
Kitchener-Waterloo Region Impact Assessment Report

Free The Children's We Day and
We Schools in Action Regional
Programming in 2010-11

Mission Measurement, LLC
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Introduction

Executive Summary

For the last 16 years, Free The Children (FTC) has been educating, engaging and empowering young people to affect positive change in the world. In 2011, Research In Motion (RIM) provided Free The Children the resources to bring its programming to the Kitchener-Waterloo region. The ultimate goal of this work is to create systemic social change within the educational system that boosts youth character, leadership and involvement in social activities at home and around the world. As shown below in Figure 1, the FTC model influences the necessary intermediate outcomes (e.g. changes in awareness, knowledge, attitude, and behavior) for achieving its ultimate goal.

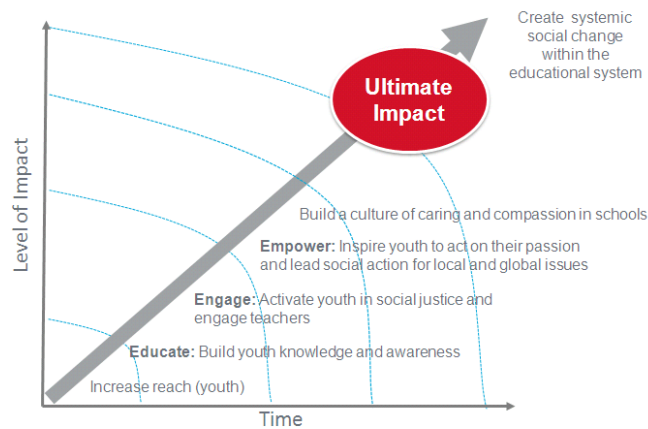


Figure 1: FTC Theory of Change

Free The Children first began to engage schools in the Kitchener-Waterloo early in the 2010-11 school year. With RIM’s and Free The Children’s support, students and teachers in these schools began taking actions and participating in campaigns to advance social justice, with increasing momentum as the school year progressed. Over a few short months, thousands of students became more educated about social justice issues, more engaged in actions to address social justice issues and more empowered to be the leaders of a growing movement that will have lasting impact on students, schools, and communities across the Kitchener-Waterloo region.

- **Educate:** The burgeoning movement was accelerated on February 17th, 2011, as over 6,000 teachers and students from across the region attended *We Day*, *improved knowledge and awareness* about social issues and became inspired to take action.
- **Engage:** Combined, more than 10,000 students from over 200 schools in the region were *moved to action* and provided more than 140,000 hours of community service and raised over \$600,000 through the *We Schools in Action* program.
- **Empower:** In the weeks and months after *We Day* (and related leadership training events that followed), teachers and students returned to their schools *to lead their peers and colleagues* in social justice actions, including campaigns, events, and other activities that were designed to raise awareness and money to support local and global issues.

We Day

Summary

The Free The Children model begins with We Day, an educational “spark” designed to inspire a generation of students to care more about social justice and to take an interest in becoming part of the solution. To create a broad-reaching, sustainable movement, Free The Children anchors its programming in the local educational system. Thus, We Day also seeks to reinvigorate teachers with a renewed sense of purpose as an educator and equip teachers with practical tools to help students turn newfound inspiration into action. We Day Kitchener-Waterloo was held on February 17th, 2011, attracting more than 6,000 students and teachers from over 200 schools.

To assess We Day’s impact, we (Mission Measurement) conducted surveys of both teachers and students. The surveys were launched ten days after We Day, allowing recipients the time to reflect on their experience while still being proximate enough to capture fresh reactions not overly colored by intervening experiences.

We designed the student survey to mirror the goals of the Free The Children model: Educate, Engage, Empower. The questions on the survey asked students to reflect on their knowledge, attitudes and behaviors both prior to and following We Day, mimicking a pretest/posttest design. This structure allowed us to assess growth in each area, both by individual teacher/student and in the aggregate.

The speeches, presentations, performances and videos by social justice leaders at We Day brought a number of social justice issues to the fore. Four issues in particular were highlighted by speakers and presenters:

- Child Labor/Children’s Freedom
- Global Poverty
- Global Warming
- Civil Rights/Canadian Aboriginal Inequality

Through the surveys, we were able to assess the degree to which We Day successfully promoted knowledge of and interest in these social justice issues. Across the board, students reported growth in knowledge and passion about these social justice issues. And furthermore, while nearly 1/3 of student respondents did not see themselves as able to make a meaningful difference prior to attending We Day, nearly all of them left feeling capable of changing the world and excited enough to go tell their friends and family about their experience.

For teachers, we asked not just for their perspective of their students’ experience, where they reaffirmed what the students themselves had said, but also for the value the event provided them as educators. Many teachers reported that they went back to their schools better equipped to teach about social justice issues and with a renewed inspiration for teaching.

We Day: Summary of Findings

Students

- 85% report having gained knowledge about a social justice issue
- 81% left We Day feeling passionate about a social justice issue, up from 53% before We Day
- 61% left We Day believing they could be a leader of social change, up from 27% before We Day

Teachers

- 56% felt We Day provided them a renewed inspiration for teaching

Students: Educate

The Free The Children model begins with education. Unless students are aware of the issues facing youth locally and globally, they have little reason to become engaged in activities to address those issues. To assess the degree to which We Day successfully promoted knowledge about social justice issues, we asked students to reflect on their knowledge of four social justice issues featured at We Day both before attending the event and after. We then calculated the degree to which knowledge grew, both in aggregate and on a student-by-student basis. Students were asked to describe their knowledge in one of the following ways:

- Not aware of the issue
- Aware of the issue, but do not know anything about it
- Aware of the issue and know a little bit about it
- Aware of the issue and know a fair bit about it
- Aware of the issue and know a lot about it

Awareness before We Day ranged from 100% awareness (though not necessarily knowledge) about Global Warming on the high end to 92% who reported at least some awareness of Civil Rights/Canadian Aboriginal Inequality on the low end. With a base of awareness established, we looked at the degree to which knowledge about the issues changed as a result of We Day attendance.

To assess knowledge growth, we looked at the difference between the percent of students who reported “a fair bit” or “a lot” of knowledge about each issue both before and after We Day. For three of the four issues, over 50% of students reported having “a fair bit” or “a lot” of knowledge before We Day, with Civil Rights/Canadian Aboriginal Inequality trailing at 31%. After We Day, **knowledge increased substantially for all four of the issues**, most notably for Civil Rights/Canadian Aboriginal Inequality, with 83% of students reporting “a fair bit” or “a lot” of knowledge about the issue following We Day, an increase of 52%. **In total, 85% of the student respondents reported having gained knowledge about at least one of the issues at We Day.**

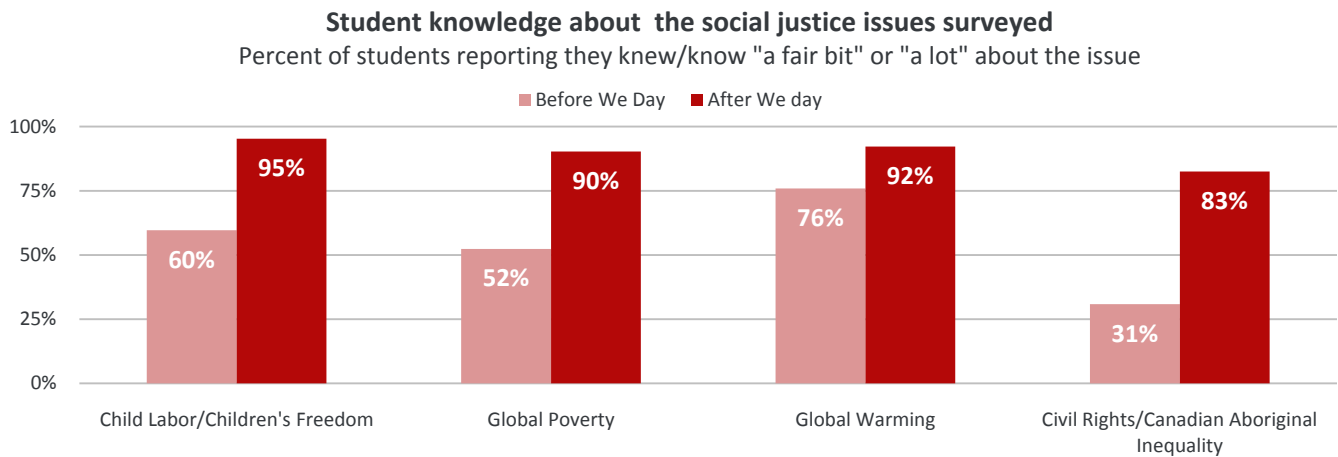


Figure 2: We Day Student Survey Results - Educate

Teacher respondents also observed this growth in knowledge, as **79% reported that their students learned “a lot” about social justice issues at We Day.** Clearly, We Day was successful in increasing student knowledge about social justice issues.

Students: Engage

The growth students experienced as a result of their We Day participation was not limited to increases in knowledge. Students also reported large increases in their passion for social justice issues and interest in becoming more engaged. To measure change in engagement, student respondents were given a similar set of choices to the knowledge question, in the same pre/post fashion. Passion, as captured in these statements, is viewed as a precursor for action and includes a component of willingness to take action.

- Not aware of the issue
- Aware of the issue, but do not think it is important
- Aware of the issue, but do not know enough to have a strong feeling about it
- Believe the issue is important and needs to be addressed by someone
- Feel passionately about the issue and want to be part of the solution

For each issue, the percent of students engaged generally follows the same distribution as seen in knowledge, with the exception of Global Warming, which did not stand above the other issues. This is not unexpected, as Global Warming has been the focus of much popular discussion in recent years. Thus, awareness of the issue may be inflated and not as strongly linked to passion as seen with other issues.

Overall, we observed a **28% increase in the percent of students that reported they “felt passionately... and want to be part of the solution” for at least one of the four issues**, from 53% to 81%. As seen with knowledge, the largest increase was seen for Civil Rights/Canadian Aboriginal Inequality, as the initial percentage of students that reported they wanted to be part of the solution more than tripled from 17% to 61%.

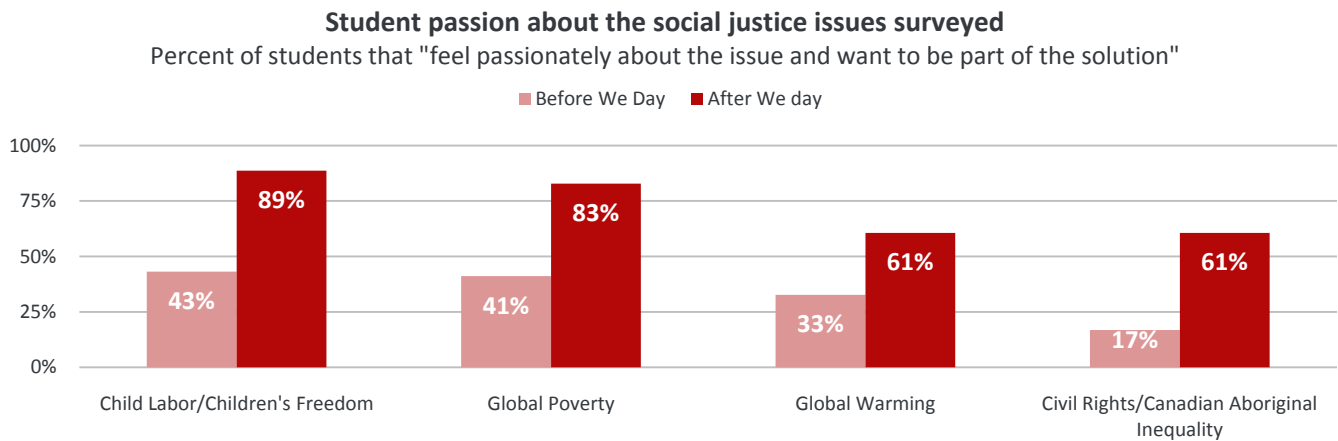


Figure 3: We Day Student Survey Results - Engage

The passion described in the figures above can also be seen in students’ reflections on their experience at We Day, “Craig and Marc had the whole auditorium chanting 'freedom'. It was very emotionally powerful, and at times I felt nearly moved to tears.”

A teacher attendee described his/her students' shift in their perception of social justice, “Hearing the message from young stars, especially Degrassi cast, makes identifying and reacting to social justice issues a "cool" thing to do, it's "cool" to care!” Given the importance of social acceptance, especially for students in middle and high school, this shift in perception could have a powerful, lasting impact driving student engagement.

Students: Empower

Free The Children believes that before youth are ready to act, they must not only have knowledge about the issues and a desire to see change happen, but they must also believe that they personally can create that change. To assess how students’ view of their role in social justice changed due to We Day, we asked to select which statement best described their view of their role in addressing social justice issues:

- There is nothing I can do to help solve social justice issues
- I can only make a very small difference through participation in social justice activities
- I can make a meaningful difference through participation in social justice activities
- I can be a leader of social change.

Prior to We Day, over 34% of student identified with the statement “I can only make a very small difference...” As 34% of respondents is the equivalent of thousands of students in attendance, this figure represented a significant risk to the success of Free The Children’s efforts if it were not changed. However, after We Day, just 3% of students felt they could make only a “very small difference.”

This shift in empowerment, from 66% of students feeling empowered to “make a meaningful difference” or “be a leader of social” before We Day before to 97% afterwards, is a strong signal for the future success in creating systemic change. **But perhaps most encouraging is that the percent of students who felt that they could be a leader of social change more than doubled from 27% to 61%.** In effect, nearly all the students who entered feeling only slightly or somewhat empowered moved up to the next level of empowerment.

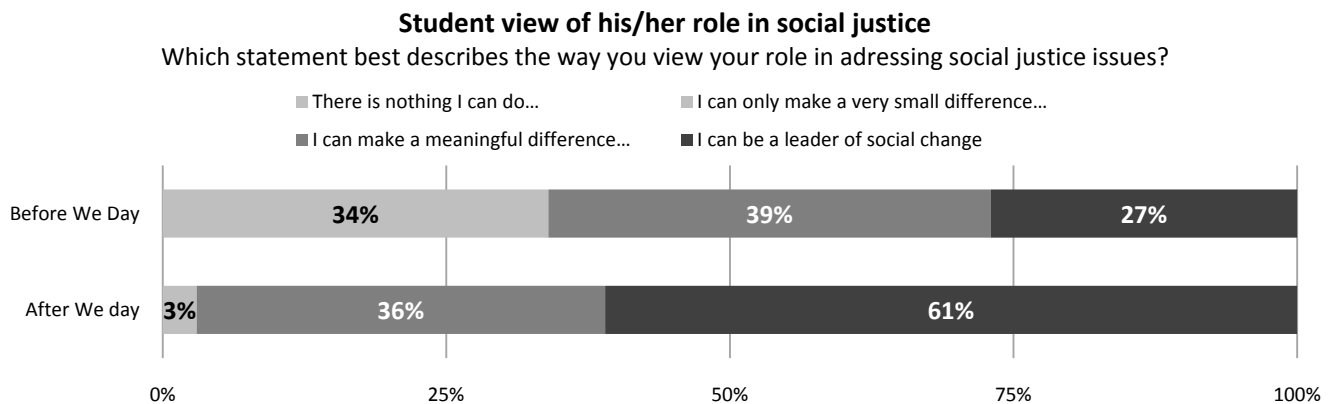


Figure 4: We Day Student Survey Results - Empower

This feeling of empowerment can be seen in how broadly the students shared their experience after leaving We Day; 93% of respondents reported having talked to their family about the issues discussed at We Day, 95% reported having talked to their peers about their We day experience and **96% reported an intent to either lead or play an active role in a social justice initiative at their school.** One teacher reported, “When we were returning to school some of the students were already planning how to share the message they heard... It was amazing to see their inspiration!”

Appreciation for the event was also evident in that every single respondent, 100%, said that they would like to attend We Day again in the future. As one student described, “I loved it all but the feeling that will stay with me forever, is the feeling of unity. Being in that arena just made me feel like I could never be alone in such a beautiful world.” When asked what, if anything, they could change about We Day, another student explained, “Nothing, it was one of the best days of my life and I learned that even though I'm a kid, I can make a change in the world. Thank you for We Day!”

Teachers

In addition educating, engaging and empower youth, 'We Day' is also designed to inspire teachers to become more engaged in their own teaching and to support them in incorporating social justice into their teaching. Free The Children believes that by inspiring teachers, as well as students, the impact of the event can take stronger root in the schools and set the stage for year-long action. Following We Day, we surveyed teacher attendees to assess their reaction to the day and received 106 responses.

While much of the programming at We Day is targeted to youth, teachers clearly were impacted as well. More than half of teachers surveyed, 56%, agreed with the statement, "(We Day) provided me with renewed inspiration for teaching." In comments following the statement, a number of teachers noted that they were already passionate about teaching and thus didn't need have their inspiration renewed. If we slightly reinterpret the results in consideration of this, we recognize that the percent of teachers who left We Day with inspiration to teach was actually greater than 56%, suggesting a stronger foundation for students that we might otherwise conclude. In the future, we can more carefully address this topic to more fully understand the degree to which teachers felt a need for renewed inspiration and the degree to which We Day accomplished that.

In comments, a number of teachers elaborated on the source of their renewed inspiration, seeing their students excited and energized. When asked to provide a favourite moment of the day, as an educator, one teacher replied,

My favourite moment was seeing my students' faces as they continued to be inspired by all of the positive energy throughout the day. I had to hold back tears because I was so moved by the day. I think the magnitude of the energy and power by all the youth was my favourite (and it was more than just a moment!!)

And teachers did not just leave with inspiration. 31% of teachers reported having received or bought useful classroom resources. By inspiring teachers and equipping them to incorporate social justice into their teaching, Free The Children set the stage for the momentum created at We Day to continue into the schools.

Year-Long ‘We Schools in Action’ Program

Summary

Traditionally, We Day occurs in the Fall, and serves as a kick-off event for the year-long ‘We Schools’ program in the community. Free The Children’s year-long ‘We Schools in Action’ program serves as a platform for campaigns, fundraisers, and other events targeted at serving people and supporting organizations both locally and globally. While February’s We Day in the Kitchener-Waterloo region clearly left students educated, engaged and empowered and teachers excited to return to their classrooms and teach, it provided a unique boost of energy and enthusiasm for the social justice movement that had already begun in the region in the Fall of 2010.

The activities which took place throughout the school year as part of the We Schools in Action program are student led and can be described as either “Local” or “Global” actions, depending on the needs being served. Actions are generally designed by and led students with the support of their teachers and a Free The Children liaison. Free The Children supplements these student-led actions with broader, coordinated campaigns in which schools may choose to participate. These campaigns are designed by Free The Children and take place at specific times during the year and enacted locally by the students.

More than 200 schools across the region participated in We Day and the We Schools in Action program. As part of the design of the We Schools in Action program, all participating schools are asked to provide a structured report on the scope of their participation and a summary of their results and experiences. However, not all schools were able to provide a report. The following figures represent the results and impact from the 194 schools across the region that provided data in May of 2011. The data were reported by teacher representatives and describe the scope of activity and impact to that point in the school year. Many schools had ongoing activities through the end of the school year. While these data capture much of what happened in the region, they should not be considered fully exhaustive.

Year-Long ‘We Schools in Action’ Program

The 194 schools that provided a report come from each of the major boards in the region as well as a number of smaller boards, including:

- Waterloo Region District School Board: 95 schools
- Waterloo Catholic District School Board: 47 schools
- Upper Grand District School Board: 27 schools
- Wellington Catholic District School Board: 16 schools
- Other, such as Waterloo region universities and independent schools: 9 schools

Across the campaigns and actions in the Kitchener-Waterloo region:

- 200+ schools participated (194 reporting)
- 10,000+ students volunteered
- 140,000+ volunteer hours given
- \$600,000 raised for local and global organizations

Local Actions

Over 90% Kitchener-Waterloo region schools (178) reported that their students conducted at least one local action, an activity designed to address local community needs. These activities included raising social justice awareness through peer education to raising money and collecting food for local organizations to participation in Free The Children's Local Spotlight: Aboriginal Education campaign. Common awareness raising actions included making daily announcements and/or handing out posters (125 schools), sharing materials on bulletin boards (116 schools) and conducting leadership assemblies (77 schools).

Of the 178 schools that conducted local actions, 144 engaged in fundraising activities on behalf of a local organization or persons in need. Fundraisers took a wide variety of forms including coin drives, food drives and classroom presentations and through these actions, the schools raised over \$125,000 and collected more than 9,000 pounds of food for over 80 local organizations. Organizations benefitting from local actions include:

Aeropostale (to benefit homeless teens)	Mennonite Coalition of Refugee Support
AIDS Committee of Cambridge, Kitchener, Waterloo and Area (ACCKWA)	MS Society of Canada
ALS Society of Canada	Neighbours Helping Neighbours
Angel Tree	Nutrition for Learning
Arthur Community Food Bank	OK2BME
Big Brothers Big Sisters	Rare Charitable Research Reserve
Bikes for Africa	Reaching Our Outdoor Friends (ROOF)
Breast Cancer	Red Cross
Cambridge Food bank	Region of Waterloo Food bank
Canadian Breast Cancer Society	Ontario Gleaners
Canadian Cancer Society	Operation Christmas Child
Canadian Diabetes Association	Our Sacred heart parish
Canadian Food for Children	Out of the Cold
Canadian Juvenile Diabetes Foundation	Pennies for Peace
Earth Day Community Clean Up	Salvation Army
East Wellington Advisory Group for Family Services (EWAG)	Share Life
Family and Children's Services	Special Olympics Hockey Team
Free the Children	St. Ambrose Parish
Friends of the Orphans Canada	St. Clement Build Fund
Grand River Hospital	St. John's Kitchen
Grand River Hospital Cancer Center	St. Monica House
Grand River Hospital Neonatal Unit	St. Vincent de Paul
Guelph Children's Foundation	SunBeam Lodge
Guelph Food Bank	Sunnyside Senior Centre
Hamilton East Kiwanis Boys and Girls Club	Teen Challenge
Headwaters Hospital	Terry Fox Foundation
Heart & Stroke Foundation	UNICEF
Heifer International	United Way
Holy Rosary Church Pantry	War Child
Hoops for Heart	Welcome Home
House of Friendship	Wilmot Family Resource Centre
Humane Society	Woolwich Township
Jean Vanier	Wyndham House
Jessica's Footprint	
Kate's Kause	<u>Unspecified local organizations/groups</u>
KIVA	Animal shelter
KidsAbility	Child(ren) fighting illness
Kids Can Fly	Church group
Kitchener-Waterloo Multicultural Center	Crisis shelter
Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony	Families in need
Langs Farm Village Association	Firefighters
MADD	Food bank
Marillac Place	Hospital
Meals on Wheels	Native reserve
Mennonite Relief Fund	

Global Actions

In addition to the widespread participation in local actions, students in 186 schools (96%) took part in global actions. As with local actions, global actions included a wide range of efforts to raise awareness, money or both. Free The Children global campaigns included Haiti: La Solidarite and Five Days for Freedom.

Students used many of the same types of actions to raise awareness and money for global issues as with the local ones, including the use of daily school-wide announcements, bulletin boards and leadership assemblies to educate peers. The fundraising efforts rose over \$475,000 to support more than 50 organizations. Recipients of funds for global issues include:

30 Hour Famine	North South Partnership for Children
Aeropostale (to benefit homeless teens)	Operation Christmas Child
Bag2School	Pennies for Pakistan
Bikes for Africa	Pennies for Peace
Bracelet of Hope	Red Cross
Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace	Ryan's Well Foundation
Canadian Red Cross	Saint Vincent de Paul Society
Caring Partners Global	Save Darfur
Carpets from Milk Bags	School in Dominican Republic
Charitywater.org	School in Israel
Development and Peace	SJK's Five World Programme
Dignitas International	Sleeping Children Around the World
Dr. Simone and the Canadian Food for Children	SOPAR well
Eat to Feed Liberians	Sourol
Fosterchild	Spread The Net
Friends of the Orphans Canada	Stephen Lewis Foundation
Global Caring Partners	STIMMA
Habitat for Humanity (Fiji)	UNICEF
Haiti well fund	University of Western Ontario Rwanda trip
Harambe Africa Project	War Child
Heifer International	World Vision
Interact Rotary	World Wildlife Fund
KidsAbility	
KIVA	<u>Unspecified global organizations</u>
KW Food Bank	Cuban farmers
Lukobe Project	School in Nicaragua
Mennonite Central Committee	Teacher's college in Sierra Leone
Missionary Ventures Canada	Teacher's mission trip to Uganda
Mully Children's Family Charitable Foundation	

Impact

Summary

While the number of students and the amount of money raised throughout the 2010-11 school year was substantial and will help advance social justice locally in the Kitchener-Waterloo region and globally, Free The Children creates its most lasting impact through the creation of system social change in the education system. As the students and teachers who attend We Day return to their communities and schools, they in turn educate, engage and empower their families, peers and neighbors. Over time, through this viral effect, the culture of local schools and communities changes as well, ultimately growing the social justice movement across the region.

To assess the impact of We Day and the We Schools program on the students, schools and communities, we incorporated a set of outcome statements into the existing We Schools in Action reporting process. The statements describe a broad set of intermediate outcomes that Free The Children's programs are designed to advance. These outcome statements were developed from both the Free The Children model and from stories and observations shared by teachers in other We Schools communities in prior years. For each statement, we asked the teacher representative from each school to state their level of agreement and to provide examples, where possible.

The teachers were asked to report their level of agreement with each statement on the following scale: Strongly Agree (4), Agree (3), Somewhat Agree (2), Disagree (1). A 'Disagree' response means the teacher did not observe the described change, while the various agree options provide an opportunity for the teacher to describe the degree to which he/she observed the described change taking place.

The statements were grouped by whom or what was impacted, students, school culture and community. Within each group, the statements were further grouped to reflect the components of the Free The Children model. In each section, we present two data tables. The first table shows the distribution of responses to each statement, along with the combined percent who responded to the top two levels of agreement (Agree and Strongly Agree) and the average scores (ranging from 1 to 4). The second table shows the average score of all respondents broken down by school board.

Overall, the greatest impact was reported on the students themselves.

- Across the statements that comprise 79% of the responses to the outcome statements in the Student section were either "Agree" or "Strongly Agree", with an average score of 3.1.
- Agreement with the outcome statements in the School Culture section was slightly lower, at 69% and 2.9 respectively.
- The least amount of impact was reported on the Local Community, with just 36% "Agree" or "Strongly Agree" and an average response of 2.3.

While a response of 2.3 clearly indicates the least perceived impact on the Local Community, this should not be interpreted as a negative result. A 2.3 response corresponds to "Somewhat Agree", indicating that that some positive impact on the community has been observed. We expect impact to expand over time, starting with the participating students and rippling out to teachers and other students through school culture and ultimately into communities as the work of the students gains greater recognition. As more students attend We Day and participate in campaigns and activities over time, we expect both School Culture and Local Community impact to increase.

Impact on Students

The statements regarding the impact on students covered the range of the Free The Children model: educate, engage and empower. As the statements were given to the teacher representative at each school, the teacher's response refers to those students whom the teacher has had the opportunity to work with and/or teach. Because we received significant insight on issue awareness and education through the We Day survey, these statements focused to a greater degree on Engage and Empower outcomes.

"My students..." (% who Agree or Strongly Agree, average response on a scale of 4)

Educate

1. Now know more about social justice issues (88%, 3.3)

Engage

2. Now believe they can make a difference in the world (95%, 3.5)
3. Now see themselves as part of a broader community (89%, 3.3)
4. Are now more passionate about addressing social justice issues (88%, 3.2)

Empower

5. Are now more self-confident (76%, 3.0)
6. Believe more strongly that they have a responsibility to address social justice issues (81%, 3.0)
7. Have taken action on their own address social justice issues (59%, 2.7)
8. Have demonstrated increased leadership among their peers (82%, 3.1)
9. Have demonstrated an increased ability to critically examine new information and thoughtfully incorporate it into their actions and beliefs (59%, 2.7)

Teachers generally reported having observed positive change in every area— that is, at least 50% of teachers either 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' with the provided statement, with an average response of at least 2.5.

Though the responses were positive, on average, in each area, there is a noticeable difference between the average responses in Educate (3.3) and Engage (3.3) and those in Empower (2.9). These results are not unexpected, as this captures the change after just one year of Free The Children programming in the region. Research of positive youth development programs shows that behavior change and skill growth are longer-term outcomes and often not realized until after the youth have been deeply involved over a period of multiple years. As students are engaged over a longer period of time and supported by the broader effects of the movement in their schools and communities, we would expect to see levels of agreement with the Empower statements increase.

This dynamic can be seen by comparing the responses of teachers in the Kitchener-Waterloo region to those provide by teachers in Vancouver and Toronto, communities which have had We Day and We Schools for multiple years. The average responses to Educate and Engage statements by teachers in Kitchener-Waterloo and those communities are comparable, but Kitchener-Waterloo teachers report slightly lower levels of agreement with the Empower statements.

The strongest level of agreement by Kitchener-Waterloo region teachers was with the statement "My students now believe they can make a difference in the world". Other statements related to students' feelings about their role, such as "My students now believe more strongly that they have a responsibility to address social justice issues" also received high levels of agreement.

One teacher described the impact of the We Schools program in catalyzing action at his/her school, "Being a We School has allowed our students to have a support system and an avenue to take action. It's so much easier for them when they know they are not alone and that there is an easy starting point with the (Free The Children) group giving support." Another described a particular student transformed by his/her involvement, "(A) shy, reserved student has now developed into a great leader who is respected by her peers."

The weakest level of agreement by Kitchener-Waterloo teachers was with the statement "My students have taken action on their own to address social justice issues" and the statement "My students have demonstrated an increased ability to critically examine new information and thoughtfully incorporate it into their actions and beliefs". That more than 50% of teachers agreed or strongly agreed with each statement is a good sign in that these longer term outcomes are already beginning to be observed. We expect to see improvement in these areas over time.

A look at the responses by school board reveals that while each school board experienced the same general trends, there was some variation among them. Of note, schools in the Wellington Catholic District School Board generally reported stronger levels of agreement than seen in the secular schools. This is most apparent in responses to their responses to the engagement statements. Their comparatively strong levels of agreement suggests that there are some other factors affecting the impact at those schools, such as a population of students that are particularly interested in taking action, perhaps in part due to the broader themes and teachings that are part of a Catholic education.

Impact on Students – Continued

Impact on Students Response Summary	Disagree (1)	Somewhat Agree (2)	Agree (3)	Strongly Agree (4)	Top 2 (3 or 4)	Average Response
Educate						
1. My students now know more about social justice issues	1%	11%	44%	43%	88%	3.3
<i>Average</i>	1%	11%	44%	43%	88%	3.3
Engage						
2. My students now believe they can make a difference in the world	0%	5%	39%	55%	95%	3.5
3. My students now see themselves as part of a broader community	0%	11%	48%	41%	89%	3.3
4. My students are now more passionate about addressing social justice issues	1%	11%	50%	38%	88%	3.2
<i>Average</i>	1%	9%	46%	45%	91%	3.3
Empower						
5. My students are now more self-confident (e.g. believe in their own abilities)	1%	24%	49%	27%	76%	3.0
6. My students now believe more strongly that they have a responsibility to address social justice issues	1%	18%	57%	24%	81%	3.0
7. My students have taken action on their own address social justice issues (e.g. have organized events or projects or participated in other activities)	7%	35%	42%	17%	59%	2.7
8. My students have demonstrated increased leadership among their peers (e.g. organized projects or events and encouraged their peers to get involved)	2%	17%	47%	34%	82%	3.1
9. My students have demonstrated an increased ability to critically examine new information and thoughtfully incorporate it into their actions and beliefs	2%	39%	45%	13%	59%	2.7
<i>Average</i>	2%	27%	48%	45%	71%	2.9

Impact on Students – Continued

Impact on Students Average, by School Board	Waterloo Region (95)	Waterloo Catholic (47)	Upper Grand (27)	Wellington Catholic (16)	Other (9)	Average Response (194)
Educate						
1. My students now know more about social justice issues	3.1	3.5	3.4	3.6	3.1	3.3
<i>Average</i>	3.1	3.5	3.4	3.6	3.1	3.3
Engage						
2. My students now believe they can make a difference in the world	3.5	3.6	3.3	3.6	3.3	3.5
3. My students now see themselves as part of a broader community	3.3	3.3	3.3	3.4	3.1	3.3
4. My students are now more passionate about addressing social justice issues	3.1	3.3	3.3	3.6	2.9	3.2
<i>Average</i>	3.3	3.4	3.3	3.5	3.1	3.2
Empower						
5. My students are now more self-confident (e.g. believe in their own abilities)	3.0	2.9	3.0	3.4	2.6	3.0
6. My students now believe more strongly that they have a responsibility to address social justice issues	2.9	3.1	3.1	3.6	2.9	3.0
7. My students have taken action on their own address social justice issues (e.g. have organized events or projects or participated in other activities)	2.6	2.7	2.7	3.1	2.6	2.7
8. My students have demonstrated increased leadership among their peers (e.g. organized projects or events and encouraged their peers to get involved)	3.2	3.0	3.3	3.4	2.8	3.1
9. My students have demonstrated an increased ability to critically examine new information and thoughtfully incorporate it into their actions and beliefs	2.6	2.7	2.7	3.0	2.6	2.7
<i>Average</i>	2.9	2.9	3.0	3.3	2.7	2.9

Impact on School Culture

The statements related to school culture fell into two groups, those pertaining to the atmosphere of the school and those specific to the teacher's personal experience:

(% who Agree or Strongly Agree, average response on a scale of 4)

Atmosphere

1. Students in my school display a greater enthusiasm for learning (38%, 2.3)
2. There is a greater atmosphere of caring and compassion (69%, 2.8)

Teachers

3. I have developed relationships with students with whom I would not have otherwise (80%, 3.2)
4. I feel a renewed sense of purpose as an educator (79%, 3.2)
5. I am better equipped to teach my students about social justice issues (81%, 3.2)

The teachers' responses to the questions about their own experience were similar those seen in the student impact section, with ~80% of teachers agreeing or strongly agreeing with the statements. Many teachers remarked that 'We Schools in Action' served as a helpful complement to existing programs. As one teacher explained, "Especially in the intermediate grades it has given us something to relate the curriculum to. Social justice has been a focus as a method to deliver the curriculum."

The responses to the statements about the school atmosphere were also positive, but less strongly so. A key outcome for Free The Children in Kitchener-Waterloo was helping to advance the Ontario Ministry of Education's goal of creating an atmosphere of caring and compassion. **69% of schools agreed or strongly agreed that there is a greater atmosphere of caring and compassion as a result of their Free The Children engagement.** One teacher explained, "The climate of me, me, me, is becoming more like we,we,we."

The lowest level of agreement in the school culture section was with the statement "students in my school display a greater enthusiasm for learning", as 10% of teachers disagreed and 52% somewhat agreed. Though the body of research around activities such as those supported by Free The Children generally establishes a link between participation and increased enthusiasm for learning, we should note that the campaigns and actions are not designed specifically to drive this outcome and that outcomes such as this require a deep level of engagement over long periods of time. So while the level of agreement seen in School Culture was notably less than seen with other outcomes, that over 1/3 of teachers agreed or strongly agreed is still a positive result.

It is important to note that school culture is a very complex dynamic, making systematic measurement difficult to conduct and interpret. While research provides justification for the belief that Free The Children can help improve school culture, the specific manifestations and scope of change will undoubtedly vary from school to school. Because of this, the strongest evidence may be anecdotal. For example, a teacher an Upper Grand District School Board school describes the impact on their culture, "By uniting to learn about social issues and work to make a difference we have learned more about each other. My students and I see each others as fellow humans first and teacher and student second."

Examining the responses by school board, we see less variation among responses than in the Student section. Though schools in the Wellington Catholic District School Board continued to show the strongest level of agreement compared to other schools, the responses were very close, suggesting that We Day and We Schools has similar positive impact on school culture regardless of whether the school is secular or religious.

Impact on School Culture Response Summary	Disagree (1)	Somewhat Agree (2)	Agree (3)	Strongly Agree (4)	Top 2 (3 or 4)	Average Response
Atmosphere						
1. Students in my school display a greater enthusiasm for learning	10%	52%	33%	5%	38%	2.3
2. There is a greater atmosphere of caring and compassion	3%	29%	54%	15%	69%	2.8
Average	6%	40%	43%	10%	54%	2.6
Teachers						
3. I have developed relationships with students with whom I would not have otherwise	5%	15%	38%	42%	80%	3.2
4. I feel a renewed sense of purpose as an educator	2%	19%	40%	39%	79%	3.2
5. I am better equipped to teach my students about social justice issues	2%	18%	44%	37%	81%	3.2
Average	3%	18%	41%	39%	80%	3.2

Impact on School Culture Average, by School Board	Waterloo Region (95)	Waterloo Catholic (47)	Upper Grand (27)	Wellington Catholic (16)	Other (9)	Average Response (194)
Atmosphere						
1. Students in my school display a greater enthusiasm for learning	2.3	2.3	2.4	2.5	2.1	2.3
2. There is a greater atmosphere of caring and compassion	2.8	2.9	2.8	3.1	2.7	2.8
Average	2.5	2.6	2.6	2.8	2.4	2.6
Teachers						
3. I have developed relationships with students with whom I would not have otherwise	3.2	3.1	3.2	3.2	3.2	3.2
4. I feel a renewed sense of purpose as an educator	3.1	3.1	3.3	3.3	3.0	3.2
5. I am better equipped to teach my students about social justice issues	3.1	3.2	3.1	3.3	3.0	3.2
Average	3.2	3.1	3.2	3.3	3.1	3.2

Impact on Local Community

The last section of statements relates to impact on the local community. In particular, we examined the relationship between the local community and the students/school.

(% who Agree or Strongly Agree, average response on a scale of 4)

1. The community now views the school in a more favorable light (37%, 2.3)
2. The community increasingly sees students as a positive force and an asset to their community (42%, 2.4)
3. The community has become more involved with the school (30%, 2.1)

Like in the other areas, we expect impact on the community to increase over time. As campaigns and events that engage the community have only begun recently in many schools, it is not surprising that the level of agreement to these statements was generally the lower than the others. It is also likely that there has been less opportunity to assess the impact on the local community than for those changes seen in the school building.

The statement “community perception of students as a positive force and an asset to their community” received the strongest level of agreement, with 42% of schools agreeing or strongly agreeing. Of note is the particularly high level of disagreement with the statement that the community has become more involved with the school. Many teachers reported that ‘We Schools’ has increased engagement with parents, but that broader community outreach was just beginning. This is an area of opportunity for Free The Children moving forward.

We see very little variation in responses by school board, with a notable exception for the responses of schools in the two catholic school boards to the statement regarding community involvement. The level of consistency in these responses suggests that perhaps the respondents did not have a strong sense of the community’s perception.

Impact on Local Community – Continued

Impact on Local Community Response Summary	Disagree (1)	Somewhat Agree (2)	Agree (3)	Strongly Agree (4)	Top 2 (3 or 4)	Average Response
1. The community now views the school in a more favorable light (e.g. received praise in local media, are known for our good work)	11%	52%	30%	7%	37%	2.3
2. The community increasingly sees students as a positive force and an asset to their community	7%	51%	38%	5%	42%	2.4
3. The community has become more involved with the school (e.g. volunteerism at the school, donations, event attendance)	24%	46%	22%	8%	30%	2.1
Average	14%	49%	30%	6%	36%	2.3

Impact on Local Community Average, by School Board	Waterloo Region (95)	Waterloo Catholic (47)	Upper Grand (27)	Wellington Catholic (16)	Other (9)	Average Response (194)
1. The community now views the school in a more favorable light (e.g. received praise in local media, are known for our good work)	2.3	2.3	2.5	2.3	2.3	2.3
2. The community increasingly sees students as a positive force and an asset to their community	2.4	2.4	2.4	2.4	2.4	2.4
3. The community has become more involved with the school (e.g. volunteerism at the school, donations, event attendance)	2.2	1.9	2.1	2.4	1.9	2.1
Average	2.3	2.2	2.3	2.3	2.2	2.3