

KINXFOLK

EVALUATION REPORT YEAR 2022

Written by the Students Commission of Canada

Project Description

ABCD is a term coined by Maame Boateng, the Executive Director to represent African, Black, Caribbean, and Diasporan people. KINxFOLK capacity builds using rest, play and nature to better the health and wellness of ABCD people. KINxFOLK serves and offers various activities for ABCD people. KINxFOLK does various self-development exercises to develop healthy toolkits. Through arts and crafts, land and water sports, team building games, crucial conversations, and self defense classes, they take youth out of their comfort zones. They aim to create safe spaces for people who share similar experiences. This creates a safe space where they can be vulnerable and have honest conversations. Organizers take campers to the countryside to help them break out of the city bubble and address their traumas. It gives the participants space both literally and figuratively to discover themselves and each other from distractions and daily responsibilities.

“Choosing to make our spaces Black focused gives the power back to our campers. They can be comforted knowing here they are given priority. Here, there is no fight for attention or to be appreciated. Here, they don’t have to explain themselves. This is done by having all Black instructors, Black chefs and attempting to keep all camp spaces as Black as possible.”

Highlights

1. KINxFOLK builds community, unity, and collaboration
2. The programs built safe spaces for ABCD youth, and this led to a strong sense of community and emotional connectedness.
3. Data was collected in four ways:
 - a. **SCC Tools**
 - i. Focus group interview n=15
 - ii. Youth Engagement Qualities survey from January 2022 n=4



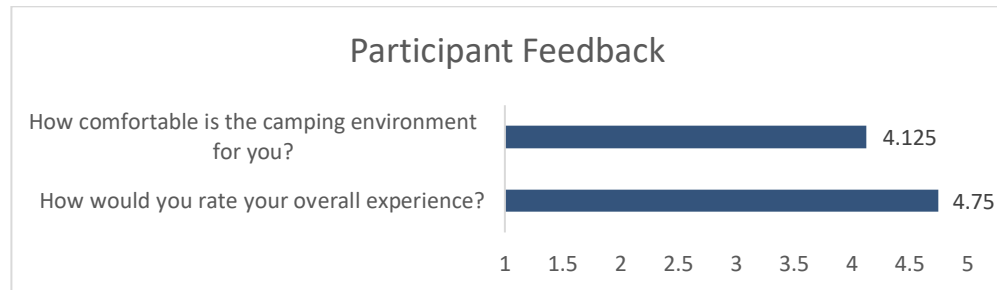
b. KINxFOLK Tools

- i. Crucial Conversation Survey from June / July 2021
- ii. KinXFolk Hindsight Survey from September 2021
n=25

Quantitative Findings

Hindsight survey (KinXFolk)

The overall experience was rated 4.75 out of 5 by participants indicating a high level of satisfaction. All the participants felt safe in the program and believed it improved their mental health. Even though the whole group felt that the topic of mental health was adequately addressed, 88% of them wanted to have structured mental health conversations. The group unanimously believed the program experience to be essential, especially during the pandemic because they identified with each other.



Youth Engagement Qualities Survey (SCC)

Participants felt they were respected and welcomed in the program where bullying was not tolerated. It made the space feel like a safe community. Participants gave near 5 to the level of safety they experienced.



Youth Voices In Decision Making



The psychological engagement portion of the survey yield highly favourable results. The activities helped participants connect to others around them and to something greater than themselves. It brought their life meaning. Majority of participants enjoyed the activities they were doing and learned something new during it.

Psychological Engagement



Qualitative Findings

Hindsight survey (KINxFOLK)

In this survey, all the participants revealed feeling safe in the program environment where there was no judgement of cancel culture. 83% of the participants identified with their peers demonstrating the effectiveness of creating a space where racialized folks can be vulnerable. Everybody agreed that the discourse and learning from peers was highly valuable to them. They pointed out a few things they liked at KinXFolk.

Discussing topics that had a focus on us as Black individuals

Sharing our mistakes and advice

Just people adding perspective and good energy

Focus Group (SCC)

The focus group revealed six key themes in the qualities and outcomes of KINxFOLK's programming – safe space, inclusion, personal growth, emotional connectedness, strong community, and mental health.

Safe Space

The programs are hosted in a space free of judgement. A place where everyone is understood because of their shared experiences. Such a space is much needed for ABCD people because they faced stigma and discrimination in their daily life is. One participant equated the experience to the safe feeling of being a child free of racial stereotypes.

It's like a sense of us being a child again, a lot of us didn't have a chance to be children

It feels good to have spaces for and by our people. It's essential to creating a safe place for conversation

Expectations regarding participation were flexible and respectful of people's boundaries. Allowing people to get comfortable with the group at their own pace helped to deeper conversations.

If you didn't want to answer you didn't need to, if you wanted to get deep about something you could

People feel open to express themselves and you really get to have those conversations that don't necessarily get to happen over a coffee chat or over the phone

Inclusion

Being part of an organization dedicated to ABCD folks was especially enriching for participants because it was led by people who looked like them. In terms of the programs specifically, people's boundaries were respected if they did not feel comfortable participating in a particular activity. They were still made to feel like a part of the group.

It was like by us for us

The most impactful thing is like the organization itself, like it's literally a Black run organization, and all the staff members are Black, most grant vendors are Black

There's no pressure to be involved in everything. If you want to go sit off somewhere go sit off somewhere just as long as if someone knows you're safe, you're fine

Personal Growth

KINxFOLK provides an opportunity to partake in activities people have never been exposed to before. These include both land and water activities such as treetop trekking and kayaking. Such opportunities allow people to go outside their comfort zones and try new things. It also builds a supportive network within the community, motivating each other.

KINxFOLK is so purposeful, as soon as people decide they're going to be a part of it, they're already going in with the intention of betterment, of improvement

I thought I was scared of heights but seeing people go treetop trekking I was like alright I can't be the only one, so I am trying it now... It's really motivating

For folks who hadn't been around many ABCD people growing up, this program gave them a chance to build connections. Through deep conversations they were able to discuss suppressed traumas. Shared connections led to seeking out relationships with more BIPOC people.

I started being a lot more cognizant and a lot more insistent on being around people who look like and other people of colour

Emotional Connectedness

The camps helped to nurture an environment where people could engage in deep conversations around difficult topics. These can be useful to the wider community. It was a supportive community where people aimed to inspire and motivate each other to grow together.

Everybody's love language is affirmed at camp in one way or another

I think the deep conversations that we had at camp were very necessary and I think that would be very helpful to our community

Being in a space where everyone has experience with the racial reality of being Black, led to the realization that while everyone is unique, they also share similarities. This gave people a sense of belonging within their respective communities and they became more confident in creating connections.

I just feel like it changed my outlook on the priority of like, where I fit in

KINxFOLK gave me a lot more confidence when it comes to reaching out and trying to form bonds with people in the Black community

Strong Community

Challenging outdoors activities build team cohesion where members support each other. KINxFOLK participants have gone beyond the program to create a group chat where they share resources to help each other and members of the wider community.

Once I got up there, everyone is cheering on everyone. There's like motivation. There's empowerment

Everything people drop in that group chat has helped me in one way or another, it it's not sharing it with somebody who I know needed that link

It is important to have a space where Black people can get the opportunity to experience things that they don't usually get to experience for a variety of reasons. One participant explains the benefits.

It helps us get out of our comfort zone, expand our perception of "fun", and grants us the ability to love and accept ourselves and one another as people

Mental Health

Providing a safe and inclusive space for ABCD people where they got to build emotional connectedness and strong community had a positive impact of their mental health. One participant talked about how the decolonizing efforts they picked up from KINxFOLK is improving their mental health.

I've been experiencing a lot of anxiety, a lot of tension, a lot of mental health issue personally. Once I got on the trip, I felt all of that was released

I am trying to decolonize, the activities I do, making sure that I see people who look like me...all of that is helping



*with my mental health and something that I got from
Kinfolk*

Ongoing efforts to keep the program running even during the pandemic was especially impactful on the participant's mental health. People were interested in more opportunities to have interactions in the winter when mental health is more at risk.

*Even just to check in was nice, to see familiar faces, even
if not in person*

Conclusion

KINxFolk provides a safe space for ABCD folks to gain new experiences outdoors and go outside of their comfort zone which helps to build confidence. This confidence allows them to seek out new connections with folks like them to build deep relationships with and flourish in the community. Being able to share the burden of trauma resulting from racial discrimination positively impacts mental health. By providing a safe and inclusive space, KINxFOLK has been helping ABCD folks realize their potential.

