



SEMI-ANNUAL
YDPE REPORT
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ABOUT US



Established in 1992, the Islamic Family and Social Services Association (IFSSA) is a non-profit registered charitable organization. It is dedicated to provide services in response to the social needs of the Edmonton community within an Islamic context.

Throughout the year, IFSSA has provided a variety of ongoing programs and services to the Edmonton community. One of our unique programs is partly funded by City of Edmonton's Family and Community Support Services. The Youth Development and Parental Education Program (YDPE) began in 2002 and has been running a variety of social and preventive programs for youth and parents since then. This report outlines the workshops delivered and outcomes achieved by the YDPE Program between January and July 2010.

For more information on the Youth Development and Parental Education Program, contact us at 780.462.0772 or visit our website at www.ifssa.ca

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STRATEGIC PLANNING SESSION

The YDPE program organizes an annual strategic planning session where youth and parents from the community are invited to share their feedback on current and past programs. This approach in program planning is very effective as it researches and evaluates direct community trends and issues, and responds accordingly. In other words, YDPE takes comments and suggestions directly from the community and implements programs based on this.

The Strategic Planning session was held on Tuesday, January 5th at the Woodvale Facility. Youth and Parents were divided into groups and

asked to discuss and share information on the following:

- What can be changed or improved for next year’s programming?
- Where is the program lacking?
- Where is the program excelling?

Participants were also asked to brainstorm ideas for future workshops. Topics were listed and then grouped into common themes. See Chart 1 below for details.

Chart 1

Relationships	Self-Development	Skills/Life Skills	Internet
Family & Friends	Stress	Money Management	Cyber Bullying
Teen dating (awareness and risks)	Morality & Bashfulness	Time Management	Internet Dangers (parental control)
Creating role models	Healthy Eating	Career Planning	
Honoring Peers	Confidence	Materialism and Greed	
Choosing Friends	Sense of Humor	Insomnia	
How to say No and still be friends	Peer Pressure	How to take accountability	
	Building Confidence	Bullying	
	Depression		
	Staying away from trouble		

Indicators of success:

- Participants were actively involved in discussions and activities during the session
- Staff were able to learn new, creative ideas when planning for future workshops
- Participants were interested in continuing to provide input in future sessions

Outcome:

- A number of themes and sub-topics were identified by youth and parent participants. These topics will be implemented by activities, sessions, and workshops based on monthly themes

Demographic Data:

- Individuals (male and female) ages 12-40 participated in the strategic planning session.
- Majority of participants came from a South Asian background

Number of Participants: 15

AFTER SCHOOL YOUTH PROGRAM (ASYP)

The After School Youth Program (ASYP) was a pilot project initiated by YDPE in collaboration with Multicultural Woman and Seniors Association (MWSA). The program is held at MWSA and is an opportunity for youth to participate in activities outside of the school. Program goals of the ASYP were:

- Educate on proper speaking skills
- Help build confidence
- Expand knowledge on social issues
- Inspire youth to become active community leaders

Youth were presented with educational sessions on the following social issues:

- Self Confidence & Public Speaking
- Stress Management
- Time Management

Participants engaged in discussions and team activities and received information sheets and self-assessment quizzes. These tools gave them a better understanding on how to prevent and/or address these areas.

Program staff and volunteers from Multi Cultural Woman & Seniors Association delivered the program once a week from February-June 2010. Training, information gathering, and communication were made on a regular basis. These factors contributed to the overall success of the program.

During the wrap-up celebration, which took place on Wednesday June 23rd, participants were invited to receive a certificate and share their experiences. Some youth presented speeches on what they learned at ASYP and offered solutions to social issues.

Indicators of Success:

- Youth participated in discussions and exercises
- Youth delivered excellent well written presentations of what they learned from ASYP at the year-end celebration
- Majority of the participants indicated they would attend ASYP sessions in the future
- 90% indicated they would like to have more workshops delivered on public speaking

Outcome:

- Youth are more confident and have enhanced their speaking skills when delivering presentations
- Youth indicated their self-confidence was very low before participating in the public speaking sessions. According to survey results, 80% of participants reported an increase in self confidence levels after participating in the public speaking sessions
- Youth can recognize stress factors and are aware of techniques to manage stress
- Survey results indicate 90% of youth had a better understanding of how to manage and cope with stress at school and in their daily lives

Demographic Data:

- Participants came from South Asian and African backgrounds
- Male and Female youth attended
- Majority of individuals were between ages 10 to 15

Number of Participants (total): 30

AFTER SCHOOL YOUTH PROGRAM (ASYP) cont'd

SELF CONFIDENCE & PUBLIC SPEAKING

The human brain starts working the moment you are born and never stops until you stand up to speak in public – George Jessel

Self-Confidence and Public Speaking were the theme of the ASYP from February 20th to March 27th. Every Saturday within this period, youth learned valuable information on public speaking and diverse ways to overcome the inability and/or unwillingness to speak in public.

The following key areas were discussed:

- **Stance:** Standing upright and not pacing
- **Eye Contact:** Making eye contact, looking at the audience, holding the paper appropriately (i.e. not in front of your face)
- **Voice:** Speaking at a volume that allows the entire audience to hear, speaking clearly (i.e. not mumbling or using a monotone voice)
- **Gestures:** Avoid playing with objects in hand, as well as with hair or glasses, avoid putting your hands in your pockets, or crossing them in front of you
- **Being Prepared:** Allows you not to fumble your notes at the last minute

These sessions also included a number of hands-on activities. Participants were provided with folders which they used for these activities (and continued to use throughout the program). The first activity was writing an introduction of yourself. Ideas on what could be included were given such as hobbies, likes and dislikes, favorite subject in school, and what you want to be when you grow up. This was later presented in front of peers. This was a great opportunity for participants to determine their strengths and weaknesses.

Another activity was a show and tell presentation. An object was shown to the audience and the presenter spoke about it. One participant had a creative idea of coloring a picture of a rainbow, and instead of talking about the picture; she gave clues to her audience and asked them to guess what the picture was. These simple team activities were a great stepping stone to the practicality of public speaking. In addition to practicing public speaking skills, participants also adopted appropriate mannerism and behavior when listening to presentations; including respecting and attentively listening to the speaker.



AFTER SCHOOL YOUTH PROGRAM (ASYP) cont'd



STRESS MANAGEMENT

Stress is not what happens to us. It's our response TO what happens. And RESPONSE is something we can choose - Maureen Killoran

Stress Management was the focus of the ASYP every Saturday from April 17th to May 29th. Youth were provided with information and tools to better cope with stress. The following areas were reviewed with participants.

- What is stress?
- What are some signs of stress?
- What causes stress?
- Methods for handling stress
- Serious problems that can occur due to stress

The program started off with a basic understanding of stress and provided examples relating to it. In other sessions, youth were educated on signs that may occur during a stressful period, such as headaches, lack of poor sleep, and upset stomach.

As methods for handling stress was discussed, youth were given examples for ways of unwinding by reading, listening to music, jogging/working out, meditation, deep muscle relaxation, watching television.

After providing these examples, youth were also advised to not exceed 1-2 hours of activity (as opposed to watching 5 hours of television).

Participants took also took part in "Stressors Rating Scale" survey. This survey was designed to help rate stress levels on two different matters:

- School Stressors
- Home Stressors

These are two of the most common stressors. Eleven participants took part in this survey. Those same participants were then required to do a Positive Coping Statement worksheet. This worksheet required youth to write down a stressful situation (one they are currently facing, or might be facing in the near future) and then coming up with several ways to cope with the situation (during and after).

In addition to participants, staff also learned how important this topic is. Survey results indicate 90% of youth had a better understanding of how to manage and cope with stress at school and in their daily lives.

WHAT'S YOUR LEGACY? LEADERSHIP TRAINING

All who have accomplished great things have had a great aim; have fixed their gaze on a goal which was high, one which sometimes seemed impossible - Orison Swett Marden

In partnership with a local community organization Qabeelat Falaah, the YDPE program co-hosted a two day workshop that was held on March 12th and 13th for youth and parents focusing on two key topics:

- How to improve relationships between the spouses (parent-focused session)
- Leadership training (youth-focused session)

Professional life coach and Counselor Riad Ourzazi facilitated these two educational sessions. For the first topic, Mr. Ourzazi focused on teaching ways to identify a healthy relationship between partners and how to improve communication. Parents learned of ways to spend quality time with each other, and how to maintain a balance in a relationship.

In the second session, the speaker focused on communication, conflict resolution, and tips and strategies on leadership training. Youth were empowered and educated about the importance of building and maintaining a strong character so they are not pressured into anti-social behaviors such as drugs and involvement in gangs.

This was a great weekend session involving both youth and parents. Due to the great marketing and promotion of this workshop, as well as the excellent speaker and topics chosen, 700 participants in total attended!

Indicators of Success:

- There were many questions raised by participants following the sessions indicating strong interest of the topics

- 90% of the participants indicated they would attend an event similar to this and recommend a friend to attend as well
- The number of participants that attended was also a strong indicator of success

Outcome:

- Participants can now identify between good and bad relationships and therefore make wise decisions in choosing their partners
- Youth have guidelines on being a positive role model and leader in society

Demographic Data:

- It was reported 60% of males and 40% of females were in attendance for the two day workshop. The following percentage of age groups attended:
 - Under 14- 5%
 - 14-17 – 40%
 - 18-25- 40%
 - 26-30- 10%
 - 31-40- 4%
 - 41+ 1%
- 42% indicated they were born in Canada and 58% indicated they were not born in Canada
- 50% had a South Asian background (i.e. India, Pakistan, and Afghanistan)
- 50% were of African descent (i.e. Somalia, Ethiopia, Sudan)
- Participants included youth and parents

Number of Participants: 700 (total over two days)

MY CHILDREN DON'T RESPECT ME

Parenting Skills Workshop

This was well worth attending on a Friday evening, we should have one on teaching children how to learn and earn respect
- Comment from a parent participant

As our society is evolving with the latest in technology, innovation, and communication, parenting has become a challenging area for many. The YDPE Program and the Edmonton Islamic Academy Leadership team co-hosted a workshop for parents on Friday March 26th. Guest speaker, Dr. Mohammed Sadiq, a certified Clinical Psychologist from Edmonton facilitated this session.

Eighty participants attended this session to learn about the Dynamics of Parent-Child relationships in the present context and share personal experiences of the family. The current state of parent-child relationship in our communities was also discussed as well as learning better ways of relating and guiding children and re-establishing an acceptable functional relationship with the children.

Indicators of Success:

- As per survey results, 90% of the participants indicated that it was worth attending and well organized
- Participants also reported they would like to have similar sessions like these in the future
- 95% of participants indicated that after attending the workshop, they have more confidence in their relationship with their children

Outcome:

- Parents have practical tips and strategies to use to communicate with their children

Demographic Data:

- Majority of participants were from the Middle Eastern (i.e. Palestine, Lebanon, Egypt). Others had a South Asian background

Number of Participants: 80



HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

Relationships are part of the vast plan for our enlightenment - Marianne Williamson

RESPECT is the number one quality of healthy relationships. In today's diverse society, our youth need to understand the importance of respect and maintaining a positive attitude at school, work and in the family. One of the key reasons YDPE organizes youth workshops is to provide youth with education and an opportunity for positive growth.

IFSSA & Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers (EMCN) co-hosted a workshop on Healthy Relationships for male and female youth ages 12-17 on Saturday April.10th at the Edmonton Mennonite Centre. The presenters from Options Sexual Health Association engaged youth to identify what they feel is important in a relationship and how to identify healthy, unhealthy and abusive relationships. These were done in group activities to open up dialogue and enable youth to share their views with each other openly. Presenters discussed and provided examples of when a relationship is or becomes abusive. Presenters stressed the importance about understanding the cycle. The importance of building a healthy relationship,

good communication, trust, and honesty, and separate identities and space was emphasized. Participants learned that if these elements are in place, conflicts will be solved in a healthier way.

Indicators of Success:

- Youth actively participated in workshop activities and discussions
- Organizers observed interesting differences between the male and female participants Females were attentive and communicated easily while males were more reserved and took more time to open up
- Females and males reported they were comfortable discussing their feelings about healthy relationships because they were in separate rooms from each other
 - Survey results indicate 100% of participants benefited from attending the workshop and would attend a similar workshop in the future

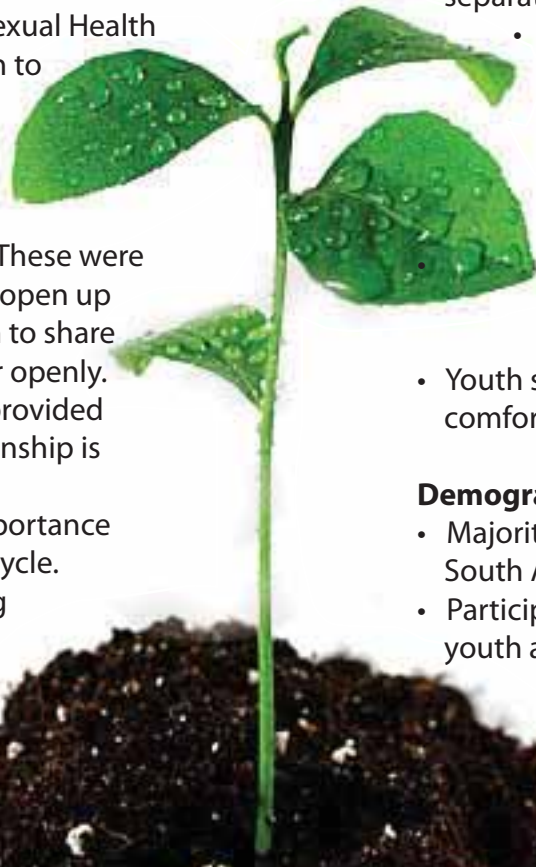
Outcome:

- Youth can now identify between good and bad friendships and therefore make wise decisions in choosing their friends
- Youth shared personal experiences in a comfortable and safe context

Demographic Data:

- Majority of participants had an African and South Asian background
- Participants included male and female youth ages 12-17

Number of Participants: 50



YOUTH IDENTITY

The Youth of a Nation are the trustees of posterity
- Benjamin Disraeli

There are different stages of learning and growing in everyone's life and these may differ depending on the society you were born and raised in. Identity is also developed through culture and faith as these have an impact on one's value and belief system.

The YDPE Program was very creative in fostering an atmosphere where youth had the opportunity to express what their identity is as a youth. The program invited Boonaa Mohammed, a "critically acclaimed award winning writer and performer (who) has toured and traveled across the world and frequently conducts writing workshops and seminars, sharing his experience and expertise in social justice based story telling with mainly youth from all walks of life." (<http://boonaa.com/>)

The event was held on Saturday May 15th at the Meridian Conference Hall. Local Edmonton youth opened up for Mr. Mohammed by presenting their own poetry to the audience.

This introduction heightened audience energy and interest, and set a vibrant mood for the afternoon. Volunteers interviewed Boonaa Mohammed, asking him to share his experience as a youth growing up in Canada. Boonaa's words of wisdom were a positive reflection for all youth present and empowered many.

Indicators of Success:

- An opportunity for youth to speak their mind (i.e. those who presented their work)
- Many participants purchased the speaker's spoken word poetry CD after the event
- Very positive comments and feedback about the guest speaker

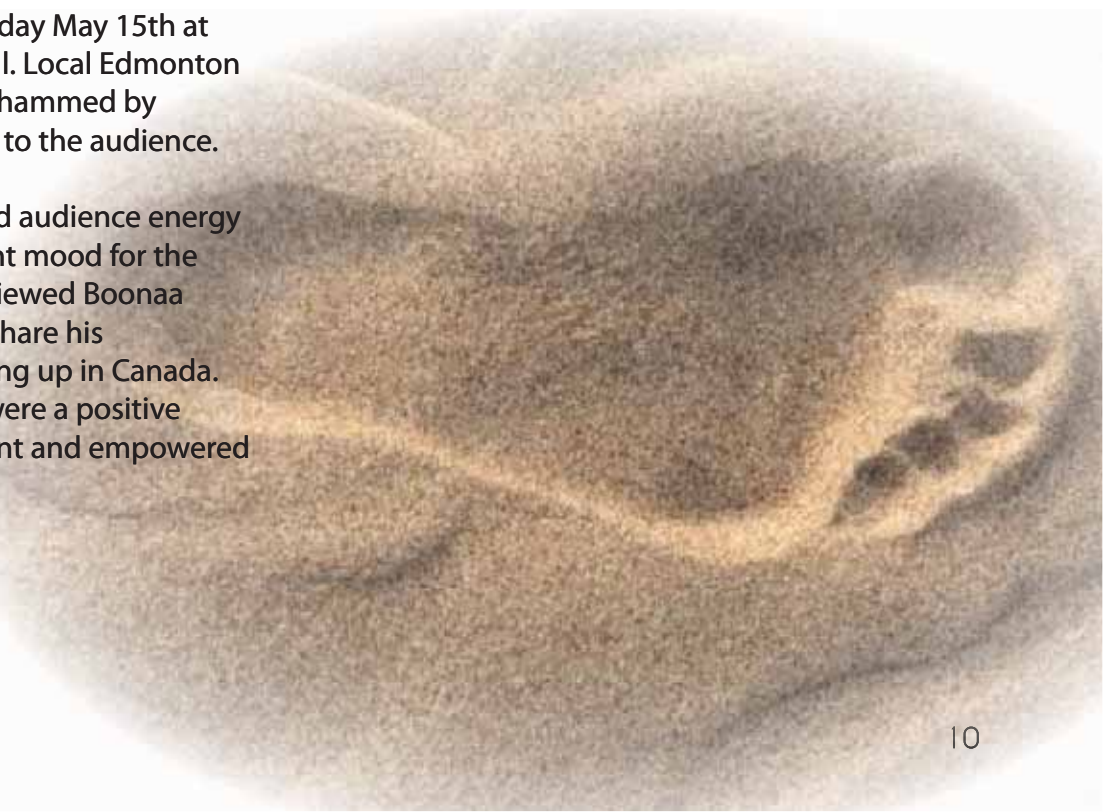
Outcome:

- Youth are able to express themselves in creative ways; as well they have a sense of self-identity and belonging in their culture in North American Society

Demographic Data:

- Majority of the participants had an African background and came from Somalia
- Youth ages 16-25 attended

Number of Participants: 80



ASSERTIVENESS & BOUNDARIES

The basic difference between being assertive and being aggressive is how our words and behavior affect the rights and well-being of others - Sharon Anthony

In partnership with Edmonton Mennonite Centre For Newcomers, YDPE co-hosted a workshop for female and male youth, ages 12-17 on Saturday June 12th at the Edmonton Mennonite Centre. The presentation was made by Councilors from Options Sexual Health Association. Some areas of focus include conflict recognition, the importance of respect, assertive responses, and setting boundaries.

Another interesting topic was I messages versus you messages. Participants learned that by using I messages, they can tell the other person how they feel and what they are thinking without blaming the other person. Focusing on how one feels (I messages), rather than what another person did (You messages) changes the tone of conflicts and is a much better approach to minimize them, and instead have respectful conversations. Youth had the opportunity to team up in groups and practice using "I" and "You" messages where they identified the differences.

Towards the end of the workshop, youth were more confident discussing openly when they felt their boundaries were being restricted by their friends; such as in school where they were being encouraged to take drugs or steal from stores. The workshop provided a venue for youth to share their stories and learn of appropriate ways to behave and communicate.

Indicators of Success:

- Majority of youth indicated they would be interested in attending more sessions similar to this one
- According to surveys results, 80% of participants indicated that after attending the workshop they learned of techniques and strategies to maintain boundaries with friends and at school

Outcome:

- Youth were able identify effective methods in decision-making
- Youth learned how to mark boundaries based on their decision and demonstrate assertiveness

Demographic Data:

- Participants had African and South Asian backgrounds
- Male and female youth ages 12-17 attended

Number of Participants: 40

YOUTH LEADERSHIP CAMP

Your eyes can't hit what your eyes can't see, float like a butterfly sting like a bee, rumble young man rumble – Muhammed Ali

Summer is a time where achievements and memories are made. It is a time where new friendships can be formed, goals can be set or achieved, and to get involved in extracurricular activities.

YDPE in partnership with Markaz Youth Group co-hosted a very successful three day camp for boys ages 12-17 from Friday June 25th to Sunday June 27th at Rocky Mountain Frontier Lodge. Topics that were presented include:

- Effective Conflict Resolution
- Leading by Being a Good Follower
- Practicing patience
- Conflict Resolution

Guest speakers were invited to attend and speak on the above topics and camp leaders set a great example of the topics through administering a unique buddy system. Each camp leader had a group of youth who they were responsible for, and everyone worked together in preparing meals, participating in team building exercises, and ensuring their cabins were clean.

Indicators of Success:

- According to survey results, 90% of participants indicated they would attend this camp again next year
- When asked which topic was the most interesting during the camp, 85% reported conflict resolution
- The buddy system was a great example of practically demonstrating skills which were discussed by the presenters

Outcome:

- Youth can implement leadership training through skills learned theoretically and practically at the camp

Demographic Data:

- Youth had South Asian (Pakistan, India) and Middle Eastern (Egypt, Lebanon) backgrounds
- Majority of youth that attended were between the ages of 12 to 17

Number of Participants: 53