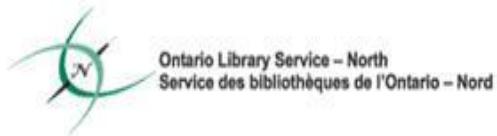


Social Return on Investment

Dryden Public Library

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Ontario Library Service – North
Service des bibliothèques de l'Ontario – Nord



Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport



Executive Summary

The Ontario Library Services - North has contracted NORDIK Institute to evaluate the impact that the 121 Libraries of Northern Ontario provide to their communities. Six diverse pilot sites volunteered to participate in the design and testing of a tool for measuring the Social Return on Investment (SROI), including Dryden, Rainy River, Kenora, Temiskaming Shores, Powassan and Wikwemikong Unceded Indian Reserve.

Based on a review of relevant literature, focus groups, consultation with Steering Committee members and site visits, NORDIK designed a Measurement Toolkit to encompass the many diverse and unique roles that public libraries play in the North as Community Hubs. Seven key areas, or sectors, were identified as components of libraries' benefit to their communities, namely: **Cultural Integrity and Regional Identity; Social Inclusion; Cognitive and Literacy; Health and Wellness; Engaged Citizens and Safer Communities; Entertainment and Enjoyment; and Economic Development**. In collaboration with the pilot sites, three indicators were chosen within each sector that best reflect how libraries' operations and expenditures contribute to each respective area. The data for each is typically already collected by most libraries or is otherwise easily accessible.

In 2016, The City of Dryden's municipal contribution to the library was \$301,347. Application of the SROI Measurement Tool to 2016 data demonstrated this investment resulted in a \$726.78 of impact per resident, and \$1590 per household. The Library is open 2,700 hours per year yielding a minimum impact of \$931.80 for each open hour. Through the application of these calculations it is apparent that the Dryden Public Library yields at minimum \$5,631,828.80 in total economic impact and a \$18.68 return on its base municipal funding. Expressed as a percentage, this amounts to is 1868%. These calculations demonstrate the monetary value of the library's cultural, social, cognitive, health and economic applications, as well as its contributions to fostering community cohesion and an improved overall quality of life.

Despite clear evidence of economic spinoff of library services not all of the impact can be quantified in terms of its monetary value. Anecdotes that illustrate the intangible benefits that libraries provide to their communities also need to be included. By demonstrating the intangible, human impacts on their communities as well as their considerable SROI, libraries across the north can demonstrate how they drive community and economic development across the North.

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1.0 Background

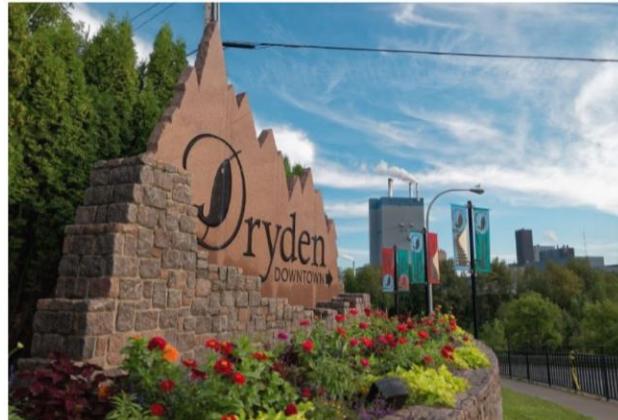
There is an increased need for libraries to articulate their value given rapidly changing economic and demographics shifts. Recent research in Ontario (Baker, 2015; Broad et al., 2015; Diamanti 2014; Guelph Public Library 2014; Martin Prosperity Institute, 2013; Milton Public Library, 2014) has utilized tools in valuing public libraries that focus heavily on financial inputs and outputs, but have not measured the full impacts of the multiple services that libraries deliver (Rao, 2012). Identifying the impact of libraries in areas such as literacy and cognitive development, citizen engagement or health and well-being, for example, which do not have a retail value that can be easily assigned, is a more challenging goal. Further, research on the value of public libraries has, to date, been concentrated in larger urban centres, and questions have arisen therefore regarding its relevance and validity for communities in Northern Ontario, dominated by its geographic and cultural uniqueness, including First Nation, francophone, and primarily small rural communities. To address the need for an assessment reflective of the region the Ontario Library Service – North contracted NORDIK Institute (www.nordikinstitute.com), Algoma University's community-based research institute, to evaluate the impact that the 121 libraries of Northern Ontario provide to their communities.

Six diverse pilot sites volunteered to participate in the design and testing of a tool for measuring the SROI of the 121 libraries across the region. Three communities are located in the Northwestern portion of Ontario, including Dryden, Rainy River, and Kenora. In the Central and Northeastern portion of Ontario the pilot communities are Temiskaming Shores, Powassan and Wikwemikong Unceded Indian Reserve. Rainy River serves the smallest population of the six locations with 2,175, and Kenora has the largest population at 15,348. The majority of the six communities are predominantly English speaking, with small contingencies of French, Ojibway, Oji-Cree and Cree speaking people. A representative from each of the six pilot libraries sat on a Steering Committee to guide the process.

Prior to undertaking the valuation of the pilot sites, NORDIK staff undertook a literature review and a series of electronically conducted focus groups to inform and assist in determining both the content and the process for evaluating the libraries. Additionally, consultations with the Steering Committee members, prior to testing the evaluation method, provided feedback to NORDIK regarding the proposed measurement topics. Based on this research, NORDIK then designed a Measurement Toolkit for testing in the pilot communities and prepared each a Community Report illustrating the social and economic contribution of their library as a community hub.

1.1 Community Profile – Dryden

Settled in 1895 the community of Dryden was founded on the agricultural prospects of the area. In 1910 there was a shift in industries as the paper and pulp industry grew. Today the city of Dryden, which is 65.84 square kilometres, has a population of 7749, according to the census results in 2016. The main economic drivers are agriculture, tourism and mining.¹ Tourists are drawn to Dryden for its vast amount of year-round outdoor adventure activities, including biking, hiking, fishing, boating and skiing, and accessible by road, rail and air. The community has marked walking trails including one meandering through woodlands, marsh and the urban centre. The government dock on Wabigoon Lake provides convenient year round access to the water and Dryden is situated on The Path of the Paddle Canoe Route, part of the Trans Canada Trail system.

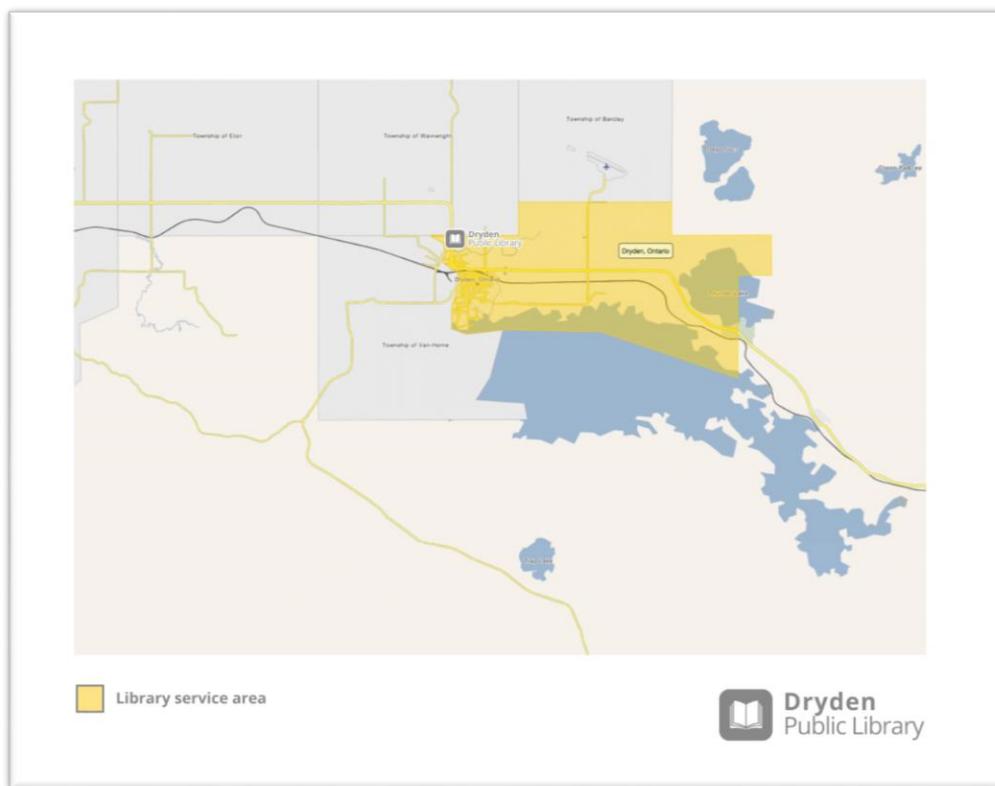


Located in Northwestern Ontario on the TransCanada Highway 17, it is the smallest established city in Ontario. The community boasts a variety of local and franchised retail and food and beverage establishments, and a well-developed service sector that includes Economic Development, Planning, Information Technology, and Human Resources. The Métis Nation of Ontario has an office in Dryden serving the surrounding area. Thunder Bay based Confederation College operates a campus in Dryden offering over 20 program options, including Business, Native Child and Family Service, Recreation Therapy, and Personal Support Worker among many others. The dominant language spoken in Dryden is

¹ <http://web.archive.org/web/20070608152256/http://www.cityofdryden.on.ca/history.shtml>

English, at an estimated 7,330 English speaking citizens, with a small contingency of 150 speaking French.²

The city has a large arena and recreation centre, home to the Dryden GM Ice Dogs, a Superior International Junior Hockey League (SIJHL) team. The arena also plays host to many hockey tournaments each year, as well as trade shows and local celebrations (ie: Aboriginal Day). The City also boasts well established soccer and baseball facilities, and active swimming, martial arts and court sports programs. The Dryden Regional Training and Cultural Center (The Centre) stages Dryden's Entertainment Series, bringing in Canadian entertainers, Theatre 17, the local community theatre, and the Dryden Children's Delight Series that has been widely supported for more than 28 years.



Open Monday to Saturday, year round for a total of 54 hour per week, the Dryden Public Library has 3 full-time and 2 part-time staff members. The library was established in 1901 and has been in its current location, adjacent to the City Hall, for more than 50 years. It was expanded to a split-level building in the 1980s effectively doubling its size. Access to

² <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2011/dp-pd/prof/details/page.cfm?Lang=E&Geo1=CSD&Code1=3560027&Geo2=PR&Code2=01&Data=Count&SearchText=dryden&SearchType=Begins&SearchPR=35&B1>All&Custom=&TABID=1>

the library is free for all residents of Dryden and to all K-12 students attending school in Dryden and the surrounding area. Currently it does not provide contract services to the unorganized outer townships of the area that has an estimated population of 20,000 to 25,000 people.



Decorated in vibrant colours, the unique building portrays strong community engagement. The space is wonderfully animated with donated and/or purchased local and Canadian paintings, murals, sculpture, and furniture, offering a diversity of comfortable seating arrangements encouraging patrons of all ages to stay a while to read, study, listen to stories, watch videos, meet others and/or play. The library hosts an array of activities and programs including a fishing rod lending program, family movie nights, children's Lego building, and knitting, to name a few.

2.0 Methodology

Prior to undertaking the valuation of the pilot sites, NORDIK staff undertook a literature review and a series of electronically conducted focus groups to inform and assist in determining both the content and the process for evaluating the libraries. Additionally, consultations with the Steering Committee members, prior to testing the evaluation method, provided feedback to NORDIK regarding the proposed measurement topics. Based on this research, NORDIK then designed a Measurement Toolkit and tested it in the pilot communities. The *Valuing Northern Libraries Toolkit* contains background information to the study, and data collection methodology including indicator formulae, enabling each library to conduct its own Social Return on Investment. The Social Return on Investment (SROI) is a term “originating from return on investment (ROI), as used by traditional investors. It describes the social impact of a business or non-profit’s operations in dollar terms, relative to the investment required to create that impact and exclusive of its financial return to investors” (Lingane, 2004).

2.1 Designing a Framework for Measuring Public Libraries

NORDIK Institute conducted a literature review and submitted a written draft to the pilot sites prior to site visits. The literature review revealed seven distinct areas for assessment, identifying that public libraries act as ‘community hubs’ providing services and programs that reach far beyond the now-outdated concept of libraries as mere storehouses of books. Focus groups with the Steering Committee and each of the pilot sites confirmed that the valuing of public libraries in the Northern and rural settings of this study required that the measurement tool reach well beyond circulation materials to encompass the many diverse and unique roles that public libraries play in the community. Based on the review of the literature, site visits, and input from each of the pilot sites, seven areas, or sectors, were identified as key components of libraries’ benefit to their communities: Cultural Integrity and Regional Identity; Social Inclusion; Cognitive and Literacy; Health and Wellness; Engaged Citizens and Safer Communities; Entertainment and Enjoyment; and Economic Development.

A Measurement Framework outlined in Figure 3 below was therefore designed, based on the research conducted for the study.

Figure 1: Measurement Framework



2.2 Developing Evaluation Indicators

An Indicator is a quantifiable measure used to monitor progress or impact in a given area or sector. The same number of indicators is measured in each of the seven sectors for the purpose of demonstrating the equivalent value of each sector in the overall economic benefit and calculation of its Social Return on Investment.

While many of the services and activities of the libraries could arguably demonstrate benefits in multiple sectors assessed by the measurement tool, this study has relied on the preferences of the pilot sites to identify the placement of indicators most appropriate to each of the seven sectors. Such preferences have been informed, in part, by the development of a particular service or activity itself, for example, a program funded by the Ministry of Health might be placed in the Health and Well-being sector, even though it may have implications for cognitive and literacy development, or some other sector. The narrative has attempted to identify the reason(s) for selecting the overall sector.

Similarly, the indicators that have been selected for measuring the value could arguably be used for different sectors. The indicators have been selected based on data that is collected by all libraries, or alternatively, can be easily collected during the ‘typical week’ usage survey which is usually conducted in November of each year.

2.3 Dryden Public Library Focus Groups

Each library has built a unique mix of resources—collections, programming, services, etc. in response to community needs, enabling diverse people to improve their quality of life and/or participate in the life of the community in meaningful ways. In many instances, libraries have demonstrated leadership by promoting services that are otherwise non-existent, under developed and/or under serviced. Staff of the Dryden Public Library organized a focus group to obtain insight into ways the library responds to community needs. The focus group was held on June 22, 2016, with seven participants drawn from the Library Board, Friends of the Library, staff, volunteers, and a representative from the Dryden Anti-Racism Network (DAARN) and the (former) Dryden Economic Development Corporation. Participants utilized post-it notes to identify the various ways that s/he felt the library contributes to the community that were then shared with others to gain insight into the broader context and implication of each. Library staff later analyzed the group’s data, organizing the post-it notes into the seven assessment areas outlined in the measurement framework, creating a narrative to illustrate the value of the library in the following section.

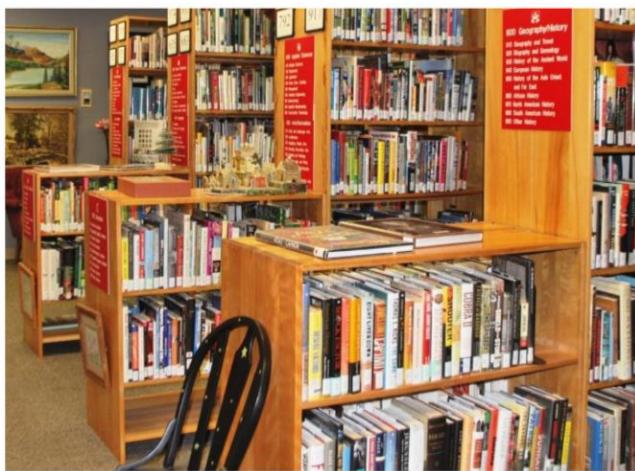
3.0 Valuing the Dryden Public Library

The focus group research conducted by the Dryden Public Library demonstrates that it actively contributes to all seven aspects of individual, organizational and community capacity building identified by the literature: 1) Cultural Integrity and Regional Identity; 2) Social Inclusion; 3) Cognitive and Literacy Development; 4) Health and Well-being; 5) Engaged Citizens and Safer Communities; 6) Enjoyment and Entertainment; and 7) Economic Development.

3.1 Cultural Integrity and Regional Identity

The Dryden Public Library supports the cultural integrity and identity of the region in diverse ways ranging from forging relationships with the surrounding townships and First Nations, and providing free access to all K-12 students in the area to its numerous cultural resources.

Both the physical space of the library and the services it offers reach a wide generational breadth of people. The library provides an important, casual opportunity for social interaction for seniors, particularly those living alone. It is a year-round destination for those who wish to walk and simply get out of the house, as well as those looking for arts and culture-based social opportunities, such as the knitting and craft classes offered regularly. Likewise, for youth and children, the library helps cultivate a sense of community and shared space. The library is an important cultural hub for those residing nearby in unincorporated townships that largely lack the cultural infrastructure offered by libraries.



As suggested by the literature review, the library serves as a repository for local historical archives. For example, it houses a wealth of historical information, including the Genealogy Club's records and resources that are available to the broader community upon request. It is a

repository for city's local newspaper the Dryden Observer (print and microfiche); Dryden Historical Society's clippings including an extensive collection on local schools archives extending to more than 30 banker boxes; and past phone books reflecting changes in community demographics. A recent Rotary Club grant enabled the library to purchase a new microfilm reader, providing greater access to its collections. Such resources and services help maintain the record of locals' shared heritage as well as means by which to acquire and promote local knowledge thereof.

The library offers a variety of interventions to support and promote local culture. The building itself showcases many local works of art (including paintings, murals, sculpture, and carvings). The library's collection provides means for locals to learn more about the area's own cultural diversity, as well as that outside of the region. The fishing rod lending program and promotion of the area's cultural activities through its large, visible Community Bulletin Board evidences ways the library has responded to local interest and cultural heritage.



Tourism plays an important role in the local economy with visitors stopping in Dryden as they travel along the Trans-Canada highway or making it a primary destination because of the area's excellent fishing opportunities. The library plays an important informational and educational role for this industry, providing quick connections to local operators, suppliers, retailers, and other community activities in which tourists can engage during their stay.

Table 1: Cultural Integrity & Regional Identity Benefit

1. Cultural Integrity & Regional Identity Indicators	Economic Benefit
a) Economic benefit of special collections and other materials related to culture and history of area (incl. snowshoes, fishing rods, GPS,	\$25,423

Indigenous/French/Immigrant languages) ³	
b) Economic benefit of the promotion of local cultural and historical events, programs, advertising space and information services about local area ⁴	\$3,780
c) Economic benefit of cultural events ⁵	\$9,090
<i>Total economic benefit of Cultural Integrity & Regional Identity indicators</i>	\$38,293

The economic benefit generated by the Dryden Public Library in 2016 through its services and activities related to cultural integrity and regional identity totals \$38,293 based on the indicators selected to assess the contribution to this sector.

3.2 Social Inclusion

Libraries are key community sites for fostering social inclusion, providing services that can serve to equalize skill levels and foster relationships of mutual support and trust (see Rao 2012; Rankin 2012; Rosenfeldt 2006). The Dryden Public Library has endeavoured in numerous ways to ensure that its services are accessible, welcoming and inclusive of a diversity of peoples.

The library has aspired to foster a welcoming and inclusive environment for everyone. This sense of inclusion is intentionally cultivated through a number of outreach activities, including class tours, school visits, and programs offered at the Senior Centre, such as craft and reading groups.



³ Formula: [Collection value] x [No. of items] = Economic Benefit

⁴ Formula: [Cost of a 2-week radio campaign] x [4 events or the actual No. of cultural events] = Economic Benefit

⁵ Formula: [Total attendance] x [Cost of program] = Economic Benefit

In a similar vein, the public space the library provides affords its patrons with a place to cool off in the summer, to warm up in the winter, and a place to go when other places are closed. It offers one of the only public washrooms in the city. The library is a destination open to the entire community regardless of one's ability to pay for goods or services. It offers an engaging, visually attractive space and information hub for both the community and visitors alike.

In partnership with the Centre for Equitable Library Access (CELA), the Dryden Public Library offers materials and adaptive technologies that facilitate literature and media access to a broader cross-section of the local population. Large print books, Print Braille, DAISY CDs, and audio books are all available to support patrons with print disabilities. The library also provides used or donated books and magazines to the Dryden Regional Health Centre, increasing patient access to materials at times when they are most vulnerable and isolated from these shared community resources.

Many people in Dryden, and particularly in the rural areas surrounding the community, do not have reliable access to the internet in their homes, and so the connections offered by the Dryden Public Library are crucial for public access to web-based information or services, and make it a hub for nearby remote Northern communities with limited access to health or other government services. That such services do not require a membership card makes them more accessible for patrons residing outside the city limits of Dryden. Likewise, membership cards are not required for programming or on-site use of the collections, ensuring rural populations can access the public library as a shared public commons. Nonetheless, the library also reaches highly connected patrons through its active social media presence.



The library also provides meeting space for a number of different purposes, including community groups like the Literacy Association or Alzheimer's group, or public information sessions, such as anti-fraud workshops. The educational role of the library also extends to the

support it offers students seeking an intellectual environment outside of school or to carve out a path for their future career through co-op opportunities that the library offers with local schools.

Table 2: Economic benefit of Social Inclusion

2. Social Inclusion	Economic Benefit
a) Economic benefit of accessible collections, (i.e., Braille, large print books, Talking Books on CD, etc.) ⁶	\$36,735
b) Economic benefit of inter-library loans ⁷	\$12,810
c) Economic benefit of internet access ⁸	\$83,365
<i>Total economic benefit Social Inclusion indicators</i>	<i>\$132,910</i>

The economic benefit generated by the Dryden Public Library in 2016 through services and activities related to social inclusion totals \$132,910 based on the indicators selected to assess the contributions to this sector. It additionally provides considerable and consistent human interventions that can't be quantified, but make Dryden a more inclusive and equitable place to live, work and play.

3.3 Cognitive and Literacy Development

Recent research shows that adults with low literacy levels have more health problems, earn less and live shorter lives than other adults (Canadian Council of Learning 2010). The Dryden Public Library looks to address literacy and cognitive development in a variety of ways, ranging from the provision of materials that cater to multiple different forms of literacy to programming that creates positive associations with reading and literacy itself.

The Dryden Public Library's collection of literary resources (Fiction and non-Fiction) extends well beyond the holdings contained on-site due to its participation in the inter-library loan program, significantly increasing the materials to which local residents have access. In 2016 1152 items have been brought in to the community through inter-library loan, while 702 items from the local collections have been shared with other libraries. Not only does the service increase the raw number of accessible resources, it also ensures patrons have access to the

⁶ Formula: [Collection value] x [No. of items] = Economic Benefit

⁷ Formula: [No. of borrowed books] x [Cost of service] + [Average shipping cost] x [No. books borrowed] = Economic Benefit

⁸ Formula: [No. of users] x [Cost of service] = Economic Benefit

most current resources, even when local collections can't keep up with the pace by which non-fiction resources becomes out-of-date.

Both the local catalogue and the inter-library loan service have played an important role for the few families homeschooling their children in the area, one of the several direct contributions the library makes to local education. Library cards are also available to all students, ranging from grades K-12, free of charge regardless as to whether or not they reside within the City of Dryden. Clearly youth also find value in the physical space and in-person services offered by the library, as they continue to travel to the library despite much of the catalogue and electronic resources being accessible from home.



Computer and internet access is also complemented by on-demand technology workshops that help foster computer literacy and promote the access of technology among a broader cross-section of the population than would otherwise have access through private means.



Special attention has also focused on programming for children and youth. Nearly all programs are free for children, and a large number are specifically geared toward them, including story hours for toddlers. A recent emphasis has also focused on physical programs, such as Lego Club, knitting, and craft classes that all help in developing the kinesthetic and visual/spatial skills and intelligence.

Table 3: Cognitive & Literacy Development Benefit

3. Cognitive & Literacy Development	Economic Benefit
a) Economic benefit of Children and Youth Circulation (incl. books, audio books, DVDs, databases and other materials directed at this age ⁹)	\$232,544
b) Economic benefit of Children and Youth Programming ¹⁰	\$29,355
c) Economic benefit of class instruction at a library or a school ¹¹	\$26,750
<i>Total economic benefit of Cognitive and Literacy Development indicators</i>	<i>\$288,649</i>

The economic benefit generated by the Dryden Public Library in 2016 through its services and activities related to cognitive and literacy development totals \$288,649 based on the indicators selected to assess the contributions to this sector.

3.4 Health and Wellness

Research (Brewster, 2014) reveals a strong connection between the services of public libraries and the health of their patrons, particularly serving those who experience mental and physical health, and many patrons know that they are more than just another face to the staff at the Dryden library. In Northern and rural communities, libraries also serve as a major source of health information (Wathen & Harris, 2007) and libraries have also made considerable contributions to wellbeing through environmental interventions (e.g., Antonelli, 2008).

Among the primary environmental interventions offered by the Dryden Public Library is the large collection of materials pertaining to farming and gardening, collections that are favourites among patrons, contributing to greater small-scale local production of agri-food products. The library also facilitates connections between patrons and the natural environment by occasionally offering programming outside on the front lawn of the nearby city hall, and its current interest in creating green space for reading. The library has also taken steps to reduce its carbon footprint by replacing appliances and light bulbs with energy efficient alternatives.

⁹ Formula: [Collection value] x [Annual circulation] + [Total circulation value x 18% in library use] = Economic Benefit

¹⁰ Formula: [Total attendance] x [Cost of service] = Economic Benefit

¹¹ Formula: [Total attendance] x [Cost of program] = Economic Benefit

Book sales and book donation programs offered by the library also helps divert books from the landfill through redistribution to other organizations, and/or use in arts and crafts programs.

The Dryden Public Library has also provided programming to Grace Haven/Patricia Gardens, including craft programs, e-reader support for Seniors and outreach circulation services.

Table 4: Health & Wellness Benefit

4. Health & Wellness	Economic Benefit
a) Economic benefit of health-related programming delivered at the library ¹²	\$0
b) Economic benefit of Health and Wellness related collection (incl. books, e-books, DVD's) ¹³	\$38,835
c) Economic benefit of in-library information requests ¹⁴	\$54,850
<i>Total economic benefit of Health and Wellness indicators</i>	<i>\$93,685</i>

The economic benefit generated by the Dryden Public Library in 2016 through its services and activities related to health and wellness total \$93,685 based on the indicators selected to assess the contributions to this sector.

3.5 Engaged Citizens and Safer Communities

Previous research has identified the considerable impact that libraries have demonstrated in strengthening community relationships between individuals, families and other groups, by developing a shared sense of place and community while contributing to crime prevention through social development (Rankin, 2012). Promoting and improving community dialogue and understanding was one of the most consistent outcomes noted in the 2012 study in Yorkshire, England. Early interventions, provision of meeting spaces and community partnerships all contribute to building community groups' capacity and the ability of library patrons to engage in public life and access government services (Hanna, 2012; Ulvik, 2010; Rankin, 2012).

Children's programming has helped to foster not only the cognitive development of children, but also create opportunities for mothers to meet one another, engage in much-needed adult social interaction, and foster long-term friendships both among the children and the adults that bring them to the programming. For socially isolated individuals accessing library service, the

¹² Formula: [Total attendance] x [Cost of program] = Economic Benefit

¹³ Formula: [Collection value] x [No. of items] = Economic Benefit

¹⁴ Formula: [No. of requests] x [Cost of service] = Economic Benefit

staff at the Dryden Public Library can also be among the only people a patron might see or talk to over the course of a regular day. Staff may then be the first people to notice an injury, behaviour change, or other sign that a patron is in need of help or support.

Joint programming that the library offers with the Dryden Area Anti-Racist Network (DAARN) has also contributed to raising awareness and providing support for residents who experience discrimination. Drawing between 15 and 30 participants to its monthly *Living Library* series, participants share stories about their lives and what they would like to see in the community, building social bonds of mutual support and creating avenues for collective action for change. DAARN and the Dryden Public Library also offer a monthly Film Series, highlighting a mix of documentaries, local films and Hollywood films that feature diverse cultures, experiences and perspectives. Such partnerships also increase the knowledge of services offered by the library by bringing in new patrons.



The library has both assisted and benefitted from community partnerships, ranging from participating in Canada Day festivities, to assisting the local science camp source materials, from coordinating donations of artwork that promote local artisans, to receiving a donation of chairs from a local car dealership. The Dryden Public Library's engagement in partnership building has contributed to mutually beneficial promotion of partners' works and strengthened the social fabric within the Dryden area.

Table 5: Engaged Citizens & Safer Communities Benefit

5. Engaged Citizens & Safer Communities	Economic Benefit
a) Economic benefit of a library membership ¹⁵	\$1,199,289
b) Economic benefit of volunteer hours (incl. adults, board members, community hours and student coops ¹⁶)	\$3,435

¹⁵ Formula: [No. of library members] x [Average cost of an annual recreation membership] = Economic Benefit

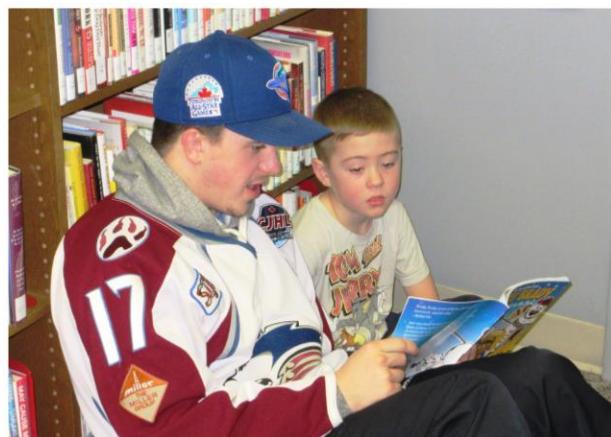
c) Economic benefit of community development workshops ¹⁷	\$24,050
<i>Total economic benefit of Engaged Citizens and Safer Communities indicators</i>	\$1,226,774

The economic benefit generated by the Dryden Public Library in 2016 through its services and activities related to promoting engaged citizenship and safer communities totals \$1,226,774 based on the indicators selected to assess the contribution to this sector.

3.6 Enjoyment and Entertainment

The Canadian Library Association (2014) has indicated that libraries provide enjoyment and entertainment to their patrons in two important ways: 1) through their ever-changing collections of books, CDs, DVDs, eBooks, audio books, and wide range of other materials; and 2) as a place to ‘hang-out’. For the populations living in Northern, rural and First Nation communities, both of these functions may be of even greater importance than in larger urban centres.

In Dryden, collections and programming have adapted with changing technology to provide access to a wider breadth of goods, including STEM toys and robotics, Lego, and Wii U games. There has been a growing pattern of declining book circulation as the library continues to invest in online resources and services, yet walk-in traffic has drastically increased, reflecting the library’s crucial role as a social and entertainment hub.



¹⁶ Formula: [Total No. of volunteer hours] x [Minimum wage + benefits] = Economic Benefit

¹⁷ Formula: [Total attendance] x [Cost of program or service] = Economic Benefit

Outside of any additional program, the library is always a place that is engaging to walk into, where patrons can simply ‘hang-out’ or come and ‘gawk.’ But the library also plays an integral role within the arts community and in providing entertainment for local residents.

The library also hosts author visits and readings, both for local writers and those visiting from outside the community. Such supports foster the local arts community and create new opportunities for recreation and creative expression.



Dryden Public Library also provides a number of entertainment services geared to families, including holiday events such as the *Little Bunnies Easter Egg Hunt* or the open house prior to the Santa Clause Parade that last year brought in over 150 people. Family movie nights, the weekly *Kids Craft Club* and *Knitting Club* also provide families with affordable entertainment, social interaction, and opportunities to learn new practices in casual setting.

Table 6: Entertainment & Enjoyment Benefit

6. Entertainment & Enjoyment	Economic Value
a) Economic benefit of Adult Circulation (All materials) ¹⁸	\$1,718,058
b) Economic benefit of Adult & Seniors programming and services (incl. , cooking, knitting, yoga etc.) ¹⁹	\$5,160
c) Economic benefit of one library visit ²⁰	\$319,825
<i>Total economic benefit of Enjoyment and Entertainment indicators</i>	<i>\$2,043,043</i>

¹⁸ Formula: [Collection value] x [Annual circulation] + [Total circulation value x 18% in-library use] = Economic Benefit

¹⁹ Formula: [Total attendance] x [Cost of program or service] = Economic Benefit

²⁰ Formula: [Total No. of visits to the library in person] x [Cost of service] = Economic Benefit

The economic benefit generated by the Dryden Public Library in 2016 through its services and activities related to entertainment and personal enjoyment totals \$2,043,043 based on the indicators selected to assess the contribution to this sector.

3.7 Economic Development

Public libraries have a considerable economic impact on their communities, ranging from direct jobs and spin-off jobs created in the community (MPI, 2013) through to the role libraries play in facilitating entry into the labour market (Rao, 2012). Other impacts include access to Wi-Fi services, thereby providing a ‘home office’ and local purchasing, while Jeanotte (2008) has observed that there is a notable gap in the literature on public libraries related to the leveraging of resources from other levels of government, foundations and the private sector.

The Dryden Public Library is no exception, providing direct employment to 6 staff, including one Head Librarian, three Library Clerks and two Library Pages, making a \$445,133 average annual contribution to the local economy. Volunteers are also highly valued, whether they be high school students gaining volunteer hours or adults from the community, they naturally develop workplace and interpersonal skills, are able to provide informal mentorship, and foster the exchange of knowledge that supports intellectual development.



The library also assists businesses and other educational institutions, hosting proctored exams, for which demand has been increasing. Similarly, the meeting space that the Dryden Public Library makes available to community groups helps to support the work of local citizens to strengthen the social economy and the city’s overall resiliency.

The Dryden Public Library has also regularly hosted co-op students and other student placements over the past several years, helping students both meet their education goals, and gain valuable workplace experience.

Table 7: Economic Development Benefit

7. Economic Development	Economic Benefit
a) Economic benefit of funds leveraged from outside the community (incl. capacity building, pay equity, provincial operating grants) ²¹	\$24,233
b) Economic benefit of self-generated revenues ²²	\$39,456
c) Economic benefit of Employment, Training and Development ²³	\$445,133
<i>Total economic benefit of Economic Development indicators</i>	<i>\$508,822</i>

The monetary benefit generated by the Dryden Public Library in 2016 through its services and activities related to economic development totals \$508,822 based on the indicators selected to assess the contribution to this sector.

4.0 The Social Return on Investment of the Dryden Public Library

Social Return on Investment (SROI) is a term originating from return on investment (ROI), as used by traditional investors. It describes the social impact of a business or non-profit's operations in dollar terms, relative to the investment required to create that impact and exclusive of its financial return to investors (Lingane, 2004).

The social return on investment assesses three main areas: direct spending, direct tangible benefits, and indirect tangible benefits.

The SROI of the Dryden Public Library cannot be fully captured by economic indicators; in fact, perhaps the most significant value of the library, (i.e. that of serving as a community hub, which contributes to the community's overall health and well-being, cohesiveness and engagement) is necessarily under-rated when reported in primarily quantifiable terms. Nevertheless, the SROI calculation is a valuable exercise in that it reveals some aspects of library service that would otherwise remain hidden from the general public, policy-makers and funders. Table 8 indicates the total of each of the 7 benefit areas of the framework.

Table 8: Total Benefits

Indicators	Economic Benefit
1. Cultural Integrity & Regional Identity	\$38,293
2. Social Inclusion	\$132,910
3. Cognitive & Literacy	\$288,649
4. Health & Wellness	\$93,685

²¹ Formula: [Total funds] = Economic Benefit

²² Formula: [Total self-generated revenues] = Economic Benefit

²³ Formula: [Total salaries + benefits] x [Multiplier effect of 1.7] + [Training + development costs] = Economic Benefit

5. Engaged Citizens & Safer Communities	\$1,226,774
6. Entertainment & Enjoyment	\$2,043,043
7. Economic Development	\$508,822
Subtotal	\$4,332,176
Premium Value for underserviced area²⁴	1.30%
Total Economic Benefit	\$5,631,829

Table 9 (below) outlines how to calculate the SROI.

Table 9: SROI for the Dryden Shores Public Library

Social Return on Investment		Economic Benefit
Economic Impact	Total of the 7 areas of indicators (Table 8)	\$4,332,176
Total Economic Impact	Multiply Economic Impact x Premium Value for locale	\$5,631,829
Impact per Resident	Total economic impact divided by number of residents in catchment area	\$726.78
Impact per household	Total economic Impact divided by the number of households in catchment area	\$1,590
Impact of One Open Hour	Total economic benefit of the circulation of all materials for all ages, plus the total economic benefit of all programs and services, plus the economic benefit of internet access, divided by the total number of open library hours of all branches, not including statutory holidays.	\$931.80
Total Return on Investment	Total number of dollars generated divided by the municipality's operating grant	\$14.37
Percentage of Total Return on Investment	Total number of dollars generated divided by the municipality's operating grant expressed as a percentage	1437%

In 2016 the monthly cost of the Nutritious Food Basket for the Northwestern Health Unit area, which encompasses Dryden is \$1018.20, whereas Toronto's monthly cost is \$858.81. The difference represents a premium value of 1.30% as an underserved area. The Dryden Public Library serves a population of 7749 residents, comprised of 3541 households. The Dryden Public Library is open 2700 hours per year yielding a minimum impact of \$931.80 for each open hour. In 2016, Dryden's municipal contribution to the library was \$301,347.

²⁴ The Premium Value calculation for the underserviced area is based on the percentage difference between the cost of a Nutritious Food Basket in Toronto and the locale. Figures are obtained through regional public health units.

Through the application of these calculations it is apparent that the Dryden Public Library yields at minimum \$5,631,829 in total economic impact and a \$14.37 return on its base municipal funding. Expressed as a percentage, this amounts to 1437%. These calculations demonstrate the monetary value of the library's cultural, social, cognitive, health and economic applications, as well as its contributions to fostering community cohesion and an improved overall quality of life.

Despite very evident economic spinoff of library services across each of the sectors measured in the pilot sites, not all of the impacts on community life that libraries offer can be quantified in terms of monetary value. Consequently, future applications of these measurement tools should supplement quantifying indicators with anecdotes that illustrate the intangible benefits that libraries provide to their communities, as has been exemplified in the preceding pages and past research (MPI, 2013; Sawyer, 1996) on quantifying the value of libraries.

The Dryden Public Library, both in terms of its intangible and dollar-value SROI, is evidently integral to its community's life and future development. It has demonstrated its capacity as a driver of community development and ability to maximize the local benefit and impact of its funding.

Glossary of Terms

Children: 0 - 12 years of age

Community Development: Libraries may provide a variety of programming that addresses community capacity building, community empowerment or organizing, municipal planning or municipal cultural planning, forums for public input and participatory planning, community-based planning and group work, or that brings together representatives from a number of sectors for development and planning purposes.

Economic Multiplier: Multipliers are used by economists to estimate the impact of investment or job creation on the economy of a community or region. They are developed from complex mathematical models which identify the interrelationship between spending/job creation in one sector (e.g., an industrial employer) on another (e.g., household) (The Importance of Economic Multipliers, Fact Sheet-04-59, University of Nevada, Reno, 2004).

Indicators: An Indicator is a quantifiable measure used to monitor progress or impact in a given area or sector.

Premium Value: The total value - economic and quality of life – that rural, Northern, Indigenous and francophone libraries provide may be difficult to fully ascertain, however, should be recognized as a significant factor in attracting and retaining citizens and investment. A premium value has been assigned in this toolkit to acknowledge such access and benefit. Such premium value is calculated by applying the percentage difference of the cost of the Nutritious Good Food Box²⁵ in local communities versus such cost in the City of Toronto. Community Nutritious Food Basket costs can be located through regional public health units²⁶.

Social Return on Investment (SROI): Social Return on Investment (SROI) is a term “originating from return on investment (ROI), as used by traditional investors. It describes the social impact of a business or non-profit’s operations in dollar terms, relative to the investment required to create that impact and exclusive of its financial return to investors” (Lingane 2004). The social return on investment assesses three main areas: direct spending, direct tangible benefits, and indirect tangible benefits.

²⁵ Health Canada, Nutritious Food Basket (<http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/surveill/basket-panier/index-eng.php>)

²⁶ Ministry of Health and Long Term Care, Public Health Units (<http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/common/system/services/phu/locations.aspx>)

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Appendix A: Detailed Indicator Charts

Please see attached SROI Indicator Spreadsheet.