

Annual Project Report 2023-2024



Knowledge Sharing Session!

What We Learnt From You I
We Want To Share With You

Register Here!

Event Details
Date: March 16, 2024
Time: 4 - 6 P.M.
Venue: Genesis Center
For more information
Email: info@cresscentre.ca
ncsc@nepalisociety.ca

Organizers:

Food will be served

RECEIVE CERTIFICATE UPON COMPLETION

- Encourage open discussions about mental health
- Combat stigma and promote understanding
- Use supportive language and create safe spaces
- Raise awareness of mental health resources and treatment options

On Thursday December 12th, 2024 from 4:00PM - 6:00 PM
In Room D122
Genesis Center 7555 Falconridge Blvd NE
Scan QR Code to register



Centre for Research, Education, and Social Services (CRESS Centre)





Centre for Research, Education, and Social Services (CRESS Centre)

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Web: www.cresscentre.ca

Social Media: <https://www.facebook.com/cresscenter>



**SENIORS'
RESOURCE KIT** www.cresscentre.ca



Executive Summary

Since its inception in July 2023, the CRESS Centre has been running programs and services for vulnerable Calgarians following a top-down participatory approach. The rigorous need assessment is done with the needy people and stakeholders, and programs are designed based on the need framework. Accordingly, the organization provided programming support to over 2000 Calgarians by mobilizing 65 volunteers, with over 1100 volunteer hours. We worked with over 20 non-profit organizations and communities in the last year, strengthening the collaborative culture within the organization. Distributing over 200 food packages to needy people, 50 digital devices (laptop, desktop, and tablets) to 50 newcomers and low-income Calgarians benefiting over 300 family members, organizing seven educational tours and interaction sessions for 400 multicultural seniors and non-seniors, the celebration of the senior week together with over 350 seniors and their families, engaging and supplying fresh produce through community gardening to 20 families, seven batches of home alone safety training to around 150 kids and youth, instructor-led multicultural arts and crafts to 140 kids, youth and their families, and awareness and educational sessions on mental health, anti-racism, and diversity to over 500 individuals were some of the key activities and beneficiaries thus far. The key outcomes we achieved include strengthening collaboration, enhancing social inclusion, improving mental health, reducing screen time, fostering multiculturalism, and developing internal capacity to plan, manage, and execute project activities.

The CRESS Centre is committed to fan out its activities to provide programs and services to vulnerable Calgarians in the coming days in collaboration with the grassroot organizations, non-profit sectors, and local entrepreneurs. We strongly believe in a collaborative culture and collective outcomes. Accordingly, we are committed to implementing our activities with other organizations, further strengthening our collaboration and partnerships. We want to extend our heartfelt thanks to our partners, esteemed volunteers, funders, and most importantly our clients.

President's Message

With immense pride and gratitude, I reflect on the remarkable achievement of the CRESS Centre over the past year, highlighting a year of growth, impact, and community-driven initiatives. Since our establishment in July 2023, we have remained steadfast in our mission of serving vulnerable Calgarians by fostering inclusion, empowerment, and resilience through innovative programs and strong partnerships. Guided by a participatory, needs-based approach, we have made a tangible difference in the lives of over 2,500 individuals.

Over the past year, we have expanded our collaborative culture. Our collaborative efforts with more than 20 partner organizations and the invaluable contributions of 37 volunteers, who dedicated over 1,100 hours of service, have been instrumental in making these programs successful. From mental health awareness initiatives and digital literacy programs to multicultural arts, community gardening, and food security efforts, our programs have addressed critical social issues while enhancing community well-being.

As we look ahead, our focus remains on strengthening partnerships, expanding services, and ensuring sustainable, impactful programs that address the evolving needs of our community. On behalf of the CRESS Centre, I extend my heartfelt gratitude to the unwavering support of our volunteers, partners, funders, and supporters for their dedication and commitment. Together, we are creating a more inclusive and resilient community.



Kalpana Thapa
President

Key Initiatives (2023-24)

- Breaking the Barriers: Mental Health Awareness and Engagement (2023)
- Multicultural Arts and Crafts (2023 and 2024)
- Multiculturalism and Anti-racism Engagement Activities (2023 and 2024)
- Senior Week Celebration (2024)
- Nurturing the Nature (2024)
- Celebration of Seniors' Achievements (2024)
- Social Inclusion Support to the Elders (2024-25)
- Kids and Families with Confidence (2024-25)
- Multicultural Arts and Crafts Contest Focusing on Mental Health (2024)
- Home Alone Safety Training (2023-24)
- Digital Literacy (2024)
- Food Security (2023-24)
- Nepali Mela and Multicultural Showcasing (NMMS) Event (2023-24)

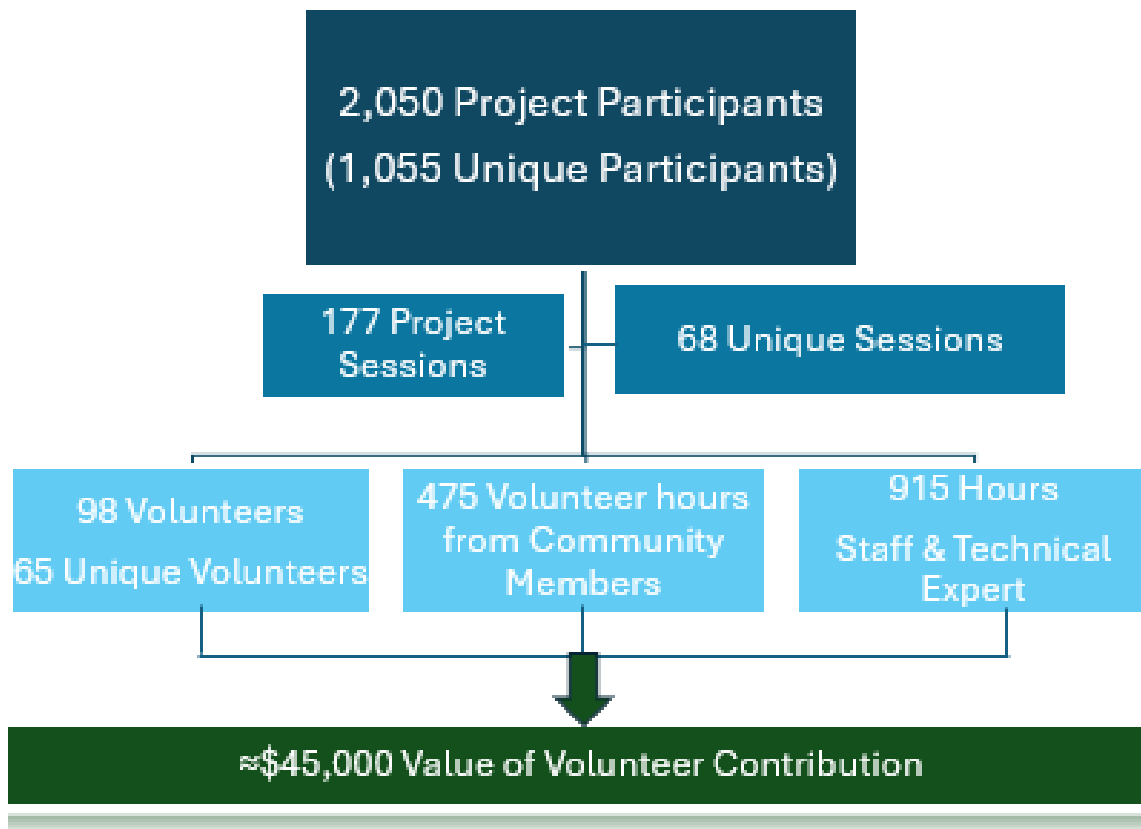
Ongoing Initiatives (2025-26)

- Social Isolation and Inclusion Support to Elders (2025-26)
- Nurturing the Nature (2025-26)
- Senior Week Celebration (2025)
- Celebration of Seniors' Achievements (2025)
- Nepali Mela and Multicultural Showcasing (NMMS) Event Episode III

Key Activities (2023-24)

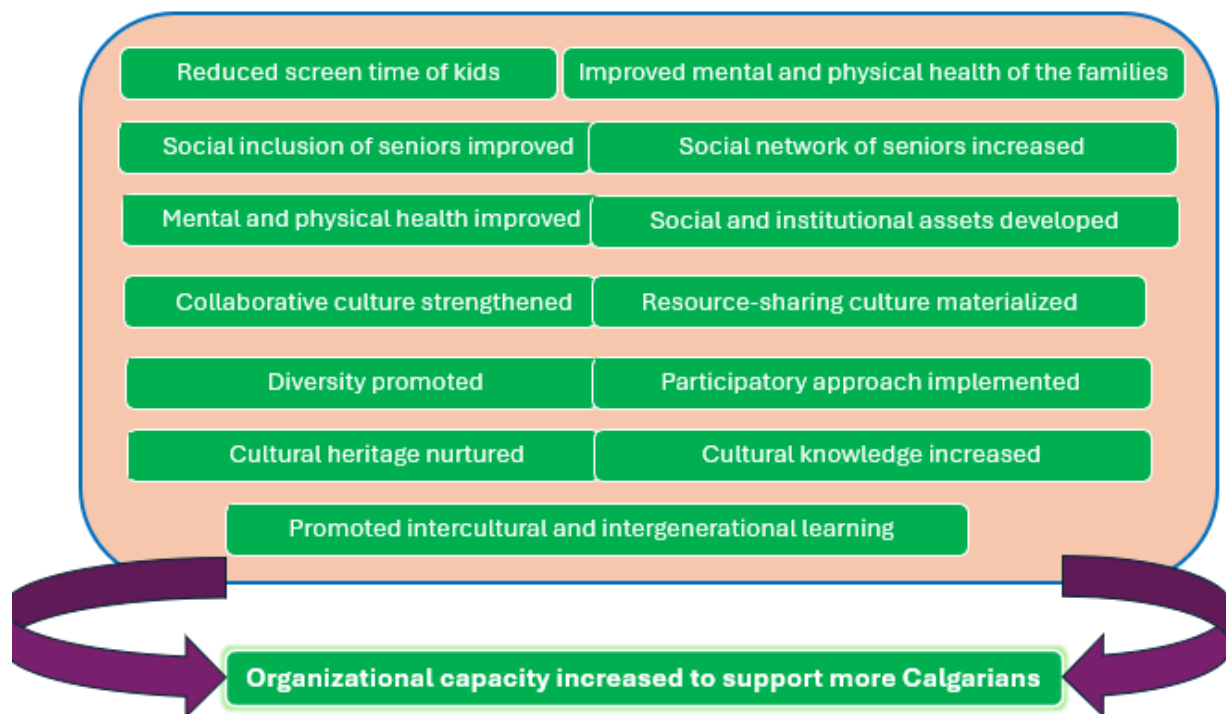
- Multicultural Arts and Crafts Sessions - 30 sessions
- Multicultural Tours and Interactions - 7 sessions
- Senior Week Celebration Event - 1 event
- Seniors Appreciation Events - 3 events
- Home Alone Safety Training - 6 sessions
- Knowledge Dissemination Event - 1 event
- Mental Health Peer Support for Youth - 1 session
- Multicultural Showcasing Event - collaboration in two events
- Community Gardening and Engagement - 1 season
- Seniors Mental Health Sessions - 5 sessions
- Seniors' Awareness of Key Areas - 3 sessions
- Digital Literacy - 1 session
- Food Security - 12 times food distribution

Key Indicators (2023-24)



Key Outcomes Achieved

Several initiatives implemented by the Centre for Research, Education, and Social Services (CRESS Centre), in collaboration with multiple organizations, touched on multiple outcomes. Some outcomes were the results of initiatives carried out before the reporting period. However, for the brevity of this document, they have only been mentioned in a specific category. The critical outcome of the project activities was the increased visibility of the CRESS Centre in Calgary, making it a vibrant organization serving vulnerable Calgarians.



Nurture the Nature (NtN)

Engaging Seniors in Community Gardening

- Land Welcoming by Indigenous Community
- Indigenous Cultural Practices in Tipi
- Weekly Gardening Practices
- Multicultural Interactions and Sharing
- Organic Produce
- Harvest Celebration with Ethnocultural Communities and Indigenous Community



Nurture the Nature (NtN): Community Gardening

Managed by the Calgary Catholic Immigration Society (CCIS), the community gardening project at Land of Dreams (LoD) is an iconic program aiming to make diverse communities vibrant by engaging them in regenerative agriculture. The Centre for Research, Education, and Social Services (CRESS Centre) collaborated with CCIS to create a regenerative farm where different cultures come together to share their stories and knowledge to support each other and build a thriving and

inclusive society.

Through the NtN project, the CRESS Centre aims to reduce the social isolation of seniors by engaging them in organic production on the community farm.

The specific objectives are to:

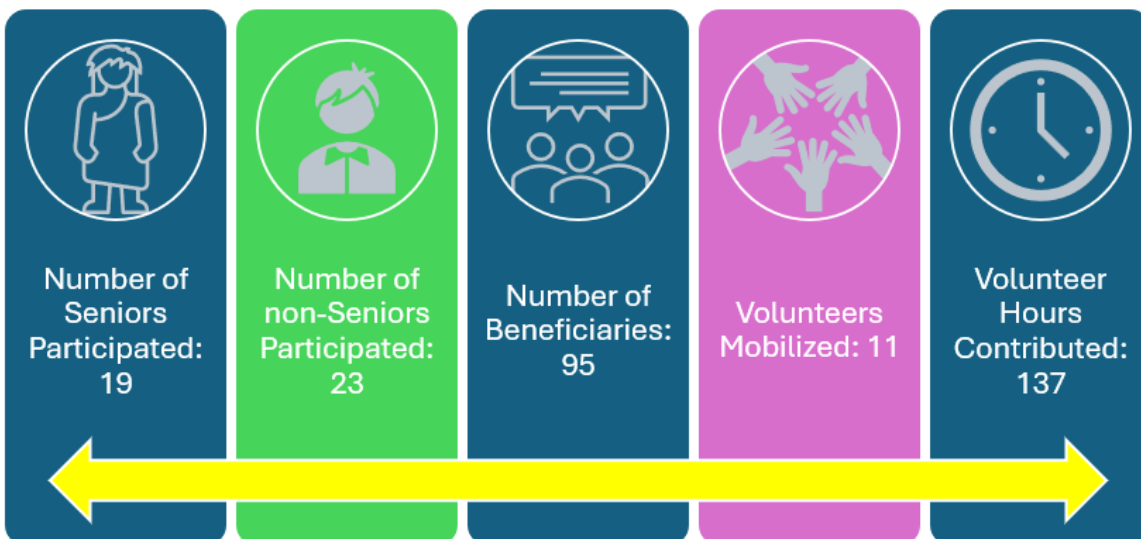
- promote intercultural and intergenerational learning
- develop a volunteering culture among seniors and non-seniors
- make fresh farm produce available to the

participants

- increase cross-cultural knowledge, including knowledge of Indigenous culture



Indicators



Outcomes

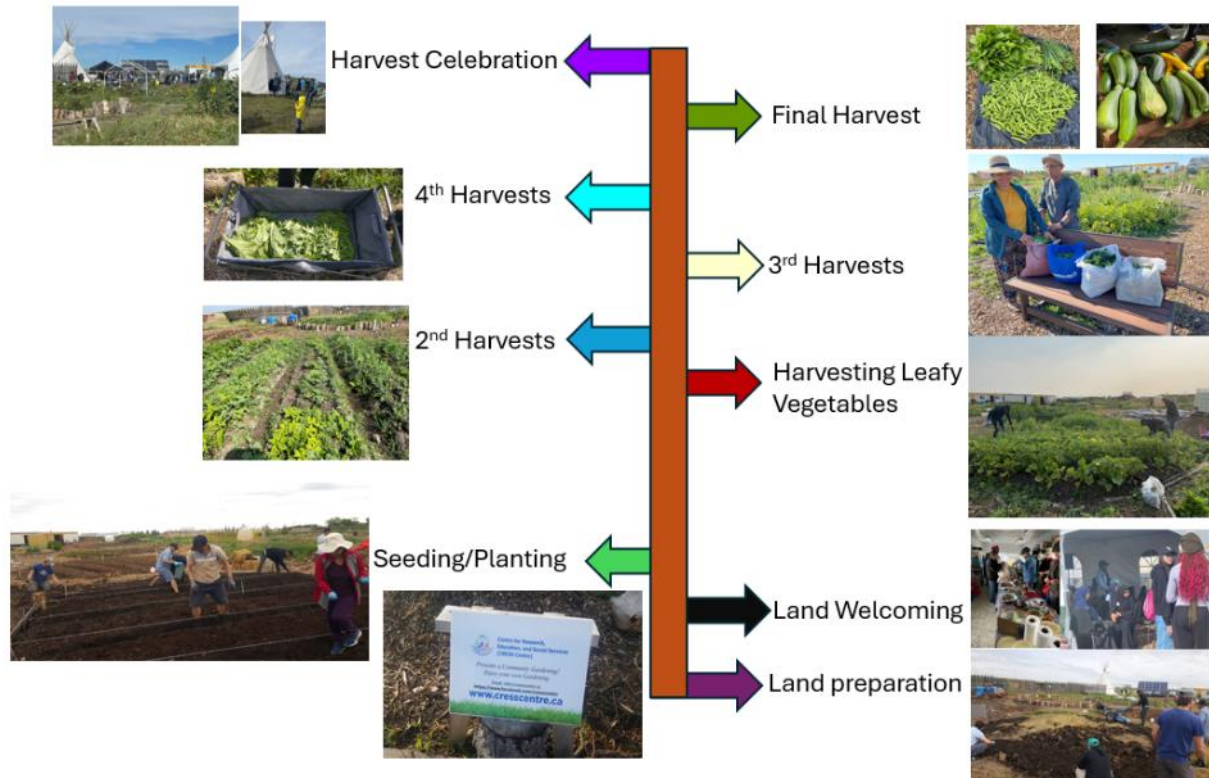


Feedback from the participants

I find community gardening initiative organized by the CRESS Centre very promising in terms of engaging seniors like me to revive my skills and interest in open and cultural mosaic environment. I got an opportunity to harvest fresh and organic produce while interacting with the folks from other cultures and learning from them.

Don't miss me in next year. I found this program very interesting and engaging. Driving way from the resident every weekend, doing fun while engaging in agriculture, and learning from other cultures are what I like the most. Please bring more people and host some celebrations like BBQ event together with the participants.

Key activities





Kids and Families with Confidence

- Multicultural Arts and Crafts
- Home Alone Safety Training Sessions
- Multicultural Arts Contest on Mental Health
- Cultural Awareness and Social Networking



Executive Summary

The Kids and Families with Confidence (KFC) project aims to enhance the social inclusion of children and youth from racialized communities by engaging them in skills development activities with their parents. The project started in October 2024 and ended in January 2025. The key activities in the project include craft sessions (10), home-alone safety training (3), and a multicultural art competition (2 cohorts) focusing on mental health.

- A total of 27 kids and youth attended the craft sessions along with their parents.*
- Nearly 90 youth attended the Home-Along Safety Training program.*
- Over 50 youth participated in multicultural arts competitions.*
- Over 100 visitors (participants, their parents, and the audience) attended and observed the artworks of the competitors.*
- Collaboration with six organizations developed and strengthened, leveraging resources to make the project successful.*
- Majority of the parents agreed that the project activities reduced the kids' screen time (74%), reduced their level of anxiety (67%), developed confidence (79%), and improved mental health (81%).*
- The age of the participants ranged from 7 years to 15 years.*
- Participants in the project activities represented over seven racialized communities in Calgary, reflecting multiculturalism.*

Background

There is a growing recognition of the importance of providing opportunities for at-risk children and youth to develop essential skills beyond traditional educational settings. However, many children and youth, particularly among the racialized communities, lack access to avenues that foster the development of these crucial skills. In today's digital age, children and youth increasingly spend excessive time with screens, including smartphones, computers, and televisions. While technology offers many benefits, prolonged screen time has been associated with various adverse outcomes, including decreased physical activity, social isolation, and diminished cognitive development. Most parents keep themselves busy at work, have limited time to closely watch their kids and youth, and offer the best course of action. Even if they have time, they do not have other alternatives for their kids and youth. The mental health of the parents gets worse. These after-school activities offer diverse opportunities for kids and youth to explore their interests, develop new skills, build friendships, and have fun in a structured and supportive environment.

Goal and Objectives

The Kids and Families with Confidence (KFC) program aims to enhance the social inclusion of at-risk children and youth from racialized communities by engaging them in activities that have the potential to reduce screen time, develop life skills, and strengthen social connections. The objectives of the project are to:

- Build and strengthen creative arts and crafts skills among the participants through structured sessions led by the instructors
- Offer training on Home Alone Safety for the youth
- Reduce screen time of the kids and youth by motivating them to make use of their leisure time in creative activities
- develop confidence in the participants and their parents by improving their mental health and enhancing skills

Delivery Method and Collaboration

The project activities were communicated and promoted through the CRESS Centre email list, social media channels, and collaborative partners. The poster was prepared in advance of the activities and posted in Genesis Centre, Village Square, a couple of community hubs, and word of mouth. We believe in the power of collective action and collaboration to create positive change and enhance the well-being of the vulnerable Calgarians. Accordingly, collaboration was developed with multiple organizations to implement the project activities: Trellis Centre, Nepalese Community Society of Calgary (NCSC), Planet Youth, Calgary Bridge Foundation for Youth (CBFY), CCIS, Pamir Canadian, and Genesis Centre.

The action planning meeting was hosted with the collaborating partners to define the course of action and the resource-sharing mechanism. Given the approved budget, resource sharing from collaborative partners, and convenience of the participants, project activities were hosted at Genesis Centre in liaison with the Trellis Society.

A Google form was designed, and a link was promoted via different channels asking for the participants' registration. An evaluation expert designed a survey instrument and it was administered to the parents/guardians of the participants. A Likert scale was used to collect the level of agreement on key items required to ensure the project moved the needle. Open feedback and stories were collected from the selected participants and presented as verbatims in this report.

Results

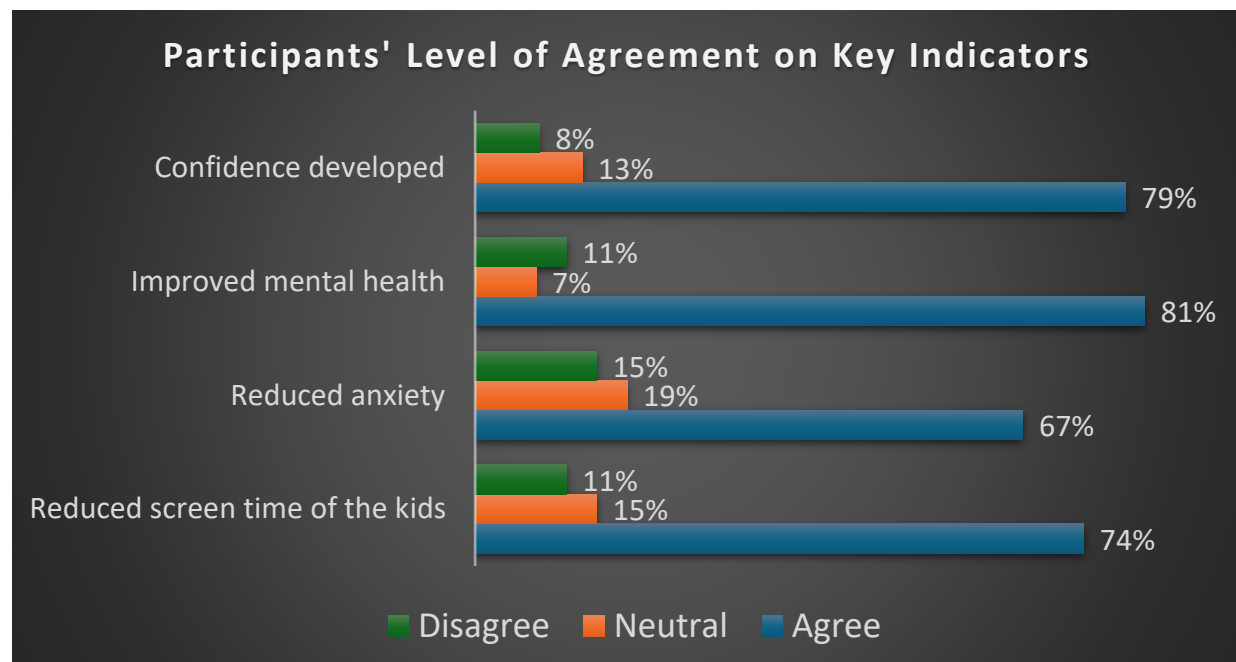
The action planning meeting decided to run two Home-Along Safety Training sessions, each with 30 participants. Given the overwhelming number of registrations in the first session, we decided to run three sessions, covering 30 participants each. The sessions started in October and ended in December 2024. Parents were engaged in the last one hour of the training session.

Starting in mid-November 2023 and weekly thereafter, the community expert ran ten multicultural crafts sessions with 27 participants. The parents were encouraged to engage with their children to learn together. The diversification of craftwork was hoped to increase social and emotional outcomes such as social skills, self-esteem, and positive attitudes toward others.

CRESS Centre also collaborated with multiple partners to host a multicultural arts competition on mental health for two cohorts of youth: 10-12 years and 13-15 years. A total of 50 submissions were received. All submissions were scored by a panel of judges, and awards were distributed to the winners. Nearly 100 participants attended the event. Given the nature of the program, we did not administer surveys but collected feedback from selected parents.

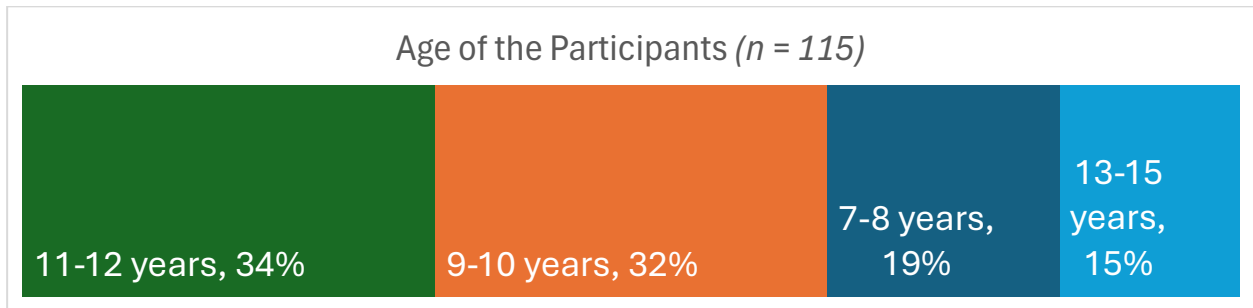
Due to the project funding, collaboration with six organizations was achieved and strengthened: CCIS, CBFY, Trellis Centre, Genesis Centre, Pamir Canadian, Nepalese Community Society of Calgary (NCSC), and Planet Youth. The strength of collaboration achieved during project activities will be further strengthened and leveraged further in the coming days.

A post-activity survey was implemented with the parents/guardians of the kids and youth in the Home Alone Safety and Crafts activities of the project. A large number of parents agreed that the project activities reduced the kids' screen time (74%), reduced their level of anxiety (67%), developed confidence (79%), and improved mental health (81%).

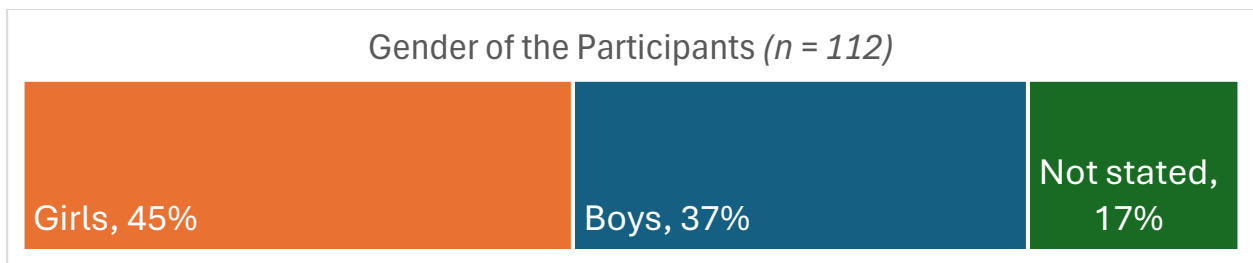


Demographic Information

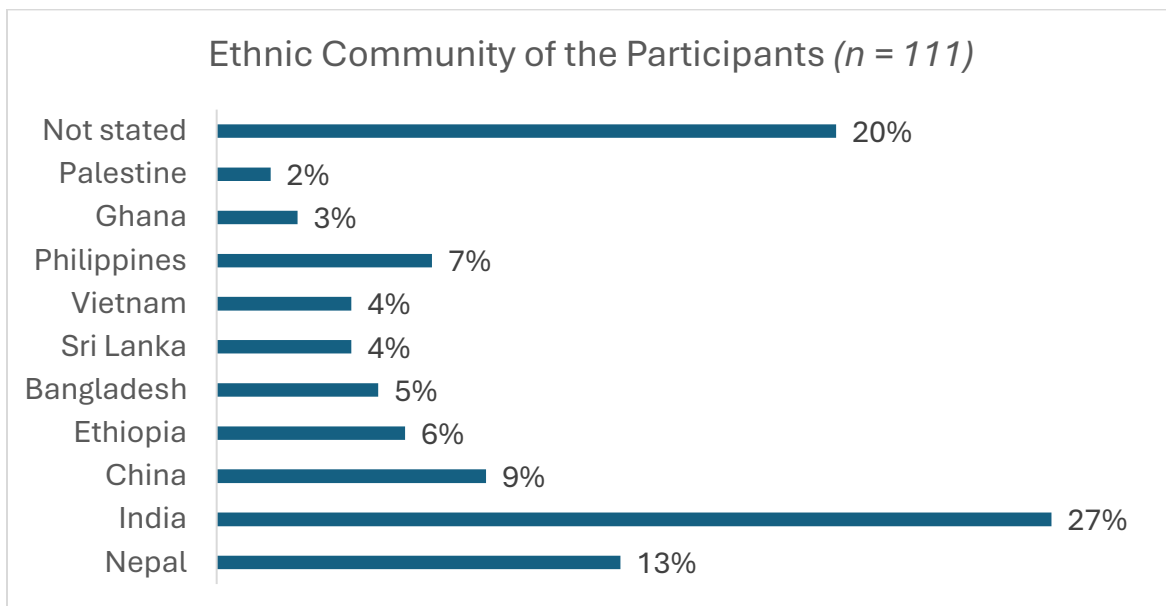
Participants from ages 8 years to 15 years were covered in the project activities. Nearly one-third of the participants were 11 to 12 years old, while another one-third were 9 to 10 years old, and the rest were 7 to 8 years old and 13 to 15 years old.



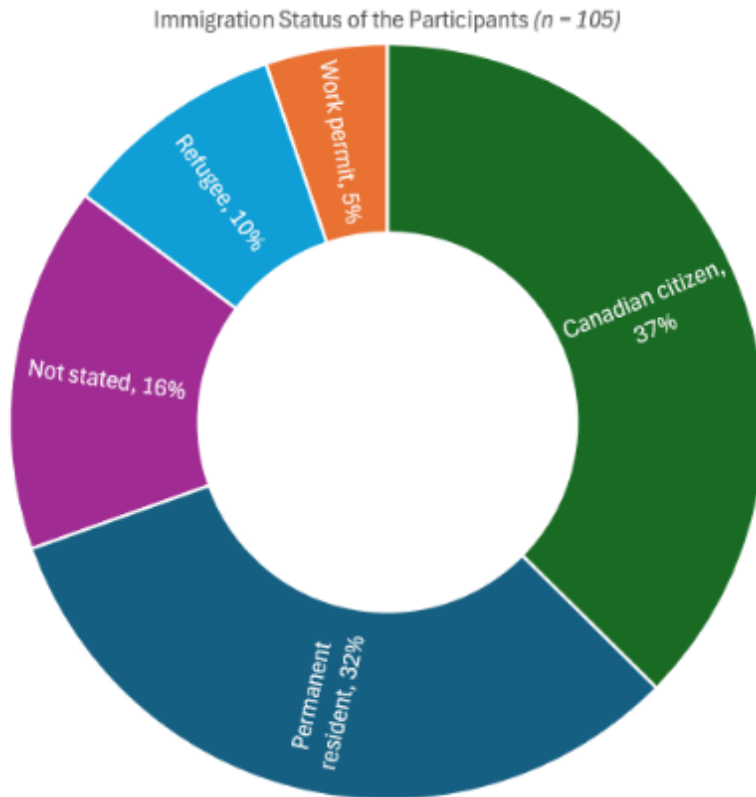
Around half of the participants were girls, 37% were boys, and the rest did not disclose their gender.



Around one-quarter of the participants belong to the Indian community, mostly the Punjabi community, followed by 13% from the Nepalese community. Other participants belong to the Chinese, the Philippines, Ethiopian, Bangladesh, Sri Lankan, Vietnam, Ghana, and Palestine. The project activities have reflected the essence of multiculturalism.



Slightly over one-third of the participants were Canadian citizens, and another one-third were Permanent residents. Some participants were refugee claimants and work permit holders.



Verbatims

I have never heard of a Home-Along Safety Program for children aged 8 to 12. Thanks, CRESS Centre, for raising awareness about this important program. I am a single mom with two kids, ages 8 and 10. I used to work full time before, but it was challenging to manage a full-time job as I had to be with my children after their school time. Now that my boys have taken Home Alone Safety Training, they can stay home for a few hours, letting me work full-time. This will provide me peace of mind working full time, which is essential for my economic well-being while making me worry-free for my boys at home during my absence.

The Home Alone Safety Training Program is very important for families with small children at home. Many people do not know about this program, and you guys have to put more effort into raising awareness first through different channels. This training will certainly give my family much-needed peace of mind starting tomorrow as my kids have taken this training, and we can leave them at home without worrying about them for a short time. We used to request assistance from our circles when we were away to take care of our kids. Since this training lets them stay alone, we won't have to bother our friend circles on this.

I am on a study permit with my wife and daughter, who is turning nine. My wife has a work permit, and it is difficult for us to manage time for my daughter, especially after school hours. I had not heard about the home-alone safety program before, and there are limited opportunities for students like me to enroll in the program, which is provided free of cost. Thanks to the CRESS Centre for bringing this program to needy families. Now that my daughter has taken this training, we will feel comfortable leaving her alone for a few hours. This will help improve our mental health while focusing on my research.

Creative arts and crafts are essential skills for everyone to keep them engaged and be creative. Many non-profit organizations or communities offer these programs but focus on their clients. The current creative crafting program offered by the Genesis Centre seems to be multicultural, as I can see kids and youth from diverse ethnic backgrounds. While kids and youth and we as parents learn essential crafting skills, we get to know people from different ethnic backgrounds, letting us know their cultural perspectives while making crafts. Many thanks to the organizers, and I would expect this program to continue down the horizon.

The organizers of arts and crafts sessions deserve special thanks for offering a program for kids and youth in ten sessions free of cost. The interesting part is that they provided all the required materials, and whatever arts and crafts our kids prepared during the sessions were given to them. Kids engaged in the program today may not consider this, but they will feel refreshed to see their arts and crafts once they grow up. My son and daughter got engaged in the session, and we backed them up while they learned. This provided an opportunity for both generations to learn together. We also increased our social network with other parents from diverse ethnic backgrounds. I have observed that my son and daughter spend time at home practicing arts and crafts, reducing their screen time and making all of us mentally refreshed.

I felt honored to have my daughter receive a winning prize for the artwork. While this will motivate my daughter to keep engaged in creative arts in the coming days, it is a matter of pride for us as a parent. Thanks to the organizer of this competition, we anticipate such work in the future, too. Thanks to the Genesis Centre for its idea of showcasing all the artwork on the wall of its building. The youth will get to see their artworks far into the future.

Some Snapshots

Arts Competition



Home Alone Safety Training Sessions



Guided Craft Sessions



Acknowledgments

CRESS Centre acknowledges the funding contribution from Genesis Centre Community Grant for making this initiative a success. We also acknowledge our collaborative partners (Trellis Centre, NCSC, CCIS, CBFY, Pamir Canadian, and Planet Youth) for their volunteer support, venue, expertise, in-kind, and cash contributions. Accomplishing the collective outcomes we envisioned would not have been possible without their support.

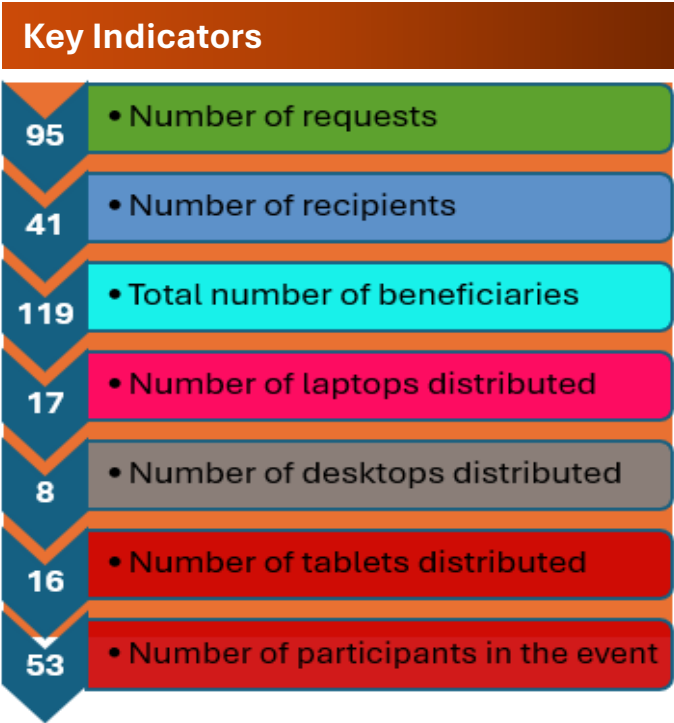
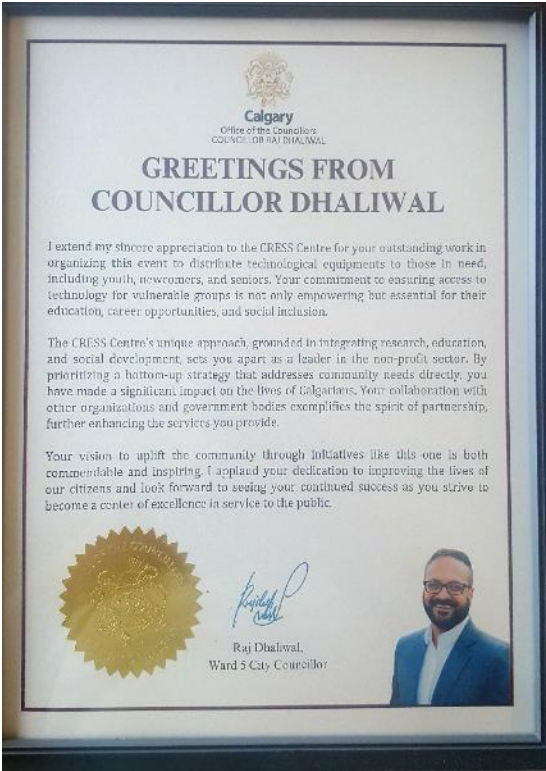
Digital Literacy Program

- Need Identification
- Laptop, Desktop, and Tabs Distribution
- Multicultural Interactions
- Sharing Stories



Promoting Digital Literacy among Vulnerable Calgarians

Vulnerable Calgarians like kids and youth from low-income families, seniors with mobility issues, unemployed people, recent newcomers, and refugees, among others, face challenges to grow and excel in a multicultural environment. They need support services and guidance from early on. The Centre for Research, Education, and Social Services (CRESS Centre) envisions becoming a center of excellence by integrating research and education to provide social services and enhance the quality of life of the vulnerable Calgarians. Our need assessment exercise in the summer of 2024 noticed that many kids, youth, refugee families, and recent newcomers face barriers to enhancing digital literacy. Digital devices like laptops, desktops, iPads, etc., could help them access fundamental resources like completing homework online, preparing resumes, increasing their social network, etc. With this background work, the CRESS Centre approached Computers for School for refurbished items that could be very helpful to the needy demographics we identified. Together with Remember Refugee Society (RRS), a device distribution event was held at the Genesis Centre in collaboration with the Calgary Catholic Immigration Society (CCIS) on 4 Oct 2024.



Brief Stories of the Recipients

I am a senior nearing retirement. If a device is provided to me, I would like to promote my digital literacy and share my learning with others my age.

I have been in Canada for a while with my family, but we are low-income, and I have been facing challenges in school where I have to go to the library to use the laptops there because my family can't afford because we are low-income and are being supported by the government I have got bad grades since sometimes I have no time to go to the library and study there since my house is a busy place I have no laptop or desktop to work on. When we first came here, we had no phones or laptops, just a small TV that all my siblings and I watched.



I am a newcomer. I would like to study, improve my education, and have a better life. Unfortunately, I can't afford everything if I don't get help as little as possible.



I am a newcomer to a low-income family, and I would like to use the computer (if provided) for language learning to improve my English and for job search, resume writing, and interview preparation. Getting a digital device through your project would be a great help.

My and my kids came as refugees and have fled from war in our home country. We are low-income, and I am currently unemployed but looking for a job. My wife and I are the only ones with electronics, including our TV. I don't have a way to get a job quickly since my kids want another way to watch something they like. We have struggled, and I want to have a way to teach my kids better English and do their work better.

At 13, I live in a cozy but cramped apartment with my mom, dad, and younger brother. My parents both work hard to provide for us, but money is often tight, and I see them stress over bills. Balancing schoolwork and helping at home can be a challenge, especially with my brother needing attention. It would be a game changer if I had a laptop, tablet, or desktop. I could complete my assignments more efficiently, explore my interests like digital art and coding, and even help my brother with his homework. Having that resource would lighten my load and give me the tools to grow creatively and academically, setting the stage for a brighter future for all of us.



I am a Grade 11 student living in an apartment. I have four family members and one old laptop. Most of the time, I have to wait my turn to use the laptop for my projects and assignments. I have done project work at Calgary Public Library several times. If you provided a computer, it would save me time and make it easy to work on time and anywhere.



I am a refugee claimant who came to Canada five months ago. I am living in a shelter. Last month, I got my work permit. Last week, I got a job in a relief position.

I need a laptop to help me apply for jobs and do some online studies to improve myself. I would appreciate it if you considered me. Thank you.



As a mother of two daughters, I've faced numerous challenges balancing work, parenting, and financial stability. I'm determined to create a better life for my children. I'm pursuing a degree in early childhood education while caring for my kids, aged 9 and 11. Receiving item a laptop would be a lifeline for me. I would utilize it to complete online coursework, access educational resources, and develop skills to advance my career. This opportunity would enable me to increase our financial stability and become a role model for my children. Ultimately, it would allow me to provide a secure, nurturing environment for my family to thrive and inspire others in similar situations to pursue their dreams.



I am one of five children in a low—to mid-income immigrant family. Being such a large family means there are some limits to the things we can all get, so getting a free laptop would help me cross off at least one thing on my list as a student going into university next year.



Seniors' Week Celebration: Engaging Multicultural Seniors in Celebration Event

Multicultural Performances

Land Welcoming and Indigenous Cultural Showcasing

Multicultural Performances

Roundtable discussions and sharing

Celebration Lunch

Land Welcoming and Indigenous

Fun Activities

Cultural Showcasing



Bridging Cultures, Connecting Generations

Background & Objectives

The Celebration of Diversity with Seniors (CDS) initiative is a vibrant platform bringing together seniors from diverse racialized communities. This event fosters intercultural and intergenerational learning, strengthens mutual respect, and promotes unity amid diversity. Through a blend of cultural sharing, performances, and interactive sessions, the initiative also includes Indigenous culture as a key component, focusing on truth, reconciliation, and lived experiences.

Key Activities:

Multicultural Performances – Dance, singing, cultural role-play, and Indigenous showcases.

Cultural Roundtables – Seniors from different communities share experiences and traditions.

Seniors Week Celebration: Lunch & Learn – Enriching discussions over a shared meal.

Indigenous Drumming & Storytelling – An immersive experience into Indigenous traditions.

Key Achievements & Impact

The event **successfully united** seniors and community members through cultural exchange and shared experiences.

Attendance: 350+ seniors and adults from racialized communities.

Cultural Artists: 35 performers representing diverse traditions.

Community Partners: 13 organizations collaborated to make this event a success.

Volunteers Engaged: 11 individuals contributed their time and skills.

Volunteer Hours (Event Day): 61 hours of dedicated service.

Volunteer Hours (Planning & Execution): 123 hours invested in making this event remarkable.

The fusion of **cultural showcases with Seniors Week celebrations** created a powerful impact:

Seniors felt valued & respected

Cultural diversity was celebrated & promoted

Intercultural and intergenerational learning flourished

Knowledge and appreciation of Indigenous culture grew
Stronger community bonds & networks were formed

What Participants Said

 "Celebration of cultural diversity in a space where seniors feel comfortable is something unique. I made friends from India, Nepal, Pakistan, Ghana, Ethiopia, Afghanistan, and Canada, including Indigenous people. I hope to see such interactions regularly!" – Senior from Afghanistan

 "Blending Seniors Week with cultural diversity celebration was an amazing idea! It fostered intergenerational learning and cultural sharing in a way I had never seen before." – Senior from Ethiopia

 "Learning about Indigenous traditions firsthand was eye-opening. I wish we had more time to interact with Indigenous elders and hear more stories." – Senior from Nepal

 "Our collaboration was time-intensive, but seeing the impact today made it all worthwhile. As a small ethnic community, we appreciate the support in securing funds and look forward to future partnerships." – Collaborative Partner

Some Snapshots



Seniors' Week Celebration
Let's Celebrate the Contribution of Seniors in Fostering
MULTICULTURALISM in Calgary and Beyond

Highlights of the Event

- Multicultural Seniors Round Tables
- Multicultural Performances
- Interactions with the Indigenous Community
- Sharing Lived Experience on Discrimination and Racism
- Keynote on Cultural Humility
- Intercultural and Intergenerational Learning

Open to Public
Food Provided

Funded by
Calgary
Government of Canada
Gouvernement du Canada

Organized by
CRESS CENTRE
For more information
phone: 403-397-2421
thecresscentre@gmail.com
http://cresscentre.ca

Location:
Genesis Centre

Date: June 4, 2024
10:00 AM-5:00 PM

In Collaboration with

Partners: PACT, THE IMMIGRANT EDUCATION SOCIETY, GENESIS CENTRE, IMMIGRANT SERVICES CALGARY, ZALMI, CCIS, trellis SOCIETY, FOCUS on seniors, CIWA



stressor in managing and implementing events of this size and kudos to all of us. A big thanks to Gulnar and Luke for being MCs of the event and Noor for managing logistics. Special thanks to the CRESS Centre for taking the time to prepare a grant proposal and securing funds for the event. As a collaborative partner, I would like to acknowledge funding support from the Arts and Culture Microgrant of the City of Calgary. NCSC would like to work collaboratively with organizations in ongoing and upcoming initiatives.

Please don't forget to take part in the Nepali Mela and Multicultural Show (NMMS) event to be hosted on Winds Park. If you need a desk or your community folks we will be there for you. Also, please let us know if you need any support for the event. Also, please let us know if you need any support for the event. Also, please let us know if you need any support for the event.



Z Zenobia Ladha Jun 5
Hi Gopal, Hope you are doing well. Please find the...

R Rossbina Nathoo Jun 5
to The, me, Noor, Aina, Anita, F.O... w

Many many heartfelt Thanks to Genesis centre for the free venue and Cress for securing the funding. Without these 2 foundational needs such events can be compromised. Congratulations to all collaborators for Team effort in Event planning. Forward to the de-briefing meeting. Love & compliments, Rossbina Nathoo



8 Acknowledgments

This initiative was made possible through the dedicated efforts of our collaborative partners:

- ✦ Trellis Society
- ✦ FOCUS on Seniors
- ✦ Nepalese Community Society of Calgary (NCSC)
- ✦ The Immigrant Education Society (TIES)
- ✦ Calgary Catholic Immigration Society (CCIS)
- ✦ Genesis Centre
- ✦ Calgary Immigrant Women Association (CIWA)
- ✦ First Step Together
- ✦ Immigrant Services Calgary (ISC)

Special thanks to The City of Calgary Arts & Culture Microgrant for funding support and to the Genesis Centre for providing the venue.

 *Together, we celebrate diversity, embrace cultural learning, and build stronger communities!*

***Breaking the Barriers
(B&B): Enhancing
Mental Health
Awareness of
Immigrants***



Breaking the Barriers (BB): Enhancing Mental Health Awareness of Immigrants

Objectives

The Breaking the Barrier (B & B) initiative aims to raise mental health awareness through educational and interactive sessions, artwork, and engagement activities. Through these activities, the initiative expects to reduce mental health stigma.

Sessions Concluded

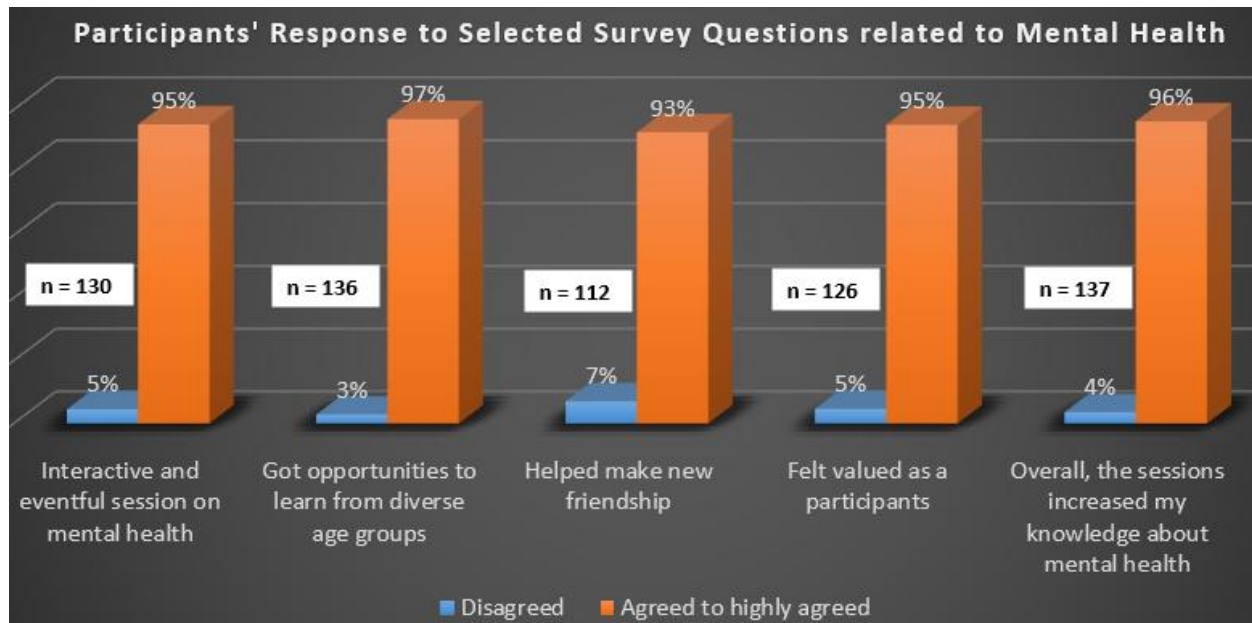
- Mental health awareness I & II - sharing mental health issues, stories, challenges, and coping
- Intergenerational interaction and sharing mental health issues and navigating resources
- Youth conversation café on mental health, addictions, and wellbeing
- Promoting healthy life: self-care, healthy diets, and health awareness
- Collaborative artwork on self-expression, cognitive functions, and conversation
- Focus group discussion on community mental health issues and ways to address them in a user-friendly approach

Project Outputs

Possible Indicators	Expected Outputs	Actual Outputs
Number of events organized	Six mental health awareness sessions concluded	Six interactive and fun sessions with mental health awareness
Number of participants	100 participants	227 participants
Number of volunteers	18 volunteers	10 volunteers
Number of volunteer hours	60 hours	120 hours
Number of FGDs / consultations		One FGD with the knowledge keepers and partners
Number of FGD / consultation participants attended		11 participants
Number of collaboration / joint activities		All sessions hosted collaboratively
How many organizations involved in collaboration		Four collaborative partners
Products/tools/frameworks developed		Survey instruments, slides, wheel of life for perceived wellbeing
Photos		Pictures captured in all sessions
Promotional materials		Posters, email communications

Success Stories

The B & B initiative funded through CAP has been a great success in terms of participation of the diverse age groups and ethnicity, and the quality of interaction between the participants and the experts. Many participants (above 90%) agreed or highly agreed that the sessions provided opportunities to learn from each other, helped make friendships, felt valued as a participant, and increased knowledge about mental health from diverse perspectives as displayed in the chart below. Some verbatims from the participants and expert listed below also demonstrate a high success rate for the B & B initiative.



Participants' Verbatim

"It was an excellent idea to bring multiple generations and ethnic communities together to first know each other and their cultures through rigorous rapport building exercises. Followed by this was the mental health education and awareness session facilitated by a community expert with a great deal of experience on mental health issues of the immigrants. I have not gotten the opportunity like this to freely share my mental health concerns in a large group and get to know the ideas from the expert. Thank you, CRESS Centre and other collaborative partners, for hosting this session, and I would be happy to partake in this kind of session should they happen in the future.

"I don't know whose plan was, but I felt extremely energized and relieved physically and mentally to see seniors from diverse ethnic backgrounds in the outdoor environment on such a pleasant day. Seniors need this refreshing activity whenever weather permits rather than an education session inside. I personally learned a lot from fellow elders from other communities and how they define their mental health. I have been part of education sessions before, but learning perspectives from different lenses would be memorable. The CRESS Centre and whoever planned this activity deserve a special vote of thanks. By the way, ethnic food was delicious".

"I am thrilled to host today's mental health sharing and learning session in my backyard. This is the first time ever to see over 30 elders and adults sharing the same platform sharing and learning about mental and physical health, interacting with each other, and enjoying BBQ together. It's always pleasant to see multiple organizations working together: CRESS Centre, NCSC, and TOSS. Collective action brings a longer lasting impact than the individualized approach of programming. I hope to see more activities with collective action down the road".

"It was an eventful event to have multicultural and multigenerational participants engaged in crafts that have mental health significance. Thank you, CRESS Centre, for bringing participants from diverse ethnic communities and working with other organizations".

Expert's Verbatim

"The Action Dignity's funding support to the CRESS Centre helped organize a series of mental health sessions with innovative ideas. Rather than engaging participants in educational sessions, which seem to me less interesting and pleasing to appeal the attention of the participants, I was able to engage participants in fun filled activities and as an expert it was very easy to provide required information on mental health to the participants and keep them engaged throughout the activities. I would suggest other organizations providing educational sessions to work with the CRESS Centre to find innovative ways of engaging participants and their participation rate".

Multicultural Arts and Crafts Instructor-Guided Sessions for Kids and Youth: Fostering Multiculturalism

- Multicultural Instructors-Led Guided Sessions
- Showcasing Arts and Crafts in the Multicultural Events
- Diversity Talks and Awareness Sessions
- Social Network and Connection Building



Executive Summary

Funded by the WCEF, the City of Calgary, and the Calgary Foundation, the project entitled “*Fostering Multiculturalism through Arts and Crafts Training and Engagement*” implemented by the Centre for Research, Education, and Social Services (CRESS Centre) in collaboration with the Nepalese Community Society of Calgary (NCSC) aimed at fostering and promoting multiculturalism through kids and youth engagement in multicultural arts and crafts sessions provided by the experts from diverse ethnic communities in Calgary. There were 15 multicultural instructor-led multicultural arts and crafts sessions to engage and educate 67 kids and youths (8 - 16 years) at NCSC Resource Centre and Genesis Center, Calgary.



Multicultural arts and crafts sessions led by experts from diverse ethnic communities



created positive attitudes about differences and boosted kids' self-confidence in their own identities. Diversification of artwork has also increased social and emotional outcomes such as social skills, self-esteem, and attitudes toward others. During the sessions, the project conducted an expert assessment of the participants' feedback to determine the progress made by the

participants and their parents, particularly skills gained by the participants and the social network made by the parents during training sessions. Volunteers contributed over 90 volunteer hours to the project during the sessions, equivalent to \$1800. The project made a remarkable contribution in getting 67 kids and youths engaged in the sessions, learning about multiculturalism in Calgary, developing volunteering culture, increasing the social capital of the community, and showcasing their art and craft work in the Nepali Mela and Multicultural Showcasing (NNMS) event that has been visited by over 10,000 visitors from different parts of Canada.

According to the parents, the arts and crafts sessions helped their children engage in skill development activities that reduced their screen time, increased interactions between children and parents, and enhanced the social network of the parents. **Almost 90% of the**

guardians highly agreed that arts and crafts sessions had helped their kids to make new friends sharing diverse cultures, increased the skills of their children, reduced their children's screen time, and developed the habit of their kids and youth in making artworks outside their screen time. Parents also reported that this project helped them to get introduced to parents from diverse cultures, learn from each other, and enhance their social network. Participants and parents strongly recommended that they need similar sessions to retain the skills their children learned through the project.



Key Outputs

- Sessions completed: 15
- Total participants: 67
- Unique volunteers mobilized during the project period: 5
- Total volunteer hours: 90 hours (\$1800.00)



Objectives (Participants)

- Enhance arts and crafts skills
- Reduce screen time and develop the habit of making use of leisure time in productive activities
- Build a positive attitude and self-awareness and improve communication skills
- Inculcate knowledge, enhance awareness, and promote multiculturalism



Objectives (Parents)

- Engage their children in productive activities, enhancing their awareness and building skills
- Enhance knowledge about diverse cultures and build a social network

Objectives (Community)

- Foster and promote multiculturalism
- Develop a volunteering culture among participants
- Increase social capital, skills, and capacity

Key Results

- My Kid(s) made new friends sharing diverse cultures (95% agreed)
- This activity increased the skill of my kid(s) (90% agreed)
- The activity helped make use of kids' leisure time (85% agreed)
- My kid(s) screen time has been reduced (90% agreed)

- I will put my kid (s) in a guided multicultural arts and crafts session next time should there be an opportunity (95% agreed)
- I, as parent/guardian, learned about different cultures, enhanced my social network, and got to know parents from other cultures (90% agreed)

Key Outcomes

- Increased knowledge and understanding of multiculturalism in Calgary.
- Reduced screen time of the participants.
- Enhanced volunteering culture among participants.
- Developed social capital for the community.
- Motivated participants and parents by showcasing their arts and crafts among the visitors of Nepali Mela (over 10,000 visitors).
- Built working relations and partnerships with the NCSC and Trellis Society.

Acknowledgments

The CRESS Centre is highly grateful to the Ward Community Event Fund (WCEF), the City of Calgary, and the Stepping Stone Funding Grant Stream of Calgary Foundation for providing funding support to make this project successful. We also acknowledge the financial support from Nepalese Community Society of Calgary (NCSC) and Trellis Society for offering training space.





Celebration with the Seniors and Mental Health Program



Celebration of Seniors' Achievements (CSA)

Background

Funded by the Ward Fund of the City of Calgary, the Celebration of Seniors' Achievements (CSA) marks an opportunity to show appreciation for older adults and their many contributions to our communities through volunteerism and mentorship. Following a theme of "Aging is More...." as the City of Calgary declared, the CRESS Centre's Celebration of Seniors' Achievements (CSA) event brings volunteer seniors and older adults to a fun-filled platform. It celebrates their contribution through education, engagement, and acknowledgment.

The event aims to enhance social connections and community support for seniors, promoting feeling good, having fun, staying healthy, and continuing to live an active and happy life.

The community facilitator and expert, who thoroughly understood community needs and the seniors' contribution in the past couple of years, was engaged in facilitating the event. An event planning committee involving five active volunteer seniors was formed, and they planned the event's details. The facilitator followed the plan prepared by the planning committee.

Objectives

The overall goal of the event was to acknowledge the contribution of seniors in promoting volunteerism and addressing the social isolation of seniors. Specifically,

- To engage seniors in a fun-filled environment.
- To appreciate and acknowledge seniors through certificates and appreciation.
- To promote a volunteerism culture by engaging seniors in the planning and execution of the event.

Results

Led by the CRESS Centre, the CSA event was hosted on Nov 2, 2024, in collaboration with other senior-serving organizations. 39 participants attended the session (35 seniors and four non-seniors, 25 males and 14 females). A planning meeting was hosted with all collaborating organizations on Oct 12, following an Event Planning Team meeting on Oct 5, 2024. After the introduction, most of the participants played board games, which was instrumental in building strong rapport among the participants. The board game was followed by appreciating 15 seniors through appreciation certificates and the remaining participants through acknowledgment by the CRESS Centre and other collaborating organizations. The appreciation was followed by sharing stories, a question-and-answer session, and a celebration dinner.

Verbatims

I feel honored to be part of the event steering committee. I have learned a lot about planning and executing events while making strong connections with the event planning committee members. I have also met more seniors from my community.

Many thanks to the CRESS Centre and other collaborative partners for making this event happen and, more importantly, for appreciating my contributions to the community.

I would like to see this kind of event/activity in which seniors are given opportunities to partake and share their lived experiences. This helps build stronger relationships, which will strengthen the community.

Thanks to the CRESS Centre for collaborating with the Senior Society on a senior appreciation event. Organizing events and activities with multiple collaborative partners is important to achieve collective outcomes.

As an event facilitator, I learned much from the seniors while sharing my knowledge and skills to make the event happen. I knew the event was funded through the City of Calgary's Ward Funding component. I want to acknowledge the funding support that helped execute the event.

I have seen only a small number of activities that focus on senior women in the community. Today, I can see a large number of senior women. Thanks to the organizers for bringing more women to the activities and acknowledging their contribution to the community.

As a retired senior, I find myself confined in the household. You guys approached me and my wife. You can't imagine how happy we were when we got a phone call from the CRESS Centre. Truly amazing job, and keep it up.

Snapshots



Our Collaborators & Partners



Our Funders

