

Inspire Evaluation 2016-17

Through our partnership with The Department of Canadian Heritage, RBC, and Great West Life, Unity Charity successfully delivered over 70 In-School Unity Day Programs across Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Alberta, British Columbia and Ontario. The National Unity Day Program engaged 22,252 students through 396 hours of artistic programming that involved 2 Indigenous Communities, 15 Community Organizations, 12 highly trained Artist Educators, and a rigorous evaluation phase. Unity's Inspire Evaluation consisted of quantitative and qualitative stakeholder feedback obtained through 2,272 surveys.

Quantitative Highlights:

- 86% of youth strongly agreed or agreed that Unity Day gave them a greater understanding of hip-hop culture
- 85.5% strongly agreed or agreed that listening to the artists tell their person stories helped them have a better understanding of other people's feelings
- 81.8% strongly agreed or agreed that seeing the artists perform taught them new and constructive ways to express their stress.
- Of the 2,272 surveyed, 42% identified as "Male", 43% identified as "Female", and 15% preferred not to identify and/or responded outside of the gender binary.

Qualitative Highlights:

Participants learned how to tell their stories and connected with those of their peers, which allowed them to not only connect to a broader Canadian identity, but also instilled the values of empathy, inclusivity, and the importance of positive self-expression. Using a "mental health through the back door" approach, our programs have immediate and long-lasting positive impact on the youth we serve.

- *"Finding alternative ways of dealing with feelings. Especially sadness."*
- *"Using arts as an outlet for managing stress"*
- *"I can understand others actions more because you never know what someone else is going through"*

– Youth Participants
- *"Using different ways of expressing understanding is important and I hope my students appreciate diversity and embrace it"*

– Teacher
- *"Through poetry and the writing exercises, some students were able to let out their frustrations and in a sense were able to heal." "Two young male friends had a falling out. One of them wrote about it during the poetry workshop and shared it with the class. The counterpart embraced his former friend during this sharing of their mutual experience. There were tears and apologies throughout the poetry workshop, and a space was created for them to reconcile their differences."*

– Artist Facilitator
- *"Days like this where we get away from the traditional textbook learning are the memorable days."*

– Vice Principal

The year concluded with an intense multi-level Artist Training and Anti-Oppression Training provided to over 60+ Artist Educators to ensure they continued to build on their skills necessary for high quality artistic instruction. With a well-trained and strategically aligned team, Unity is excited to step into its 10th year of programming, and Year 2 of Theory of Change.

Moving Forward

Unity's evaluation system for its Inspire programs focuses on evaluating the Inspire Theory of Change outcomes through a survey. The survey also provides youth with opportunities to write about the program's impact on them, and to provide feedback. Unity's Inspire survey is accompanied by a teacher survey where relevant.

Theory of Change Outcomes: By 2019 as a direct result of Unity Day, more than 100,000 youth (66% of 150,000) will have more ways to express their stress, awareness of Unity's other programs, appreciation of the power of community and awareness of mental health and well-being resources available to them.

- Learn new and positive ways of to express their stress
- Express interest to get involved with the hip hop community
- Become more aware of the mental health and well-being resources available to them in their community

Improve Access to Mental Health through Partnerships: Focusing on strategic partnerships as the way forward, Unity will continue to strengthen its relationships with Public School Districts and local organizations to improve access to mental health resources whilst showing youth new and positive ways to express stress. Partnerships with organizations such as Royal Bank of Canada, The Psychology Foundation of Canada, and Kids Help Phone will be instrumental in navigating the complex realm of youth mental health.

Improve Access to Arts: By offering the program for free to schools, Unity will directly remove the funding barrier that prevents schools from having arts programs. Unity is committed to increasing access to arts-based learning opportunities through compelling artistic and cultural experiences offered through its National Unity Day Program.