



Amplified Fellowship Report

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Amplified Fellowship

In the Summer of 2019, Youth Ottawa piloted the Amplified Fellowship with funding from the City of Ottawa's Community Economic Development Fund, the RBC Foundation, the Ottawa Community Foundation, and the Canada Summer Jobs Grant from ESDC.

The point of this fellowship was to "amplify" what young social innovators were already doing – creating innovative impact projects in their communities – and addressing a serious need/gap that we heard consistently, in that they lacked sustainable funding for their projects and were often prevented from scaling their impact by the fact that they had to work other jobs.


So we decided to take our summer jobs grant and hire 13 young social innovators to work with an entrepreneur-in-residence and the Youth Ottawa team on building sustainability for their projects through a combination of one-on-one entrepreneur-in-residence consulting, business design workshops, and applied work on their projects.

We also trained them in running our High School programs, so that they would have another job/avenue to earn income that would be aligned with their social purposes.





Key Questions Asked

1. How do we help build sustainability for youth-led initiatives, particularly those run by youth who have faced significant barriers.
 2. How transferable was social enterprise training to the employment in the emerging “free agent” economy that youth are facing?
 3. How much better would Youth Ottawa’s high school programs be if we could have them run by the inspiring young people involved in our Amplified Program?
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Social Innovation Projects

Cuts for Kids Foundation

(4 youth) – youth from Ottawa Community Housing who, based on lived experiences, recognized the dignity of a good haircut/style. They partner with barbers, hairstylists and community housing centers to provide free haircuts to children and youth.

Camps for Children

(1 youth) – youth who provide camp and other recreational activities to children living in areas in Ottawa where there is a known “recreational desert” (think of the concept of an urban “food desert”

Woke Studios

(1 youth) – an aspiring artist management label for Blues Fusion artists, also conceived by a young person who recently won a Spirit of the Capital Award from Youth Ottawa

Hot Shoe Productions

Additionally, 3 youth were hired to work on the business development for Hot Shoe Productions, a videography social enterprise where youth are hired to make videos for clients. Run jointly by the Social Planning Council of Ottawa and Youth Ottawa.

FreedX

(1 youth) – a professional creative agency with the intent on creating more employment opportunities for young womxn, particularly BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Colour) womxn.

Urban Legends

(1 youth) – a collective of spoken-word artists which recently “hired” their first female Executive Director, a young woman who recently won a Spirit of the Capital Award from Youth Ottawa.

Empower'em

(2 youth) – leadership and mental health activities run by young women of colour for young women of colour, recognizing in particular the significant opportunity gaps that exist for young muslim women.



Impact on Sustainability

Freed X - has “gone to market” and already secured in excess of \$17,000 in revenues (in two months). Presented at the Center for Social Enterprise Developments annual conference, Unleashed.

Cuts for Kids– working with Youth Ottawa earlier in the year, they received a \$10,000 grant from the Ottawa Community Foundation, \$12,000 from ESDC for three of the Canada Summer Jobs Grant positions. They have applied for subsequent funding through the Ottawa Community Foundation as well as having a productive first conversation with Ottawa Community Housing on services that they can deliver to help the organization connect with residents. Moreover, they have identified that the community housing market is larger than previously known, and the jobs that they can do for OCH also apply to other social housing providers. Currently working on the resources and activities side of their operations and a proposal to the OCH.

Woke Studios – has developed a clearer business model, received \$3,000 in additional funding to date and applied for a further \$25,000. Was one of the few projects selected to pitch at the SoGal Dragon’s Den pitch competition (happening Nov 28th) based on the clarity of the value proposition in the proposal.

Urban Legends – was able to use a business model developed through the Amplified Fellowship to convince key stakeholders in Urban Legends to consider more earned revenue models/ moving away from a purely volunteer-based organization. Considering that the youth running this was stepping into a pre-existing organization, this is a significant step.

Camps for Children – made headway in developing a potential business model. In the process, however the core team faced the question of whether they wanted to scale their impact or keep it as it is, a volunteer hobby. This is a great question for them to face, and a productive outcome, as the challenges involved in building sustainability not only became more manageable, but also they become more real and forced the team into some serious consideration of where to go next.



Impact by Numbers

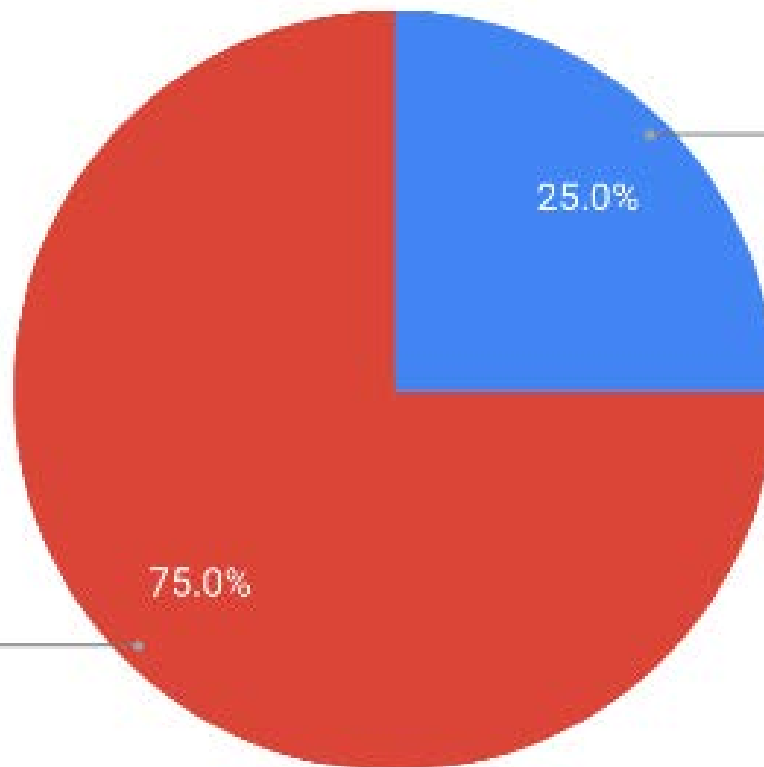


Participated

13 Young Social Innovators



Level of knowledge on how to make changes
in the community compared to the start of the
amplified fellowship



More than before

75.0%

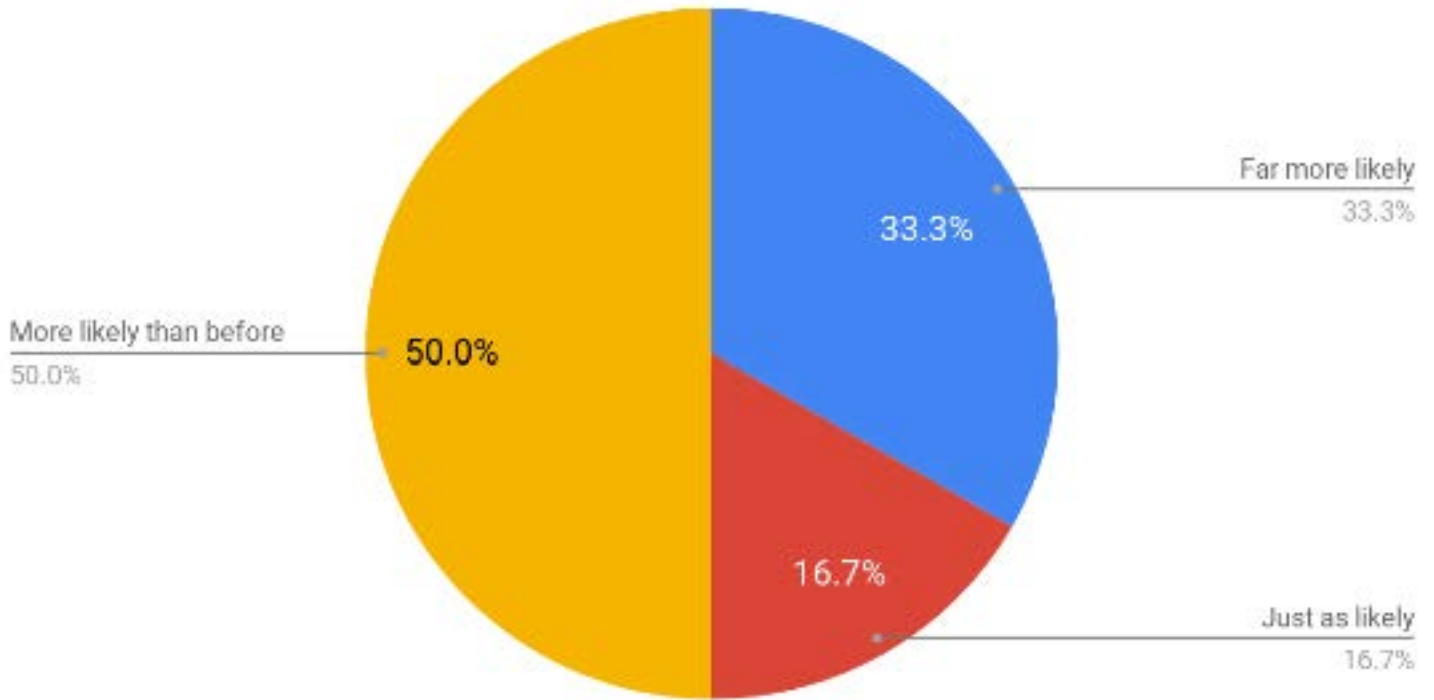
Far more than before

25.0%

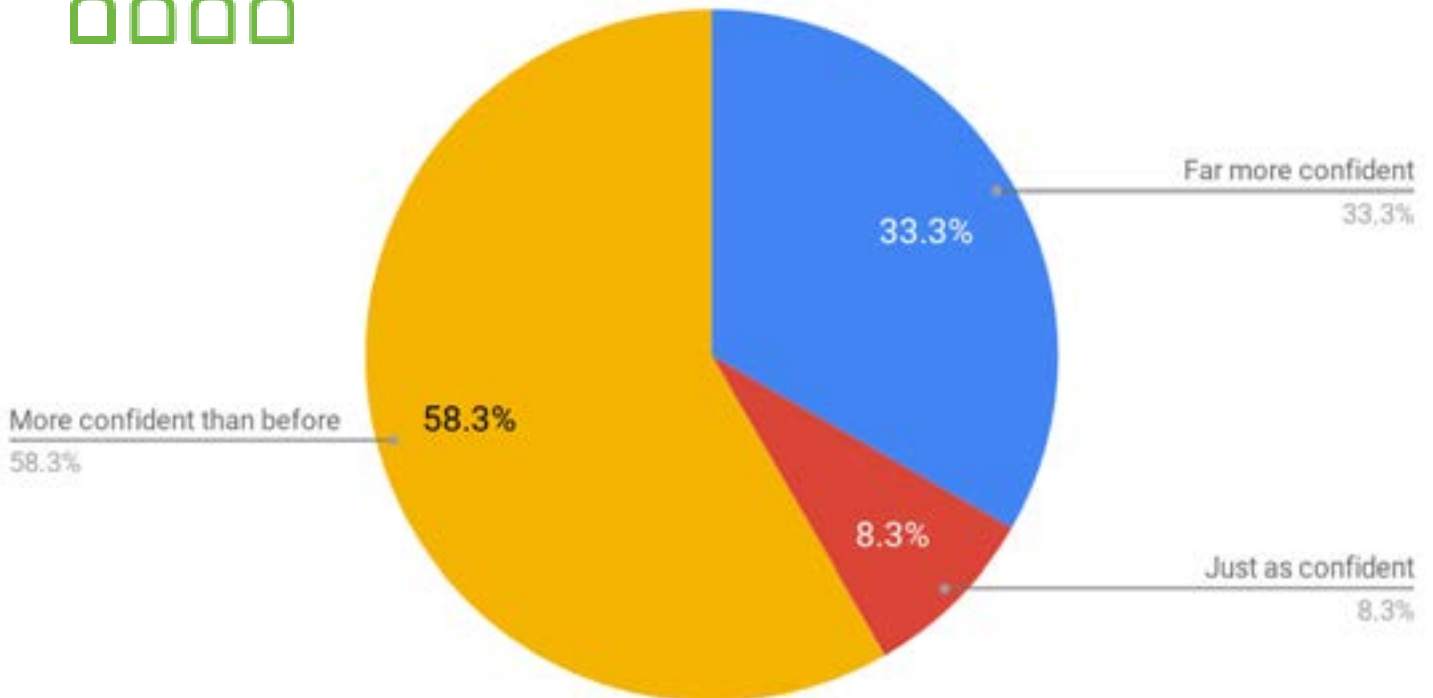




Likelihood NOW of getting more involved in projects to improve your community compared to the start of the Fellowship



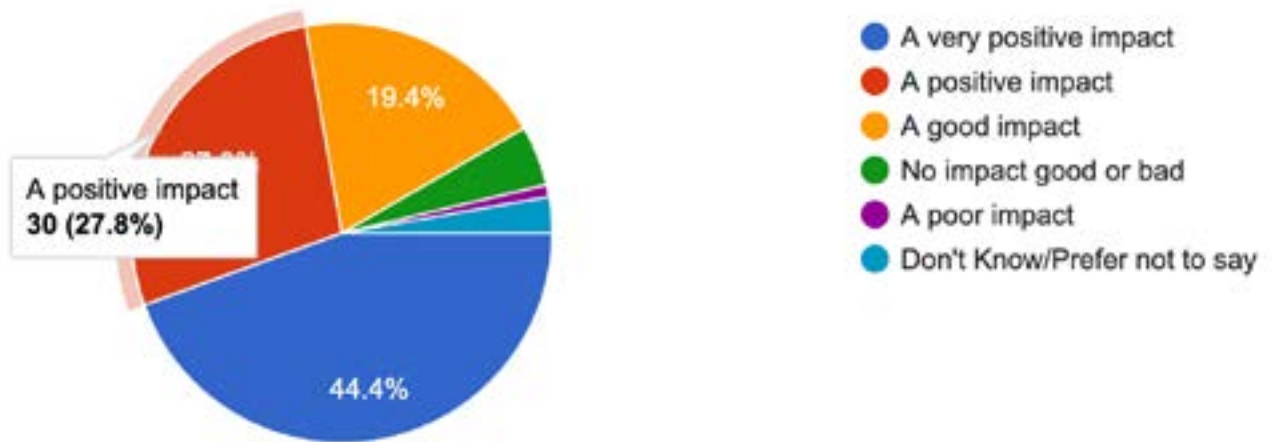
Level of confidence that you can make a difference in your community compared to the START of the Fellowship



Impact of Amplified fellows on High School students

6b. What IMPACT did your Youth Ottawa Facilitator HAVE ON YOU?

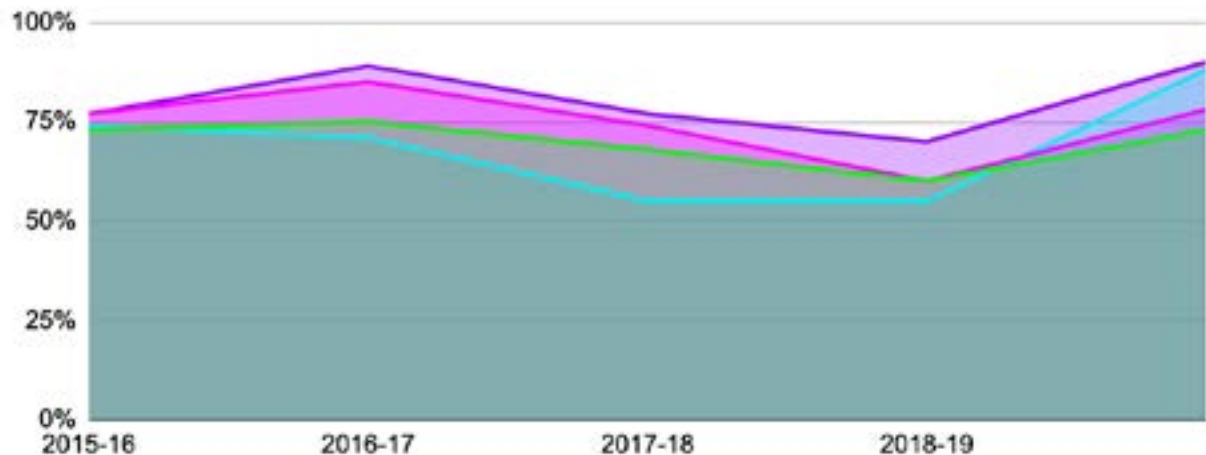
108 responses



Amplified Fellows resulted in improved results in 2019/2020

Youth who increased in "Civic Knowledge", Youth who increased their "readiness to Challenge Injustice", Youth who...

■ Youth who increased in "Civic Knowledge"
 ■ Youth who increased their "readiness to Challeng..."
 ■ Youth who increased in "Civic Self-Efficacy"
 ■ Youth who increased their "Collaboration"



HISTORICAL COMPARISONS

Testimonials



“ Potential funders are contributing to reshaping mindsets of the young people in this city that will allow us to take strides to create change and influence with confidence and intention. Young people who have been bound to such traditional and limiting ways of how to accomplish our dreams. Funders should know that they have a part in being responsible of impacting whole generations with the seeds that this program imparts into participants. They are rekindling the true spirit of community advancement with this program by bringing diverse groups with various levels of wisdom to interact with one another and transfer knowledge. I gained fresh perspective, I gained a network and allies and access to the tables that seemed far from reach.

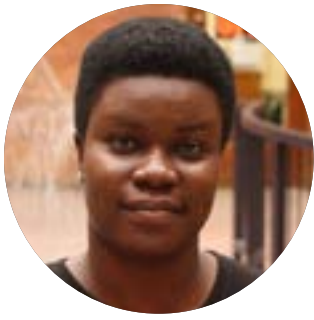
—Liz Clarke - FreedX



“ It is crucial to invest in this program and amplify its value offered. There is a perilous gap between youth and adult communities, especially when it concerns opportunities for meaningful livelihood. This program is an invaluable first step in bridging that gap by providing youth with tangible insights into what exactly is required to meaningfully engage with the business community.

—Cuts for Kids





“Youth Ottawa Amplified Fellowship is the most educating and empowering employment program for youths in the city of Ottawa. The program provides strong theoretical and experiential learning opportunities to prepare you for a broad array of career opportunities, including: -Entrepreneurship - commercializing an innovative product or service through the formation of a start-up venture -Social Innovation - implementing innovative ideas which serves the good of society through a not-for-profit or a for-profit venture -Corporate Innovation – developing and launching innovative ideas, products or processes within the structure of an existing corporation or organization.
—*Empower’Em*



“This program is essential in optimizing and making the efforts of young change makers more efficient. We often spend a lot of time and energy navigating our way through new terrain. However, this program teaches us the fundamentals about decision making, planning, networking, and communicating among many other skills. Moreover, it allows us to put those practical skills into use. As a result we are better equipped to continue our work and our mission to make the city a better place. I am much more confident in myself now and I am more unapologetic about taking up space, enthusiastic about continuing to learn and excited about the impact of my voice and my ideas. —*Camps for Children*





“My facilitator has motivated me to be the best version of myself, and to never settle for less.”
—ACI Participants



“She was humble but dynamic, informed, related very well with me and my students. She was respectful and provided and accepted feedback. Her positive energy and vibe was very contagious.”
—ACI Participants



“Liz and Brenda are such motivators and they understand each and everyone of us. Brenda for me really took time and asked us questions about what we wanna do as a career and what to think about. She also gave us some big tips on public speaking and to be confident. She was an overall amazing help and did way more than she had to, to make this an amazing experience.”
—ACI Participants



Impact on Transferable Skills

Two-thirds of participants indicated that they were either more confident or far more confident in their “soft skills” (like collaboration, communication, problem solving – skills necessary for the future of work as proposed by groups like RBC), but the remaining third who reported no change already had very high confidence in this areas.

More importantly, we were able to use participants strengths as social innovators and social entrepreneurs to create in excess of 3,000 additional employment hours running our programs for high school students in schools.

In high schools, without consciously intending to do so, having Amplified Fellows run our programs resulted in greater gains in soft skills among high school youth.

For example, we noticed a 15% improvement in high school youth’s self-identified confidence in problem solving.



Next Steps

Based on our experiences, we know that we have a model that is very efficient for teaching entrepreneurial skills to innovate young people, 18-25 yrs old. It is a model that is helping them to build sustainability for their social innovation projects, creating economic opportunities for themselves and their peers, and allowing them to deepen their social impact.

We also now know that paying these young innovators to run our civic engagement program results in significantly better results than having volunteers run the program.

Next, we want to deepen our impact by:

1. Extending the Fellowship for a full-year (to better support social enterprise development and customer exploration and acquisition)
2. Creating a corollary social enterprise program for High School Careers classes (as a way to better transfer entrepreneurial and employment skills) to complement our Civics class program.

In doing so, we are creating a “virtuous cycle” of for youth by youth change, and we strongly suspect that this model will lead to significantly better outcomes on entrepreneurship, employment, community connection, and well-being for all the youth involved.



