



# THE IMPACT OF BGC CANADA

## A 3-Year Study of the Impact of Clubs

May 2025

**Executive Summary**

# Learning and Impact

In 2021, BGC Canada initiated a collective evaluation called Learning and Impact to better tell the story of Club impact in Club participants through a strategy to gather data, both quantitative and qualitative, from Clubs across Canada. The purpose of Learning and Impact is to prove and improve the impact of Clubs, individually and collectively, through evaluation. To evaluate the effectiveness of Clubs in achieving their intended impact, BGC Canada embarked on an initiative to build the capacity of individual Clubs and the national federation of Clubs to collect data on the effects of the Club experience in the lives of children and youth.

## Impact Framework

The conceptual framework for the evaluation is based on BGC Canada’s theory of change - the Model for Success – which articulates the intended impact of the Club experience. The Model for Success is rooted in literature and research on child and youth development. The model identifies four primary domains of intended impact with 21 factors. Factors for each domain were identified by BGC leaders during the pilot phase and corroborated by research literature.

Positive Relationships	Healthy Living	Lifelong Learning	Leadership
Connection	Healthy Choices	School Readiness	Identity as a Leader
Belonging	Nutrition	Exploration	Influence
Conflict Resolution	Physical Activity	Creativity	Confidence
Acceptance of Self	Positive Outlook	Challenges	Initiative
Acceptance of Others	Resilience	Goal Attainment	Cooperation
			Self-Regulation

## Survey Data

Quantitative data were collected through the design and deployment of a national outcomes survey. Clubs distribute the BGC Member Survey annually to children and youth ages eight and older. The survey includes one question for each factor in the impact framework. It includes four demographic questions that enable disaggregation and analysis between different populations.

Nearly all Clubs in the BGC federation have deployed the member survey each year. The survey sample includes BGC members from Clubs in all provinces across Canada and the Yukon. The response rate to the survey has increased by over 1,000 responses each year, with Clubs collecting 5,774 survey responses from children and youth in 2022, 6,827 in 2023, and 8,195 in 2024. There was a total of 20,796 survey responses over three years.

The survey data reveal a strongly positive perception among members of the impact of Clubs (item means ranging from 1.46-2.10 on a 3.00-pt. scale). Standard deviations reveal considerable consistency of impact in most areas (item SD ranging from 0.89 to 1.14). Confidence intervals provide assurance that the results accurately represent members’ experience (item CI ranging from 0.02-0.03). Analysis comparing results over the three years



of survey implementation revealed consistency in results year-over-year, with the increasing sample size over the years increasing confidence in the data.

The disaggregation of the data using member identifiers on demographic items provides a more granular analysis of the relative impact between demographic subgroups of members. The data show equitable impact across Indigenous respondents, respondents that identify as a person of colour, and respondents that identify as neither. However, some areas of variability are revealed in the data. For example, members identifying as boys or men have a relatively lower reported impact than those identifying as girls or women. Those identifying as nonbinary or who self-described their gender rate the impact Clubs lower relative to other gender identities. There is also a persistent dip in the reported impact of youth ages 11 to 13 compared to other age groups. Duration of participation in Clubs makes a statistically significant difference in impact, with longer attendance associated with more positive impact results.

## Interview Data

Qualitative data were collected through in-depth interviews. Qualitative cohorts were offered in the fall of 2022, 2023, and 2024. Each year, full-member Clubs from across the BGC federation were invited to participate in interviews. Across the three cohorts, teams from 38 Clubs conducted interviews with members. Teams from each of the participating Clubs were trained in sampling, qualitative interviewing, data collection, and data analysis. Clubs followed a sampling approach called purposeful stratified sampling to select interviewees. They conducted 30–60-minute, one-on-one, in-depth interviews with members. Most interviewers captured data through a voice-to-transcription application. Interviewers then analyzed the data inductively using a modified version of thematic analysis. Each interviewer used a two-step analysis process to identify insights and themes from the interview data. First, each interviewer analyzed their interviews individually to identify initial themes. Second, each Club interview team developed common themes from their Club's full data set.

The qualitative data corpus from this three-year study is immense, representing 1,246 one-on-one interviews. The impact of Clubs is substantial as seen in the interview data. Data from the qualitative interviews unequivocally demonstrate that young people are not only enjoying their Club but are also feeling connected, safe, welcomed, challenged, and at home in their Club. Through the experience of Clubs, their lives are being impacted. The interview data reveal that Clubs profoundly affect how children and youth think about themselves, others, and their future. Clubs have an impact on how children and youth are growing and developing into their potential and how they are discovering and pursuing the things that give them meaning and joy.



## The Impact of Clubs

The meta-analysis of the data collected through surveys and interviews reveal substantial impact.

### Positive Relationships

The intended relational impact of Clubs is that members have healthy connections to themselves and others, with a network of people in their lives who care about them. The survey data reveal particular strength of impact in the items assessing connection (i.e., having more people to spend time with), a sense of belonging, acceptance of self, and acceptance of others. The interview data show that at Clubs children and youth

develop friendships and social skills to forge and maintain friendships with others and grow in their ability to relate to themselves positively. Although the survey data revealed a lower impact in navigating interpersonal conflict compared to other areas, the interviews clearly revealed that Club staff are influencing how members handle conflict.

**90%**  
of respondents reported that because of a Club, they **feel more comfortable being themselves**, with 44% reporting they are “a lot” more comfortable.

**“Since coming to Club I’ve realized there are a lot more people around that I can actually share my thoughts and troubles with. The leaders I’ve met have been really friendly and open with me [and] I feel a lot more able to connect to people now.”**

### Healthy Living

Clubs intend for members to become healthy, active, and self-assured, using personal wellness strategies that contribute to a balanced lifestyle. Most clearly seen in the data, members are more physically active. The survey and interview data provide a compelling picture of greater and more meaningful activity in children and youth because of Clubs. The data also show a substantial impact in the growth and development of the social and emotional health of children and youth. In 2024, a group of Club staff implemented a qualitative study focused on socio-emotional development using a special interview protocol. This focused study provided

**90%**  
of respondents reported that because of a Club, they are **more physically active**, with 48% reporting they are “a lot” more active.

evidence of a remarkable impact on members through Clubs in the areas of emotional development, self-regulation, identity, self-perceptions, and other critical areas of socio-emotional maturation. Survey data also reveal that the area of resilience is an opportunity for improving outcomes in the future. Given the increasing stress on young people in recent years, innovations in the strategy of Clubs to address resilience would be valuable.<sup>1</sup>

**“Club has helped me build more self-confidence and learn how to make good decisions for myself, and how to take care of myself better, and take care of other people as well”**

<sup>1</sup> Haidt, J. (2024). *The Anxious Generation: How the Great Rewiring of Childhood Is Causing an Epidemic of Mental Illness*. Penguin Press.



## Lifelong Learning

Clubs strive to support the development of enduring habits of and learning, becoming more prepared for the future. Data from both the survey and interviews demonstrate significant impact in members cultivating deep and enduring development in learning. Clubs provide members with opportunities to have enriched experiences. Members report being impacted by the

thoughtfulness of Clubs to design appropriate challenges for young people. They also talk about being invited to develop new skills and engage in activities they have never been exposed to previously. The evidence from three years of data show the development of growth mindset, openness to learning, and grit among members, attributes that presage the development of lifelong learning skills and commitment.<sup>2</sup> Given the strengths of data in this domain, Club staff have identified areas for improvement, including developing learning based on assessments for aptitudes and interests, focused learning for youth ages 11 to 13, and support for learning readiness for formal educational contexts of schooling.

88%

of respondents reported that because of a Club, they are **better able to take steps to reach their goals.**

**“You can explore a lot of different things [at the Club]. It teaches you what you're interested in or not interested in. It's a place where you are taken care of, can do fun activities, and learn very important skills.”**

## Leadership

Clubs intend for members to develop confidence and have the skills they need to lead themselves and positively influence others. The data show that members gain a sense of responsibility for others, developing interest and aptitude in influencing others and acting as a role model for younger children and youth who attend Club. Members report through Learning and Impact that they are growing in their ability to lead themselves. For many, the

89%

of respondents reported that because of a Club, they are **better at helping out when it is needed,** demonstrating improved initiative.

experience of the Club provides a vision for their future and how they might lead themselves into the future they desire. The primary area revealed in the survey for increased programming attention in the future is the ability of young people to manage their anxiety, regulate their emotions, and calm themselves when upset.

**“I went from needing a role model at Club to being the role model at Club.”**

<sup>2</sup> Duckworth, A. (2016). Grit: The Power of Passion and Perseverance. Scribner.



## The Value of the BGC Approach

The BGC Model for Success defines the Club experience as having three common features across all Clubs: a place of belonging, life-changing opportunities, and authentic connections. The qualitative data surfaced themes not only about the impact of Clubs but also insights into the causes and catalysts for impact.

### Clubs are a place of belonging

- **Clubs create an environment where everyone is welcome.** Each child and youth who walks into a Club is invited to participate fully and experience a deep and meaningful sense of acceptance.
- **Clubs are a place where members can be themselves.** Club is a place where children and youth feel safe and secure enough to be themselves.
- **Members experience the Club as a place of deep acceptance.** Members can show up as they are, with no pressure or expectation to adopt a self-protective facade or pretend to be someone they are not.

### Clubs provide life-changing opportunities

- **Clubs are a place to try new things.** Clubs provide boundless opportunities for children and youth to have new experiences, explore emerging interests, and expand horizons of curiosity.
- **Clubs are a place of fun.** Clubs offer children and youth countless opportunities for fun, to enjoy themselves and others.
- **Clubs are a place for self-discovery.** In the Club environment, members discover who they are and who they want to be. They can explore themselves surrounded by people who care. This helps them negotiate some of the most important challenges of growing up by finding and celebrating the value and uniqueness of self

### Clubs provide authentic connections

- **Clubs are a place to build positive friendships.** Clubs offer the opportunity for children and youth to create friendships at a stage of development when positive friendships are highly formative.
- **Clubs are a place where members develop positive relationships with quality adults.** At Clubs, children and youth experience the presence of a caring and attentive adult.
- **Clubs are a place where adults provide wisdom and insight.** The data show that the relationships that are developed between staff and young people provide supportive scaffolding for the development of members.

**"I like how every time I come here, people greet me. I get to make new friends and spend time with new people and learn new things. It feels like I have a place I belong."**

- Interviewee



## Recommendations

The findings through Learning and Impact reveal recommendations for the future impact of BGC Clubs.

**1. Create specialized strategies and programming for 11 to 13-year-olds.** Three years of data reveal a persistent dip in the reported impact of youth ages 11 to 13. During the Fall of 2024, staff from Clubs across Canada designed and implemented a qualitative study of the experience of youth in this age range at Clubs. They discovered that young people in this age group needed dedicated places and specialized programming to meet their unique needs.

**2. Provide opportunities for greater youth voice and choice.** Although many interviewees reported that the opportunity to make choices at their Club helped them develop their interests and personal agency, some expressed a desire for greater choice. Creating more opportunities for members to have a say in what they do and take greater ownership over their programming could develop their initiative, cultivate their choice, and foster a sense of agency in children and youth.

**3. Give ongoing attention to the inclusion of gender diverse populations.** The data show remarkable consistency of impact across demographic groups identified in the survey. However, members identifying as boys or men have a relatively lower reported impact than those identifying as girls or women and those identifying as nonbinary or who self-described their gender rate the impact Clubs lower relative to other gender identities.

**4. Increase support for school success.** Youth reported mixed results about the impact in school readiness. While some children and youth experience a positive impact of Clubs on their school readiness and achievement, others are unable to translate the impact of Club experience into their ability to learn and succeed at school.

**5. Create greater awareness of leadership identity.** Through Club experience, youth become better role models for their peers and younger children. However, many are hesitant to embrace their identity as a leader due to insecurity, pressure, or the negative connotations they hold about being a leader.

**6. Expand programming options for members' interests and aptitudes.** Interview data show that there may be opportunities to deepen and expand the skill development of members by increasing focused and intentional programming. Some interviews show that children and youth want activities that will help them accomplish a personal goal. Programming that provides a variety of activities and experiences can help children to discover their passions and interests. Specialized programs could be developed, based on members' interests, to improve their skills and develop their interests and aptitudes.

**7. Increase developmentally challenging learning opportunities.** For some interviewees, there is a sense that the Club experience is not yet intentional enough to maximize the learning of members and develop their full potential. Some young people voiced a desire for greater attention to purposeful development, whether it was academic or skill learning. According to



the data, one of the keys to Club impact is the presence of appropriate, intentional, and well-suited challenges for the developmental stage of the member. Balancing the need for unstructured play with the opportunity for structured challenges could potentially lead to an increased impact among members.

**8. Develop strategies for improving conflict resolution skills.** Even though many children and youth are developing conflict resolution skills, the survey data and some perspectives from interviewees reveal the difficulty they experience navigating conflict healthily and productively. Club participants report feeling more empathetic but are not as equipped to manage personal situations, specifically those involving stressful components or conflict.

**9. Provide increasing support for the development of mental health, emotional self-regulation, and well-being.** The data show that children and youth occasionally report that their physical health and activity levels are more stable than their mental health and wellbeing. The survey revealed lower ratings of impact in resilience than others. Evidence from three years of mixed-methods data collection demonstrates that Clubs are having a substantial impact on the development of interior strength and buoyancy in the lives of young people. However, the data also suggest that mental and emotional health are areas holding potential for greater impact in the future.

**10. Offer more structure to facilitate goal setting and attainment.** Some Club members struggle to set goals and develop strategies for pursuing them. Although the data show that children and youth are thinking about their future goals, the interview data revealed little about how they create and work toward goals during their time at the Club. This suggests that there may be a missed opportunity to help children and youth maximize their Club experience by developing essential skills related to setting and achieving shorter-term goals.

**11. Fortify staff recruitment and consistency.** The data show that one of the most significant reasons for impact is the presence of dedicated, trained staff who care about children and youth and are involved meaningfully and skillfully in their lives. Staff provide safety, guidance, culture, and learning activities for the Club experience. They are the glue that creates the bonds of connection and relationships throughout the Club. It is critical that staff are recruited, developed, supported, and retained to sustain the kind of impact Clubs are having in the development of children and youth.

**12. Amplify the youth voice of impact.** Learning and Impact has demonstrated that the voices of young people about the impact of Clubs are clear and compelling. They enjoy Clubs, make friends at Clubs, and build healthy relationships with adults at Clubs. They learn and grow at Clubs, building resilience and becoming emotionally and socially healthy at Clubs. The impact is broad and deep. And since the impact can be heard so clearly in the voices of children and youth who are members, opportunities should be provided for them to talk about their growth and development.



## Conclusion

The scope of Learning and Impact is one of significant magnitude, both in scale and depth. The following highlights rise to the surface of the initiative as lessons learned:

### **The impact of Clubs is remarkable.**

Data from 20,796 survey responses and 1,246 interviews over three years reveal a compelling picture of impact. Clubs are making a substantial difference in the lives of members. Because of Clubs, children and youth across Canada are growing and developing into their potential. Members are being given opportunities, being challenged, making friends, learning skills that will serve them well for the rest of their lives. They are finding their voices, influencing others, and stepping forward into the best versions of themselves.

### **The implementation of a thoughtful evaluation is developmental for BGC Canada.**

A commitment to evaluation matters for this national movement. They have embraced an evaluation that is not superficial or perfunctory. It takes enormous dedication to engage in a mixed-methods study of impact over the course of three years. The commitment to evaluation, using both an outcomes survey and deeply personal interviews, yields a richness of insight that is often overlooked in standard evaluations. Building the capacity of staff across Canada to skillfully engage in data collection and analysis produces curious, thoughtful, and responsive staff.

### **Participating in a meaningful evaluation is nourishing for children and youth.**

The approach of Learning and Impact has been to center the experiences and voices of youth, providing them with the space and reason to think about their lives and talk about their growth and development. The intent has been for evaluation to benefit the young people who are taking the survey and participating in an interview. The reflections of children and youth through the data collection process have encouraged them to consider the value of their lives and the brilliance of their growth.

### **The commitment to developing a culture of learning and impact is transformational.**

A culture of learning and a focus on impact does not come naturally when there are inestimable tasks to manage in a Club. And yet, Learning and Impact has demonstrated that evaluation can be done at scale without compromising the quality of programming. Staff can learn how to practice evaluation meaningfully and significantly. Evaluation can become a part of the culture and habits of an organization. Learning and Impact has proven that evaluation can be transformative for a national movement, to prove and improve impact.



## Acknowledgements

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BGC Airdrie Club  
BGC Albion Club  
BGC Battlefords  
BGC Bell Island Club  
BGC Botwood  
BGC Braeburn  
BGC Brantford  
BGC Camrose  
BGC Cape Breton  
BGC Central Vancouver Island  
BGC Charlotte County Club  
BGC Charlottetown  
BGC Chatham-Kent  
BGC Cochrane & Area  
BGC Cornwall/SDG  
BGC Cranbrook  
BGC Dawson  
BGC Dieppe  
BGC Dovercourt Club  
BGC Durham  
BGC East Scarborough  
BGC Eastview  
BGC Fort McMurray  
BGC Fort Saskatchewan  
BGC Gander  
BGC Grand Manan  
BGC Greater Fredericton  
BGC Greater Halifax Clubs  
BGC Greater Saint John  
BGC Hamilton-Halton  
BGC Kamloops & Williams Lake Club  
BGC Kawarthas  
BGC Leduc  
BGC London  
BGC Miramichi Club  
BGC Moncton  
BGC Niagara  
BGC Norris Arm  
BGC North Simcoe  
BGC Okanagan  
BGC Olds & Area  
BGC Ottawa  
BGC Peel  
BGC Preston  
BGC Prince County

BGC Red Deer & District Club  
BGC Renfrew County  
BGC Riverview  
BGC Sarnia-Lambton  
BGC Saskatoon  
BGC South Coast BC  
BGC South East  
BGC South Vancouver Island  
BGC Southern Alberta  
BGC St. Alban's Club  
BGC St. Anthony's & Area Club  
BGC St. John's  
BGC St. Paul  
BGC Stettler & District  
BGC Strathcona County  
BGC Three Rivers  
BGC Thompson  
BGC Thunder Bay  
BGC Toronto Kiwanis  
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