

Supporting and Developing Youth Through the MIGIZI Green Jobs Pathway Program

Phase II Opportunity Reboot Evaluation

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Key findings

MIGIZI Green Jobs Pathway program aims to prepare Native American youth to become financially independent, responsible, and self-determined adults. The program provides education and support for youth, helping them create career pathways to secure a living-wage career in the green economy. MIGIZI received funding from Youthprise and participates in its Opportunity Reboot initiative as a sub-grantee.

Each year, three different cohorts of youth participate in the Green Jobs Pathway program. In 2017-18 (Phase II of the project), 34 youth participated in the program. Most youth (68%) were in middle or high school and the remaining youth (32%) graduated from high school. Those who graduated from high school had a high school diploma, a graduate equivalent diploma (GED), or had some college/technical/vocational school. Most youth (70%) were male and a few (12%) were homeless.

Findings of the program evaluation are generally positive. The program was successful in:

- **Engaging and retaining participants in the program.** Most youth (77%) participated in more than 150 program hours and most youth (82%) completed at least 75 percent of the activities offered to them. Almost all youth completed the job skills training or credential programs (94%), or had an apprenticeship, internship, or other paid or unpaid work experience (91%).
- **Offering participants a large array of learning opportunities and supports.** The program offered opportunities for hands-on experiments in solar, electricity, thermal, and wind turbine topics; conducting research and presentations; attending conferences; participating in college and commercial plants tours; and learning about financial management, job skills and goal setting, and green economy careers.
- **Strengthening the program implementation** from Phase I to Phase II based on the Opportunity Reboot model.



The findings also pointed to areas that the program could be strengthened. We recognize that improvement efforts are underway. These areas include:

- **Recruiting more participants.** The program expanded to include non-Native American youth participants in the summer. Also, because the program had difficulty finding youth who were current high school students at risk of leaving school before earning a high school diploma for one of the three sessions, the program might consider targeting different kinds of students for that session.
- **Extending the program.** Because some of the youth outcomes are intermediate and long-term, program should consider extending the length of the program beyond the nine weeks.
- **Continuing to use the practices and features that they gained from their participation in the Opportunity Reboot initiative,** as appropriate.

In addition to this report, Search Institute (who conducts the overall Opportunity Reboot initiative evaluation) will produce a summary of the youth survey results and the quality impact study results, which will provide more a comprehensive evaluation of the program.



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Overview

Across a range of measures, from housing to income and education to criminal justice, Minnesota's American Indians fare worse than other racial groups. The graduation rate for American Indian students in 2017 was 51 percent, compared to 88 percent for white, non-Hispanic students. American Indian students' high school graduation rates have been the lowest of any racial or ethnic group in the state. Estimated poverty rates among American Indian Minnesotans are also among the highest of any racial or ethnic group (Minnesota Compass, as cited in Kaul 2018).

MIGIZI created the Green Jobs Pathway program to address the community's youth development needs and to combat income and education disparities. It aims to prepare Native American youth to become financially independent, responsible, and self-determined adults. The program provides education and support for youth, helping them create career pathways to secure a living-wage career in the green economy. They do this through helping youth discover their cultural role as caretakers of the earth, develop their workplace skills, and complete postsecondary coursework or credentials.

The Green Jobs Pathway program started in 2016 to provide education and support to youth through a nine-week Indigenous Stewardship Institute. Each year, three different cohorts of youth participate in the Institute. These cohorts include current high school students at risk of leaving school before earning a high school diploma; youth who left high school and had not earned a high school diploma or GED; and youth who had earned a high school diploma or GED but were not enrolled in postsecondary education or working in a career. Youth who participate in the program receive paid internships and are encouraged to contribute to the program's matched-savings Individual Development Account (IDA) to help pay for future postsecondary costs.

MIGIZI received funding from Youthprise and participates in its Opportunity Reboot initiative as one of its sub-grantees. The Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) awarded Youthprise Opportunity Reboot initiative with the Social Innovation Fund (SIF) grant to work with existing community-based programs, such as MIGIZI, to leverage and expand their capacity to more effectively create pathways to school, career, and life success for youth who are homeless, in foster care, involved in the juvenile justice system, or disconnected from school and education.

Evaluation

Search Institute works with Youthprise to coordinate the initiative's overall evaluation. Based on MIGIZI's recommendation, Search Institute contracted with Wilder Research to conduct a two-phase evaluation of Green Jobs Pathway program. The Phase I evaluation focuses on examining MIGIZI Green Jobs Pathway's current strategies, activities, and plans for alignment with Youthprise's Opportunity Reboot model, as well as perceived program experiences and outcomes. Qualitative data were gathered through a focus group with youth and key informant interviews with staff. In addition, the MIGIZI staff were asked to complete a program mapping tool. The mapping tool includes spaces for MIGIZI staff to self-evaluate their work and document any anticipated changes needed to better align with Youthprise's articulation of the Opportunity Reboot model. Findings from the Phase I evaluation are reported separately (Gozali-Lee, Peterson, & MartinRogers, 2017).

This report summarizes Phase II evaluation findings, focusing on the characteristics of the youth enrolled in the program, program activities and youth participation, changes in program implementation based on the Opportunity Reboot model, and youth outcomes, as reported by staff. Wilder Research examined program records, interviewed key staff about program implementation, and analyzed staff ratings on youth outcomes.

In addition, Search Institute collected youth pre- and post-surveys and conducted a qualitative impact study. Those findings will be reported separately by Search Institute. Except for program records and the youth focus group protocol at Phase I, Search Institute created all data collection instruments for this evaluation, with the input from Opportunity Reboot sub-grantees. For example, MIGIZI and Wilder Research requested that youth in the Green Jobs Pathway be asked questions about their sense of connection to their Native American culture and caring about the environment.

Youth profile

Characteristics of youth enrolled in MIGIZI Green Jobs Pathway program in the 2017-18 school year and in summer 2018 (Phase II) are presented in Figure 1. There were 34 youth across the three cohort groups: 3 youth attended the fall session, 11 youth attended the winter/spring session, and 20 youth attended the summer session. Because of the small number in each cohort group, the combined results are reported.

Although the program primarily serves Native American youth, other community youth participated during the summer session. Among the racial groups, 54 percent of youth identified themselves as Native American, 25 percent were black, and 21 percent were a combination of white, Asian, or multi-racial. Three of the Native American youth were of

Hispanic ethnicity. Most youth (68%) spoke English at home and the remaining youth (32%) spoke either Spanish or Somali.

Most youth (68%) were in middle or high school, including three youth (9%) who were enrolled in an alternative high school. The other youth graduated from high school and had either a high school diploma (21%) or a graduate equivalent diploma or GED (6%). One had some college/technical/vocational school (3%), and one youth was not attending high school or had dropped out (3%). At the conclusion of the program, all youth were either in school or had graduated from high school, including two who had completed some college or technical/vocational school.

Most of the youth (70%) were male. Four youth (12%) were homeless and three youth (9%) had a part-time job.

1. Youth profile in 2017-18 (N=34)

Gender	N	Percent
Female	10	30%
Male	23	70%
Race		
American Indian or Alaska Native	15	54%
Black or African American	7	25%
Others ^a	6	21%
Education status at program entry		
Middle or high school, including alternative secondary	23	68%
High school diploma	7	21%
GED	2	6%
Some college/technical/vocational school	1	3%
Not attending school	1	3%
Other information		
Homeless	4	12%
Employed (part-time)	3	9%

Note. Some gender, race and ethnicity data are missing. At program exit, two youth had some college/technical/vocational school and none was in the “not attending school or high school dropout (outside compulsory age)” category.

^a Includes white, Asian, or multi-race.

Implementation

Program activities and participation

The Indigenous Stewardship Institute provided youth with a large array of learning experiences. Youth participated in hands-on experiments in solar, electricity, thermal, and wind turbine topics; conducted research, wrote and presented the findings; attended and presented at conferences; visited colleges; toured commercial plants; took a job skills assessment; and learned about financial management, job skills and goal setting, and careers in the green economy. Figure 1 shows the number of hours youth attended program activities and the proportion of all program activities they completed. Figure A1 displays the list of activities and the percentage of students who attended each.



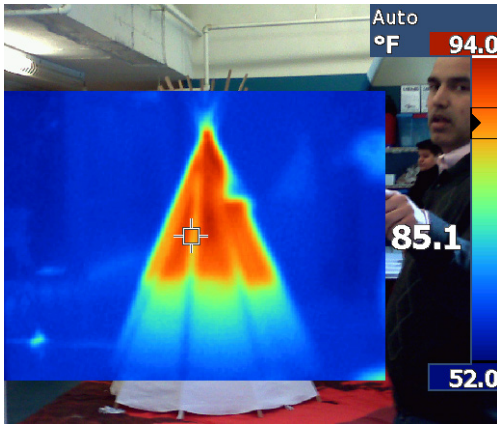
Youth attendance rates in the program were high; most youth (77%) participated in more than 150 program hours and most youth (82%) completed at least 75 percent of the activities offered to them (Figures 2 and A1).

2. Participation rates

Number of hours	N	Percent
Fewer than 100 hours	5	15%
100-150 hours	3	9%
More than 150 hours	26	77%
Percentage of completed activities		
Fewer than 50 percent	3	9%
50-74 percent	3	9%
75-100%	28	82%

Note. The number of programming hours and number of project activities varied among cohort groups; but each cohort groups received more than 200 programming hours (ranging between 212 to 278 hours).

Program engagement



In a survey, staff rated 80 percent of the youth as highly engaged in the program. The remaining youth were either engaged at medium levels (17%) or low levels (3%). Engagement was defined as staff observations of youth participating in class discussions, asking questions during field trips or tours, interacting with peers appropriately, or having minimum distractions during class time (e.g., using cell phone appropriately).

Program mapping

This section examines the fidelity of the Green Jobs Pathway program to the Opportunity Reboot model developed by Youthprise in 2017. Youthprise developed the Opportunity Reboot model to reflect common aspects (including activities and immediate and long-term outcomes) of its six Social Innovation Fund subgrantee programs, with the assumption that following this model will result in positive outcomes. The model has four main features: mentoring relationships, goal supports, career pathways framework, and cross-sector partnerships. Each feature contains one to four concepts; in turn, each concept is broken down into two to four strategies. Each subgrantee program used its own tactics (activities) to meet each strategy. After developing the initial model in early 2017, Youthprise revised the model in summer 2017 based on subgrantee feedback.

As a companion to the model, Search Institute devised a program mapping tool to help each of the six subgrantee programs measure implementation fidelity in each of the model's four features. The program map asks staff from the subgrantee programs to rate their program's alignment to the strategies outlined in the Opportunity Reboot model on a scale from 0 ("not aligned") to 3 ("strongly aligned"), with the goal of attaining strong alignment in each of the 27 strategies.

MIGIZI staff who were involved in the Green Jobs Pathway program met with Wilder Research staff on three occasions to review the program mapping tool and, where applicable, discuss ways to adapt the Green Jobs Pathway program to increase its alignment with the model. For this report, Wilder compares the second program map from November 2017 (the first program map with the revised and updated model) to the third and final program map from May 2018.

Feature 1. Integrated Positive Mentoring Relationships

Mentorship is a central component of the Green Jobs Pathway program, with program staff acting as mentors to the youth in the program. While there has been some alignment in all five strategies from the beginning of the program, MIGIZI staff agreed there was lower alignment in the concepts and strategies that focused on structured mentoring arrangements. MIGIZI staff are highly trained, knowledgeable, and experienced mentors, but the Green Jobs Pathway program was not designed to teach youth about mentorship in a formalized way. To bring the program into greater alignment with the model, MIGIZI staff partnered with MENTOR MN to provide training for youth on identifying and maximizing relationships with formal and informal mentors. After completing this work, MIGIZI staff identified their program as “strongly” aligned in all five strategies.

Feature 2. Coordinated Career Pathways Framework

MIGIZI staff rated all eight career pathways strategies as “strongly” or “mostly” aligned during the November 2017 program mapping session, reflecting a commitment to guiding youth to sustainable employment in the green jobs sector. Strategies with slightly less alignment (“mostly” rather than “strongly” aligned) tended to ask for more formal or structured processes, such creating an education or work plan for youth. As with mentorship, MIGIZI staff are highly trained and capable of guiding youth to more meaningful, stable, and long-term careers; however, the Green Jobs Pathway program was not initially designed to provide formal training on specific job skills or social-emotional competencies. Trainings in résumé writing and postsecondary planning were introduced in 2018 to bring the Green Jobs Pathway program into greater alignment. MIGIZI staff identified the program as “strongly” aligned in all eight strategies in May 2018.

Feature 3. Responsive Individualized Goals Supports

In general, MIGIZI staff perceived the Green Jobs Pathway program to be well-aligned in this feature, with 9 of 10 strategies identified as “strongly” or “mostly” aligned in November 2017. MIGIZI staff identified lower levels of alignment in strategies that referred to tracking goal progress and updating or modifying plans; the short-term nature of the Institute program (nine weeks) means that there is little time for plans to change and no formalized way of updating them. As a result, two strategies (one addressing modifying plans, one addressing staff assisting youth with revising and expanding goals) remained “mostly” aligned in the final program map.

Feature 4. Impactful Cross-Sector Partnerships

The Green Jobs Pathway program has cultivated relationships with cross-sector partners, including businesses and higher education institutions. MIGIZI staff identified a few challenges with the cross-sector partnership features in the Opportunity Reboot model, particularly the strategy around maintaining and strengthening collaboration through regular interactions. In particular, the educational partners engaged in the Green Jobs Pathway program experienced a significant amount of staff turnover during the evaluation period; as a result, MIGIZI staff have spent time reintroducing and reestablishing connections rather than strengthening collaboration with these partners. Despite these challenges, MIGIZI staff saw strong alignment with two of the three strategies by May 2018.

Outcomes

Staff ratings

Staff were asked to rate youth progress on a list of relevant program outcomes and individual goals during their time in the program. Almost all youth completed the job skills training program or credential program (94%) or apprenticeship, internship, or other paid or unpaid work experience (91%). This is not surprising because the program offered both of these opportunities to youth. All high school youth made a substantial progress toward or completed a high school diploma or a GED. Those with a postsecondary outcome goal had started or made some progress.

In terms of individual goals, soft employment skills and getting training and certificates were met by almost all the youth. Most youth (64%) made substantial progress on their education goals. More than half made some progress on employment (57%) or housing (55%).

3. Outcomes and goals

Outcome ^a	N	Percent			
		Started activity	Some progress	Substantial progress	Activity completed
Job skills training program or credential program	34	-	3%	3%	94%
High school diploma, GED, or adult diploma	14	-	-	21%	79%
Postsecondary	10	60%	40%	-	-
Apprenticeship, internship, or other paid or unpaid work experience	34	-	6%	3%	91%
Individual goal ^a		No progress	Some progress	Substantial progress	Goal met
Education	34	-	12%	64%	24%
Employment	14	-	57%	14%	29%
Housing	9	-	55%	22%	22%
Soft employment skills (e.g., communication skills, social skills)	34	-	9%	-	91%
Training and certificate	34	-	6%	-	94%

^a Includes applicable/identified individual outcomes or goals. Because of a small number, results on the mental health goal were not reported.

Training certifications

For the cohort youth who were offered to complete a training certification as a part of this program, most of them (82-95%) completed and received the training certificates.

4. Training certificates

Certificate	N	Percent
MREA Course PV101: Basic photovoltaics certification	9	82%
Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) 10 construction safety certificate	10	91%
CPR/AED/First aid certificate, American Red Cross	10	91%
Introduction to home audits (0.6 CEUs, 6 hours) at Minneapolis Community and Technical College	19	95%

Note. Two of the three cohorts were offered one or more of these training

Conclusion and issues to consider

MIGIZI Green Jobs Pathway provides learning opportunities and job skills training that are important for the future of the youth and their community. Governor Dayton illustrates the importance of clean energy to the overall economy in Minnesota and to the environment in this remark:

This year, Minnesota achieved our Renewable Energy Standard seven years early. Now over 25 percent of our energy comes from renewable sources, powering a clean energy economy that employs over 59,000 Minnesotans. Minnesota has made tremendous progress to advance clean energy and create jobs. But we must do more to build an even better, more environmentally sustainable future for our children and grandchildren. (Clean Energy Economy Minnesota website, August 8, 2018)

Findings from the Phase II evaluation pointed to areas of success for the MIGIZI Green Jobs Pathway program. These include:

- Engaging and retaining participants in the program.
- Offering participants a large array of learning opportunities and supports.
- Strengthening the program implementation from Phase I to Phase II based on the Opportunity Reboot model.

Findings also pointed to areas that the program could be strengthened. We recognize that improvement efforts are underway. These areas include:

- Recruiting more participants. The program has expanded to include non-Native American youth participants in the summer. Also, because the program had difficulty in finding youth who are current high school students at risk of leaving school before earning a high school diploma, the program might consider targeting different kinds of students.
- Extending the program. Because some of the youth outcomes are intermediate and long-term, program should consider extending the length of the program beyond the nine weeks.
- Continuing to use the practices and features gained from participation in the Opportunity Reboot initiative, as appropriate. The core strength of MIGIZI Green Jobs Pathway program is in building informal relationships with youth and community partners. Being part of a SIF grant project required the program staff to formalize and track the program activities, including the mentoring relationships with youth, the relationships with partners, and to show evidence of program effectiveness. Program staff mentioned

that the MENTOR MN training helped them to make positive adjustments to the way they mentor youth.

Clean energy jobs are in high demand. According to the Clean Energy Economy Minnesota, clean energy jobs in Minnesota grew at a rate of 2.6 percent, twice as fast as overall job growth in the state (August 8, 2018). Because of this prospect, MIGIZI is on the right track for introducing the Native American youth in the community to this field and at the same time, reinforcing the Native American culture known to respect the nature and care for the earth.

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Appendix

A1. Number of students completing the project activities

Program activities	N	Percent
Solar experiments		
Phone charger ^{abc}	33	97%
Parabolic reflectors: construction and testing ^c	17	85%
Solar ovens: focal point calculation ^a	3	100%
Solar ovens: comparing 2 models (with and without glass cover), record the temperatures and make a data set ^c	18	90%
Solar ovens: designing, constructing, testing ^c	19	95%
Solar thermal: insulated coffee can ^b	10	91%
Solar thermal: lights on pipes ^{bc}	28	90%
Solar photovoltaic: measuring output using multi-meter ^{bc}	27	87%
Solar panel station preparation: constructing basic wood frames ^c	17	85%
Solar panel station preparation: reading and analyzing solar panel – rating labels ^c	17	85%
Solar panel station preparation: designing and sketching a model of a portable frame ^c	17	85%
Solar panel station preparation: testing the angles of a solar panel to determine efficiency ^c	17	85%
Watch Nova's video "Save by the Sun: a look at solar energy technology and its evolution" ^c	17	85%
Thermal efficiency/HVAC experiments		
Tiny Tipi ^{abc}	31	91%
Large Tipi ^{bc}	19	61%
"Wigwametry: wigwam design and construction using geometry ^c	18	90%

Note. The percentage of youth attended the activities were based the number of youth who were offered that activity.

^a Activity offered to the fall cohort.

^b Activity offered to the winter/spring cohort.

^c Activity offered to the summer cohort.

A1. Number of students completing the project activities (continued)

Program activities	N	Percent
Energy usage		
Kunsi's apartment: light bulb problem ^{bc}	26	84%
Kunsi's apartment: utilities included ^{bc}	26	84%
Killa-watt meter and office appliances ^{bc}	25	81%
Low energy glass: measuring the efficiency of double-paned windows ^c	18	90%
Breadboard basic of electricity: introduction to current, volts, resistance, circuits, and switches ^c	17	85%
Humidity experiments 1 and 2, using an infrared camera ^c	17	85%
Inverter testing and troubleshooting ^c	17	85%
Calculate and determine the proper size of inverters ^c	17	85%
Wind turbine		
Work on wind generator kit ^{bc}	22	71%
Faribault energy park tour: calculating percentage of capacity (turbine speed, physical structure, and wind speed) ^c	17	85%
Hydropower		
Hydropower field research at Minnehaha Falls ^c	15	75%
Ford hydroelectric plant tour: learning about how hydropower works ^c	16	80%
Electricity experiments		
Multimeter battery tests ^a	3	100%
Model of breadboard's distribution system ^a	3	100%
Basic of electrical safety ^a	3	100%
Career skills or future plans		
My Bio, My Education Plan, My Career Plan ^{abc}	32	94%
Hire-ability assessments: taking pre and post surveys and examining results ^{ab}	12	86%
Take interest inventory, skills assessment, career exploration ^{abc}	32	94%
Résumé-building: adding new skills and certifications ^{abc}	32	94%
Mentoring skills development: training from the MENTOR Minnesota ^{ab}	11	79%
Research careers, industries, and pathways ^c	19	95%
Career description and outlook, research and presentation ^c	16	80%

Note. The percentage of youth attended the activities were based the number of youth who were offered that activity.

^a Activity offered to the fall cohort.

^b Activity offered to the winter/spring cohort.

^c Activity offered to the summer cohort.

A1. Number of students completing the project activities (continued)

Program activities	N	Percent
Research projects: writing and presentations		
Environmental stewardship ^a	3	100%
My tribe's resources ^b	7	64%
Solar-powered station demonstration project ^a	3	100%
Daily journals ^{bc}	30	88%
Tiny Tipi project demonstration and data collection project ^a	3	100%
Project notebook ^{bc}	31	100%
Recycling in our community: process, history, data, how-to ^c	16	80%
Green steward: how I can help my family, neighborhood, and community ^c	15	75%
Field trips		
Century College: renewable energy information ^{ab}	10	71%
Minneapolis Community and Technical College (MCTC) renewable energy, energy efficiency, and career information ^{abc}	30	88%
Dunwoody College training and career information ^{ab}	12	86%
Brookfield Renewal Power, Inc./Ford Hydroelectric Dam tour and career information ^a	3	100%
Xcel Energy Black Dog Generating Station visit and career information ^a	3	100%
Climate change impacts, science, policy at the Uptown theatre ^a	3	100%
Great River Energy: learning about the wind turbine that produces renewable energy for their platinum-certified Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) headquarters facility ^a	3	100%
Learn about traditional foods and medicine gathering at Prairie Island: sustainable living practices ^a	3	100%
Wunderkammer Tech and Training Exploratorium: career fair ^c	18	90%
Financial literacy		
Session 1 ^{ab}	9	64%
Session 2 ^{ab}	10	71%
Session 3 ^{ab}	10	71%

Note. The percentage of youth attended the activities were based the number of youth who were offered that activity.

^a Activity offered to the fall cohort.

^b Activity offered to the winter/spring cohort.

^c Activity offered to the summer cohort.

A1. Number of students completing the project activities (continued)

Program activities	N	Percent
Community projects		
Just solar conference: information table for Green Jobs Pathways ^b	3	27%
Inflatable Tipi, additional to solar panel charger project ^a	3	100%
Solar panel portable station ^{bc}	28	90%
Solar panel portable station demonstration with teachers and students ^c	16	80%
Solar cell charger and Tipi Heating Ventilating Air Conditioning (HVAC) project and presentation to the board ^b	8	73%
Little Earth community solar projects ^a	3	100%
Community solar photovoltaic projects ^b	10	91%
Social justice		
Energy equality ^a	3	100%
Environmental concerns, issues, and debates ^a	3	100%
Energy disparities and energy progress worldwide ^a	3	100%
Environmental justice		
Line 3 Hearing at the MN Public Utilities Commission ^{bc}	27	87%
Just solar conference attendance ^b	3	27%
Watch "Catching the Sun" video on worldwide solar: policies, future of energy, new energy jobs ^c	17	85%
Cultural core		
Sugarbush ^b	9	82%
Red willow harvesting and scrapping ^b	10	91%
Buffalo herd ^{bc}	26	84%
Mind, Body, Medicine with speaker, Linda Eagle ^{bc}	20	65%
Sage harvesting, bundling, and drying ^c	17	85%
Traditional Native American games with Dan Ninham ^c	19	95%
Traditional lacrosse: playing the game ^c	19	95%

Note. The percentage of youth attended the activities were based the number of youth who were offered that activity.

^a Activity offered to the fall cohort.

^b Activity offered to the winter/spring cohort.

^c Activity offered to the summer cohort.

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