

## Valuing Northern Libraries

The OLS-North Nordik Institute / Algoma University **Valuing Northern Libraries** Toolkit has the pilot report out! And they're awesome!

Learn more about the Toolkit here. It is free to use and works for any library – not just northern ones and focuses on economic and social ROI of public libraries. Here's a link to the toolkit: <http://fopl.ca/news/valuing-northern-libraries-toolkit/>

Here are the first six pilot reports:

1. Valuing Northern Libraries Community Report Wikwemikong final community report (1)  
Wikwemikong First Nation Public Library  
Social Return on Investment
2. Valuing Northern Libraries Community Report Kenora final community report  
Kenora Public Library  
Social Return on Investment
3. Valuing Northern Libraries Community Report Community report Dryden (2)  
Social Return on Investment  
Dryden Public Library
4. Valuing Northern Libraries Community Report Powassan final community report (1)  
Powassan and District Union Public Library  
Social Return on Investment
5. Valuing Northern Libraries Sample Community Report Temiskaming shores final community report  
Temiskaming Shores Public Library  
Social Return on Investment
6. Valuing Northern Libraries Sample Community Report  
Rainy River Public Library  
Social Return on Investment

## **Valuing Northern Libraries Toolkit**

<http://home.olsn.ca/resources/valuing-northern-libraries-toolkit>

Ontario Library Service – North (OLS – North) contracted NORDIK Institute to create a measurement tool to illustrate the value of libraries in rural, Northern, First Nation, and francophone communities. A steering committee consisting of the CEOs of the six pilot communities participated in identifying the measurement topics, the design and testing of the tool.

### **The Toolkit and Resources**

This tool is designed to measure the value of public libraries and their role as community hubs, building capacity for healthy, resilient people and places, especially in rural, Northern, First Nation and francophone communities. The toolkit provides a step-by-step process to assess libraries' social return on investment (SROI) within a holistic, cross-sectoral framework. The Social Return on Investment (SROI) is a term describing 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.

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.

This framework identifies seven areas where libraries contribute to building individual, organizational, and community level capacity.

1. Cultural Integrity & Regional Identity
2. Social Inclusion
3. Cognitive & Literacy Development
4. Health & Wellness
5. Engaged Citizens & Safer Communities
6. Entertainment & Enjoyment
7. Economic Development

An indicator is a quantifiable measure used to monitor progress or impact in a given area or sector. In collaboration with the pilot sites, three indicators were chosen that best reflect how libraries' operations and expenditures contribute to each respective area. 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. 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.

Each library builds a unique mix of resources—collections, programming, services, etc. in response to community needs, enabling diverse people to improve their quality of life and to participate in the life of the community in meaningful ways. In many instances, libraries demonstrate leadership by promoting services that are otherwise non-existent, under developed or under serviced. The library value toolkit can be used in all of Ontario’s small and rural communities to demonstrate how the library contributes to individual, organizational, and community capacity.

### **SROI Indicator Template (the library value calculation spreadsheet)**

The SROI Indicator Template will require some of the data submitted for the 2017 Annual Survey of Public Libraries, the Typical Week Survey, plus other commonly collected information.

Download the template and sample reports:

1. The SROI Indicator Template
2. Community Report Template
3. Sample Community Report
4. Sample Completed Indicator Template

### **Training Resources**

**COMING SOON** – The Valuing Northern Libraries Toolkit online course will be made available on LearnHQ for Ontario public libraries to access.

## **Valuing Northern Libraries Community Reports: Social Return on Investment**

The Ontario Library Services - North contracted NORDIK Institute, at Algoma University, 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. These studies were accomplished under a grant from the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport through the Ontario Library Capacity Fund. We thank the Ministry for this funding.

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.

Kudos to Rainy River Public Library for the fine entry below. Libraries that are measuring their results, impact, economic impact, outcomes etc. report on using PLA's Project Outcomes, OLS-North's Valuing Northern Libraries Toolkit, and other library values and economic impact models. Others report they prefer data and written accolades attesting to their service impact, or that they plan to measure outcomes soon. This report is posted on the FOPL website <http://fopl.ca/news/special-reports-from-the-2017-ontario-public-library-operating-data/> and <http://fopl.ca/news/2017-ontario-public-library-statistics/>.

### **Rainy River Public Library**

Rainy River Public Library was one of six pilot sites for the Valuing Northern Libraries Toolkit project of OLS-North: <http://home.olsn.ca/resources/valuing-northern-libraries-toolkit>.

Based on the Toolkit indicators, and using our 2017 data, preliminary results for the Social Return on Investment for all programs and services delivered by our library is as follows:

1. Raw Economic Benefit, \$882,913.02.
2. Total Economic Benefit, adjusted by the cost differential between Toronto and our region (as calculated by the annual Nutritious Food Basket report of Ontario Public Health Units): \$1,196,434.01.
3. Benefit per Resident of our catchment area, \$602.43.
4. Benefit per Household in our catchment area, \$808.95.
5. Economic Impact of one Library Public Service Hour, \$251.59.
6. Total Social Return in Investment, based on local operating funding from our appointing council: 3,474%. We would be glad to share full results.

### **Wikwemikong First Nation Public Library**

In 2015, Wikwemikong's contribution to the library was \$15,000. Application of the SROI Measurement Tool to 2015 data demonstrated this investment resulted in \$259.45 of economic benefit per resident, and \$714.08 per household. The library is open 1,569 hours per year for the year evaluated, yielding a minimum impact of \$80.05 for each open hour in 2015. Through the application of these calculations it is apparent that the Wikwemikong First Nation Public Library yields at minimum \$844,753.70 in total economic benefit and a \$56.32 social return on investment for each dollar of its base band funding. Expressed as a percentage, this amounts to 5,632%. These calculations demonstrate the monetary value of the library's cultural, social, cognitive, health, and economic applications as well as its contributions to community cohesion and an improved overall quality of life.

### **Kenora Public Library**

In 2015, Kenora's municipal contribution to the library was \$614,634. Application of the SROI Measurement Tool to 2015 data demonstrated this investment resulted in \$972 of economic benefit per resident, and \$1,988 per household. The library was open 3,700 hours per year for the year evaluated, yielding a minimum impact of \$2,331 for each open hour in 2015. Through the application of these calculations it is apparent that the Kenora Public Library yields at minimum \$14,665,861 in total economic benefit and a \$23.86 return for each dollar of its base municipal funding. Expressed as a percentage, this amounts to 2,386%. These calculations demonstrate the monetary value of the library's cultural, social, cognitive, health, and economic applications as well as its contributions to community cohesion and an improved overall quality of life.

### **Dryden Public Library**

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.

### **Powassan and District Union Public Library**

In 2016, Powassan's municipal contribution to the library was \$151,930. Application of the SROI Measurement Tool to 2016 data demonstrated this investment resulted in \$361.09 of economic benefit per resident, and \$694.05 per household. The library is open 3,594 hours per year for the year evaluated, yielding a minimum impact of \$344.45 for each open hour in 2016. Through the application of these calculations it is apparent that the Powassan & District Union Public Library yields at minimum \$2,494,398.75 in total economic benefit and a \$16.42 return for each dollar of its base municipal funding. Expressed as a percentage, this amounts to 1,642%. These calculations demonstrate the monetary value of the library's cultural, social, cognitive, health, and economic applications as well as its contributions to community cohesion and an improved overall quality of life.

### **Temiskaming Shores Public Library**

In 2016, Temiskaming Shores' municipal contribution to the library was \$392,262. Application of the Social Return on Investment (SROI) measurement tool to 2016 data demonstrated this investment resulted in \$400 of economic benefit per resident and \$858 per household. Collectively the branches are open 4,200 hours per year. Based on the library's programs and services for the year evaluated, these yielded a minimum benefit of \$436 for each open hour in 2016. Through the application of these calculations, it is apparent that the Temiskaming Shores Public Library yields a minimum \$4,680.190 in total economic benefit and an \$11.93 return for each dollar of its base municipal funding. Expressed as a percentage, this amounts to is 1193%. These calculations demonstrate the monetary value of the library's cultural, social, cognitive, health, and economic applications as well as its contributions to community cohesion and an improved overall quality of life.

