

# WESTON FRONTLINES CENTRE

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## EVALUATION REPORT YEAR 1

Written by the Students Commission of Canada

### Project Description

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Weston Frontlines Centre is a youth charity for ages 6 to 29 that's dedicated to Weston and the surrounding areas in the Greater Toronto Area. B-YOU and Find Your F.I.T is part of an overall innovative initiative under the Black Youth Opportunities Over Unemployment (B-YOU) initiative of Frontlines that seeks to address the issues of economic disparities in Black young adults between the ages of 18-29 by helping them find their career, education or entrepreneurship path through F.I.T (Frontlines Internships and Training). This program includes 4 different streams which are General Social Work, Culinary Stream, Business Stream, and Social Diversity & Inclusion Stream.

### Methodology

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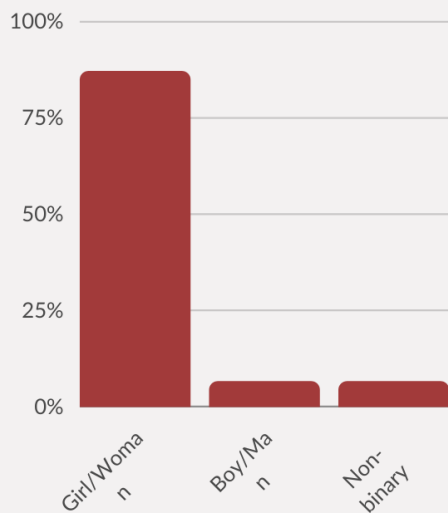
Weston Frontlines Centre has collaborated with the Students Commission of Canada (SCC) through their Sharing the Stories (StS) program, which offers customizable evaluation for non-profits serving youth. Together, they are working to ensure that Frontlines continues to support and empower Black youth in the Greater Toronto Area. The purpose of this report was to evaluate the impact of programming on the lives of youth participants. For this evaluation, Frontlines used both quantitative (surveys) and qualitative tools (Head, Heart, Feet, Spirit) to evaluate the impact of their Culinary and Social Work Stream.

Given the small sample sizes, the quantitative results from the Culinary and Social Work Stream were combined in order to run a significant statistical analysis and to get an overall picture of the impact of programming. The quantitative results showed that youth felt confident with finding a career they are passionate about, and networking with people working in their career of interest. The data also showed that youth's career skills and interest increased since joining the program. Youth reported that they felt more equipped and supported to pursue a career they are passionate about.

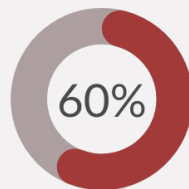
The qualitative results showed that youth experienced personal growth and increased self-confidence, leadership, and community engagement. Following the program, youth said they felt more confident to apply their newfound skills in their future careers. They also said they were eager to become more involved in their communities and give back to help others.

# Demographics

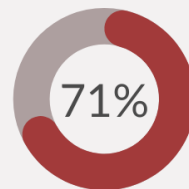
## Gender



## Born in a country other than Canada



## Parents born in a country other than Canada



## How do you identify?



Black 71 %  
Person of Color 29 %

## Language Spoken at Home

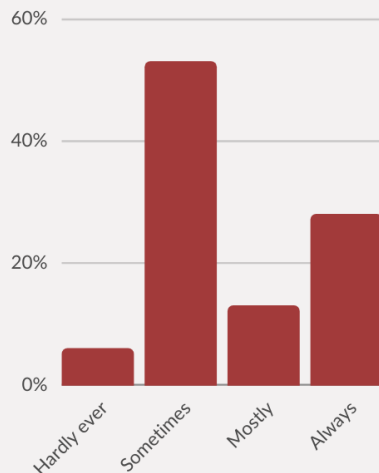
English 100 %  
Filipino 6 %  
Spanish 6 %  
Italian 6 %  
Somali 6 %

## Sexual Orientation

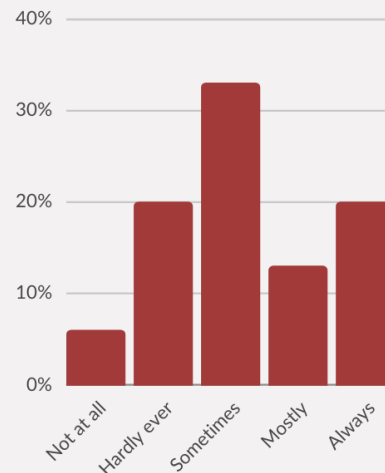
Heterosexual 73 %  
Bisexual 20 %  
Queer 7 %



## Do you have enough money to meet your basic needs?



## Do you have enough money to do the fun things you'd like to do?



## Cultural and Racial Groups

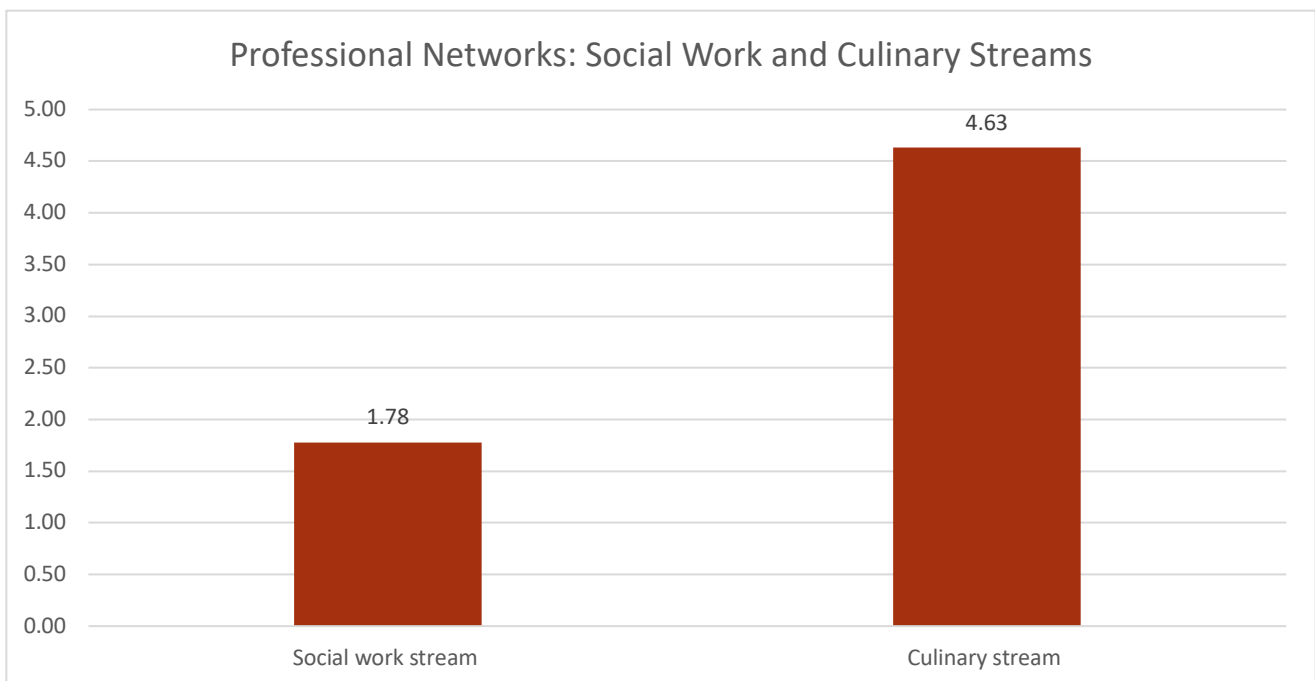
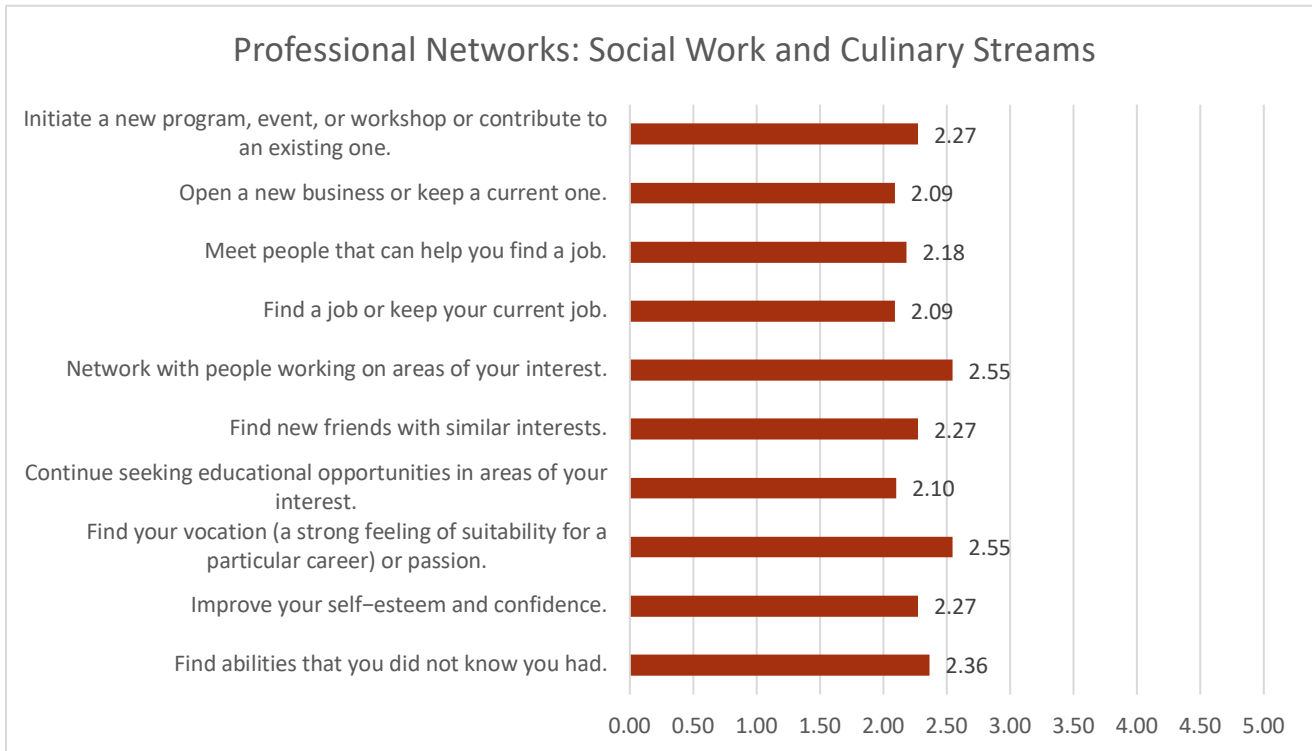
Caribbean 50 %  
East African 11 %  
Western African 5.5 %  
South African 5.5 %  
Filipino 5.5 %  
Latin American 5.5 %  
North American 5.5 %  
Western European 5.5 %  
Southern European 5.5 %



15 participants from the Culinary stream (n=5) and the Social Work stream (n=10) filled out the demographics form. Their mean age was 24 years old.

# Professional Networks

The Professional Networks tool includes 10 questions that look at youth's networking and vocation skills. The scores range on a scale from 1 (Not at all) to 5 (A lot). The youth participants from the Social Work stream (n=9) and the Culinary Stream (n=2) filled out this survey at the end of the program (TP4). The following graph illustrates the average score for each question.



## Takeaways for Professional Networks

- The scores from the *Professional Networks* tool varied across streams. When we combined the average scores from both the Culinary and Social Work Stream, youth showed moderate levels of professional networks. This means that some youth felt like the programs helped them develop professional networks whereas other youth did not share that sentiment. Nonetheless, the highest score was found in youth's confidence with finding a career they are passionate about, and networking with people working in their career of interest. This suggests that the programs encouraged youth to network and think more deeply about their future careers.
- Interestingly, when we look at the average scores for each stream separately, we can see that youth in the Culinary Stream scored higher than those in the social work stream. This suggests that youth in the culinary stream had a more positive experience in regards to building professional networks. However, it is crucial to note that the sample sizes differed across both groups, which affects the statistical significance of the results.

## Career Skills

The Career Skills module measures young people's curiosity and confidence to make career-related choices. It also examines young people's plans about their future employment and their leadership skills. Higher scores indicate better engagement and future planning. This was a post-retrospective survey, so youth were asked to indicate how they felt both before and after the program. The following graph illustrates the average scores for youth who participated in the Social Work Stream (n=9).



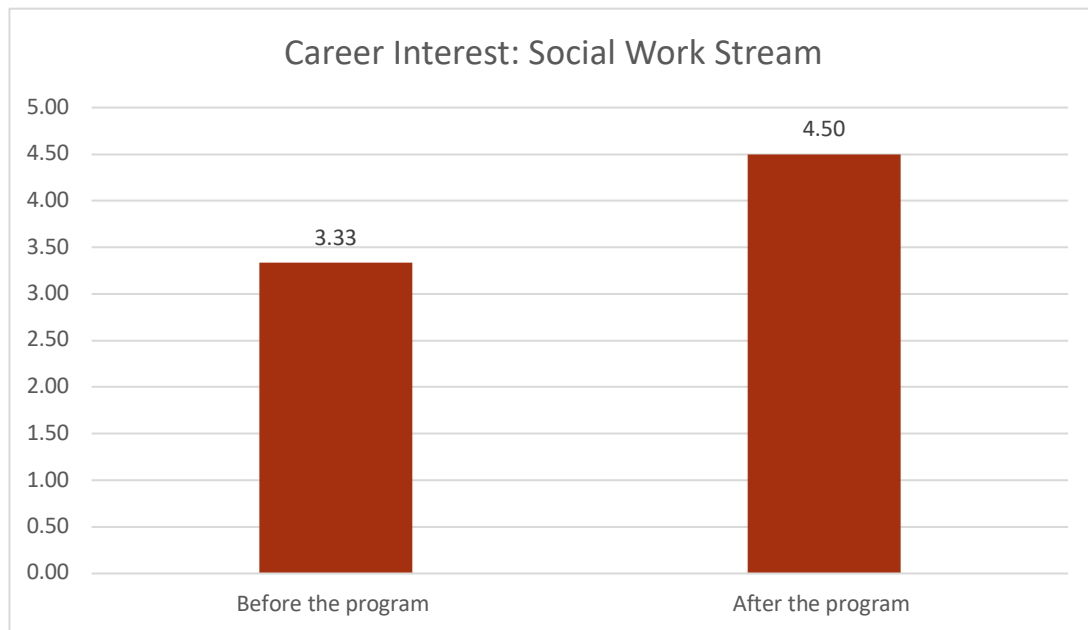
## Takeaways for Career Skills

- The results showed that youth's perceived career skills increased after their involvement in the program. Youth reported that they felt more equipped to pursue a career they are passionate about. Youth also felt like they gained valuable career skills such as critical thinking, listening, decision-making, and collaboration.

## Career Interest

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The Career Interest module measures young people's interest in their future careers. This was a post-retrospective survey, so youth were asked to indicate how they felt both before and after the program. The following graph illustrates the average scores for youth who participated in the Social Work Stream (n=9).



## Takeaways for Career Interest

- The results showed that youth gained a greater interest in their careers following the program. Youth felt like they had a supportive environment to pursue their passions. Youth also felt confident that they would enjoy their careers and thrive in their respective fields. They also felt like a career in social work would be meaningful and rewarding work.

# Head, Heart, Feet, Spirit: Social Work Stream

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Youth participants from the Social Work Stream (n=29) were asked to fill out the Head, Heart, Feet, Spirit (HHFS) Module. HHFS is an open-ended way to collect responses from participants on their engagement experiences. Specifically, the different components of the HHFS Sheet examine the following aspects of participants' experiences: **Head** (what they learned from the experience), **Heart** (how they felt about their participation in the experience), **Feet** (what they intend to do as a result of their participation), and **Spirit** (how their experience connects/contributes to something outside of the self). The following qualitative analysis illustrates the key themes which came up, as well as quotes from participants.

## **Head – What did you learn?**

Following the program, youth participants learned more about themselves and experienced personal growth. Participants had moments of self-reflection and learned more about their strengths, values, and abilities they didn't know they had. They also learned about the importance of self-care and taking care of their emotional health. Furthermore, youth gained hands-on experience in the social work field and gained valuable career skills (i.e., grant writing, working with diverse populations). Moreover, youth gained more knowledge on cultural diversity, impacts of racism, social justice, intersectionality, trauma and mental health.

*“I learned about self care, putting myself first and how important that is. Also, emotional health and is as important as your physical health and how to put your care into action.”*

*“I learned social work theory and I got hands on experience doing a social work job at a community centre. I was able to master grant writing and advocating for people who needs housing. I learn how to be very diverse and where to find resources that is needed to help people.”*

*“The important work this program offers. I have learned there are a lot of support for black community and how to find. I have also learned how to do research, planning the events and mentorship programs.”*

## **Heart – How did you feel?**

Participants described feeling happy, proud, optimistic, motivated, amazing, informed, and successful. They reported increased self-confidence and felt like they were able to come out of their shell and express themselves more. Youth also felt more equipped for their placement and future careers.

*“Very happy I am coming out of my comfort zone with this program trying to be more expressive.”*

*“I feel more critical and equipped for my placement. This course will not only garner me skills, but is healing my inner child.”*



*"I feel motivated to continue learning about society what it is made up of & ways too help with the advancement of society."*

### **Feet – What will you do as a result?**

Following the program, youth said they would continue practicing self-care and self-love and doing their daily meditation and breathing exercises. Youth also said they would apply their newfound skills and knowledge in their future careers. Many youth were interested in pursuing a career in social work or in the non-profit sector. Moreover, youth said they were eager to become more involved in their communities to give back and help others.

*"I will try to incorporate self care into my routine because it should always be a priority."*

*"I feel very excited to apply all the knowledge that I've learned throughout the program to not only my future career but also to my personal life."*

*"I will continue to pursue a career in social work to someday be in charge of my own non-profit organization."*

### **Spirit – How did you connect?**

Youth said that they connected with the mentors and the other participants thanks to the safe space that was created. Youth also felt more connected to their communities knowing that they could have an impact.

*"There is a deep respect between all the mentors of the cohorts. The facilitator created a very safe space."*

*"It brings joy to my spirit knowing that I made a great impact on everyone who I worked with and people who I served from the community."*

*"I connected all that I learnt in classes and applied it in my placement and was able to fully learn thoroughly what it takes to be a social worker."*

### **Feedback**

In the open-ended section of the survey, some youth shared their feedback of the program. Youth shared their gratitude for their experience and how the program helped them.

*"This program is better than I expected and I am grateful to get the opportunity to be apart of it. I learnt a lot about people and even about myself so far."*

*"I think this program is fantastic. It really shows me how social work really is, instead of hearing about it. This program is an eye opener for me. Just doing this placement made me want to be such a better person."*

*"The guest speakers were really good. Very engaging and they made sure to answer all the questions and ensured that we really understood."*

*"This program is really open my eyes in so many things. the program is very engaging hands on a lots f discussion. I am very glad that I was a part of this."*

*"It helps me to keep making progress in my life, like I say it's been rough. But forcing myself to come I feel like it's making a difference within me."*



# Head, Heart, Feet, Spirit: Culinary Stream

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Youth participants from the Culinary Stream (n=9) were also asked to fill out the Head, Heart, Feet, Spirit (HHFS) Module. The following qualitative analysis illustrates the key themes which came up, as well as quotes from participants.

## **Head – What did you learn?**

Youth participants described the new cooking skills they learned that would be useful in their personal lives and future careers.

*“Today I learned how to de-bone a whole chicken also learned how to make mash potatoes.”*

*“I learned everything I need to become a good cook.”*

*“I learned to make different meals.”*

## **Heart – How did you feel?**

Youth felt very positive about their experience in the culinary stream. They felt empowered by all the new things they learned.

*“I feel wonderful, it’s awesome to be able to come here and learn new things everyday.”*

*“I feel like I learned educational tips.”*

*“I feel good about today.”*

## **Feet – What will you do as a result?**

Following the program, youth said they would continue cooking both at home and at future workplaces in the culinary field. Youth also said that they would begin serving their community and feeding the homeless.

*“I will take in my home cooking and feeding the homeless.”*

*“I will start serving my community.”*

*“I will take this with me to my home and future workplace in the kitchen.”*

## **Spirit – How did you connect?**

Youth participants felt included, supported, and safe. Through the program, they were able to build healthy close relationships and meet new people from diverse backgrounds.

*“Good I felt really included and supported.”*

*“I connected with my teammates and having a good relation.”*

*“I connected with learning what other peoples backgrounds are with the dishes they made.”*





# Discussion and Conclusion

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Weston Frontlines Centre addresses the issues of economic disparities in Black young adults between the ages by helping them find their career, education or entrepreneurship path through F.I.T (Frontlines Internships and Training). For this report, we analyzed participants' experiences in the Social Work and Culinary stream.

The quantitative results showed that youth in the Social Work and Culinary Stream felt confident with finding a career they are passionate about, and networking with people working in their career of interest. This suggests that the program encouraged youth to network and think more deeply about their future careers. The data also showed that youth's career skills and interest increased since joining the program. Youth reported that they felt more equipped and supported to pursue a career they are passionate about.

The qualitative results showed that youth participants in the Social Work and Culinary Stream learned more about themselves and experienced personal growth. Participants had moments of self-reflection and learned more about their strengths, values, and abilities they didn't know they had. Moreover, youth gained valuable skills and knowledge in their respective fields. Following the program, youth said they felt more confident to apply these new skills in their future careers. They also said they were eager to become more involved in their communities and give back to help others. Thanks to the safe space that was created within the program, youth were able to form meaningful close relationships with their peers and mentors. Youth felt safe, included, connected, and engaged.

Throughout this report, it is evident that the Weston Frontlines Centre succeeded in helping youth find their career path. Youth voice gathered in this baseline report can help to better understand the reality of these youth, the impact of such a program, and can help to develop and improve similar programs that are beneficial for youth. Our recommendation is to discuss the present results with youth in the community to see if this data portrays what they are experiencing.

