

FINAL REPORT
Children and Youth Mental Health Fund:
Diversity Capacity Building Project
2008/2009



Delisle Youth Services
&
Regent Park Community Health Centre

"THE YOUTH DIVERSITY PROJECT"

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THE YOUTH DIVERSITY PROJECT**

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1.0 BACKGROUND & PURPOSE OF THE YOUTH DIVERSITY PROJECT

1.1 Background

This Youth Diversity Project centers on the collaborative efforts and partnership between two Toronto-based human service organizations: Regent Park Community Health Centre and Delisle Youth Services.

Regent Park Community Health Centre (RPCHC), founded by area residents in 1973, is located in Canada's oldest and largest public housing community. RPCHC serves a diverse population of approximately 26,000 with 15,000-20,000 of these people living in subsidized housing (Moss Park, Regent Park North and South, and 220 Oak Street) and an unknown number of people who are under-housed and homeless. RPCHC uses an integrated approach to health care, emphasizing a shift in health care from illness to health promotion and disease prevention. A wide range of integrated health and social services is offered to address the complex needs and challenges of the residents of the area. Examples include:

- *Primary Health Care* includes doctors, nurse practitioners, nurses, chiropodists who provide direct patient care
- *Community Health Team* involves social workers, community development staff, researcher, dietician, and community health workers who focus on the social determinants of health and on health promotion. They provide counseling, case management, advocacy, outreach to communities and work with harm reduction with a focus on the homeless population
- *Pathways* provides education support to high school students in Regent Park to assist students with educational achievement and attainment (e.g. high school graduation, post-secondary schooling)
- *Parents Through New Beginnings* focuses on mental health services for children from 0-6

Delisle Youth Services (DYS) has been in operation since 1970. It is a unique children's mental health service provider in that it is both a direct service provider and a systems service provider.

As a *direct service provider*, *DYS* offers:

- Counseling
- Long term residential program
- Day treatment program for youth (combines educational credits and therapeutic program)
- Community programs and school based counseling in 6 schools (e.g. counseling, consultation, programming for LBGTQ youth, art gallery for youth across Toronto)
- Special needs team (e.g. case management and coordination for special needs youth with developmental disabilities and other risk factors where youth cannot be served by community providers)
- Ongoing case management/brokering for children with complex special needs.

As a *system service provider*,

- Has oversight responsibility for all residential programs in Toronto
- Identifies gaps in direct service provision, predicts future trends, and works with community planners and government funders to help the system plan services in an efficient way on behalf of the children and families in Toronto
- CARS which provides centralized access to residential beds throughout GTA

1.2 Purpose of Project

This *Diversity Capacity Building Project* evolved out of two factors. The first, work that *DYS* and *RPCHC* had collaborated on previously on a project called The Delisle Youth Art Gallery; the learning and partnerships from that initiative informed and built on this current one. Second, the Ministry made available opportunities for short-term projects that focused on advancing diversity understanding. *DYS* and *RPCHC* jointly submitted and were awarded this one-time grant.

Overall purpose of this Youth Diversity Project is

- ❖ To enhance the capacity of the children and youth mental health sector to embrace and embed diversity

Specific goals are:

- To increase the capacity of *RPCHC* in working with adolescent mental health issues
- To increase the capacity of *DYS* in working with racialized and marginalized adolescents
- To think about how we (*DYS* and *RPCHC*) can work in ways that better serve adolescents
- To work with a Youth Advisory Committee to examine models that effectively help engage youth

1.3 Target Group, Strategic Objectives & Deliverables

Target Group	Strategic Objectives	Deliverables	Achieved Yes / No
Youth At Risk &/or Service System Planning	<p align="center"><u>Organization Change</u></p> <p><i>Increase DYS & RPCHC capacity by offering culturally competent clinical counselling to:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Identified youth to assist them address their mental health need</i> • <i>DYS/ RPCHC Staff to increase knowledge, competency & skill base</i> 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Culturally competent clinical counseling provided to 22 Regent Park youth by counselors from RPCHC and DYS 2. Culturally competent training provided to 70 DYS and RPCHC staff by specialist, Dr. Andermann 	<p align="center">YES</p> <p align="center">YES</p>
	<p align="center"><u>Knowledge Exchange</u></p> <p><i>Develop partnerships and framework foundations towards the creation of a Peer-to-Peer Service Model</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Created a Regent Park Youth Advisory Council reference group with 29 youth attending 2. Explored other Peer-to-Peer models & prepared recommendations for future implementation 	<p align="center">YES</p> <p align="center">YES</p>
	<p align="center"><u>Knowledge Delivery</u></p> <p><i>Partner with knowledge specialist in cultural competence therapy to advance staff skills in therapeutic practice</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Psychiatric clinical consultation provided to staff by Dr. Andermann at two time points 2. RPCHC staff attended 4 clinical consultation meetings offered by specialist, Dr. Weir - DYS 	<p align="center">YES</p> <p align="center">YES</p>
	<p align="center"><u>Knowledge Development</u></p> <p><i>Create evaluation framework to assess outcomes and achievement of objectives</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Engaged Child Welfare Institute, Children's Aid Society to work with project staff to develop evaluation plan, study tools and evaluation implementation 2. Complete project evaluation by May 01, 2009; submit Final Report to CMYHF by May 15, 2009; 3. Present report findings to agency partners June 19, 2009 	<p align="center">YES</p> <p align="center">YES</p> <p align="center">YES</p>

2.0 PROJECT COMPONENTS

2.1 Counseling Services

To offer and provide to diverse, vulnerable youth referred to the Youth Diversity Project counseling that is appropriate and specialized to teens and their mental health needs, as well as culturally relevant to their culture and context.

A total of 22 referrals were made to the Youth Diversity Project Counseling Services

- 20 were “internal” (91%) and 2 were “external” (8%)

Internal referrals (n=20)

- 15 (75%) were made by Pathways to Education staff
- 15 (75%) met with a counselor at least once; 5 youth came more than 6 sessions (25%)
- 5 (26%) declined/did not respond/did not follow through with booking 1st appointment

Other Services

- In addition to counseling, the youth availed themselves of other services such as consultations or meetings with the housing worker at DYS

2.2 Regent Park - Youth Council (RPYC)

To promote and engage community youth in participating on the RPYC. To hire two community youth for RPYC outreach; their tasks included but were not limited to:

- Distributing flyers in Regent Park inviting youth to participate in RPYC
- Speaking to youth at their schools re RPYC
- Presentations at neighbourhood and different community locations about RPYC (e.g. Jarvis CI, Pathways and K Club).

Two youth workers, one from DYS and the other from RPCHC, were assigned RPYC duties; tasks included contacting agencies/ programs within Regent Park, as well as through SCAARP and the RPCHC staff; duties also included recruiting for RPYC and facilitating RPYC meetings.

RPYC Recruitment and Participation

- 43 youth attended the RPYC youth information session on December 10, 2008
- 42 youth filled out the RPYC application and completed a selection process
- 32 of 42 (76%) of those youth were offered a RPYC position
- 29 of 32 (91%) accepted the position.

RPYC Drop Out

29 youth commenced with the RPYC, three left the Youth Council before it ended:

- 1 teen left due to an educational opportunity (accepted to a university level course)
- 2 youth dropped out two weeks prior to the RPYC end due to an honorarium discrepancy
- Overall drop-out rate: 3/29 or 10.3%

RPYC Demographics

The Regent Park Youth Advisory Council was composed of 29 youth, 16 females (55%) and 13 males (45%) and none identified as transgendered (0%) youth; their strongest characteristic – diversity! Examples of diversity included but are not limited to:

- Their culture (e.g. Bangladesh, Canada, Chad, China, Ethiopia, France, India, Italy, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and United Arab Emirates)
- Their religion (e.g. Agnostic, Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, and Muslim)
- Their school (e.g. Central Commerce, Central Tech, College Francais, Danforth, Eastern Commerce, Jarvis, Lord Dufferin, and Northern SS)
- Their language (e.g. Amharic, Arabic, Bengali, English, French, Hindi, Somali, Tamil, and Urdu)
- Time in Canada (e.g. ranged from 1 to 17 years)

2.3 Consultation and Training with Cultural Psychiatrist

To provide RPCHC and DYS staff with training in cross-cultural competency. A half-day of specialized training was offered to 70 staff from both DYS and RPCHC on January 6, 2009. Dr. Lisa Andermann from Mount Sinai Hospital, a specialist in the area of cultural diversity in psychiatry, was the Youth Diversity Project trainer. The aim of the training was to ensure participant and cross-agency competency and shared knowledge acquisition in the area of diversity and youth mental health issues. The following deliverables were completed as a result of the Youth Diversity Project:

- Specialized cross-cultural psychiatry training provided to 70 DYS and RPCHC staff on January 6, 2009
- Related articles on adolescents, anti-oppression & racialized populations assigned to the Youth Diversity Project team for reflection and future discussion
- Psychiatric consultation sessions with Dr. Andermann were offered to staff at two time points: January 23, 2009 and February 13, 2009.

2.4 Consultation and Training with Adolescent Psychiatrist

To provide DYS and RPCHC staff with opportunities to advance their knowledge and understanding of adolescent mental health issues and solutions through the services of an adolescent psychiatrist. Specialist, Dr. Heather Weir, provided the service. The following deliverables were completed as a result of the Youth Diversity Project:

- Led by Dr. Weir, RPCHC staff attended clinical meetings at DYS regarding youth treatment formulation
- DYS Counseling Team commenced reading articles and discussing their own practices in working with culturally diverse youth populations
- DYS Counseling Team identifies five key anti-oppression goals to work on as a team; overall goal to expand to recommendations to impact organizational change.
- DYS developed an agency-wide Diversity Team and is now in the process of setting goals.

2.5 Collaboration between DYS and RPCHC

To advance collaborative efforts between DYS and RPCHC. The following deliverables related to that objective occurred as a result of the Youth Diversity Project.

- Submission of CYMHF – Diversity Capacity Building Project Grant
- Joint Youth Diversity Project Team membership
- Rotating venue for the Project Team meetings
- Joint development of evaluation methods and instruments
- Shared delivery of clinical service
- Joint DYS and RPCHC consultation and training in cultural psychiatry
- Joint DYS and RPCHC consultation and training in adolescent psychiatry
- Improved consultative services to Student Parent Support Workers at Pathways

3.0 ANALYSIS

3.1 Analysis of Primary Project Staff's Views & Awareness of Diversity Issues

Deliverable:

To examine shifts/ changes in the four primary staff's views, knowledge and awareness regarding diversity issues from the start of the project to its end.

Evaluation Tool:

A seven-page, standardized pretest – posttest survey was provided to the four primary project staff. A confidentiality code was used. The survey had four sections:

Section 1 was the *demographic section* (i.e. agency, position, gender, occupation, venue for professional training, age group, languages spoken, cultural affiliation and whether they had previous training in the areas of: multicultural issues, adolescent issues and anti-oppression issues; questions were asked at the Pretest point.

Section 2 was the *California Brief Multicultural Competency Scale* (2004) by G. Gamst, R. Dana, A. Der-Karabetian, M. Aragon, L. Arellano, G. Morrow, & L. Martenson; it consists of 21 statements related to a variety of multicultural issues and set in a 5-point Likert-scale from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree"; questions were asked at the Pretest and Posttest.

Section 3 was the *Multicultural Awareness-Knowledge-Skills Survey* (MAKSS) –Social Worker Edition by D'Andrea, M, Daniels, J, Fong, R.; it consists of 55 items developed to help the respondent evaluate self on a broad range of cultural competencies thought to be important for social workers to acquire so that they might be better able to effectively and respectfully meet the needs of persons from diverse populations; questions were asked at the Pretest and Posttest.

Section 4 asked about *changes that they observed* in themselves or their agency or others since beginning the Youth Diversity Project (i.e. ability to engage diverse youth, ability to sustain engagement of diverse youth, knowledge of adolescent development, knowledge of mental health needs of diverse youth, understanding of inter-city youth culture, understanding of power dynamics in cultural oppression, and ability to assess inter-generational tension in a youth's family); questions were asked at the Pretest and Posttest.

The following data analysis methods were used:

- Descriptive data analysis methods (e.g. frequencies, cross-tab)
- Independent t-tests (Mgt vs. Frontline by Time 1 and Time 2 data; DYS vs. RPCHC by Time 1 and Time 2 data)
- Matched-pair t-tests analysis (Time 1 to Time 2 by section)

Findings:

NOTE: The findings must be treated with caution due to the small number of respondents (n=4) and the short time period to effect change (pre-test Fall 2008 to post-test Spring 2009).

Section 1: Staff Demographics

The four primary staff for the Youth Diversity Project consisted of two managers/directors and two front-line counselors/social workers:

- The four primary staff are very experienced human service professionals; all have graduate degrees; each came to the project with considerable working experience (e.g. 10 to 20 plus years of experience)
- Three of the four Youth Diversity Project staff were born outside of Canada ;all self-identify as “diverse” (ethnically or culturally); all four speak English and one also speaks a language other than English
- Overall, the core project staff had received prior to the project some comprehensive training in the key specialized areas (Multicultural, adolescent and anti-oppression); there was some variance in training received by topic by agency (e.g. type of specialized training received by the Directors/ Managers reflects their agency’s area of specialty).

	Multicultural Training	Adolescent Training	Anti-Oppression Training
Front-Line n = 2	1 = 1 to 3 hrs (RPCHC) 1 = 4 to 14 hrs (DYS)	1 = 1 to 3 hrs (RPCHC) 1 = over 14 hrs (DYS)	2 = over 14 hrs (DYS & RPCHC)
Directors n = 2	2 = over 14 hrs (DYS & RPCHC)	1= none (RPCHC) 1 = over 14 hrs (DYS)	1= none (DYS) 1 = over 14 hrs (RPCHC)

Section 2: California Brief Multicultural Competency Scale

Independent t-test:

- Examination of mean score changes (p< .05) for Q 1-Q21 between “management” and “front-line” at the Pretest and Posttest time points found no differences
- Examination of mean score changes (p<.05) for Q 1-Q21 between “DYS” and “RPCHC” at the Pretest and the Posttest time points found no differences

Matched-pair:

Test of mean score changes (p < .05) between Time 1 to Time 2 found that while overall scores generally rose, only two of the 21 questions were at a level approaching significance:

- Q12 – “*I have an excellent ability to critique multicultural research*”
(pre mean score 3.75 and increased at the post mean score 4.50 = p=.058)
- Q19 - “*I am knowledgeable of acculturation models for various ethnic minority groups*”
(pre mean score 3.25 and increased at the post mean score 4.00 = p=.058)

Section 3: Multicultural Awareness-Knowledge-Skills Scale

Independent t-test:

- Examination of mean score changes ($p < .05$) for Q 1-Q55 between “management” and “front-line” at the Pretest and the Posttest time points found no differences
- Examination of mean score changes ($p < .05$) for Q1- Q55 between “DYS” and “RPCHC” at the Pretest and the Posttest time points found no differences

Matched-pair:

Test of matched–pair mean score changes ($p < .05$) between Time 1 to Time 2 found that while scores generally rose only one of the 55 questions was at a level approaching significance:

- Q5 – “*In general, how would you rate your level of awareness regarding diverse cultural institutions such as different religious groups, family structures, etc?*”
(pre mean score 2.25 and post mean score 3.00 = $p = .058$)

Section 4: Changes Observed

Independent t-test:

- Examination of mean score changes ($p < .05$) for Q 1-Q7 between “management” and “front-line” at the Pretest and Posttest time points found no differences.
- Examination of mean score changes ($p < .05$) for Q1- Q7 between “DYS” and “RPCHC” at the Pretest and Posttest time points found no differences.

Matched-pair:

- Small gains in scores were noted between Time 1 and Time 2 but none were at the level of significance ($p < .05$).

Staff Comments on Their Learning From Youth Diversity Project

Two key themes arose from the four main project staff’s comments regarding what they learned as a result of the *Youth Diversity Project*.

Changes In Self

S1 - *“My awareness of the intergenerational issues for youth increased. I could see that youth growing up here would have a very different sense of their cultural identities than their immigrant parents, which could cause specific tensions. I was able to be more helpful in a consultation session with a Social Worker, once I understood the situation with the parents in this way.”*

S4 *“[My] reassessment of concepts and words related to anti-oppression and white privilege. Grappling with seeing myself as part of a dominant oppressive group when due to religion and gender I have generally thought of myself at least in part as a minority or oppressed group. Getting in touch with the layers and complexity of how the various issues of race, culture, oppression, dominance and power are woven together.”*

S2 *“[I] realized that working with families and youth and family members is important – I need to develop skills in this area...and also another area of learning I need is youth gang violence culture.”*

Changes in the Organization

S4 *“More open dialogue within our organization about race and power and privilege. Looking at how to be truly a more diverse agency. Recently a staff diversity committee has been struck and the first issue we have had to grapple with is that the committee does not represent the diversity of the agency.”*

S3 *“Developments of diversity initiative at agency and with team – oppression, as opposed to just cultural competency being brought into the discussion – hopefully this will positively impact the service we provide, and how we engage with new communities. It should also impact all staff and not just the front line workers in how we think about working with youth, power and the systems we’re a part of.”*

Staff Comments on Improvement to Youth Diversity Project

The four core staff had suggestions on how the Youth Diversity Project could be improved upon. Again two key themes emerged from the content analysis of their comments.

Improvement to Overall Program Management

S1 *"The project was too big to manage and support well...it takes time for teams to build trust and to learn how to work together. I under estimated this aspect of the project"*

S4 *"More time for up front planning would have improved the project"*

S3 *"Reduction of expectations of project within time restraints or add six months to one year to create a meaningful and healthy project for the community, youth, and staff involved"*

S4 *"There was a disparity in staffing from the two partners that was built into the project which was problematic. Equal staffing should be considered in future projects"*

Improvement to Specific Interventions/Strategies

S4 *"Too little time for the youth advisory committee to form and come up with recommendations. More time should be built in for this portion of the project"*

S2 *"Cultural competence was not a strong component; [project] needed relevant and experienced consultants; [we] needed more time"*

S1 *"The cross-cultural presentation was very interesting... but would not invite such a cross- section of staff again"*

S4 *"For the consultation piece in the future...should consider other mental health professionals"*

S3 *"An increased focus on developing clinical and other skills in working with diverse youth and communities...increased focus on integrating the concepts we've learned through the project to our team consistently, examining and reflecting on power dynamics and oppression and how they play into our roles as workers with youth"*

Interpretation of Findings:

The short time frame of the project (6 months) and the small sample size (n=4) hindered the ability to demonstrate significant statistical shifts (<.05) in the four primary staff's views and abilities regarding cultural competency and knowledge of adolescent development, as measured by the standardized tools. That said, the core project staff's comments clearly underscore that changes did occur in their understanding and knowledge of, as well as sensitivity and approach to, working with diverse youth. They wrote about their greater appreciation of the complexity of oppression and the impact of power imbalance from a personal, a team and even their own organization's perspective. They indicated both a desire and a need to further their competencies with these issues. The staff's strong commitment to the project was evident as was the collaborative partnership and good will between the two agencies. Both elements were key factor in the project's ability to successfully meet its deliverables.

"I appreciated the commitment and energy that staff brought to the work and the outreach, the engagement and empathy re: the youth"

"I would judge the project in general a success."

3.2 Analysis of Effectiveness of Cultural Competence Training

Deliverable:

To deliver cultural competency training.

A half-day training took place January 6, 2009. It was offered by Dr. Lisa Andermann, a psychiatrist at Mt. Sinai and specialist in the area of cultural competence. She served as a consultant on this project and as the trainer for this segment of the project. The training employed a cross cultural framework that incorporated diversity issues and presented their impact on mental health assessment.

Evaluation Tool:

Trainees were asked to complete a two-page, standardized evaluation tool that was divided into five sections: *Profile of Trainees, Evaluation of the Objectives of Training, Evaluation of the Presenter, Evaluation of the Experience of the Training, and Experience with Cross Cultural Work*. The first four sections collected quantitative data and the final section collected qualitative, narrative data.

Findings:

Profile of Trainees:

A total of 70 staff attended the specialized half-day training with 50 completing surveys; 12 (24%) were from DYS and 38 (76%) were from RPCHC. There was broad representation from both agencies various service areas: clinical counseling/social work (25%), community health (13%), day program/residential staff (4%), parent programs and home visiting programs (13%), special needs teams (11%), specialized education programs (28%), and administration (6%). While nearly two-thirds (60%) had worked at their organizations five years or less there was a large group (20%) who had worked 15 years or more, suggesting staff tend to either be very experienced or in the earlier stages of their career.

Evaluation of the Objectives of Training:

Trainees were asked three questions on whether the training assisted them in meeting the following objectives

Objectives	Results	ACHIEVED
1. Become familiar with the field of cultural psychiatry	80% indicate training <i>met</i> the objective 18% indicate training <i>partially met</i> objective TOTAL: 98%	YES – very good results
2. Understand the principles of generic and specific cultural competence	69% indicate training <i>met</i> the objective 29% indicate training <i>partially met</i> objective TOTAL: 98%	YES –good results
3. Know how to use the DSM-IV cultural formulation.	56% indicate training <i>met</i> the objective 38% indicate training <i>partially met</i> objective TOTAL: 94%	YES – somewhat good results

Evaluation of the Presenter:

Overwhelmingly, trainees were satisfied with the trainer and her presentation.

Presenter demonstrated knowledge of subject?	98% strongly agree/agree
Information presented was useful?	94% strongly agree/agree
Presenter was responsive to questions?	96% strongly agree/agree
Information shared in interesting manner?	83% strongly agree/agree
Can apply what I learned?	83% strongly agree/agree
Satisfied with the training?	85% strongly agree/agree

Trainees were asked what they found the “best feature” of the training to be. While 28% did not respond, most did and indicated the best feature was:

The opportunity to discuss, learn and reflect on the implication for cultural casework and integrate it into the work they do.

With respect to “what they would change” about the training, over 38 (74%) responded to the question and the predominant answer: longer presentation of the material with more detail.

*“Topic should be elaborated by doing the workshop more than one day”
“More strategies for bridging perspectives on ‘diagnosis’ and ‘treatment’”*

Evaluation of the Experience of the Training:

For half the trainees more than sixty percent of the material was new to them; for the other half, less than forty percent of the material was new. This finding accurately reflects the broad range of knowledge across the trainees, where a large proportion had less than five years experience whereas some have considerable experience in working with diverse cultures. Two-thirds (66%) rated the training either “excellent” or “good”.

Cross Cultural Work Training Experience:

Trainees were asked four open-ended questions about their experience with cross-cultural work. The primary themes by question are:

Skills Used	Theme 1	“Seek feedback from the clients”
	Theme 2	“Use empathy and openness to guide process”
	Theme 3	“Educate self to other cultures/use of interpreters”
	Did not respond	34%
Difficult Areas	Theme 1	“Lack of knowledge of various culture/cultural issues”
	Theme 2	“Language barriers”
	Theme 3	“Intervening when there are mental health issues”
	Did not respond	34%
What to Do	Theme 1	“Consult with others (on team or in community)”
	Theme 2	“Look for resources to support understanding/education”
	Theme 3	“Look for ways to overcome language/culture barrier”
	Did not respond	42%
Know More About	Theme 1	“More information on intervention and strategies to work cross –culturally”
	Theme 2	“Working with other services and how to obtain cultural specific information”
	Did not respond	50%

Interpretation of Findings:

Overall, the training and trainer were well received and viewed very positively. The broad range of participants meant the training offered some the opportunity to learn quite a bit about cultural competency – for other’s it was a review of material they knew and understood. Future training opportunities should split the participant group into two: “basic” and “advanced” and have the substantive material and case exercises reflect the different levels of expertise and knowledge.

3.3 Analysis of Regent Park Youth Council (RPYC) Model

3.3.1 Youth Satisfaction with RPYC

Deliverable:

To create a Regent Park Youth Council (RPYC).

Forty-three community youth were recruited and interviewed by project staff; 32 of those were offered a position and 29 committed to being on RPYC. Due to the large number of youth, RPYC was broken into two groups with two sets of trained facilitators. One group included 15 youth aged 13-15; the other group was composed of 14 teens aged 16-19.

A) Youth Perspective: Youth Evaluation Tool

Twenty-six of the 29 youth who completed their tenure on the Youth Advisory Council were asked to complete a two-page, 30 question standardized evaluation tool that used Likert-type scales to ask them 16 questions about their level of satisfaction with the Youth Council process, 10 questions on their views on the outcomes achieved and four questions were open-ended, qualitative questions regarding their experience. Independent t-test analysis found no statistical differences in the responses between the different sets of facilitators.

Activities

From Jan. 15 to Mar. 26, 2009, the Youth Advisory Council met weekly at RPCHC.

- *RPYC Goal:* to obtain youth feedback that would inform the creation of a program in Regent Park that would address youth’s emotional health needs.
- *Topics and Activities:* strategically based on discussions from the previous week in order to keep the meetings youth-directed. Additionally, RPYC youth were encouraged to add agenda items and recommend activities as well as lead them.
- *Topics of Discussion:* were varied and included:

<i>emotional health</i>	<i>emotional abuse</i>	
<i>community</i>	<i>youth & healthy relationships</i>	<i>pain</i>
<i>respect</i>	<i>Regent Park revitalization</i>	<i>coping</i>
<i>power</i>	<i>violence</i>	<i>experience in programs</i>
<i>privilege & oppression</i>	<i>policing</i>	<i>develop new program</i>
- Additional activities were offered to RPYC youth over March Break (e.g. visiting another youth program outside of Regent Park, having visitors to Regent Park speak about their youth program, attending a movie).

Other programs in the GTA that consulted with RPYC during this process were:

- 1) *Leave Out Violence* 2) *React* 3) *Peer Outreach Support Services & Education (POSSE) Project*

Findings:

Of the 29 youth who started with RPYC, 26 completed it and 24 participated in the formal evaluation (92.3% participation rate).

The first question asked *why* they joined the *Regent Park Youth Council*. While their reasons did vary somewhat (e.g. to make new friends, because it was recommended), by far the dominant reason: To make a difference in their community.

- Y1 *It got me involved in the community*
- Y3 *I wanted to make a difference and understand some aspects of my community*
- Y10 *I want to make a difference in my community.*
- Y19 *I wanted to be the source of helpfulness and change*
- Y21 *I joined because I wanted to contribute*

There were 15 questions on their perceived satisfaction with the process.

	Strongly Agree/ Agree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree/ Disagree
Q2 Reasons I joined the Regent Park Youth Council (RPYC) were met	74%	26%	~
Q3 Appropriate RPYC group goals were set	82%	18%	~
Q4 The 11 week length of the RPYC was the right amount of time	26%	26%	48%
Q5 Being involved in the RPYC has been a positive experience for me	92%	4%	4%
Q6 I am satisfied with the RPYC proposals for future youth programming	100%	~	~
Q7 RPYC deepened my understanding of what "community" means	83%	13%	4%
Q8 I made a contribution to my community through RPYC	77%	23%	~
Q9 I had a good working relationship with my RPYC facilitators	96%	4%	~
Q10 RPYC facilitators were knowledgeable about youth issues	96%	4%	~
Q11 I felt comfortable to share my ideas openly at RPYC	71%	29%	~
Q12 At RPYC I met youth I would not ordinarily interact with socially	64%	32%	4%
Q13 RPYC positively impacted how I feel about myself.	47%	47%	6%
Q14 I would like to continue my involvement with RPYC	87%	9%	4%
Q15 I would recommend joining the RPYC to a friend	79%	17%	4%
Q16 Overall, I am satisfied with the RPYC program	88%	8%	4%

NOTE: Question 4 asked, "if you were not satisfied with the length of the Council, what would be acceptable?"; 21 responded
43% wanted it longer 9% wanted it shorter 48% wanted it to be ongoing.

There were 10 questions on their views of the outcomes they achieved

	Much improved/ Improved	Same	Much worse/ Worse
Q17 My understanding of emotional health is	75%	17%	8%
Q18 My knowledge about the issues youth in Regent Park deal with is	79%	21%	~
Q19 My comfort in taking a leadership role is	70%	13%	17%
Q20 My ability to work with others is	71%	29%	~
Q21 My ability to talk and listen in a group is	79%	8%	13%
Q22 My understanding of power structures within society is	88%	4%	8%
Q23 My comfort level interacting socially with other youth is	75%	17%	8%
Q24 My feeling of belonging to something worthwhile is	84%	8%	8%
Q25 My comfort level speaking in groups is	71%	21%	8%
Q26 My sense of moving towards making a change in my community is	84%	8%	8%

Correlation analysis found the youth's "Satisfaction" was very strongly correlated with:

My understanding of emotional health is $r = .728$
 My comfort in taking a leadership role is $r = .726$

And moderately correlated with:

My comfort level interacting socially with other youth is $r = .646$
 My feeling of belonging to something worthwhile is $r = .664$
 My comfort level speaking in groups is $r = .627$
 My sense of moving towards making a change in my community is $r = .595$

	Q27 What was most helpful?	Q28 What was the best part?	Q29 What was Least helpful?	Q30 What would you change?
THEME 1	Opportunity for Discussion & Expressing Oneself	Discussions and Talking	Nothing Was Least Helpful	Make it Longer
THEME 2	Hearing Other's Experiences	Sharing Ideas	Some Activities (e.g. journals/ games/drawing)	Expand Discussion & Topics & Food & Activities
THEME 3	Understanding Emotional Health	Games and Food	Talking (for some)	Develop Group Membership Rules

Final comments offered by the youth participants

- Y6 *I wish RPYC will continue. I enjoy being here.*
 Y14 *It was an amazing experience and love for it to continue.*
 Y21 *I loved the youth council. It helped me and changed the way I think about the community*
 Y23 *This youth council was a good idea. I learned a lot and was able to help others... I hope this continues*

Interpretation of Findings:

The Youth Advisory Council offered Regent Park teens an important opportunity to have their voice on matters important to themselves, their cohort, and their community – heard. RPYC gave them a vehicle to learn about themselves, about others and about how they could work together to make a difference in their community. Overwhelmingly, the youth were positive about the RPYC experience. The correlation analysis, while preliminary, suggests that RPYC model may find the highest satisfaction levels with teens who are comfortable in taking a leadership role and/or their reason for joining is more altruistic: to help their community. For youth who find it difficult or challenging to talk in a group and/or join for non-altruistic reasons (e.g. for money, for food) – the RPYC model may not afford them the same level of benefits and satisfaction as the youth who are comfortable in a group setting, are confident in a leadership role, and whom are at RPYC because they want to make a difference in their community.

3.3.2 Regent Park Youth Advisory Council (RPYC) Recommendations

Through their 11-weeks of meetings, RPYC identified five recommendations.

Recommendation 1: Youth Space Required for Youth in Regent Park

The RPYC experience highlighted the need for sustainable youth space in Regent Park. The RPYC recommendation is to create *Youth Space* in Regent Park where the goal is:

- To bring youth together so that they feel like they belong
- To create a space that is comfortable
- To provide them with an environment that is safe
- To foster youth self-esteem, confidence, and friendships
- To connect youth to this space so they get involved and create a better community.

RPYC envisions this youth space to:

- Have a “drop-in” space
- Have organized programs which would include the following:
 - help/support interventions (e.g. counseling, medical care)
 - homework help
 - studying in a safe environment
 - activities & sports
 - relax & eat with friends
 - discussions about community/ life
 - workshops
 - cooking

Recommendation 2: Offer Youth Workshops & Discussion Opportunities

The RPYC recommends that *RP Youth Space* or another space in the community provide workshops and discussion opportunities for youth. The topics of most importance are:

racism
stereotyping
homophobia/sexuality
body image

drugs/smoking/alcohol
media
sex and violence
abuse

job fairs
volunteer fair

Additional topics of interest include:

environmental issues
photography
art
government
world issues
war

pregnancy
shelter/homelessness
mentoring
cooking
emotional health
date rape

health
fulfilling your dreams/goals
preservation of Regent Park
relevant issues in RP

RPYC believe the workshops would be more meaningful by getting youth involved who have experienced the specific issue, by working on specific solutions and problem solving, and by learning how to prevent the issues from happening.

Recommendation 3: Community Care Project

A group made up of Regent Park youth, families, and members of the RPYC as well as sponsors, will form with the intent to:

“Preserve the memory of Regent Park and unite the community”

This group will have two goals:

- 1 To preserve Regent Park, discuss area revitalization and options, and relevant issues in the community.
- 2 To bring the community together and disseminate information (e.g. “info” nights with food and entertainment; create a place that people could go to receive information about what is going on in Regent Park, employment and education).

A key outcome is through the youth involvement, RP youth model for others, showing other youth how to get involved in community action. This space would cater to mixed-ages (youth and adults) and be “youth friendly” in its milieu.

Recommendation 4. Community Land-marking

RPYC recommends the development of a community photography project with the goal of preserving Regent Park. A group would take pictures of buildings and spaces in Regent Park. Suggested places are schools including Nelson Mandela, Lord Dufferin, Spruce Court, etc: pictures that represent Regent Park like cage court, centres, restaurants, street signs, stores, field, oaks, hockey/skating rink, playground, Focus, public transport, important buildings, nature, random shots of kids and people, graffiti, cranes (not birds). It is suggested that the pictures are taken from different angles like aerial views, etc . Once the photos are taken, a collection of them are presented in photo albums and could be viewed in community spaces and new Regent Park buildings once they’re built.

Recommendation 5: Continuation of Youth Advisory Council

RPYC sees the continuation of the Youth Council as a place to just talk about how things are and how to tackle specific issues (i.e. peer pressure). They would plan events for youth in the community and bring the community together. The group would be comprised of 15 -20 committed youth, have meetings once a week and run for over the course of a year. Once the year is complete each member would have a choice to stay or leave. Members would be selected through forms, an application process and interviews. RPYC thinks it’s important that youth are punctual. RPYC believes that voices of the youth should be heard and that it is a space for free speech, where they would talk about things they wouldn’t generally talk about. Involvement on Youth Council would be a break from issues and stress. There could also be trips at times. The youth advisor/chairperson would be an experienced young adult from the community so they can relate to the situations. The structure would be the same as the initial RPYC structure (Check-in or quick round circle discussion, agenda review, admin, game, discussion/activities/small group work, high-low check-out with food served).

3.3.3 Regent Park Youth Advisory Council (RPYC) Analysis of Outreach Survey to Regent Park Youth

Deliverable:

RPYC undertook a survey of Regent Park youth who were not involved in the council. 24 youth responded to the questionnaire developed by the council.

Findings:

The following bullet points summarize the findings from this survey:

- The average age of the participants was 16; 52% were male and 48% were female.
- 59% of the respondents prefer to spend time in non-institutional settings like home, neighborhood, playing sports, malls and movies and 41% of the respondents prefer to spend time in institutional settings like library, community centre, mosque, Pathways.
- 87% of the respondents participate in some programs in Regent Park; 13% do not participate
- 87%, are involved in the PATHWAYS program and some are also involved in SYA (Somalia youth Alliances), Tutoring and mentoring programs.
- 40% of the participants said the help they get in tutoring and homework is what keeps them coming back; 30 % of the participants were attracted by free tickets provided by the centre. Other factors were to have fun and make new friends.
- Other than friends and family 43% of the participants use PATHWAYS for extra support and 43% do not go anywhere, while others go to a school counselor.
- According to 35% of the respondents major issues faced by young people in the community are drugs and violence. Other problems included: family problems, racism, bullying, poverty, financial problems, homelessness, gang involvement and abuse.
- Major worries which friends bring to participant youth are: love and relationships, family problems, school issues like skipping classes, low grades and home work.
- Most of the youth said that when their friends are in trouble they talk to them, give suggestions and solutions and sometimes suggest they talk to a teacher. If the issue is particularly tough they direct them to other people like family members, parents, teachers, pathways, guidance counselors and sometimes to a doctor.
- *What kind of supports or services to emotional health do you think youth would benefit from in the community?* This is really an important question and only 8 out of 23 participants answered this question. Some suggestions were to call kids help phone, arrange workshops for calming activities and developing skills (job training) and sports.
- 55% of the participants spend spare time playing outdoor games; 18% hang around with friends, spend time on the internet and/or reading. The rest of the participants spend their time in shopping, playing indoor games/video games and listening/playing music.
- According to the participants the majority of them were of the opinion that the best place for a drop-in centre would be Pathways, community centre or the health centre.
 - 42% of the participants said that any activity related to sports or games would attract them to the Regent Park drop in. Almost 22% of the youth said their decision to go would depend upon the activity. Other attractions included: free food, money, gym, computer activities and entertainment.

- If these attractions are there than 75% of the participants would go while 15% would not go and 10% have not yet decided whether to go or not.
- The most preferred day of the week would be Friday with Saturday as a second choice; nearly 51% of the participants preferred these two days. Other days preferred by the participants in ascending order are Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and only 1 participant preferred Wednesday.
- The most convenient time for 75% of the participants would be 4p.m. to 8p.m. followed by 12p.m. to 4 p.m.
- Participants had different views on what they would like to see happen at the drop-in centre. Some suggestions would be lectures on different topics, kids talking about issues that concern them, discussing different problems related to youth and coming together as a community to fix problems.
- The majority of participants would like to see tutoring and counseling offered at the drop-in centre. Some suggested doctor, clinic and support in women's health.
- To make the youth drop-in centre more youth friendly, more and younger people should be invited and involved. Different activities should be initiated along with sports events.
- Workshops related to violence and drugs would attract the majority of youth. Other workshop or discussion topics would include: body image/media, communication, government, racism/stereo typing, Regent Park being preserved, revitalization information and options, self esteem and war and world issues. Some participants suggested that there should be workshops on islamophobia, police their rights and our rights, consumerism and tragedy of the newcomers in Canada.
- The major reason for not attending would be if the discussions were boring.

3.4 Analysis of Collaboration between Agencies DYS and RPCHC

Deliverable:

To increase collaboration and partnerships between DYS and RPCHC that advance knowledge and skills in the area of cross cultural service and interventions to adolescents at risk.

Evaluation Tool:

Tracking of all project activities, dates, dollars and deliverables related to collaborative efforts and outcomes.

Findings:

The following achievements regarding improved partnerships between the two lead agencies occurred as a result of the Youth Diversity Project

- ✓ Submission of CYMHF – Diversity Capacity Building Project Grant
- ✓ Joint Youth Diversity Project Team membership
- ✓ Rotating venue for the three meetings for Project Team

- ✓ Joint development of evaluation methods and instruments
- ✓ Shared delivery of clinical service
- ✓ Joint DYS and RPCHC consultation and training in cultural psychiatry
- ✓ Joint DYS and RPCHC consultation and training in adolescent psychiatry

As noted above, DYS and RPCHC met together in various combinations throughout this project's term. Meetings consisted of: the two administrators, the counselors, the youth facilitators, meetings with psychiatric consults, agency teams, administrators and the counselors together as well as three meetings with all project participants and the evaluation consultants.

In addition to improved partnerships between the two lead agencies, the Youth Diversity Project also developed greater consultation services to Student Parent Support Workers (SPSW) at Pathways due to the need of Pathways SPSW's for assistance in dealing with the complex needs of the youth they serve. The Youth Diversity Project expanded to provide both support and consultations to SPSW's at Pathways.

Goals of the consultation were:

- Provide monthly meetings of 1 to 2 hours for two groups of SPSWs
- Create a safe space for SPSWs to share experiences in working with youth
- Offer support and recommendations to facilitate the SPSW's work with youth
- Provide relevant educational information on questions and challenges in working with youth & families in their connections to mental health

The following deliverables were achieved with the SPSW's at Pathways:

- 1 hour meetings held monthly for the 2 groups of SPSWs with focused discussions on: *counseling, how to refer youth, barriers to making referrals or youth connecting with counseling, identifying when a youth may need counseling, self-care for SPSWs and challenging client situations*
- Based on the positive feedback, meetings with SPSWs will continue beyond the project completion date to allow sharing of skills and knowledge regarding challenging cases
- SPSWs met with RPCHC social work team to discuss bridging youth & Social Work

Overall, through the collaborative efforts and sustained partnership the Youth Diversity Project resulted in valuable learning in a variety of areas:

- ✓ Improved understanding of best practices in counseling with racialized youth
- ✓ Development of new treatment models using a youth engagement process
- ✓ Increased appreciation of the complexity of conducting successful collaborative projects *and* meeting deliverables that involve multiple staff, programs and consultants.

Interpretation of Findings:

In summary, the Youth Diversity Project advanced knowledge and change in youth diversity. A SWOT (strengths, weakness, opportunities and threats) analysis identified four key areas of recommended Project improvements

<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Knowledge Development</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Allocate more time to the development of the Youth Advisory Council and the project as a whole; at least a year is required to do proper outreach, develop the committee, provide training, develop a model and evaluate and write up a report. Youth engagement takes time especially if the goal is to truly involve them in all aspects of the project. With more time the evaluator would have met with the committee at the outset to develop the evaluation tools and model for the project.	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Knowledge Delivery</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Describe the expertise needed for the project and allocate a portion of the budget but do not define too narrowly the professional credentials needed to deliver the service. Allow for the use of a variety of experts over the course of the project. When providing training, consider doing it in segments geared to varying levels of knowledge and expertise so that all staff can increase their knowledge base.
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Knowledge Exchange</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Build a continuation plan into the project so that youth know from the outset what will happen and again allow for more time to accomplish the initial goals.	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Organizational Change</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pick only 1 major activity for a short term project• Build sufficient team building activities into the beginning stages of the project and ensure ongoing regular consultation to deal with differences and issues as they occur; do not under estimate the amount of staff time required to do this well• For counseling - allow a long lead time to build trust with staff and youth and have a strategy to continue the service at the end of the project in place from the start

4.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1: Continued Specialized Counseling

To provide counseling to youth that offers cultural competency and is knowledgeable about adolescent development

Recommendation 2: Continuation of the Youth Advisory Council

To continue to offer the RPYC to Regent Park youth and work to implement their four other recommendations

Recommendation 3: Continue Cross-Agency Collaboration

To continue to advance opportunities for cross-agency collaborative partnerships between DYS and RPCHC

5.0 BUDGET ANALYSIS

YOUTH DIVERSITY PROJECT	Proposed Budget	Actual Budget
Staffing: <i>1 FTE therapist x 6 months (Backfill for DYS)</i>	\$30,000.00	\$ 30,692.73
Evaluator	\$11,00.00	\$ 11,000.00
Psychiatrist	\$4,500.00	\$ 3,125.00
Payment to youth facilitators <i>added due to size of youth council</i>		\$ 1,840.00
Administration and supervision	\$8,00.000	\$ 8,000.02
Transportation for staff and youth	\$500.00	\$ 85.00
Youth costs Honorarium for youth (3hrs/wk x \$11/hr x 26 wk x 10 youth) includes training honorariums and costs for two sessions	\$8,580.00	\$ 9,959.50
Training for youth (28 hrs x \$11/hr x 10 youth)	\$3,080.00	\$ 420.00
Food for meetings & supplies	\$750.00	\$ 1,287.75
Donations in kind <i>RPCHC Social Worker 1.5 days per week Office space at both DYS & RPCHC Computer s and office supplies at both DYS & RPCHC Consultation with adolescent psychiatrist</i>	IN KIND	
TOTAL	\$66,410.00	\$ 66,410.00

NOTE: Budget adjustments were made to accommodate the costs associated with the larger than anticipated group of young persons involved in the Youth Council. For example, additional facilitators were hired to support effective management of the groups' activities. Other costs were in line with the proposed budget.