



++
++
++
++



++
++
++
++

Kujenga Youth Wellbeing Program Annual Review

2022-2023

Prepared By:
Nicole Perryman
Brittany White
Tasia Richards



++
++
++
++



++
++
++
++

Kujenga Youth Wellbeing Program Quarterly Team Reports

July 1-Sept.30, 2023

Prepared By:
Robby Msir, Cathy Vieneer, and
Wynikka Matthews, DFCC Team
Brittany White, and Ishara Ramroop

Table Of

Content

1 Introduction

++

2 Program Goals & Objectives

++

3 Our Team

++

4 Program Features

++

5 Performance
Metrics

6 Success Stories & Lessons Learned

7 Community Partnerships

8 Volunteers

Guided Healing from the Roots



Ifarada: Centre for Excellence is a non-profit, charitable organization specialized in providing services to children, youth, adults, and families. Ifarada is focused on promoting healthy families, embracing equity, and celebrating diversity and cultivating resiliency. Ifarada holds a strong emphasis on equity, holistic care, and empowerment.

Ifarada's services include therapeutic groups, educational programs, counselling support and leadership programs. Ifarada has led the development of programs that have received funding and support to deliver specific programs. Through the Kujenga Youth Wellbeing Project, Ifarada focuses on therapeutic groups and workshops, transitional programs, pre-employment workshops, mental health counselling, and parenting programs.





Kujenga Family Wellness Fair event held April 22, 2023 for community members in collaboration with the Ifarada team. The event was attended by 300 people and featured children activities and youth performers, workshop presenters, and vendors.



Program Goals & Objectives

Partnerships

The Kujenga Youth Wellbeing Project is a collaboration between the Durham Cultural and Family Center and Ifarada. The project works in collaboration with organizations such as the Durham Children's Aid Society, Durham District School Board, Durham Catholic School Board, Durham One, and sister organizations Kujenga Family Wellness Project and Wonderfully Made.

Our Mission

The Kujenga [building] Youth Wellbeing Project, aims to support Black and racialized children and youth in engaging with their communities and reducing disparities and negative outcomes facing Black and racialized children. This program offers a diverse range of supports and programs meant to support this overall goal.



Our Team

++
++
++
++



01. Nicole Perryman

02. Brittany White

03. Tasia Richards

04. Ishara Ramroop



Cultivating Resilience



2

Innovative & creative

Groups facilitated by Ifarada and the Durham Family and Cultural Centre [DFCC] centered on creating space for youth to explore their *strengths*, *interests*, and *creative interests*. Facilitators contributed their ideas to developing tailored programs for each in-school and out of school program. Young people were encouraged to share their perspectives on the programming they needed. **Strength-based and youth-focused** were the core principles which guided the work.

1

Culturally-Relevant programming

The Kujenga Youth Wellbeing hosted multiple therapeutic groups in schools, in the Harmony Wellness Centre, and virtually. Young people had an opportunity to explore critical topics such as *race*, *identity*, *language*, *culture*, *colorism*, *excellence*, *anti-Black racism*, *inclusion* and so much more. As young people began to unpack the impact of racial trauma highlighted during the pandemic, the programming centered on creating safe spaces for youth to explore topics that was critical for them. At the same time, the program facilitators reinforced the importance of cultural and racial pride in forming youth's identity.



IFARADA:
CENTRE FOR EXCELLENCE



ASKIRA WARRIOR

For Girls Ages 4 - 9
Years Old

 @ifaradacentre

To Register Visit:
www.ifaradainstitute.org



3 Trauma-informed approaches

A key part of the therapeutic groups, parenting programs, family outreach, and counselling programs was embedded trauma-informed care. Every individual and family has experienced a traumatic incident or experiences which have shaped their identity, their personality and their experiences. Many of the families and youth in the program had experienced more than one trauma, and had encountered an injury as a result. The injuries ranged from developmental concerns, mental unwellness, family separation and discord, and self-identity crisis. The program team members worked with youth and families to cultivate **safety and trust**, provide **education** about trauma and its impact, assess and identify presenting concerns, provide resources when needed, and foster **therapeutic relationships**. Throughout the year, the team supported youth and their families as they navigated difficult life experiences, and guided them to access strategies to improve.



4 Holistic care

Ifarada and DFCC collaborated together to provide an holistic care to children, youth and their families. The holistic approach follows the principle that healing occurs in one's **mind, body, and soul**, in their **ecosystem [community and family]**, and through their **lineage**. Many youth who joined Ifarada remained service users over the past year, and participated in multiple programs. Parents were invited to participate in programming through parent counselling and coaching, workshops, and parent programs.



NIA
GWENDA

Girls With
Purpose

For girls
10 - 16

YEARS OLD

Register Now!

More Information at:
www.ifaradainstitute.org

 @ifaradacentre



5 Training and development

Training and team development helped to inform the team's approaches, their perspective, and evidence-supported initiatives. Training centered on building **leadership skills** for team members, and examining the intersections of **race, identity and culture**. The team participated in training that centered on:

- Indigenous ways of being and healing [2-days].
- Anti-Black racism [2-days].
- Family -centered care with Black families [1-day].
- Youth facilitation training [2 days].
- Rites of Passage training [2 days].
- 2SLGBTQ1A training [1/2 day].
- Black Mental Health Symposium [2 days].

The team has access to a library of online webinars consisting of past workshops and therapeutic interventions [offered on Pesi, and Integrative Play Therapy].

Select team members also participated in external training with the Canadian Association For Play Therapy, Family Services Toronto, and the Canadian Social Work Education Conference. In the summer, the team participated in a team training day, a wellness day, and program development team days.



6 Strengthening family systems

Many children and youth were working through the impact of the past three years which had destabilized their families. The team encountered families who had: recent divorce or separation, loss of parent, heightened anxiety and depression, sudden change in behaviour, recent diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder or Attention-Deficit Disorder or Post-traumatic Stress Disorder.

In addition to group programs, families accessed counseling, psychotherapy, family outreach, and family therapy. The team worked with external therapists and graduate interns. Ifarada uses approaches which are consistent with client-focused, narrative, strength-based, evidenced-based, and holistic. Clients participated in pre-and post surveys which helped to assess their outcomes.



IFARADA:
CENTRE FOR EXCELLENCE

Kusoma Reading Circle



SIGN UP NOW!

TO REGISTER CONTACT:

 WWW.IFARADAINSTITUTE.ORG

What We Offer:

Early literacy programs, book review, educational support, exposure to diverse authors, mentor days, and creative activities.



Ifarada and Durham Family and Cultural Centre sought to support Black and racialized children and youth to engage in their communities and achieve better outcomes. The objectives focused on: enhancing social, emotional, and cultural pride, enhancing parenting skills, improving mental health, and increasing support for youth transitioning into adulthood.

Program Preparation and Development

In the first three months, September to December 2022 Ifarada and DFCC established their Memorandum of Understanding and aligned goals for the program. New team members joined the program, and participated in orientation. In addition, new psychologists and psychotherapists joined the team as external providers for the program.

Youth Advisory

DFCC and Ifarada conducted focus groups to engage youth in the community. In March 2023, the Youth Advisory Group was developed. The group will provide guidance to Ifarada's programs and services. The group will also engage in community activities and events, and act as ambassadors to the organization.

Program Execution

Ifarada and DFCC began programming for children, youth and families in September 2022. In September, Ifarada's team started in-school programming, Askira Girls, Nia Gwenda, and parent programs. In January 2023, Ifarada and DFCC continued to expand offering mentorship programs for youth, youth cultural activities, boys' activity groups, and so much more. In April and June 2023, Ifarada worked in collaboration with community partners to host the Annual Wellness Fair and Community Dance Showcase. In August 2023, DFCC in partnership with Ifarada hosted the International Youth Day Talent Show.

ENROLL TODAY

Nia Gwenda: Girls with Purpose

DATE: July- August, 22



ifarada institute is re-introducing...

KUSOMA VIRTUAL READING CLUB

AGES 4-8 9-13 14+



S EVERY WEDNESDAY ON ZOOM FROM 4-6PM ST

JUNE 29TH

promote
education and
literacy in the
community

celebrate diversity w
inclusive books writt
by Black, Indigenous o
racialized author

**LEARN
MORE
ABOUT US**

**REGISTER
HERE**

PARENT-CHILD FIHANKRA DROP-IN

MONDAYS FROM 4 - 6 PM

NO APPOINTMENT NECESSARY



Performance Metrics 2022-2023



Children & Youth
Served

450

served



Parents & Family
Supported

218

served



Therapeutic
Programs Held

30

for children and youth



Community
Partnerships

50 +

nutured

Performance Metrics 2022-2023



**Parent Programs
Facilitated**

5

Queen's Unite, Our Story, Fihankra
Drop-in and Men's Support Group



Workshops Held

10

Navigating Education, Black
Mental Health Week, Raising
Healthy Families



Events Hosted

3

International Youth Day Celebration
Showcase, Riddim Fits Cultural Arts
Showcase, and the Kujenga Family
Wellness Fair



**Counselling &
Outreach Sessions**

**100
Families**

Success Stories



++
++
++
++

Women's Group 2022-2023

"I feel like we have a connection already, feel less alone" (participant quote from December 8th session two), "Just finished group. It went really well. There were 4 women and they all enjoyed the conversation. They are excited to come back next week and expressed feeling more connected and less isolated." (facilitator testimony Phebe Quaye, December 1st session one). "We now have a Whats App group where we can check in after group through the week about parenting struggles and connect" (participant quote from December 15th, via email)..

Success Stories

Children's Group 2022-2023

“My daughter really loves the art aspect of askira girls, She loves the chance to connect and talk with other girls her age- Askira girls parents.

“As soon as my daughters came back from the first session, they wouldn't stop talking about how much fun they had. I have never seen them so excited to go to programming like this, they will definitely be back.” - Nia Gwenda parent of two participants.

“I like having a group of other Black girls that are similar to me so I can talk about things my school friends wouldn't understand. I want to make genuine friends so I like the connections I have made here and look forward to speaking with everyone each Wednesday.” Nia Gwenda participant

“I like coming here to talk about my emotions because I get bullied at school and like to make friends with girls who understand. I trust the girls and [the facilitator], I know they will listen.” - Young Queens participant.

“The activity we did today about the power of words was great, I did not think of it that way before.” - Young Queens participant.



+ +

+ +

+ +

+ +

“My sons look forward to coming every week!, They were so excited to come back after the break.- Adinkrahene Boys Leadership Group participant.

LESSONS LEARNED

Ifarada had the privilege of continuing their signature programs developed from inception. However, there were many areas of learning and growth through the development of the program.



Increase in Referrals

Our programs met a need within the community and in schools. This led to an increase in referral sources, and an unforeseen delay. By March 2023, Ifarada began to accumulate a waitlist for services.

Navigating anti-Black racism

Young people continue to experience the impact of systemic racism, financial constraints and social isolation related to the pandemic. Many youth reported experiences of racism, high surveillance, unfair treatment, heightened punishment and social isolation.



Exploring family conflict

Through working with young people and their families, the team learned how the pandemic, social isolation, and family changes impacted the emotional, mental and family wellbeing. Many of the young people struggled with parent-teen conflict, anxiety, social anxiety, and difficulties in school. There were a few clients who had experienced grief/loss due to the death of a caregiver and, reoccurring suicidal ideation. Many families experienced heightened family conflict and challenges, recent separation, past experiences of intimate partner violence, and transitions due to housing and community changes. All of the families that identified as Black reported experiences of anti-Black racism in schools, in their community, and with service providers.



COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS



When the root is deep, there
is no reason to fear the wind

African Proverb



KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

September 2022- Durham Family and Cultural Centre and Ifarada initiate a partnership to develop the Kujenga Youth Wellbeing Project. This momentous partnership has forged the way to cultivate, nurture, and empower Black-led, Black-owned organizations to thrive. In August 2023, DFCC in collaboration with Ifarada hosted the Annual International Youth Day conference featuring youth performers, keynote presenter, and awards ceremony.

September 2022- August 2023- Ifarada forges relationships with schools in the Durham Region to host weekly programming in elementary and secondary schools. Programs within schools focused on: *identity building, self-confidence, and self-esteem, education awareness, advocacy, leadership development, and relationship building*. The relationship cultivated with students helped to create a safe space for children and youth to explore healing and growth. In one school, facilitators were invited to attend the graduation of the students.

December 2022- Ifarada partnered with Kids Up Front, an organization that distributes tickets to arts, culture, and sporting events. Since the program started, 65 children, youth, families, and support staff to several events in the community. Kids Up Front has donated \$4500 to Ifarada's families.



COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS



It was nice to be able to view the show with my family that we would otherwise be unable to afford. Thank you.

Kids Up Front Ticket Recipient



KEY ACHIEVEMENTS CONT'D

March 2023- Ifarada Centre for Excellence, TAIBU, Durham ONE, and community partners collaborated to develop Black Mental Health Week events within the Durham Region, including workshops, panel discussions, paint nite, and a follow-up youth mental health week during the summer break.

April 2023- Ifarada supported the Kujenga Family Wellness Project to host their first annual Family Wellness Fair. The fair hosted over 300 families, multiple vendors, youth cultural performers, and workshop facilitators covering topics such as mental health, partner relationships, nutrition, and cultivating family relationships.

September 2022-September 2023- Ifarada's team worked with multiple community organizations from building partnerships, hosting focus groups, facilitating support for the community, mobilizing to address issues within the community, and collaborating on community outreach and initiatives.



OUR VOLUNTEERS

Ifarada hosted **13** volunteers from September 12, 2022, to September 30, 2023. Volunteers assisted in direct service to clients, community engagement, events, and on a macro administratively level.

Volunteer Testimonials:

"The volunteer experience has improved my confidence and self-esteem through the value of support I rendered to the clients. It has also expanded my resume. My volunteer activity was an eye opener to me when it comes to supporting black communities with their different needs, for I never knew that such organization exists. I learnt a lot of new things, like contacting clients, listening to their needs and was able to help them out. I have also gained new skills with the support of my supervisor and the staff".- Miriam

"I had a great time at this event. I got to meet some familiar faces and meet new people. Volunteers from DFCC were nice and I even friended two of the volunteers. Staff made sure to look out for us and were friendly. Got to see amazing performances and loved the upbeat energy". - Uzma, Student



“Don’t aspire to make a living, aspire to make a difference”.

Denzel Washington



Kasserian Ingera

Ifarada collaborates and partners with the local children's aid society to provide family outreach, counselling and advocacy for Black families involved with the children's aid society.

Adrinka Youth Leadership

The Leadership program supports youth with accessing micro-grants to support community projects and individual initiatives that promote positive change.

Youth Engagement and Intervention Program

Funded by the Public Safety Canada, the youth engagement and intervention is aimed to support youth and families at-risk or involved in the criminal justice system. The program offers SNAP programs, youth outreach, advocacy, youth employment, and counselling.

Social Enterprise

Through Kujipenda, Ifarada is aiming to cultivate cultural pride through innovative programming, cultural showcases, and arts presentations throughout the city. Ifarada will host an equity conference for professionals seeking to enhance their equity knowledge and initiatives within organizations. Through programs, Ifarada is addressing systemic racism and seeking to achieve equitable outcomes for all community members.

Kuwa New Parents Program

The Kuwa new parents program provides a safe, supportive environment for parents to develop healthy attachments, cultivate parenting skills, and build their social relationships.

Cultural -Arts Program

Ifarada's cultural arts, and recreational programs supports youth to engage in positive pro-social activities that enhance their positive outcomes, and builds pride and self-confidence.



UPCOMING PROGRAMS

Therapeutic Groups

Starting in 2013, therapeutic groups have evolved as a safe space for children, youth, and adults to heal, to grow, and to transform. Therapeutic groups are grounded in theoretical approaches and include Africentric and Indigenous approaches to healing. Therapeutic groups include *Askira Girls*, *Adrinkahene Male Group*, *Nia Gwenda* to name a few. Participants engage in therapeutic activities aimed at building self-identity, promoting pride and confidence, developing skills to manage emotions, and more. Groups are held in -school, and after school throughout the week.

Counselling and Psychotherapy

Children, youth, and parents can access 8-12 sessions with a therapist or social worker. The therapists work with clients using a *strength-based, holistic, and client-centered approach* to healing. Counselling and psychotherapy support people addressing mental health concerns, i.e., anxiety, grief and loss, social isolation, and low self-confidence, separation and divorce, family reunification and rebuilding, and more. There are no waitlists for therapy.

Family Outreach

Family outreach workers provide counselling, advocacy, and outreach to families seeking to recover, heal, and rebuild their family systems post-pandemic era. Family outreach workers provide telehealth and in-office sessions to parents providing them with tools and strategies to enhance their roles as parents, to cultivate strong attachments, to address behavior and emotional concerns with their children, and adopt new parenting strategies.





UPCOMING EVENTS

Youth Advisory & Workshops

In collaboration with DFCC, Ifarada hosts an Advisory Council for youth. This *paid* position trains and develops youth to advise on youth programs and interventions, become engaged within their community, and learn how to advocate for their needs. Youth workshops center on teaching youth leadership skills and building their employability. Workshops are facilitated by professionals and mentors who are excited about cultivating the next generation of leaders.

Mentorship Programs

Mentorship programs are geared to connect youth with elders, professionals, and peer mentors. The programs consist of special events, such as apple picking, and volunteer initiatives such as the Bustani Garden Project. Mentorship can support youth to see themselves represented in others and envision better outcomes for their lives. In addition, mentorship can teach youth skills that will build their pride, their leadership and employability skills, and strengthen their identities.

Special Events

Ifarada and DFCC's special events focus on meeting the needs of youth in the community. DFCC offers activities and events in their youth lounge such as Play Station (R) game nights, 2SLGBTQIA Prom Night, and more. Youth and families can access free tickets to arts, culture, and social activities from Kids Up Front. In February and August, Ifarada and DFCC works with community partners to celebrate Emancipation Day and Black History Month. In March, Ifarada will co-host events in the region promoting Black Mental Health and Youth Mental Health week. In May 2024, Ifarada will collaborate with community organizations to host the 2nd Annual Kujenga Family Wellness Fair.



IFARADA

Centre for Excellence

Thankyou for your
support

CONTACT US:

E: INFO@IFARADAINSTITUTE.ORG

P: 905-250-0415

W: WWW.IFARADAINSTITUTE.ORG

Funded by the Government
of Canada's Social Development
Partnerships Program

Canada