



# **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.

A young woman with dark hair and glasses is smiling and holding a Canon DSLR camera. The background is a soft, out-of-focus light blue and white. A horizontal line with blue, red, and green segments is positioned below the title.

# 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?





# SOCIAL INNOVATION PROJECTS

**Ibrahim Musa is the Founder and Executive Director of the Cuts For Kids Foundation, which promotes dignity through access to equal opportunities by connecting youth to essential services – starting with a haircut or style. Ibrahim’s personal mission is to alleviate socio-economic barriers affecting youth, born out of his own experiences arriving to Canada in 2002 as a refugee from Iraq.**

“Coming as a refugee to Canada and growing up poor, I was increasingly self-conscious about myself and my family, and it was socially isolating. At that point, haircuts were a luxury we couldn’t afford, and I remember being so sick of my mom’s haircuts that I picked up my teddy bear, grabbed a pair of scissors - cutting his hair and then mine. I was 5 years old when I learned that even as a child, we have a need for dignity. The Cuts For Kids Foundation believes that every child deserves an equal opportunity to succeed. We promote dignity by providing access to opportunities through connecting youth to tailored services - starting with a haircut or style.”

## IMPACT OF THE AMPLIFIED FELLOWSHIP

1

CUTS FOR KIDS HAS ENHANCED THEIR UNDERSTANDING OF THEIR PRIMARY CUSTOMER SEGMENTS AND BENEFICIARIES TO IMPROVE THEIR SERVICES.

2

DEVELOPED A BALANCED BUSINESS MODEL

3

IMPROVED THEIR DONOR STORY

4

SECURED MULTIPLE GRANTS

## FOR YOUTH BY YOUTH MODEL

After building upon the business lessons from the Amplified Fellowship, Ibrahim was employed by Youth Ottawa to launch the new Social Enterprise Program - changing the way students think about their education and career path.

“I AM HAPPY TO BE A PART OF A TEAM OF TALENTED CHANGEMAKERS WHO ARE TAKING THEIR FOUNDATIONAL LIVED EXPERIENCES AND INSIGHTS ON CHANGE LEADERSHIP INTO THE CLASSROOM.

YOUTH OTTAWA’S FOR YOUTH BY YOUTH MODEL IS WORKING TO TURN THE PAGE ON ANTIQUATED VIEWS ON YOUTH AND BRING COMPETENT AND COMPASSIONATE YOUNG PEOPLE TO THE FOREFRONT OF CHANGE.

# FREED X



Freedx is a women-led creative agency using the power of collaborative artistry to establish women's careers in the creative industry. FreedX was established by Liz Clarke from struggle she found when navigating the creative industry. She hopes that FreedX becomes the leading women-led content creative agency in Ottawa.

HIRED 8 WOMEN CREATIVES

8

SECURED 17,000 IN REVENUE

\$17,000

The Amplified Fellowship has given me the confidence, knowledge, and networks to dominate in my professional endeavours. I am now fully aware of the value I possess and the needs I am fully equipped to address and contribute to in my communities. I now have a better idea of what my worth is and how to set boundaries that benefit me. In addition, I learned to broaden my mental frameworks and completely understand my why for everything I do. This skill has greatly strengthened my ability to problem solve creatively with consideration for more options or resources to access.

## IMPACT ON SUSTAINABILITY

- ✓ Has gone to market and secured in excess of \$17,000 in revenue
- ✓ Has an in-reach partnership with the OAG that gives FreedX the space to host monthly programming to build relationships with women creatives
- ✓ Presented at the Centre of Social Enterprise Developments annual conference, unleashed

After the Amplified Fellowship Liz Clarke was hired to run Youth Ottawa's Artistic Mentorship Program and Active Citizenship Initiative.

The creative/experiential youth work taking place in schools by Youth Ottawa is beyond innovative and crucial in increasing societal consciousness about preventative measures needed in partnership with young people; to ensure their wellness long-term, that they are driven by their purpose and passions and that they are engaged, empowered and supported fully.

# EMPOWER'EM

Empower'em is a grassroots youth group providing safe spaces and programming for young women of color and Canadian newcomer women. Their mission is to build and empower women of colour and Canadian Newcomers to progress personally, professionally, and in the service of others through workshops and tools that build their leadership skills and provide them with the connections they need to succeed



DEVELOPING LEADERSHIP



CREATING SAFE SPACES

CELEBRATING INTERSECTIONALITY

## IMPACT ON AMPLIFIED FELLOWS....

- provided Brenda with full-time employment to develop Empower'em.
- deepened her sense of curiosity with an interest in learning and ability to turn learnings into actionable strategies
- increased her entrepreneurial skills including business strategy, business plan writing, strategic decision-making, goal setting and implementation
- provided her the platform and opportunity to collaborate with other passionately driven youths in Ottawa who are ready to challenge the status quo.



Brenda is now employed as the Program Lead Facilitator for Youth Ottawa's Active Citizenship Initiative and is responsible for:

- Lead delivery of a portfolio of initiatives (Active Citizenship Initiative) that drive action towards social responsibility priorities
- Establish long-term, mutually beneficial partnerships with stakeholders from the private, public and civil society sectors that simultaneously drive business and social value – 'shared value'
- Develop and maintain relationships with external organizations within Ottawa including the OCDSB whose perspectives are important in shaping the social responsibility landscape

"RUNNING THE YOUTH OTTAWA ACI HAS BEEN EMPOWERING FOR ME BECAUSE IT LED TO MORE PERSONAL DISCOVERY ABOUT MY SKILLS, STRENGTHS, VALUES AND ENERGY AS A YOUNG SOCIAL INNOVATOR"





## IMPACT OF AMPLIFIED FELLOWS ON HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

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87%

OF HIGH SCHOOL PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS GAINED THE KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND ATTITUDES TO BECOME ACTIVE AND ENGAGED CITIZENS LIKE OUR AMPLIFIED FELLOWS.

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90%

OF YOUTH REPORTED HAVING EITHER A POSITIVE IMPACT OR A VERY POSITIVE IMPACT OF THEIR AMPLIFIED FELLOW FACILITATOR

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### HERE'S WHAT THEY SAID ABOUT WORKING WITH OUR FACILITATORS...

"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

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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.



