

Investing in kids' futures pays off in hard dollars

Every dollar invested in Big Brothers Big Sisters mentoring generates \$18 in social return on investment, new study finds

Toronto, July 16, 2013 – When it comes to hard dollar returns, few investments equal a donation to Big Brothers Big Sisters, according to a new study from The Boston Consulting Group (BCG).

The research compared the life outcomes of 500 former Little Brothers and Little Sisters with a control group of individuals from similar family and economic backgrounds who did not have a Big Brother or Big Sister to mentor them as children. The study found that, over their working lives, the former “Littles” will earn on average \$315,000 more than those in the control group.

Four categories of differential life outcomes were examined: employment, philanthropy, life skills and general well-being. Participants in Big Brothers Big Sisters (BBBS) mentoring programs were also significantly more likely to give generously to charitable causes and volunteer their time to community work. They also achieved more positive life outcomes in the categories of life skills and personal well-being.

“The BBBS Social Return on Investment Study was designed to audit the financial return to society from Big Brothers Big Sisters,” said James Tucker, a partner in Toronto at BCG, who led the research project. “We found tremendous financial value generated through higher taxes and higher spending due to increased income and increased charitable donations in time and money. Big Brothers Big Sisters mentoring programs generate an average social return on investment or SROI of \$18 for every dollar invested.”

For the most economically disadvantaged participants in BBBS mentoring programs the impact is even higher with an average, SROI of \$23 for each dollar invested.

Each former Little Brother and Little Sister involved in the research project is on track to generate an average of \$32,154 in additional tax revenue; \$49,819 in increased consumption; \$5,856 in additional charitable volunteering and \$890 in greater charitable giving. The average investment required to mentor a Little Brother or Little Sister over the average duration of a Big/Little match is \$5,059.

Key findings

- 68 per cent reported being employed full time, compared to 58 per cent among those in the control group. The BBBS participants were also significantly more likely to have higher full-time salaries (average: \$59,600 versus \$52,700)
- 66 per cent self-reported volunteering for community service versus 43 per cent among those in the control group. The BBBS participants reported an average of 95 hours of community service per year compared to 73 hours
- Almost eight-in-ten BBBS participants (77 per cent) self-reported they donate to charities compared to 67 per cent among those in the control group
- Average annual charitable donations were also higher (\$395 versus \$329)

- 80 per cent self-reported pursuing a healthy lifestyle versus 72 per cent among those in the control group
- 81 per cent self-reported being financially literate compared to 70 per cent
- 47 per cent self-reported being a senior leader in their working environment compared to 32 per cent
- 42 per cent strongly agreed that they were a happy person, compared to 26 per cent of those in the control group; 52 per cent strongly agreed that they make good life choices versus 39 per cent and 42 per cent strongly agreed that they had a strong network of family and friends compared to 28 per cent

“Collective action is needed to change the trajectory of young lives,” says Bruce MacDonald, President and CEO of Big Brothers Big Sisters of Canada. “This study is sending a powerful message: the private sector, governments and individuals can support BBBS mentoring programs knowing that their investments will have a transformative effect on young lives and yield robust long-term financial returns and societal value.”

The idea of collective action to invest in the future of boys and girls in need of guidance through BBBS programs is gaining strength.

Three recently announced sponsorships will generate an estimated financial return of \$78.3 million over 40 years.

Standard Life, a sponsor of Big Brothers Big Sisters since 2009, has renewed its commitment with an investment of \$1.125 million over the next five years. The funds will go towards recruiting more volunteer Big Brothers and Big Sisters.

“Many causes are worthy of our support. We now have the proof that mentoring with Big Brothers Big Sisters does much to improve the quality of life in our society,” said Sophie Fortin, Senior Vice-President, People, Business Change and Communications, Standard Life Financial. “We’re in the business of investing for the long term. We’re proud of our commitment to the future of young Canadians and the positive effect it has on the health of our communities. This is truly one of the most satisfying investments we can make.”

Boston Pizza, a new corporate sponsor, has also made a five-year pledge to invest a minimum of \$1.5 million in BBBS mentoring programs.

“We see the impact and benefit of strong mentorship in our restaurants every day as more than 22,000 young people are employed at Boston Pizza restaurants from coast-to-coast,” said Cheryl Treliving, Executive Director of the Boston Pizza Foundation. “This study confirms the importance of role models and mentoring, as well as the long-term impact we can have on the lives of individuals and on the health of our country and workforce.”

The Government of Canada through the auspices of Citizenship and Immigration Canada is investing \$1.6 million in BBBS over three years. The funds are dedicated to establishing programs to serve the mentoring needs of immigrant youth.

“The Government of Canada is committed to helping newcomers succeed and prosper in their new home,” said Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism Minister Jason

Kenney. “We are proud to partner with Big Brothers Big Sisters of Canada to help immigrant youth integrate into their new school and community through this mentorship program.”

Methodology

The BBBS SROI study compares the life outcomes of single parent children of very similar backgrounds who had a BBBS mentor with a group that did not have that experience. The differential life outcomes were then identified and attributed to the program based on self-reported causal assessments. BCG then translated the causal differential life outcomes into societal dollar impacts and compared them to the up-front investment on a Net Present Value (NPV) basis to generate the ROI. The study was undertaken by BCG using a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods. The qualitative research consisted of fifty 1:1 interviews where hypotheses were tested and refined in preparation for the quantitative research. All of the quantitative research was undertaken via online survey and weighted to ensure a representative socio-economic, demographic and geographic sample in Canada.

About Big Brothers Big Sisters of Canada

For one hundred years, Big Brothers Big Sisters has been making a positive difference in the lives of Canada’s youth by developing and implementing a wide range of mentoring programs. BBBS volunteer mentors teach by example the importance of giving back, of staying in school, and of respecting family, peers and community.

BBBS provides quality mentoring services for more than 40,000 children and teenagers. The community-based youth mentoring organization currently has over 25,000 volunteer mentors working at 118 agencies that serve children in over 1,000 communities across the country. Learn more. Visit www.bigbrothersbigsisters.ca.

About The Boston Consulting Group

The Boston Consulting Group is a global management consulting firm and the world's leading advisor on business strategy. We partner with clients from the private, public, and not-for-profit sectors in all regions to identify their highest-value opportunities, address their most critical challenges, and transform their enterprises.

Our customized approach combines deep insight into the dynamics of companies and markets with close collaboration at all levels of the client organization. This ensures that our clients achieve sustainable competitive advantage, build more capable organizations, and secure lasting results. Founded in 1963, BCG is a private company with more than 75 offices in 43 countries.

About Standard Life

Standard Life Financial provides long-term savings, investments and insurance solutions to more than 1.4 million Canadians, including group retirement and insurance plan members. It has been doing business in Canada for 180 years and has more than 2,000 employees across the country.

About the Boston Pizza Foundation

The Boston Pizza Foundation raises funds for many charities across Canada, including Big Brothers Big Sisters, Kids Help Phone, Live Different and Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation. Since its inception in 1990, the Boston Pizza Foundation has

raised more than \$16 million through various fundraising initiatives, the money raised supports local, national and global non-profit organizations, all of which directly improve the health and well-being of children and families.

About Citizenship and Immigration Canada

Citizenship and Immigration Canada's settlement allocations for provinces and territories outside of Quebec have almost tripled from less than \$200 million in 2005-2006 to approximately \$600 million for the current fiscal year.

CIC's Settlement Program supports newcomers in a variety of ways by providing language training, information to better understand life in Canada, assistance to find employment and help to establish networks and contacts in their communities. In addition, newcomers have access to needs assessments and referrals services, as well as support services (interpretation, transportation, child care, etc.) required to address both immediate and long-term settlement concerns.