



Federation of Black Canadians YEAR 2 (2025-2026) Evaluation Report



**FEDERATION OF
BLACK FÉDÉRATION DES
CANADIANS CANADIENS
NOIRS**

Written by the Students Commission of Canada, March 2026



Federation of Black Canadians EVALUATION REPORT

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Year 2
2025-
2026

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Federation of Black Canadians – Newcomer Youth Program

The **Newcomers Program** was a two-year initiative designed to overcome education and employment barriers for newcomers and **NEET** (Not in Employment, Education, or Training) Black youth across Canada. Building on the success of our **Support for Student Learning Program** (SSLP), this program aimed to engage over 100 Black youth. Through a combination of targeted skills development workshops and individualized wrap-around support, the program fostered educational attainment, workplace readiness, and holistic growth. The first year of the Catapult grant was focused on doing a needs assessment with youth, designing and planning the program. The second year of the grant (2025-26) was focused on program delivery.

The program was delivered in Ontario and Alberta through two partner agencies, OASIS and Crown Mentorship. Each organization followed a program curriculum and adapted it based on their own expertise and the needs of youth. Overall, the program included regular online and in-person sessions, with workshops and activities focused on career exploration, employability skills, networking, and mentorship. Each cohort lasted between 3-6 months.

Project Description

The Catapult Fund supported the Newcomers Program, delivered by the Federation of Black Canadians. This program provided online targeted workshops, mentorship opportunities, and networking supports designed to address barriers related to employment, education, and career development. Programming focused on priority areas identified in early research in Year 1 (2024-2025), including understanding Canadian workplace culture, improving access to professional networks, and offering mentorship and career guidance.

Participants engaged in a variety of activities such as guest speaker panels, lunch-and-learn sessions, and one-on-one mentorship check-ins. The individualized mentorship sessions offered personalized guidance, career advice, and ongoing support. Guest speakers brought diverse professional experience, helping participants expand their networks and gain insight into different career pathways. These activities strengthened participants' practical skills, broadened their professional connections, and improved their ability to navigate employment opportunities.

Guided by findings from the Year 1 needs assessment, the team enhanced outreach and engagement strategies. They strengthened marketing strategies, expanded social media presence, increased newsletter campaigns, and collaborated with partner organizations. These improvements boosted program visibility and participation. Partnerships with community groups and government initiatives, including those focused on sustainable jobs, further expanded the program's reach. Additionally, the shift to fully flexible online delivery allowed youth across Ontario to participate regardless of location, reducing barriers related to travel and cost and significantly widening access throughout the program period. During lunch-and-learn sessions, Uber Eats gift cards were provided to allow participants to enjoy a meal while engaging in the learning session. These flexible approaches and strengthened partnerships ensured participants could connect with relevant resources, opportunities, and supports while accommodating diverse schedules and commitments.

Overall, by expanding access to mentorship, career guidance, and professional networks for Black youth and newcomers navigating education and employment in Canada, the program enabled participants to gain practical career skills, build confidence, and form meaningful professional relationships.

In its second year (2025-2026), the program supported a total of 87 students and learners aged 18 to 35. It was offered in two provinces: Alberta and Ontario. Participants in Ontario were from Malton, Mississauga, London, and Brampton, while Alberta participants were from Edmonton, Lethbridge, and Calgary. The table below outlines participant demographics.

Participant population	Number of participants (n= 87)	Percentage (%)
Gender identity: Woman	44	50.6%
Man	43	49.4%
With a disability	0	0.00%
Racialized	87	100%
From Official Language Minority Communities (OLMC)	60	69.0%
At-risk of homelessness	2	2.30%
From rural, remote, or Northern areas	2	2.30%
First in their family to attend post-secondary education	75	86.2%
Not in school nor employed	8	9.20%
Newcomers to Canada	45	51.7%

Highlights

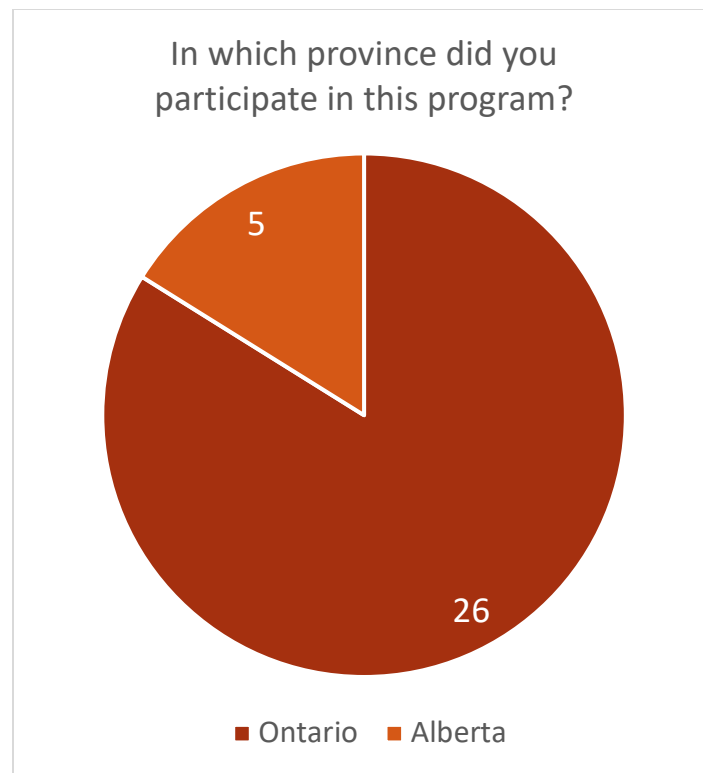
In Year 2 (2025-2026), Black youth in Ontario and Alberta (n=31) reported high satisfaction with the *Newcomer Program*, noting that it strengthened their professional networks, confidence, and career development. Qualitative and survey data (n = 20) showed that most participants benefited from mentorship. The majority of participants reported they would recommend the program to others.

Methodology

After the end of each cohort in Year 2 (2025-2026), participants completed an online survey. The survey included the “Professional Networks” tool and custom survey tools about the experience of mentorship, their overall experience of the program, as well as open-ended comments about the program. This report will show the overall results of the survey.

Survey Respondent Demographics

The Year 2 (2025-2026) program engaged 87 Black youth. A total of 31 Black youth participated in the evaluation by answering the following survey (36% response rate from the total amount of youth who participated in the program). They either completed the Alberta or Ontario program with the majority of respondents in Ontario. (Please note that 11-12 participants did not finish the full questionnaire.)

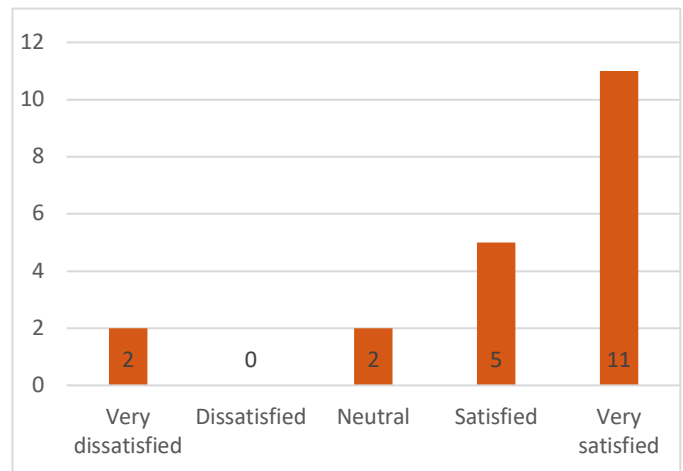


Experience of Mentorship

How satisfied are you with the matching process (pairing you with a mentor)?

This question examines the extent to which the participants (n=20) were satisfied with the matching process between themselves and a mentor in the program on a five-point scale ranging from *Very dissatisfied* (1) to *Very satisfied* (5).

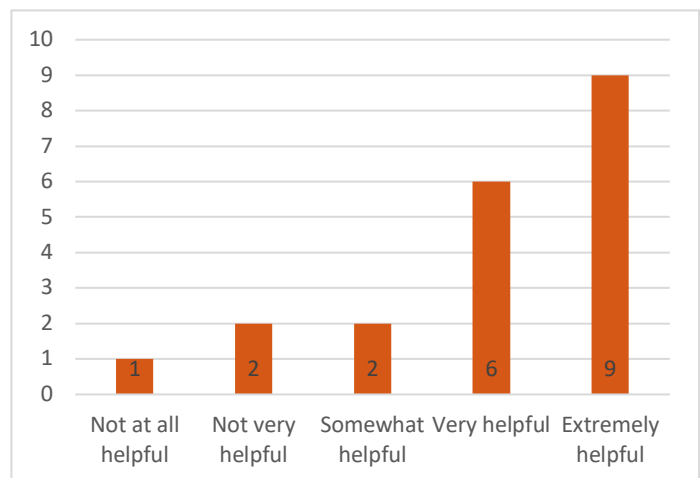
The mean for this question was 4.15 out of 5, indicating a high level of satisfaction with this process overall. While the majority of participants were very satisfied with the matching process, there were two participants who were very dissatisfied.



How helpful has your mentor been in guiding you towards your personal and professional goals?

The above question examines the extent to which the participants (n=20) found their mentor helpful in supporting them with goal setting on a five-point scale ranging from *Not at all helpful* (1) to *Extremely helpful* (5).

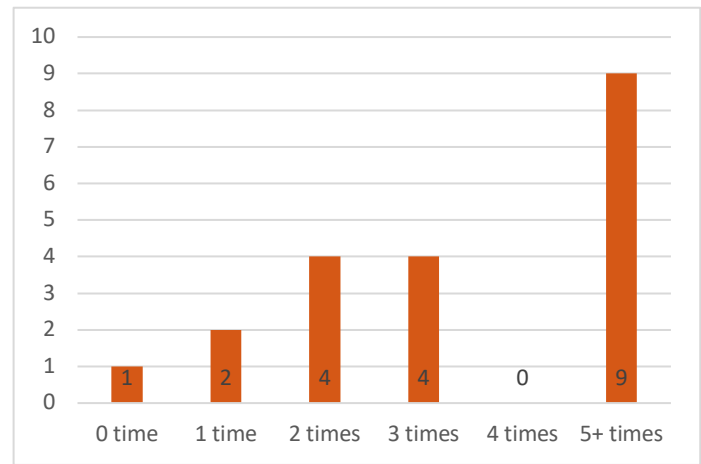
The mean was 4.00 out of 5, suggesting that most participants found their mentors' support to be instrumental to their personal and professional goal setting. While the majority of participants found the mentorship to be extremely helpful, there was one participant who found it not at all helpful.



How many times have you met with your mentor?

The above question examines the number of times the participants (n=20) met with their mentor from *0 times (1)* to *5+ times (6)*.

The mean was located between 3 and 4 times over the length of the program (3 to 6 months). While most participants met with their mentor five times or more, three participants either did not meet with their mentor at all or met only once.

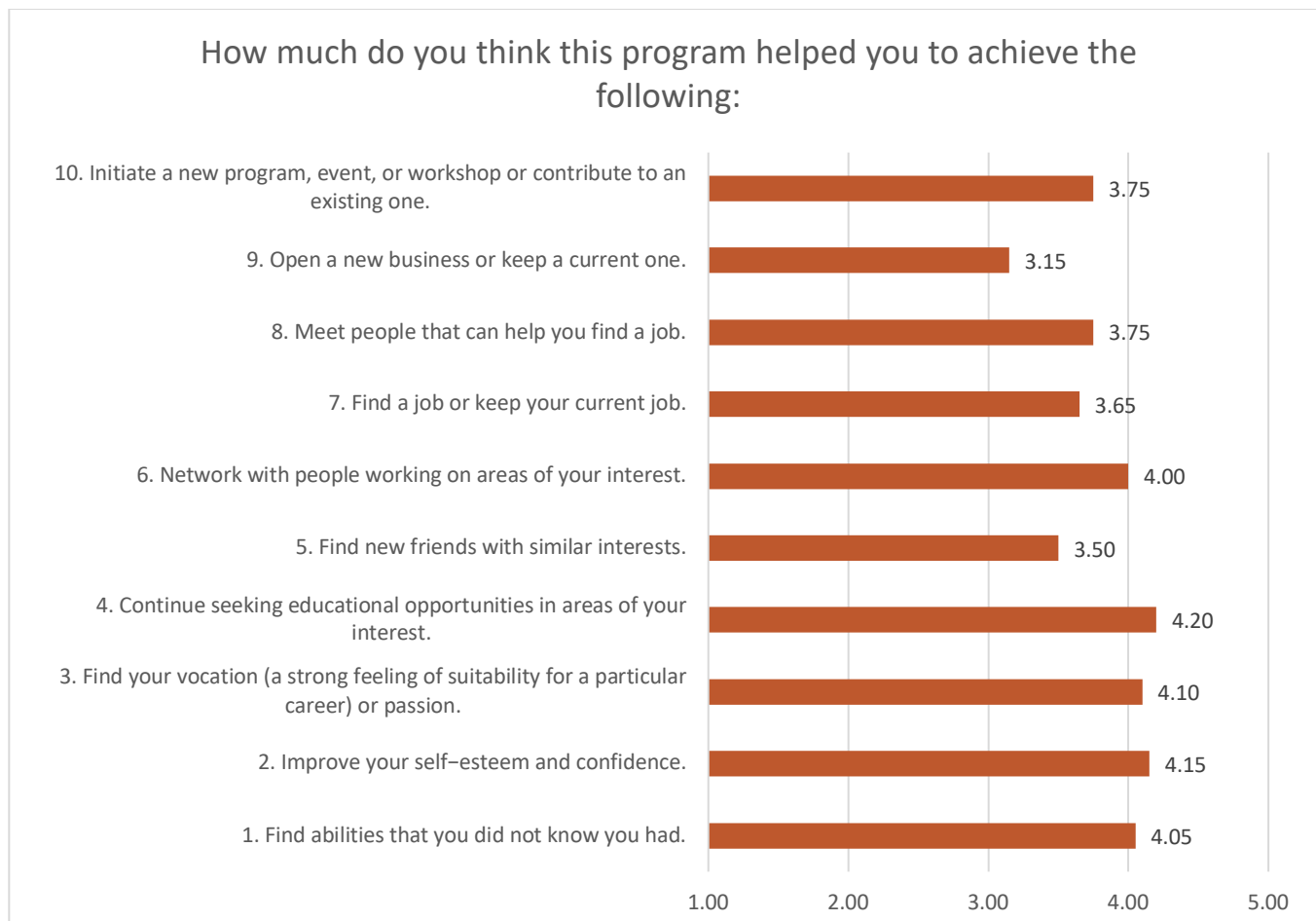


Takeaways/Conclusion

- The scores for the questions above were, on average, high. While most participants scored highly on these statements, a few participants scored very low. These scores suggest that, overall, participants were very satisfied with their mentors, perceived them as helpful, and have met with them multiple times, while a few participants reported the opposite.
- This could indicate that the program offered mentorship that has many benefits.

Professional Networks

This survey examines the extent to which participants developed their professional networks through the program. The growth of professional networks can support access to opportunities and mitigate educational and employment barriers. The survey contains 10 statements that participants (n = 20) responded to on a five-point scale ranging from *Not at all* (1) to *A lot* (5).



Takeaways/Conclusion

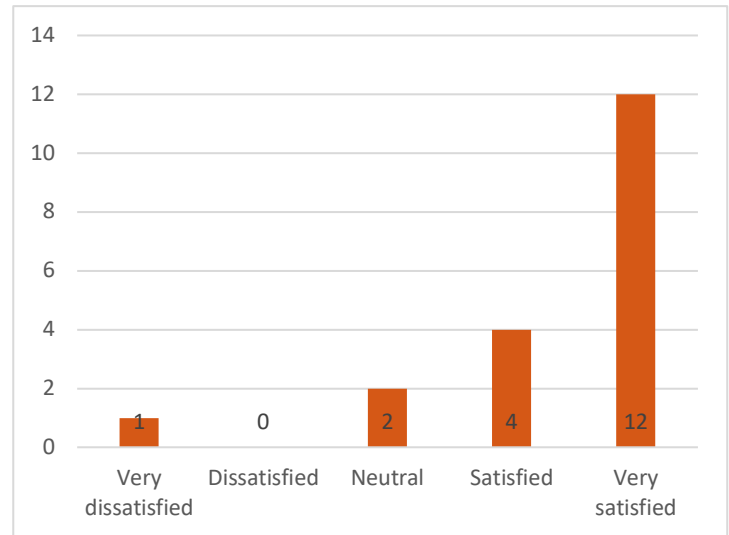
- The average scores were moderately high overall. These results indicate that the program supported the Black youth's development of professional networks, especially with respect to seeking educational opportunities in areas of interest (M=4.20), improving self-esteem and confidence (M=4.15), and finding their vocation (M=4.10).

Experience in the Program

Overall, how satisfied were you with your experience as a participant in the program?

The above question examines the extent to which participants (n=19) are satisfied with the program on a five-point scale ranging from *Very dissatisfied* (1) to *Very satisfied* (5).

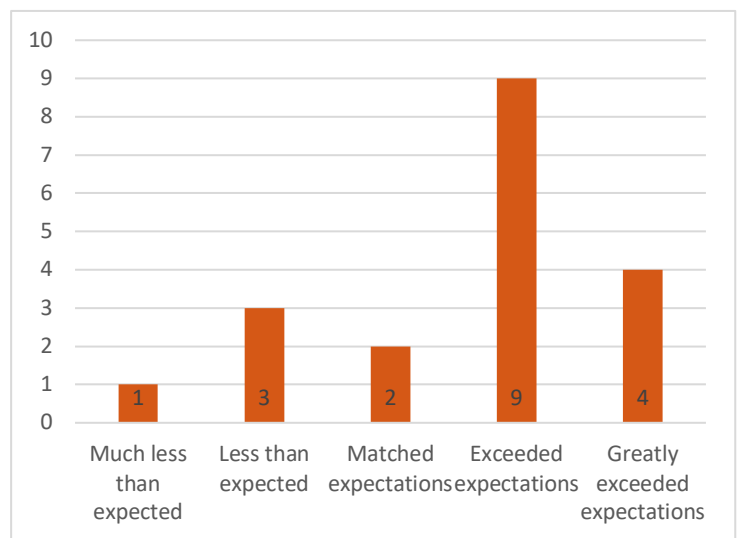
The mean was 4.16 out of 5. While the majority of participants were very satisfied with the program, there was one participant who was very dissatisfied.



Overall, did the program meet your expectations?

The above question examines the extent to which the program met participants' (n=19) expectations on a five-point scale ranging from *Much less than expected* (1) to *Greatly exceeded expectations* (5).

The mean was 3.63 out of 5. While the program greatly exceeded expectations for the majority of participants, one participant reported that the program was much less than expected.



Takeaways/Conclusion

- The scores were very high, suggesting that most participants were satisfied with the program and that it exceeded their expectations.

Qualitative Data

Were there any areas where you felt you needed more support or different guidance from your mentor? (n = 20)

The majority of participants were highly satisfied and did not report any additional support needed (n = 9).

"I felt well-supported throughout the program. My mentor was patient, responsive, and generous with his time, even accommodating my technical challenges during our first meeting when I had internet issues. He answered my emails promptly and made himself available for calls when I needed guidance. I genuinely cannot identify any gaps in the support I received."

Some participants reported needing more time with their mentor (n = 2). One participant highlighted that it was mostly due to scheduling issues.

"Yes, I needed to spend more time with my mentor. It was difficult balancing our schedules."

Four participants reported that they desired more networking opportunities.

"Networking opportunities Professional growth Academic growth"

Two participants reported wanting to develop their professional skills more.

"Finding opportunities Speak in public CV tailoring"

One participant mentioned that they would have liked for their mentor to support them with financial constraints.

"Still loan to complete my final year fees"

What areas of support or guidance from your mentor have been the most beneficial? (n = 20)

The majority of youth reported that their mentorship helped with their career development and advancement (n = 8). Additionally, they reported that their mentorship was beneficial for the development of their professional skills (n = 6), their educational resources and opportunities (n = 5), their networking and integration into the work force (n = 4), and their job search and application support (n = 3).

"Providing resources for continuing education, information on healthcare in Canada as a woman of African descent, workshops and short courses to booster my resume, we are also currently working on a pitch which would enable me to be more confident in expressing who I am and my intention for my career growth."

"The most beneficial guidance was learning how to network effectively in the Canadian context. My mentor taught me strategies that I successfully applied at the [name] summit, where I made valuable professional connections. This is a skill I will carry with me throughout my career. But what truly stands out is his willingness to continue mentoring me even after the program ends and his openness to introducing me to his professional network. This ongoing support means I'm not just gaining skills but also building the trusted relationships that are essential for success in Canada."

Four participants mentioned the beneficial support they received for their personal well-being.

"Loan for fees, advice and mental support"

One participant mentioned that nothing from the support and guidance of their mentor was beneficial.

What resources or support from the program would have made your mentorship experience more valuable? (n = 20)

Five participants from the Ontario program reported that they were highly satisfied and that no additional support was needed.

However, other participants reported wanting their mentors to provide more learning and skill-building resources (n = 5) and networking and career exposure (n = 5).

“Guide to build a better LinkedIn profile and online presence”

“Connecting with professionals who work in my field of interest or have similar academic and professional backgrounds would have been helpful. Learning from their career paths and getting industry-specific advice could have complemented my mentor’s guidance. However, the program provided excellent support, and my mentor helped me make valuable connections that are relevant to my career goals.”

Three participants reported needing more financial and practical support:

“Certification, scholarships”

“More resources to take action”

Two participants reiterated that they would have wanted more access and support from their own mentor, while two other participants would have liked meeting other mentees to share their experience.

“Meeting with other mentees to share our experiences, growth, challenges and opportunities”

Were there any barriers to being able to participate fully? If so, what were they? (n = 16)

The majority of participants did not identify any barriers to their participation (n = 10).

However, some participants highlighted specific barriers to their participation:

- Scheduling conflicts (n = 4): *“None from my end, just scheduling conflicts”*
- Location barriers as the participant could not attend in-person events (n = 1): *“Yes, I was not in Toronto and so I could attend the in-person networking event”*
- Their own shyness (n = 1): *“That would be my shyness.”*

How could we have made this program better for you? (n = 16)

Several of the participants reported being satisfied with the program (n = 6).

Others highlighted elements that could make the program better for them.

Two youth suggested expanding the program. Specifically, one participant from the Alberta program would have liked more diversity and inclusion within the program.

“It was very good , but I think if you can invite more diversity of [nationalities] it helps the whole event works better.”

Three participants reiterated that they would have liked to have more access to their mentor, including two who mentioned having in-person meetings with their mentor would have made the program better.

Two participants would have liked the ability to choose their own mentors or have a better matching process.

“Don’t force a mentor onto someone especially when they do not have the same educational background.”

“Being able to pick from a pool of mentors.”

Two participants requested more opportunities for peer networking between mentees in the program.

“Creating more opportunities for cohort members to connect and build relationships with each other would have been valuable. While my mentor relationship was excellent, networking with fellow mentees could have provided peer support and shared learning experiences.”

One participant would have liked for the program to be longer, and one participant requested more partnerships.

“More partnership”

Would you recommend this mentorship program to others? Why or why not? (n = 19)

Except for one participant, every youth reported that they would recommend the program for various reasons (n = 18).

One participant already recommended the program to their friends and family.

“Yes I have already recommended it to friends and family.”

Four participants reported that the mentorship program was supportive, with three participants of these four who specifically said it was supportive for newcomers.

“Yes, the program provides a lot of information to newcomers. They will benefit from it.”

Participants mentioned how it helped their career growth (n = 2), personal development by building confidence (n = 1), and created helpful networking opportunities (n = 2).

Two participants also reported the positive program environment as a reason to recommend the program to others.

“Most definitely due to the friendly atmosphere”

One participant said they would recommend the program, even though they did not have a lot of access to their mentor.

“Yes because the program is amazing and I think I just got matched with an unavailable mentor.”

Lastly, the one participant who said they would not recommend the program explained that it was because the program did not help them.

“No, it did not help me.”

It is worth noting that two participants found the program’s name misleading, suggesting that *Newcomer Program* did not clearly convey that it is a mentorship initiative aimed at addressing education and employment barriers.

“Yes, it’s a worth more than what the name implies.”

Testimonials of Success Stories

The Federation of Black Canadians captured youth’s voices by having them share their experience in the program (n=3). These testimonials come from three youths who participated in the Year 2 program.

Participant testimonial videos can be viewed here:

<https://www.canva.com/design/DAHDFTEzlyw/mtYafdgysiGdvQSV3sDnpQ/view?utm%20%20content=DAHDFTEzlyw&utm%20%20campaign=designshare&utm%20medium=link2&utm%20sourc%20%20%20e=uniquelinks&utlId=hcd63f920f3>

Common themes were found between testimonials, which support aforementioned themes found in the previous survey questions.

Supportive and effective mentorship:

First, all three participants described the program's mentorship as an important factor of their growth. They each highlighted personalized, one-on-one support as important for navigating life and career in Canada. Mentors helped them with career navigation, resume development, interview preparation, emotional encouragement, and confidence building. Mentorship was consistently presented not just as guidance, but as a relationship that provided stability and direction during a major life transition.

Their testimonials underscored how the program isn't just career-focused; it provided human support. Participants described feeling supported, encouraged, and less alone in the newcomer journey. They went from uncertainty to feeling part of a community that believes in their potential.

"The program has been very helpful for my journey, here, in Canada. I was paired with a mentor that helped me navigate my career and life here in Canada." – Opeyemi Bello

"And beyond being a mentor, he has also been a brother to me." - Ajibola Ogunbiyi

Professional identity:

Each participant talked about gaining confidence in their skills, clarity about their goals, and a stronger professional presence. They moved from uncertainty to feeling more grounded and empowered in the Canadian context, professionally, academically, and personally.

All three shared a forward-looking vision: building careers in business, finance, or consulting, leveraging their MBA training, and creating long-term impact in Canada. They saw the program as a launchpad toward meaningful, stable, purpose-driven careers.

"And most importantly, it will also help me to stay focused on my MBA program and my career goals of building a sustainable future for youth in Canada." - Ajibola Ogunbiyi

"The Oasis FBC newcomer program has played a huge role in helping me navigate through life, school, and professional growth here in Canada. The mentorships, workshops, community and practical guidance has helped me build confidence, clarify my goals, and feel supported in every way. Receiving this scholarship will help me continue investing in my MBA studies, strengthen my professional development, and pursue opportunities that support my long-term career in business and finance." - Beryl Wakhungu

Job-market readiness:

An important shared theme was learning how to navigate the Canadian way of writing resumes, interviewing, communicating value to employers, and understanding workplace culture. All three grew in their ability to translate their international experience into something employers recognize and value.

"When I arrived in Canada this year, I was unsure of my next steps. However, through this mentorship program, I met an incredible mentor in the name of [Name of mentor], who helped me with resume building, mock interview preparations, and giving me the necessary confidence to land my first co-op opportunity here in Canada" - Ajibola Ogunbiyi

Financial support:

The scholarship component of the program was clearly meaningful for each of them. They described it as helping them reduce student loan burdens, fund certifications or professional development, stay focused on their MBA or studies, manage the financial strain of settling in Canada, and how the financial support removed barriers and enabled them to continue investing in their careers.

"Additionally, I won a personal finance coaching session that has given me two keys to ensure my financial prosperity in Canada. So, shout out to 123 finances. This scholarship is going to be helpful to reduce part of my student loan obligation as an international student and also help finance my whole coming certification."

– Opeyemi Bello

Across all three stories, the program functioned as a bridge: helping newcomers transform uncertainty into direction, financial strain into opportunity, and self-doubt into confidence. Mentorship and targeted professional development equipped them not just to survive but to thrive and eventually uplift others.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Overall, youth who participated in the evaluation of the *Newcomer Program* from either Ontario or Alberta were satisfied with the mentor matching process, the support they received, and the program itself.

The participants (n = 20) reported high scores in the *Professional Networks* survey, indicating how the program benefited them in bolstering their professional networks including confidence building, finding their vocation, and seeking educational opportunities in areas of interest. This finding was supported by qualitative data, as participants reported that the program helped build their confidence and personal development, while also providing opportunities, through the program and their mentor, to network, develop skills, grow their careers, and explore the workforce.

A small number of participants (n = 2) were not satisfied with the matching process, which resulted in little to no satisfaction with the overall program. They suggested that the program could be improved by pairing mentees with mentors who have similar educational backgrounds and professional interests, and by providing more regular opportunities for mentees to meet with their mentors.

Many participants (n = 10) did not identify any barriers, and the majority would recommend the program to others (n = 18).

Additionally, three participants shared recorded testimonials about their positive experience in the Newcomer Program. Their stories echoed the experiences expressed by most survey respondents.

Ultimately, the Federation of Black Canadians' *Newcomer Program* supported Black youth in Ontario and Alberta to reduce educational and professional barriers through mentorship.