

Valuing Northern Libraries

Community Report Kenora Public Library

Social Return on Investment

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Executive Summary

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.

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 effects on their communities as well as their considerable SROI, libraries can demonstrate how they drive community and economic development across the North.

Based on a review of relevant literature, focus groups, consultation with steering committee members and site visits, NORDIK designed a measurement tool 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 accessible through other library data collections methods.



Figure 1: Kenora Public Library

1.0 Why We Value Northern Libraries

Public libraries serve their communities as centres of information, art, technology, history, and community life. Libraries compete for scarce public funding along with other community institutions.

Small and rural Northern libraries are increasingly challenged to explain their value in the community amid mounting municipal and band council priorities. In addition, funding organizations request that grant applications identify outcomes that will be achieved through grants. As this becomes more prevalent, small, rural, and remote libraries are under pressure to define and use outcome based analytics. Small northern libraries need the capacity to define, assess, and report on outcomes or return on investment.

For the first time, we are studying the Social Return on Investment (SROI) in Northern Ontario's public libraries. That is to say, how much do our communities benefit through its local support of a public library. In addition to economic benefit, this study also examined library-based benefits in the areas of literacy, cognitive development, citizen engagement, and health and well-being.

There are no studies specific to small and rural Northern Ontario public libraries that provide the tools necessary to demonstrate the return on the investment from a public library. The Valuing Northern Libraries project created a measurement toolkit with corresponding online training.

The relative value of remote libraries and the financial challenges they face must be measured against the economic reality of the North. For example, successive Nutritious Food Basket studies have confirmed the cost of basic goods in Northwestern Ontario is double the cost of the same goods in Toronto. Based on the difference between the Nutritious Food Basket in Toronto and individual northern communities, a premium value was calculated and used in this measurement toolkit to acknowledge the access and benefits to services provided by public libraries in Northern, First Nation, francophone, and rural communities and which may otherwise be unavailable.

This community report is a narrative report based upon the results of the SROI Indicator Template and the focus group discussions. The tables are also derived from the SROI. Thus, all Ontario public libraries are able to duplicate this report in their own communities.

1.1 Community Profile – Kenora

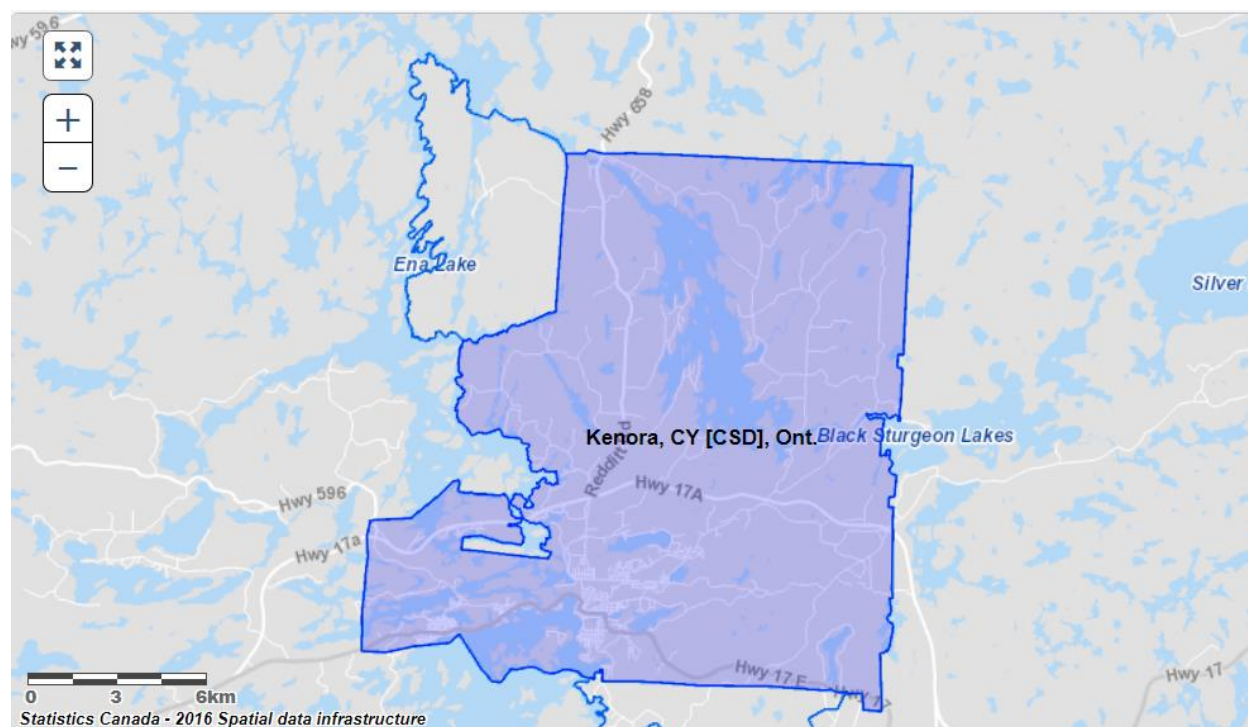
The City of Kenora is located in the Heart of the continent, on the Canadian Shield, in the Northwest corner of Ontario. It is just 50 km from the Manitoba border and 2 hours from Winnipeg and right on the Trans-Canada Highway. It is perched on the north shore of Lake of the Woods and its 14,522 islands and 65,000 miles of shoreline. It is that iconic image of Canada painted by the Group of Seven - the granite, the pines, and the water.

Kenora has a population of 15,096 with a service area of approximately 25,000. In the summer months, it is cottage country for Manitoba, and the mid-west US states and the population doubles, drawn to this water-based playground.

Recently rebranded as 'North America's Premier Boating Destination' the City of Kenora has put an emphasis on expanding the tourism industry in Kenora. Since 2006, almost \$30 million in public sector investment has been made in major capital projects to build Kenora's tourism infrastructure, along with \$61 million in private sector investment between 2007 and 2012.

Kenora immediately abuts three Ojibway-Anishinaabe Communities, including Ochiichagwe'Babigo'ining Ojibway Nation (Dalles No. 38C) to the northwest, Obashkaandagaang Bay First Nation (Rat Portage No. 38A) to the southwest, and the Anishinabe of Wauzhushk Onigum (Kenora No. 38B) to the southeast, and the local Métis population is represented by the Kenora Métis Council, a charter member of the Métis Nation of Ontario. Nearly 2,700 people, close to 18 percent of the City's population identify as Aboriginal (Statistics Canada, 2012). The Indigenous population is considerably younger than the remainder of the city's population, with a median age of 27.9 while the 71.6 percent of its population over the age of 15 (Statistics Canada, 2012), compared to a median age of 44.4 for the city at large with 65 percent of the population is aged 15 or over (Statistics Canada, 2016). The dominant language spoken in Kenora is English, with 14,595 residents reporting English as their language spoken most often at home, with only 220 reporting French and 175 listing non-official languages, primarily Ojibway (Statistics Canada, 2016).

Figure 2: Service Area of Kenora Public Library



2.0 Valuing the Kenora Public Library

Focus group research conducted by Kenora Public Library demonstrates that the library actively contributes to all seven aspects of individual, organizational, and community capacity building: 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.

2.1 Cultural Integrity and Regional Identity

The Kenora Public Library supports the cultural integrity and identity of the region, as well as the cultivation of a sense of local identity and place in several ways, from offering free access to books, local history collections, internet, programs for the diverse community, as well as providing a warm and welcoming atmosphere.

The library's location in a heritage building complements the work it does to foster access to local historical records, as well as promoting local stories that reaffirm the bonds between citizens. The Common Ground Committee, for instance, is a collaboration with the Museum that hosts an annual event where people share their personal stories, which are compiled and published every five years for wider distribution. The library also has considerable resources to assist patrons with

genealogical research, including information repositories, collaborations with the local genealogical association, *Ancestor Seekers of Kenora* (ASK), and a weekly volunteer who assists patrons with genealogical searches.

Table 1: Cultural Integrity & Regional Identity Benefit

1. Cultural Integrity & Regional Identity Indicators	Economic Benefit
Economic benefit of special collections and other materials related to culture and history of area (incl. snowshoes, fishing rods, GPS, and Indigenous, French, and Immigrant languages)	\$101,425.00
Economic benefit of the promotion of local cultural and historical events, programs, advertising space and information services about local area	\$5,670.00
Economic benefit of cultural events	\$9,870.00
<i>Total economic benefit of Cultural Integrity & Regional Identity indicators</i>	\$116,965.00

The economic benefit generated by the Kenora Public Library in 2015 through its services and activities related to cultural integrity and regional identity totals \$116,965 based on the indicators in the SROI template.

2.2 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 Kenora Public Library with 2 locations, has endeavoured to ensure that its services are accessible, welcoming and inclusive of a diversity of peoples.

The physical location of the library also provides an invaluable public space for the entire community, including the socially marginalized population. The library provides free internet access to members and non-members, which many in our community rely on as the library is their only point of access. The summer is especially busy when summer residents and tourists are looking for access to a computer or wifi. Library membership is free to city residents. The library fosters connections in the community through its participation in community events, including planning and participation in Kenora’s Annual Safety Night, and efforts to promote intergenerational storytelling at Pinecrest Home for the Aged. The outreach to long-term care homes and schools conducted by the library is also paired with visits to the library by schools and daycares.

The library also helps foster relationships within the community by promoting community events and networking opportunities. One such example is the Travel Series that brings

members of the community together to share their traveling experiences. The space that the library provides to community groups to promote their events and increase public awareness about a variety of topics also creates similar networking opportunities and fosters stronger local relationships. As such, the Kenora Public Library is seen as a community hub for a broad cross-section throughout the city.

Table 2: Economic benefit of Social Inclusion

2. Social Inclusion	Economic Benefit
Economic benefit of accessible collections, (i.e., Braille, large print books, Talking Books on CD, etc.)	\$87,318.00
Economic benefit of inter-library loans	\$15,268.46
Economic benefit of internet access	\$710,000.00
<i>Total economic benefit of Social Inclusion indicators</i>	\$812,586.46

The economic benefit generated by the Kenora Public Library in 2015 through services and activities related to social inclusion totals \$812,586.46 based on the indicators selected. The library provides a safe place for people to socialize, making Kenora a more inclusive and equitable place to live, work and play.

2.3 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 Kenora Public Library addresses 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 Kenora Public Library collection of literary resources (fiction and non-fiction) is available to all community members, and in the case of the seniors' homes, is delivered right to the door. The library offers materials and adaptive technologies that facilitate literature and media access.

Chief among its interventions in cognitive development is the provision of resources to be read, used, or adapted by patrons. High school libraries, for instance, seldom have all the necessary information for students to complete projects, and the supplementation provided by the public library system is invaluable in the education process, particularly considering the supplementation available through inter-library loan services. These resources are also accessible in a variety of ways, including electronically, promoting forms of computer and research literacy. Both library branches have a 3D printer that

will encourage further local technological literacy. Special resources for those of varying abilities, such as the visually impaired, also facilitate the access to modified literacy materials for people living with disabilities that are often prohibitively expensive for a private citizen, particularly those who may have faced increased economic barriers due to their ability status.

Literacy promotion also takes place in several indirect ways. The resources described above, for instance, are of particular use and interest to families who are home schooling their children, offering access to a wide breadth of information and research sources that would be prohibitive to any family without access to a public library. Book clubs hosted by the library also encourage literacy, frequent reading, and intellectual engagement with narratives, which in turn helps develop and maintain cognitive faculties.

Figure 3: Encouraging Literacy through Welcoming Reading Areas



Table 3: Cognitive & Literacy Development Benefit

3. Cognitive & Literacy Development	Economic Benefit
Economic benefit of children and youth circulation (incl. books, audio books, DVDs, databases and other materials directed at this age)	\$467,690.70
Economic benefit of children and youth programming	\$16,665.00
Economic benefit of class instruction at a library or a school	\$11,050.00
<i>Total economic benefit of Cognitive and Literacy Development indicators</i>	<i>\$495,404.70</i>

The economic benefit generated by the Kenora Public Library in 2015 through its services and activities related to cognitive and literacy development totals \$495,404.70 based on the indicators selected.

Figure 4: Tell Me a Story at Pinecrest



2.4 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 challenges. Many patrons know that they are more than just another face to the staff at the Kenora Public 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).

The Kenora library offers a number of environmental provisions and interventions. Its book collections include resources about recycling, environmental awareness, and staff promote special collections around Earth Day. Staff and patrons also use recycled materials in crafting and encourage small-scale agriculture and seed-saving. Kenora Public Library also provides a library of heirloom seeds and programs that deliver information about bumble bees and how to help protect and preserve them.

The cultivation of the networks of care also promotes health and wellness within the community. Volunteers, for instance, take books from the library to individuals in long-term care, while home delivery service is offered for community members who cannot get to the library. Such initiatives reduce the isolation of those in care or with limited

mobility, improving their quality of life and thereby potentially improving their overall health.

Family health, cohesion, and maintenance are among the many contributions the Kenora Public Library makes to the city’s social fabric. Its space hosts an EarlyON Child and Family Centre, promoting knowledge and skills development for child health and wellbeing. Coupled with its meeting space and responsiveness to the needs of youth and families, the library has demonstrated itself to be a valuable partner to a number of social service agencies and the people they serve. In the same vein, space at the library is used for supervised visits between the Children’s Aid Society and parents to assist with the safe promotion of child wellbeing and family maintenance.

Table 4: Health & Wellness Benefit

4. Health & Wellness	Economic Benefit
Economic benefit of health-related programming delivered at the library	0
Economic benefit of Health and Wellness related collection (incl. books, e-books, DVD's)	\$86,561.00
Economic benefit of in-library information requests	\$282,500.00
<i>Total economic benefit of Health and Wellness indicators</i>	\$369,061.00

The economic benefit generated by the Kenora Public Library in 2015 through its services and activities related to health and wellness total \$369,061.00 based on the indicators selected.

2.5 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 capacity and the ability of library patrons to engage in public life and access government services (Hanna, 2012; Ulvik, 2010; Rankin, 2012).

Developing relationships as discussed in other sections of this report is also important with respect to developing engaged citizenship and building safer communities. Through various programming, workshops, and accidental interaction, patrons have an opportunity to create and develop relationships with a broader cross-section of the

population at the library than they might ordinarily meet in their daily lives. The library’s meeting space supports the work of local citizens in strengthening the social economy and the city’s overall resiliency.

This greater investment in the community, paired with the services and early interventions for those at risk of being in conflict with the law helps to create a stronger, safer community. Early interventions, such as hosting the EarlyON Child and Family Centre, and modelling adult and professional behaviour for high school student volunteers provides positive role models and exposure to a wide breadth of local residents. Participants also noted that residents at halfway houses were frequent users of the library for their own care regime as well as accessing the overall resources of the library, which helped them better integrate into the community. Partnerships with the Lake of the Woods Employment Action Project (LEAP) also helped students gain access to skills and employment, thereby increasing access to economic self-sufficiency, a principal measure of crime prevention.

Table 5: Engaged Citizens & Safer Communities Benefit

5. Engaged Citizens & Safer Communities	Economic Benefit
Economic benefit of a library membership	\$2,488,416.00
Economic benefit of volunteer hours (incl. adults, board members, community hours and student coops)	\$15,992.76
Economic benefit of community development workshops (incl. community development workshops; newcomer programs; technology, social media and computer literacy workshops)	\$13,350.00
<i>Total economic benefit of Engaged Citizens and Safer Communities indicators</i>	\$2,517,757.76

The economic benefit generated by the Kenora Public Library in 2015 through its services and activities related to promoting engaged citizenship and safer communities totals \$2,517,757.76 based on the indicators selected.

2.6 Entertainment and Enjoyment

In 2014, the Canadian Library Association reported 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 a wide range of other materials, and 2) as a place to hang out. For populations living in Northern, rural, and First Nation communities, both of these functions may be of even greater importance than in larger urban centres.

The library’s entertainment initiatives concentrate particularly on literature. The library hosts writers’ workshops, book launches for adults and children, and hosts the Giller Gala promoting Canadian publishers and authors. The “Maker Space” offered by the library also encourages craft making and play that in addition to offering cognitive development and cultivation of creative skills is also pursued for the sake of its own enjoyment.

Table 6: Entertainment and Enjoyment Benefit

6. Entertainment & Enjoyment	Economic Value
Economic benefit of Adult Circulation (All materials)	\$6,753,428.60
Economic benefit of Adult & Seniors programming and services (incl. cooking, knitting, yoga etc.)	\$8,380.00
Economic benefit of one library visit	\$338,250.00
<i>Total economic benefit of Entertainment and Enjoyment indicators</i>	<i>\$7,100,058.60</i>

The economic benefit generated by the Kenora Public Library in 2015 through its services and activities related to entertainment and personal enjoyment totals \$7,100,058.60 based on the indicators selected.

2.7 Economic Development

Public libraries boost the economy of their local communities, not only through the provision of direct jobs and spin-off jobs (MPI, 2013) but also by the role libraries play in facilitating entry into the labour market (Rao, 2012). Other advantages include access to wi-fi services, providing office space and equipment for home-based businesses and local entrepreneurs, as well as supporting the local economy by purchasing goods and services in the community.

Kenora Public Library’s most direct investment in the local economy comes in the form of its six full-time staff and five part-time students, distributed across the library’s locations. A number of student employees partner with the Lake of the Woods Employment Action Project (LEAP) to work, develop skills and leadership qualities and to support future vocational training. The library’s participation with LEAP helps to create employment and increase young people’s future economic self-sufficiency.

Small business owners are able to use library services, including internet access as well as faxes and scanning to save on their own expenses and expand their capacity. Small business owners vacationing in the area are also able to access this service, maintaining a connection to their businesses and making them more likely to return to the area. Similarly, tourists are able to access programming for their children and

families. The library also provides a cataloguing service for the Northwest Business Centres books, assisting patrons to locate the business supports they need.

Table 7: Economic Development Benefit

7. Economic Development	Economic Benefit
Economic benefit of funds leveraged from outside the community (incl. library-specific funding, e.g., capacity building, pay equity, provincial operating grants).	\$35,583.00
Economic benefit of self-generated revenues (incl. contracts, donations, employment funding, fees, grants, room rental) Project funding available only through application	\$83,406.00
Economic benefit of Employment, Training and Development	\$841,660.60
<i>Total economic benefit of Economic Development indicators</i>	<i>\$960,649.60</i>

The economic benefit generated by the Kenora Public Library in 2015 through its services and activities related to economic development totals \$960,649.60 based on the indicators selected.

3.0 The Social Return on Investment of the Kenora 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 (Lingane, 2004).

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

The SROI of the Kenora Public Library cannot be fully captured by economic indicators. In fact, perhaps the most significant value of the library is serving as a community hub, which contributes to the community's overall health and well-being, cohesiveness and engagement. This 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 seven benefit areas of the framework.

Table 8: Total Benefits

Totaling Indicators	Economic Benefit
1. Cultural Integrity & Regional Identity	\$116,965.00
2. Social Inclusion	\$812,586.46
3. Cognitive & Literacy	\$495,404.70
4. Health & Wellness	\$369,061.00
5. Engaged Citizens & Safer Communities	\$2,517,757.76
6. Entertainment & Enjoyment	\$7,100,058.60
7. Economic Development	\$960,649.60
Subtotal	\$12,372,496.92
Premium Value for underserved area	1.19
Total Economic Benefit of the 7 indicator areas	\$14,665,877.05

Once the totals of the seven indicators are tabulated, the SROI may be calculated as shown in Table 9.

Table 9: SROI for the Kenora Public Library

Social Return on Investment Data		Economic Benefit
Economic Benefit	Economic Benefit of the 7 indicator areas (Table 8)	\$12,372,496.92
Total Economic Benefit	Economic Benefit x Premium Value for locale	\$14,665,877.05
Benefit per Resident	Total Economic Benefit divided by number of residents in catchment area	\$971.51
Impact per household	Total Economic Impact divided by the number of households in catchment area	\$1,988.32
Impact of an 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.	\$2,331.48
Total Social Return on Investment	Total Economic Benefit divided by the municipality's operating grant	\$23.86
Total Social Return on Investment as a Percentage	Total Social Return on Investment expressed as a percentage	2386%

In 2015 the monthly cost of the Nutritious Food Basket for the Northwestern Health Unit area, which encompasses Kenora Public Library is \$1,018 whereas Toronto's monthly cost is \$858.81. The difference represents a premium value of 1.19% as an underserved area. This premium value is used in this measurement toolkit to acknowledge the access and benefits to services provided by public libraries in Northern First Nation, francophone, and rural communities and which may otherwise be unavailable. Kenora Public Library's catchment area serves a population of 15,096 residents, comprised of 7,376 households. Collectively the branches are open 3700 hours per year yielding a minimum impact of \$2,331.46 for each open hour. In 2015, Kenora's municipal contribution to the library was 614,634.

Through the application of these calculations it is apparent that the Kenora Public Library yields at minimum \$14,665,877.05 in total economic benefit and a \$23.86 return on its base municipal funding. Expressed as a percentage, every dollar invested by the municipality in the public library yields 2386% in economic benefit. These calculations demonstrate the monetary value of the library's cultural, social, cognitive, health, and economic benefits as well as its contributions to 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 benefits to 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 direct 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.

In terms of its SROI, the Kenora Public Library is 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 of its funding.

Appendix A: Methodology and Framework

Methodology

Ontario Library Service – North (OLS – North) received two years of funding through the Ontario Libraries Capacity Fund (OLCF) – Research and Innovation grant to develop a tool to measure the value of small libraries in Northern Ontario to their communities.

OLS – North contracted NORDIK Institute, a community-based research institute at Algoma University to measure the benefits that 121 libraries across Northern Ontario provide to their communities. Six pilot sites, chosen for their diverse geography and demographics, volunteered to participate in the design and testing of a tool for measuring the SROI of northern libraries. Dryden, Kenora, and Rainy River were the three public libraries from Northwestern Ontario. In Northeastern Ontario, the pilot communities are Powassan, Temiskaming Shores, and Wikwemikong Unceded Indian Reserve. Rainy River serves the smallest population (2,175) while Kenora has the largest population of the pilot sites (15,096). These communities are predominantly English speaking with small groups of French, Ojibway, Oji-Cree, and Cree speaking people. Librarians from these pilot communities served on the Steering Committee to guide this process.

NORDIK Institute submitted a written literature review to the Steering Committee prior to site visits. This draft 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 within the pilot sites confirmed that the valuing of public libraries in Northern and rural settings required that the measurement tool reach well beyond circulation materials to encompass the many diverse and unique roles of public libraries. Based on a review of the literature, site visits, and input from the Steering Committee, 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.

NORDIK designed a measurement tool in collaboration with the pilot sites to measure Social Return on Investment. Three indicators were chosen within each sector that best reflect how libraries' operations and expenditures contribute to each respective area. The measurement tool was tested 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 is used to describe the social impact of a business or non-profit's operations in dollar terms,

relative to the investment required to create that benefit and exclusive of its financial return to investors (Lingane, 2004).

A measurement framework outlined in Figure 7 below was designed, based on the research conducted for the study.

Figure 5: Measurement Framework



Developing Evaluation Indicators

An Indicator is a quantifiable measure used to monitor progress or benefit 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 calculation of its Social Return on Investment.

Many public library services and activities could arguably demonstrate benefits in multiple sectors. For example, a program funded by the Ministry of Health might be placed in the Health and Wellness sector, even though it may have implications for cognitive and literacy development, or another sector. This study has relied on the preferences of the pilot sites to identify the placement of indicators within each of the seven sectors.

The indicators have been selected based on data that is collected by most libraries through its automation system or is otherwise available through other library data collections methods.

Defining Outcome Measures

1. Small libraries have a reliable and user friendly tool to measure their benefit to the community.
2. Small libraries will gain an understanding of Return on Investment and value measurement.
3. Small libraries will have a social and economic measure of their community benefit that will support discussions with key stakeholders and funders about the value their library brings to the community.

Focus Groups: Kenora Public Library

Each library has built a unique mix of resources—collections, programming, services, etc. in response to community needs, enabling community members to improve their quality of life and to 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 or under serviced. Staff of Kenora Public Library organized a focus group to obtain insight into ways the library responds to community needs. This focus group was held in Kenora on June 10, 2016. Kenora's session had 6 participants. The focus group included library staff, representatives from the library board, patrons and the public. Participants used post-it notes to identify the various ways that they felt the library contributes to the community that were then shared and discussed with others. Library staff later combined data from the two focus groups, organizing the post-it notes into the seven assessment areas, creating a narrative to illustrate the value of the library as described in this report.

Appendix B: Detailed Indicator Charts

Please see the SROI Indicator Template for Kenora Public Library attached.

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 Box¹ in local communities versus such cost in the City of Toronto. Community Nutritious Food Basket costs can be located through regional public health units².

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.

¹ Health Canada, Nutritious Food Basket (<http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/surveill/basket-panier/index-eng.php>)

² 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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