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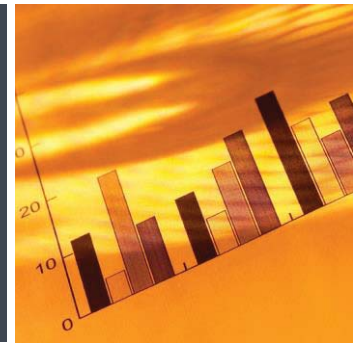
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Community Cadets Corps Program



2015-S007

www.publicsafety.gc.ca

BUILDING A SAFE AND RESILIENT CANADA

BACKGROUND

The Community Cadets Corps (CCC) program evaluation was undertaken to examine the effectiveness of Cadets as a crime prevention measure for Aboriginal youth. The CCC program was designed to increase the protective factors of Aboriginal youth ages 10 to 18 years old that are at risk of police contact, and/or engaging in criminal offences, anti-social activities, having conduct problems or truancy at school. Through the National Crime Prevention Strategy (NCPS), Public Safety Canada contributed \$2.8 million in funding to implement four CCC crime prevention pilot projects in Aboriginal communities: Cross Lake, Manitoba; Kahkewistahaw First Nation, Saskatchewan; Touchwood Agency Tribal Council, Saskatchewan; and Hobbema, Alberta. Funding from the NCPS began in 2010 and ended in 2013.

The CCC program aims to enhance youths' ability to make positive decisions, and lead to a productive and crime-free lifestyle. The program's structure was influenced by the core principles underlying the theory of the Circle of Courage. This model provides a framework for healthy, holistic culturally authentic alternatives that will build a sense of identity and community (belonging) as well as provide opportunities to enhance skills (mastery), develop a sense of independence, and support youth to practice generosity. These are the foundations for positive youth development — empowering Aboriginal youth to develop pro-social competencies, attitudes and behaviours, thereby reducing the risk of delinquent activity and criminal involvement.

The CCC program has five main components: drill and deportment; group and individual mentoring; life skills training; community leadership/involvement; and cultural and recreational activities.

OBJECTIVES

The original intent of this evaluation was to determine whether the intervention had an impact on key outcomes, including increased attachment to and attendance/performance in school; enhanced life, leadership, communication, decision-making and problem-solving skills; increased pro-social behaviours and reduced anti-social and delinquent behaviours; increased physical fitness and employability; and increased attachment to and engagement in Aboriginal culture. Due to data collection challenges in most of the sites, however, the data that was most reliable included implementation related information.

Three independent third party consultants were contracted by the project recipient to conduct monitoring and process evaluations of the four CCC pilot projects. The objectives of these evaluations were as follows:

- Assess the feasibility of reaching the target population.
- Assess the extent to which the project was implemented as intended (e.g., intake process, reach, dosage, program fidelity, resource utilization, partnerships).
- Determine how satisfied program participants, staff, volunteers, and partners were with the program and its different elements.
- Identify challenges and recommendations for strengthening the evidence-base of the intervention.

METHODS

For the Cross Lake CCC program, data were collected through the administration of three questionnaires. Information regarding Cadets' participation was based on attendance records. For



the Kahkewistahaw First Nation Community CCC program and the Touchwood Agency Tribal Council CCC program, data were collected through the implementation of a basic attendance record-keeping system, in-person interviews and focus groups. For the Hobbema CCC program, data were collected from program observation, documents, reports and other program-collected data. Interviews were conducted with key stakeholders.

FINDINGS

1. A total of approximately 565–580 youth were enrolled and participated in the CCC program across all project sites. All participants were Aboriginal and living on reserve, and the vast majority fell within the target age range of 10–18 years old. No risk level assessment data were recorded at the time of program registration.
2. There was no consistent expected standard of dosage, some activities overlapped and the dosage received by participants varied by site. Only the Cross Lake and Kahkewistahaw First Nation Community sites implemented all core components of the CCC program.
3. The CCC program activities were facilitated by program staff, military and RCMP staff, and volunteers. Across the program sites staffing issues were noted along with a need for more volunteers and parental involvement.
4. Partnerships were instrumental to the implementation of program activities. The strongest working relationships were with the RCMP.
5. Based on qualitative feedback from participants, staff, volunteers and other stakeholders, it may be concluded that the CCC program was able to meet the needs of participants. There were positive perceptions of the program by youth and parents, and it appeared to address a need in the community—the apparent lack of positive alternative social and recreational activities.

LESSONS LEARNED AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Challenges were identified in the following areas: fidelity in program implementation, data collection and data entry, program staffing and volunteers, and transportation and program space.

Several recommendations were suggested:

- conduct a community readiness assessment prior to implementation;
- make parental involvement and training formal components of the program;
- develop and maintain a communication strategy in order to maintain support and secure additional funding; and
- promote program sustainability.

Once addressed, there will be an increased likelihood that the CCC program will be able to address the key outcomes listed above.

SOURCE

Evaluation Summary: Community Cadets Corps (CCC) Program.

For more information on research at the Community Safety and Countering Crime Branch, Public Safety Canada, to get a copy of the full research report, or to be placed on our distribution list, please contact:

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