

Cultural Mapping of Regent Park

Report of Findings
Prepared for Photon Hall

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:: Thank you!

The researchers would like to thank Dixon Hall, York University, Wellesley Central, and the Cultural Career Council of Ontario for their support during this project. A special thank you to the people of Regent Park for welcoming us into the community and making our work a truly enriching experience.

:: Table of Contents

CHAPTER 2 - Literature Review	4
Introduction	4
Section 1 – Culture, Social Theory & Community	5
Section 2 – Research Methods in Cultural Planning	12
Section 3 – Past Mapping Projects of Regent Park (and Toronto)	18
Section 4 – Conclusions	25
CHAPTER 3 - Statement of Purpose and Research Methodology	26
CHAPTER 4 - Findings & Recommendations	29
Theme1 - Creating Cultural Spaces	30
Theme 2 – Programming	31
i) Leaving the “Safe Haven”	31
ii) Environment Matters	32
iii) Teaching Life Skills	33
iv) The Diversity of Activities Should Reflect the Diversity of Users	33
v) Inclusiveness: Promoting Cross-Cultural and Intergenerational Communication	34
Theme3 – Networking and Collaboration	35
i) Inter-organizational Networking: Fostering Working Connectedness	35
ii) Extra-organizational Networking: Sharing Resources	35
iii) Community Outreach: Encouraging Community Involvement	36
Theme 4 – Economics	37
i) Funding	37
ii) Social Entrepreneurship	37
Theme 5 – HHH	38
Theme 6 – Value of Cultural Resources	40
Theme 7 – Regent Park-Specific Community Feedback	42
i) Need for Space	42
ii) Inclusiveness	43
iii) Funding	43
iv) Networking	45
v) Mobilization of Residents	46
vi) “Piece of the Pie”	46
Theme 8 – Further Recommendations	47
i) Co-location	47
ii) Overcoming Barriers: “Us vs. Them”	47
iii) Feedback Systems	48
Conclusions	48

Introduction

The overarching vision of Dixon Hall is good jobs, good health, safe shelter, and a vibrant culture, all of which are necessary for a strong community. Embedded in this vision is the belief that culture plays an integral role in achieving these goals. Culture contributes not only to enlivening neighbourhoods, economic advancement and community development, but adequate cultural facilities contribute to the enhancement of social capital, common values, important community bonds as well as the overall quality of community life. Therefore, particularly in the face of the upcoming changes to Regent Park, it is the intention of Dixon Hall to gain an understanding of both the existing and emerging cultural needs of the community they serve.

This cultural mapping project for Dixon Hall is supported by a literature review on culture, social theory and communities, research methods and approaches to cultural mapping, as well as documentation of past research projects on social service provisions in and around Regent Park. Our research reveals the existing cultural resources in Dixon Hall, as well as the cultural resources still needed in each department. It identifies strategies for change and recommends ways in which Dixon Hall may heighten its cultural profile and improve its services.

Using funds provided for the research project by the Wellesley Central Enabling Research Grant, The Cultural Career Council of Ontario Youth Wage Subsidy and the York University Faculty of Arts Research Grant, Dixon Hall was able to contract four graduate students from the Faculty of Environmental Studies at York University to conduct research on Dixon Hall's cultural resources, based on cultural planning research methods.



The need for this project was identified through a planning process involving Dixon Hall's senior management and strategic planning committee. Dixon Hall has a rich history of using cultural activities to engage with members from all its communities in meaningful ways that assist individuals and groups to affect change. The valuable information gained through a cultural mapping process seemed a logical fit with Dixon Hall given its historical use of cultural activities for community engagement and the diversity of the neighbourhood. Participants in Dixon Hall programs have been involved throughout the agency in groups that inform the planning process. This project will also inform the work of the Regent Park Neighborhood Initiative Arts and Culture Committee of which Dixon Hall is a member.

On Culture:

Culture was once described by the British scholar Raymond Williams as one of the most complicated words in the English language (Evans 2001). This may be due to the generic nature of the word, as it is often broadly defined as "a conceptual summary of human phenomena" (Bennet 1998:182) or as "the local customary way of doing things" (Evans 2001:5)

In order to achieve a more specific definition of the term, the concept itself must be separated from its observable properties. While this study conceptually defines *culture* as a way of life, which includes a society's values and norms, its material goods produced, its patterns of work as well as its customs, social relations and leisure pursuits, the term *cultural resources* will be used to identify observable cultural properties.

Generally cultural resources are understood to include all those assets that help to define a community's unique identity and sense of place. For example (Baeker 2001):

- the range of facilities and human resources connected with the "pre-electronic" media - i.e., performing and visual arts, museums and heritage, as well as the contemporary cultural industries - film and video, sound recording, broadcasting, publishing, design and fashion;
- the training programs and other systems necessary to develop local talent connected to the activity listed above;
- unique or specialized products and skills in the crafts (jewelry, ceramics, etc.), manufacturing, and new media industries;
- the diversity and quality of leisure activity, including recreational and entertainment;
- historical, artistic, architectural, archaeological heritage (including local traditions, dialects, festivals);
- urban landscapes and geography, including landmarks, park systems, waterfronts, public spaces;
- external and internal perceptions of the city, media images and "conventional wisdom"

Context of the Study

Dixon Hall

Dixon Hall first opened its doors in the winter of 1929 as a soup kitchen during the Great Depression. The agency has changed a lot over the years. Today the goal of Dixon Hall's programs and services is to facilitate people in making changes and improvements in their lives and ultimately to make a better future for themselves. Dixon Hall emphasizes a 'hand up' rather than a 'hand out' approach (Dixon Hall Website 2005).

The area that Dixon Hall predominantly serves is defined by Gerrard St., Lake Ontario, River Street and Sherbourne Street in Downtown East Toronto. Occasionally, this area is expanded on a program-by-program basis. There are 12 Dixon Hall locations and seven departments, each with its own unique programming. Most programs are targeted to residents of local public housing and transient homeless men & women. Regent Park is a central focus for the agency and the needs of its 9,500 residents include: stable housing, meaningful employment, and activities that empower community growth.

The Regent Park Revitalization Plan

While Dixon Hall operates out of twelve locations in Toronto, four are located in Regent Park. Regent Park is one of Canada's oldest and largest social housing developments; revitalization plans for the area are underway. Thus, Dixon Hall plays an active role in the Regent Park community and will be greatly affected by the pending changes. As the revitalization process moves through six phases, over a fifteen-year period, changes in built form, population, and demographics are expected to take place. Change will occur gradually and will be continually monitored by the City of Toronto, in association with on-going redevelopment approvals, taking into consideration: market response in surrounding neighbourhoods; demographic and population projections; the status of funding; delivery of planned facilities and the arising needs for service planning.

The community impact of re-location, separation of communities during re-location, and the disruption of community programs will be encountered and must be addressed. This includes the relocation of Dixon Hall's main office facility, projected to occur during phase three. Studies, reviews and, in particular, a Social Development Plan will offer strategies to address these changes based on predictions of future needs and identification of current unmet needs. Likewise, this report will inform Dixon Hall on how to continue meeting the needs of Regent Park residents while facing the new challenges and opportunities of a community in transition by identifying facility requirements, opportunities for the co-ordination of services, and the delivery of culturally appropriate programming.

Introduction

Regent Park is one of the oldest and largest publicly funded housing communities in Canada, and is home to a diverse group of 7,500 residents. With the implementation of the Revitalization Plan over the next 12-15 years, the neighbourhood will change from exclusively government subsidized units to include a majority of market rent/ownership housing. Many of Regent Park's current residents are newcomers to Canada; Bengali, Chinese, French, Somali, Spanish, Tamil and Vietnamese are some of the most popular languages spoken in this community outside of English. The pending relocation along with the influx of new residents to the community only adds to the complexity of the current neighbourhood demographic.

These anticipated changes have provoked many questions among local residents, scholars, planners, politicians and service providers alike regarding what services and community spaces are needed for an inclusive community with a strong sense of civic vitality. This research project supports the notion that health is not only a state of complete physical well being, but that other factors such as social and cultural living conditions are crucially important for a healthy population as well. Social networks within a community often act as resources to an individual's strategies to cope with changes and therefore contribute to one's health and well-being. These types of social supports may be found in many cultural institutions, organizations and informal giving practices that people create in order to share resources and build attachments with others.

The cultural mapping of the Regent Park community will include interviews with representatives of social service providers, health providers, community centers, community organizations, cultural groups and cultural institutions located in the Regent Park community.

The aims of the following literature review are threefold:

1. to provide a framework for understanding the role that culture plays in building a healthy community
2. to inform the design of the cultural mapping research project
3. and to ensure limited overlap with past research projects in the Regent Park area.

Given that a vibrant cultural life is increasingly understood to be essential to healthy, sustainable, and prosperous communities, the first section of the literature review examines some key concepts which are of relevance to the subsequent cultural mapping of an ethnically diverse and mixed-income neighbourhood. The next section of the literature review explores cultural planning research with a focus on guiding trends and principles, a range of cultural mapping practices, and methods of data collection and representation. Finally, given that Regent Park has become one of the most extensively studied communities in North America, the last section of the literature review explores past cultural assessment and cultural mapping projects that have taken place in and around the Regent Park community. This section of the review also provided us with a list of social service providers, health services, community centers, community organizations, cultural groups and cultural institutions located in the Regent Park community and helped us develop a framework for our interview questions.

Section 1: Culture, Social Theory & Community

Examination of the following key concepts and relevant literature provides a foundation for the subsequent cultural mapping project for Dixon Hall and Regent Park. This section will explore the works of Marjorie Mayo, Zainab Amadahy, among others in conjunction with ideas and reports from the World Health Organization (WHO), and The United Nations Environment Social and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). The key concepts identified as integral to this project include: *culture, social capital, social sustainability, social inclusion, health, community and community arts*.

CULTURE

In the last few years, 'culture' has become a buzzword for variety of sectors. In large part due to the work of Richard Florida (2002), increasing attention is being paid to the notion of culture being good for the economy. This theory, and associated practices, is gaining traction among some leading cities in Western Europe and North America. British Prime Minister Tony Blair has even stated that London's 'creative industries' are the key sector driving that city's economy (Honderich, 2005). It is important to note that the notion of culture described in these economic growth strategies is more in line with the 'traditional' model of culture as being exemplified by the arts. However, the notion of *multiculturalism* is also intertwined with the economic growth model and "there is a growing sense that diversity and a city's tolerance of minorities is becoming

increasingly important for a city's economic potential" (Honderich, 2005). There is an ambivalent and seemingly contradictory relationship here between the notion of culture as a way of life and a potential site of empowerment or struggle, and culture as a tool for economic growth. However, these are just some of the facets of culture as seen from an urban context.

Interventions in the Regent Park community, or any other community where social housing exists in increased proportion, tend to focus on economic development or the provision of direct social services such as counseling, crisis management or skill-training programs. Little attention has been paid to the cultural resources of low-income communities. However, there is emerging literature which argues that questions of culture and identity are not peripheral to issues of community development, but rather an integral component. "Questions of culture and identity (however each of these is defined) relate to some of the most fundamental issues for communities, how they see themselves, how they analyse their situations and how they come to envisage the possibilities for change. 'Culture' in the anthropological usage...tells us not only who we are, and what is what, but what is to be done." (Mayo, 2000).

In this study, *culture* will be defined as the holistic way of life of any given group. Culture as a way of life includes "values and norms and the material goods produced, a society's patterns of work as well as its customs, its social relations as well as its leisure pursuits." (Mayo, 2000). UNESCO's World Commission for Culture and Development defines culture as "the flourishing of human existence in all its forms and as a whole" (1997). The report entitled *Our Creative Diversity* goes on to state that culture is "the complex of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features that characterize a society or social group. It includes not only the arts and letters, but also modes of life, fundamental human rights, value systems, traditions and beliefs" (Pérez de Cuéllar, J. et al., 1997).

Seen in this way, notions of culture are central to any community development endeavour and should not be separated from specifically social, economic or political strategies for community empowerment as all these aspects form part of a people's culture (Mayo, 2000; Pérez de Cuéllar, J. et al., 1997).

Many contemporary writers see culture as a site of struggle. UNESCO's World Commission for Culture and Development connects the notion of cultural hegemony to

the notion of exclusion. "Cultural domination or hegemony is often based on the exclusion of subordinate groups. The distinction between "us" and "them" and the significance attached to such distinctions is socially determined and the distinctions are frequently drawn on pseudo-scientific lines so that one group can exercise power over another and justify to itself the exercise of that power" (Pérez de Cuéllar, J. et al., 1997). Imperial pursuits were always accompanied by a corresponding offensive on the host culture be it in an overt or indirect way (Said, 1994). Amadahy alludes to the fact that many of Toronto's immigrants come from nations that have only recently emerged from colonial rule. Often the struggle to assert one's culture as an immigrant is compounded by the negative memories of colonial assaults on indigenous cultures along with systemic barriers encountered in the 'new' land. This is only an introductory description of the context that cultural groups and individuals inevitably work from.

SOCIAL CAPITAL & SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

The concept of *social capital*, popularized by Robert Putnam (1995) is particularly useful in researching the cultural needs of the Regent Park community. Broadly speaking, social capital refers to the bonds that enable collective action. The concept may be further understood in terms of both bonding *social capital* and bridging *social capital* (Gittel and Vidal, 1998). Bonding *social capital* denotes bringing together groups/individuals with a pre-established affinity to one another (such as language or ethnicity), while the bridging *social capital* describes new connections created between groups/individuals with no previous association and can refer to connections between groups/individuals with diverse interests or specific groups/individuals and mainstream society.

With the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) being the most ethnically-diverse area in the continent (Bourne 2000), planning practices must respond to the needs of our changing communities. The concept of *social sustainability* means finding a way to create a place for difference in our cities through, "development (and/or growth) that is compatible with the harmonious evolution of civil society, fostering an environment conducive to the compatible cohabitation of culturally and socially diverse groups while at the same time encouraging social integration, with improvements in the quality of life for *all* segments of the population" (Stren and Polese, 2000). Therefore, this research project recognizes these concepts of *social capital* and *social sustainability* as being of particular importance to determining the services and planning required for the Regent Park community.

SOCIAL INCLUSION, DIVERSITY & IDENTITY

Access to *social capital* is a major factor in combating *social exclusion*. A more proactive approach however, is facilitating *social inclusion*, a process that operates on behalf of all society's members. "At a general level, an inclusive society is one in which all citizens feel that they have a place to come into their own, to be and to become" (Cushing, 2003). *Social inclusion* contains the notions of *social capital* and *social cohesion*, but is much broader. Different definitions of *social inclusion* exist, each focusing on a different aspect such as social justice, health, relationships, quality of life outcomes, social and economic participation, and morality (Cushing, 2003).

The notion of inclusion also implies feeling 'at home' in a particular setting and positively asserting one's identity, feeling confident that one will be accepted. When looking at an area as diverse as Toronto, and specifically Regent Park, which is one of the main newcomer settlement neighbourhoods in the GTA, it is of vital importance to remember that "for many peoples, the homes and associated identities lost through enforced exile or chosen migration remain vitally significant" (Mayo, 2000). As such, the "question becomes not whether, but how to make oneself 'at home'" (Mayo, 2000).

This literature review draws extensively on the theoretical work of Mayo and the relationship between healthy communities, culture and identity. Amadahy, who completed an extensive cultural mapping project for Community Arts Ontario frames Mayo's theory in practice, contextualized by the experience of individuals and groups in the Toronto context. Examining notions of diversity and identity, Amadahy comments:

Many participants, members and non members alike, emphasize the importance of understanding historical experiences of colonialism and racism in order to understand current power dynamics in Canadian society. Indeed, it is essential to understand that power dynamics is at the base of equity and diversity implementation strategies" furthermore, "diversity and equity work cannot be exclusive to ethno-cultural communities. Identities transcend ethnicity and intersect with sexual orientation, class, different abilities, age, etc. (Amadahy & Community Arts Ontario, 2004b)

Mayo echoes Amadahy by asking "how to recognize differences...without categorizing identities in essentialist, uni-dimensional terms" (2000). It is important to note that the notion of 'communities of identity' is a contested one. As pointed to above,

individual identities are multifaceted and many times contradictory. As such, an individual usually belongs to a multitude of groups and 'communities' corresponding to the different facets of her identity. We do not have the liberty of delving into this (infinite) topic, but we recognize it is important to keep in mind the following questions: "How do individuals and groups become conscious or fail to become conscious of themselves, in relation to these identities? By what process do they define themselves, and how do they address the issues of overlapping and potentially competing identities?" (Mayo, 2000).

Culture, defined as a way of life, plays a significant role in shaping and maintaining communities and identity. As culture denotes the way of being in this world, it is also connected to inclusion and exclusion since values like tolerance/intolerance, diversity/conformity, or individualism/collectivism are all promoted or discouraged through culture.

HEALTH

Socioeconomic factors made up nine out of the thirteen Determinants of Health according to Health Canada. These included income, income distribution and social status; social support networks; education; employment and working conditions; healthy child development; individual capacity and coping skills; social environments; culture and ethnicity; and gender. While these factors are important in their own right, they are also interrelated.

Health agencies around the world are focusing attention on the social determinants of health, making strong arguments that the socioeconomic conditions of society need to be addressed in order to establish a healthy population. "A wealth of evidence from Canada and other countries supports the notion that the socioeconomic circumstances of individuals and groups are equally or more important to health status than medical care and personal health behaviours" (Public Health Agency of Canada, 2004). The WHO echoes the Public Health Agency of Canada in pointing out that "more important for the health of the population as a whole are the social and economic conditions that make people ill and in need of medical care in the first place" (2003).

It is not simply that poor material circumstances are harmful to health; the social meaning of being poor, unemployed, socially excluded, or otherwise stigmatized also matters. As social beings, we need not only good material conditions but, from early childhood onwards, we need to feel valued and appreciated. We need friends, we need more sociable societies, we need to feel useful, and we need to

exercise a significant degree of control over meaningful work. Without these we become more prone to depression, drug use, anxiety, hostility and feelings of hopelessness, which all rebound on physical health (WHO, 2003).

Community development workers have been aware of the importance social factors have in a community's health. As a result innovative approaches have been developed which aim to get the community actively involved in promoting healthy lifestyles instead of top-down transmission of information. This alternative approach to community health participation starts from the cultural and social context of individuals and aims to provide the conditions necessary for people to become empowered and to make decisions and take actions upon the social causes underlying ill-health (Mayo, 2000). These types of programs are of a grassroots nature and usually make use of community and culturally specific popular media to promote healthy lifestyle such as storytelling, theatre, dance, and songs. Having defined culture as a way of life, a clear connection emerges between culture and a healthy population.

COMMUNITY

Since cultural mapping is often performed working with communities, it is important to define the concept because like many of the terms discussed, it is a contested one. Evans and Advokaat's (2001) conceptualize community as "a 'layer' in society existing between the state and private life" (Evans and Advokaat's, 2001). While some theorists argue that community is no longer restricted by geographical bounds, there is the counterargument of the importance of the local place in forging a sense of identity. Borders are also vitally important in the state's interaction with individuals through the participatory processes of planning, because it is how 'communities' are defined and consulted (Evans and Advokaat's, 2001). The Regent Park 'community' as such is a creation of city planning, having defined the geographical and socio-economic bounds of this community. The subsequent inhabitants of the Park formed sub-communities, based on age, ethno-cultural origin, gender, religious affiliations, etc., further adding to the layers of the Regent Park 'community'. Subsequent studies, community development, grassroots organizing, and the current redevelopment process serve to further regroup and redefine the Regent Park community according to practical needs at hand.

COMMUNITY ARTS

Definitions of community arts are plentiful and "continue to evolve as rapidly as communities themselves" (Amadahy & Community Arts Ontario, 2004a). Community arts have been seen as an empowering challenge to the 'sterility' of high arts, and

participation and process are valued as much as final product, if not more. Community arts are intimately connected to a community's physical, social, and economic environment. "The wider context sets the framework for the arts and media, in society, and these, in turn, reinforce or challenge accepted norms and values, including norms and values about what is produced, and how, on the basis of which social relations." (Mayo, 2000).

For those who are not part of the dominant power structure in a society, community arts play a vital role in mobilizing around common issues. For example, the Notting Hill Carnival in London, for many years the largest street party in Europe, was and still is associated to broader community struggles; the theme for 2004, Carnival's 40th anniversary, was 'Freedom and Justice' (BBC, 2004). Orton argues that community arts act as a counter-hegemonic challenge in that people can create expressions of their own realities and challenge power relations (Orton, 1996). Art is no longer simply a commodity. As has mostly been the case in western tradition, art can be bought, sold or collected. The hierarchy and marginalization that occurs in the distinction between professional and amateur is removed, and art is integrated into daily activities as is the case in many cultures around the world where art "has a spiritual or intangible value and is practiced by everyone" (Mayo, 2000). In the same vein, and commenting on the local context of Ontario, Amadahy argues that it is important for community workers and policy makers to "recognize how "art" is integrated into every facet of daily life and thus cannot be conceptually separated from social and community development" (Amadahy & Community Arts Ontario, 2004b). Furthermore, she argues that "community arts" should be understood as both a tool and a product of community development. Inherent in this understanding is that cultural programs can play a role in addressing social problems" (Amadahy & Community Arts Ontario, 2004a).

Many advocates are seeking to showcase the power of community arts. Orton sees community arts as a key instrument to build skills for self expression which could be translated into wider (collective) action in the community (Orton, 1996). Participation in community arts was found to increase self-confidence, thereby increasing the employability of those engaged as well as increasing their involvement in community development (Mayo, 2000). Myerscough, 1988 as quoted by Mayo, states that the arts play a vital role in economic revitalization and are an effective investment in the public sector, providing a considerable increase in employment (Mayo, 2000).

The concepts explored in this section including *culture, social capital, social sustainability, social inclusion, health, community and community arts*, underlie the research methods to be explored in the next section and will be fundamental to our cultural mapping project for Dixon Hall and Regent Park.

Section 2 – Research Methods in Cultural Planning

CULTURAL PLANNING

Examining the intersection of healthy communities with arts and culture is a relatively new planning and community development strategy. Traditionally community development data has focused on health, employment, education, and land-use, failing to acknowledge the vital role of arts and culture in the development and maintenance of healthy communities. Cultural planning seeks to promote a framework to facilitate community health and development through the identification of cultural resources, how they contribute to the health and sustainability of a community, and what types of cultural resources are still needed to support this kind of development. This is a community specific strategy, which focuses on mobilizing resources and building capacity across a wide range of community interests.

PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH

Cultural planning research uses a variety of approaches that are, as indicated above, community specific and often adapted to unique community. However, at the core of this research and planning process is participatory action research. In participatory action research (PAR) methodology, researchers strive for an acute awareness of self and their own cultural assumptions. PAR methodology starts from the position that “communities, and individuals in communities, are experts on their own situations – although this expertise can be enhanced, and peoples’ critical awareness of alternative options can be sharpened in crucial ways, through a range of interactive projects and programmes” (Mayo, 2000).

Amadahy (2004b) refers to this methodology used for her *Cultural Mapping Project of Community Arts Ontario*. She defines PAR in the following terms:

- Acknowledging the researcher’s biases and that s/he is not outside the process.
- The objective of doing this research is to inform action aimed at effecting organizational change.

- Research tools and strategies are flexible and culturally appropriate to the groups, individuals and communities involved.
- Reflection on and modification of assumptions, premises, tools, methods, etc. is ongoing.
- The researcher does not define problems or offer solutions but researches how communities do this for themselves and then analyzes the implications. (Amadahy & Community Arts Ontario, 2004b)

It is with this understanding that we are approaching our research of cultural assets for Dixon Hall and Regent Park. PAR methodology provides the foundation for cultural mapping studies to be explored further here.

INTRODUCTION TO CULTURAL MAPPING

Cultural Mapping has emerged as the key research tool for identifying, documenting and utilizing community cultural assets. Initiatives to further develop cultural mapping techniques are underway and gaining popularity in Canada, the United States and worldwide. The Canadian Municipal Cultural Planning Project (MCP) has been developing a research base focused on the contribution of arts and culture to healthy communities at the municipal level, posting publications and relevant links online. In 1996, the Rockefeller Foundation funded the Urban Institute to study the possibility of integrating arts and culture into community quality of life measurement studies. The Arts and Culture in Community Building Project (ACIP) was created to carry out this research (Jackson 2002). The ACIP has worked to develop a framework for data collection and measurement specifically focused on the intersection of community, arts and culture. A 2003 Cultural Mapping Symposium in Australia featured Greg Young, who has represented the government in cultural mapping projects with Aboriginal communities. Through these projects Young and his partners have worked to develop models for future cultural mapping initiatives. He also addressed the expansion of the use of cultural mapping in other countries. These projects are leading the way in developing new methods of data collection specific to the role of arts and culture in healthy communities. In order to inform our study of arts and cultural assets in the Regent Park community, the following section will explore past research and examples of best practices with a focus on guiding trends and principles, a range of cultural mapping practices, and methods of data collection and representation.

GUIDING TRENDS AND PRINCIPLES

Recent interest in researching the role of arts and culture at the community level can be attributed to a few key emerging trends. One report prepared by the American Centre for Arts and Culture in 2003 identifies new broader definitions of culture to include less traditional forms of creative expression such as community arts practices and related organizations which now often include social, health, and economic services. The study also found that increased immigration patterns and shifts in demographics have significantly changed the nature of cultural activities and participation (Eckstein and Leong 2003). As mentioned in the previous section of this literature review, a broader definition of culture is central to any community development endeavour. This changing conception of arts and culture in communities, however, adds to the complexity of research and data collection. As studies are increasingly conducted and new methods of inquiry are developed, it is widely acknowledged that data collection focused on arts and culture must reflect a broad definition of culture and community values with significant input from a variety of sources including residents, arts and cultural organizations, and social service organizations.

The Culture Creativity and Communities (CCC) Program created by the ACIP have attempted to establish parameters and guiding principles for approaching research focused on community arts and culture. As a starting point, a series of research questions were identified including: "How are art and culture defined, presented and valued at the neighbourhood level? What should be measured and why? What neighbourhood level data are already available for this purpose? What kind of information needs to be collected?" (Jackson and Herranz 2002). Through an extensive series of in-person interviews, focus groups, phone interviews with community residents, cultural organizations and local social service providers in several cities, the following guiding principles for their data collection were established. First, it was found that definitions of art and culture are dependent on the cultural values and preferences of residents and stakeholders in a given community. It was also found that cultural participation includes an array of forms beyond traditionally recognized art and cultural activities. The third principle recognizes that creative expression has multiple purposes and meanings. Finally, participation in arts and culture relies on arts and non-arts specific resources and organizations (Jackson and Herranz 2002).

Young & Clark (1995), have similar guidelines in their community cultural mapping model developed through working with the Aboriginal Studies Institute (AIATSIS). They encourage a participatory approach highlighting the need for residents and stakeholders to define arts and culture in their community. In their model, the community identifies and documents local cultural resources, including what Young & Clark refer to as tangibles such as galleries, landmarks, local industries and services, and intangibles such as memories and personal histories (1995). Again, out of this comes an array of meanings and forms of expression reflecting local cultural values. Young also stresses that ethically representing the culture of others requires consent. It is important to recognize that communities should have control of their identity and intellectual property (Young 2004).

Recognizing trends such as increased immigration, changing demographics and broader definitions of art and cultural assets at the community level, projects and models presented by the ACIP and Greg Young provide guidance through their experiences and extensive research in this field. The principles provided above including the need to respect and reflect local values, recognize multiple forms and meanings of creative expression, while ensuring meaningful resident and stakeholder participation have been similarly articulated through other recent studies related to arts, culture, and healthy communities and act as a key starting point for interviews and data collection.

APPROACHES TO CULTURAL MAPPING

Having established basic principles for researching art and culture in communities, developing methods for identifying, recording, and utilizing community cultural assets is the next step. Traditionally, cultural inventories are the most widely used method for documenting the presence of cultural assets in a community. This attempts to create a portrait of arts and culture in a community and identify gaps through a list of cultural activities, spaces, and service providers. A study conducted by the ACIP, however, has identified limitations of many existing cultural inventories. Their review was guided by key questions asking what types of cultural inventories have commonly been conducted, what was included, and to what extent residents have been involved in creating the criteria. The most common form of cultural inventories identified were ones that provided lists of cultural organizations within specific geographic areas focused on only traditionally recognized cultural venues such as theatres and galleries (Jackson and Herranz 2002). A related case study on how and why people participate in cultural activities found that 92 per cent of cultural activities indicated by participants

took place in other venues such as churches, parks and local businesses (Walker and Scott-Melnyk 2002). These findings revealed that many existing cultural inventories therefore have failed to reflect local cultural values, and failed to provide a comprehensive vision of cultural activities at the community level.

As an answer to these shortcomings, community cultural mapping has been developed as a more comprehensive approach to documenting local cultural assets. This method strives to create a more comprehensive vision of arts and culture at the community level through the use of creative and participatory techniques reflective of the principles listed above. The MCPP identifies cultural mapping as an essential tool for community development and research, implementing a participatory approach with qualitative measures. A series of questions have been developed by the MCPP to guide cultural mapping processes including: "What cultural resources exist in the community and are recognized? What cultural resources exist but are not recognized? What cultural resources might grow with encouragement and planning? To what uses... can each of these resources be put to?" (Baeker 2002). Young & Clark support this approach with their focus on community identification of tangible and intangible cultural resources. This more comprehensive approach paints a complete picture of community cultural assets recording, conserving, and instigating new projects and can promote strong community identity through the celebration of local culture (Young & Clark, 1995). The ACIP also supports this approach as a more effective tool, identifying the ideal process for cultural mapping as one which broadly defines culture, includes formal and informal arts practices, combines qualitative and quantitative methods and is participatory in its approach.

DATA COLLECTION

Data collection for this more comprehensive study requires a variety of methods and participants to gather both quantitative and qualitative data. This includes in-person open-ended interviews (semi-structured), focus groups, phone interviews, observation and surveys to name a few. The ACIP has identified in-person interviews as their key tool for data collection. Interviews with artists and cultural workers have been conducted for ACIP studies requesting that they discuss their views on how arts and culture are defined at work and how they monitored cultural participation, if at all, in the neighbourhoods where they worked. Residents were also asked how they defined culture, what cultural activities they participated in, and what the necessary conditions were for their participation. The participants to be interviewed were identified by organizations involved in the community (Jackson and Herranz 2002).

Additional methods of data collection for the purpose of cultural mapping are also often necessary when trying to capture all the relevant information, particularly for informal arts and cultural practices. A Chicago study used an ethnography approach to their research focused on informal arts and cultural activities, collecting data in a number of different ways. This approach placed researchers in the field for extended periods of time allowing them to study as participants. Twelve case studies were conducted in different locations to compare findings on a broader scale in order to identify cultural assets for the city of Chicago. This search included community focus groups but also looked at administrative data from local churches including the Catholic Archdiocese of Chicago, notices collected from neighbourhood venues and local newspapers (Wali et al. 2002). The Boston Community Building Network also looked at multiple neighbourhoods to assess community cultural assets. The study conducted neighbourhood focus groups and citywide discussions to clarify definitions of culture in their community in order to establish an inclusive and broader vision of cultural life in Boston. They also conducted interviews with local cultural organizations, community interviews, and used multimedia tools such as digital storytelling narrative projects (The Boston Foundation, 2002). These examples demonstrate the variety of approaches to community art and culture data collection that can be used as well as the use of creative adaptive techniques such as digital storytelling.

DATA REPRESENTATION

An ACIP review of existing cultural mapping efforts revealed various forms of data representation including paper directories, maps, and websites. Paper formats were identified as a consistent way to provide basic inventories across organizations and inexpensive to update. This approach is also said to exist in web form, however, existing examples generally provide only basic cultural inventories. The ACIP suggests possibilities for more comprehensive web-based cultural maps using multimedia tools such as video and audio and making the project interactive. Through a multimedia web-based approach to cultural mapping, data representation can demonstrate a wide range of community cultural assets complemented by audio and visual effects to include oral and architectural histories for example. This can also be updated regularly and allow for continued community involvement through public postings (Jackson and Herranz 2002). While this technique is ideal for representing qualitative data and including the community, it is noted that the technical equipment and skills may not be available to every community.

CONCLUSIONS BASED ON PAST PROJECTS

Studies conducted by the Amadahy, ACIP, MCPP, and Young & Clark have provided a glimpse into key findings and emerging methods for conducting cultural mapping projects and the identification of community cultural assets. PAR methodologies assert that individuals are experts in their own environments and that researchers are not objective observers, but active participants keenly aware of their own cultural assumptions. As such, PAR methodologies work well in conjunction with the cultural mapping process. While no one dominant approach to cultural mapping is evident in the literature, examples of these best practices share key themes, underlying principles and goals.

To briefly reiterate: identifying community art and cultural assets requires a broad definition of culture based on local values. It is important that these processes involve local residents and stakeholders and that both quantitative and qualitative data be gathered. Through creative approaches to data collection learned from existing projects, cultural mapping projects can take research beyond basic cultural inventories to present a comprehensive vision of a community. Such projects are geared to helping communities celebrate their cultural assets, preserve local history and individual stories and ultimately initiate activities which utilize, promote, and maintain these assets as essential contributors to community health.

Section 5: Past Mapping Projects of Regent Park (and Toronto)

Community engagement has become a central tenant for the Regent Park revitalization. Thus, there have been numerous efforts on the part of the Toronto Community Housing Corporation (TCHC) to ensure that the community is involved in the planning and decision-making process. Much of this effort has involved extensive research projects aimed at determining the needs of the community. This section explores some of the past cultural mapping projects in Regent Park, and related mapping projects in the Toronto area. The objective was to inform our own cultural mapping project by both avoiding duplication and finding gaps in previous assessments that need to be addressed. The projects covered in this literature review are *Regent park: Community Services and Facilities Study, 2004*, *Cultural Mapping Project of Community Arts Ontario, 2003*, and *Asset Mapping in Downtown East Toronto "Open Door Centre" project*.

CULTURAL ASSESSMENT PROJECTS: AN OVERVIEW

Regent Park: Community Services and Facilities Study

To date, The *Regent Park: Community Services and Facilities Study* is the only cultural mapping project focused exclusively in Regent Park. Broader mapping projects have been carried out in other areas of Toronto and the Province of Ontario. These projects vary in their focus. Their methodology and findings are relevant for both shaping the methodological structure of future mapping projects and findings that equity and diversity remain an underlying issue in accessibility to cultural resources. Cultural mapping projects carried out in Toronto, which did not involve Regent Park, are included in this literature review because analyses of their methodology and findings are relevant for assessing best practices in cultural mapping projects. They also point to the trend in neighbourhoods in Toronto where there is an overall lack of community services, increase in poverty, and stress on residents for a number of factors (Arundel and Assoc., 2005).

The *Regent Park: Community Services and Facilities Study* was published by Toronto Community Housing Corporation (TCHC) in August 2004. It builds on former discussions instigated by TCHC with key agencies providing programs and services in Regent Park and was timed to coincide with a survey of residents on service delivery. This compressive, participatory research project inventories and assesses community services and facilities of Regent Park. While this study was to inform the revitalization process, it was also meant to stand alone as an assessment of the needs and gaps in the Regent Park service and facility infrastructure.

In the fall of 2003, a baseline study of the community service infrastructure serving Regent Park resulted in a database of agencies and institutions as well as a survey instrument designed and submitted to all relevant organizations. Existing services and facilities in Regent Park were broken down into groups including, schools, childcare, and parkland. Additionally, agencies that were not located in Regent Park, but served residents of Regent Park were included. These agencies consisted of, but were not exclusively, multi-service agencies, health services, social services, and recreational services. This database of services was created from a combination of government census data and community consultations¹. A database of agencies was made of all agencies with sites physically located in Regent Park and a second database of all

¹ For breakdown of data sources see *Community Arts Ontario Cultural Mapping Project*
<http://www.artsonline.ca/pdf04/CulturalMap.pdf>

agencies in the immediate vicinity reporting that more than 50 percent of their clients reside in Regent Park.

Community outreach in this consultation process was extensive, involving numerous meetings held at different times of the day to accommodate different household schedules and animators representing the main cultural backgrounds of the Regent Park community soliciting information on a door-to-door basis. Qualitative surveys were administered to residents either individually or in groups by teams of trained Regent Park animators (residents of the community) with materials translated in seven languages. There were nine consultation teams of South East Asian, Tamil, Bengali, Spanish-speaking, Youth, seniors, Long-time residents, East African and First Nations. The *Community Engagement Group*, lead by Sean Meagher and Tony Boston, prepared a synthesis of the responses and then met with the animators to test out whether the summary reflected the animators' understanding of the major themes emerging from the survey. The Revitalization Committee of the Regent Park Resident Council (now named the Regent Park Neighbourhood Initiative) then held a community meeting to present survey findings and to solicit feedback from the community.

Surveys of residents regarding community services and relocation issues were designed jointly by the *Community Engagement Group* and David Northcrop of the Institute for Social Research at York University (also translated into seven languages). The survey instrument was peer reviewed by Viewpoints Research and presented to Regent Park Resident council Revitalization Committee and staff of TCHC for approval. The survey positions were recruited from agencies carrying out employment readiness programs in Regent Park. Most surveys were conducted face-to-face and chosen by random selection.

Short summaries of what were termed Informal Service Organizations were included in the mapping of agency locations, however, there was no in-depth recording of these agencies. Also, demographic and median-income maps were skewed by overlaps of sector demographics (i.e. non-residents of Regent Park are included in sector maps, which may raise or lower real median-income for the park area alone) (Toronto Community Housing Corporation, 2004).

According to resident surveys and forums, non-English speakers were frustrated with lack of programming and/or outreach. A key theme was the lack of information about available programs and services and the need for increased community outreach to

make links and to develop programs and services appropriate to cultural needs. Also, most non-English speaking and other minority groups replied that the network of services and supports were not in place for them at all. The most common barrier in accessing programs was identified as language while other hindrances included capacity, inaccessible location, and violation of cultural or religious rules (one in seven do not use services because they are culturally incompatible). These barriers are also noted in the cultural mapping project carried out by Community Arts Ontario, where policies of 'diversity' are not being reinforced with actions for 'diversity'. In these cases, community-based cultural groups become all the more important in providing spaces that adequately reflect the cultural needs of communities that feel disinvested from mainstream cultural groups.

The implications of these findings for our study are clear: there should be a mapping and detailed description (including spatial needs and networking) of community-based cultural groups and services within the Regent Park community. These are minimally included in this report and most likely will not be accounted for when planning for new spaces. In interviewing cultural groups, we need to solicit their advice, in accordance with their needs, for creative ways of using space in the new plans (i.e. sustainable, incubator, co-op buildings). Additional community services and facilities space is needed to meet existing needs that are currently unmet. The projection of needs for the incoming population have not been calculated, however there is sufficient space in the plan to nearly triple the current amount of community services and facilities space.

Cultural Mapping Project of Community Arts Ontario

The *Cultural Mapping Project of Community Arts Ontario*, published in October 2003, was funded by the Department of Multiculturalism and Heritage and led by Amadahy (2004b). Although this was not confined to Regent Park, it included Regent Park cultural facilities. This mapping project is relevant for the methodology employed in carrying it out, the participatory action research approach, and for its findings on 'diversity' and 'equity'.

The focus of the project was on assessing issues of equity and diversity in member organizations. Community Arts Ontario was interested in what organizational procedures were in place in order to increase access of ethno-racial groups to community arts within their own communities. The CAO project was a needs assessment in part, but was also an organizational review, a review of member

organizational practices, an awareness raising and advocacy initiative, and a showcasing of best practices in order to develop a template for an action plan.

PAR methodology, as expressed in the previous section, involves having the researchers acknowledge their biases in the research process; the research does not define problems or offer solutions, rather, it researches how communities do this for themselves and then analyses the implications (Amadahy and Community Arts Ontario, 2004b). This involves using both government studies, such as demographics to have a broader sense of the community one is working while informally chatting with community workers and the people that live in the area.

The report concluded that equity and diversity remain issues of concern within community arts organizational structure and that certain ethno-racial groups faced barriers to access due to language and cultural differences that were not being accounted for and/or facilitated within community arts organizations or the Community Arts of Ontario organization itself. This is similar to the challenges faced by communities in Regent Park and points to a province-wide need to address diversity in policy, as well as in action, so that diversity is not relegated to a superficial "grant-application" role in organizational development and service delivery. The concept of 'building relationships' between groups is cleverly reduced to the personal, where the researcher poses the question: What if you were invited to a party where you barely knew anyone? What would make you go? Would you go? (Amadahy and Community Arts Ontario, 2004b). The purpose of the question is to draw attention to the fact that while organizations may speak of diversity and relationship building amongst diverse community members, the process of building these relationships involves more than a superficial mandate, but rather genuine interest and participation in the issues and events of diverse communities.

The implications for 'building relationships' and networking is an important issue relevant to cultural mapping carried out in the Regent Park community. While there are culturally diverse events and festivals, a network of cultural organizations that may lobby for the cultural needs of the community is imperative for a sustainable cultural infrastructure. Researchers who might carry out a cultural mapping (or any organizational assessment) project in the Regent Park community, gain the unique position and responsibility to disseminate information pertaining to cultural group locations to the community at large in order to increase networking opportunities.

Asset Mapping in Downtown East Toronto "Open Door Centre" Project

Towards citizen engagement in communities, another interesting methodological approach, in the *Asset Mapping in Downtown East Toronto "Open Door Centre" Project*, carried out in 2003, provides a framework for hands-on community participation in assessing gaps within their own community. The Open Door Centre is located in the Downtown East community. The project is based on the theoretical framework of asset-based community development research where all people are assets. The objective is to develop new, creative, realistic and long-term community economic development solutions to the problem of homelessness.

The researchers in this project were the 'drop-in users' themselves. They were trained to develop a capacity inventory that 'maps' the individual assets and employability skills of other Drop-in Users. This information is then used to refer drop-in users to training programs, employment, CED initiatives, and support for small business opportunities. The strategy of developing the skills of community members to help their own community was employed successfully in this project. The Open Door Centre contracted EYE Video CED to create a video to document the Project². The Open Door Centre then hired homeless people to interview other homeless people in order to learn more about their own skills and abilities and apply them in seeking employment. The Open Door Centre also created a database of people with their various skills and achieved temporary employment for several individuals in interior painting for the Street Health building (Toronto Learning Network, 2003).

When constructing a methodological framework, this project demonstrated the power of community involvement in assessing the needs of their community. It also demonstrated sustainable mapping and community development practices. As we saw in the *Community Arts Ontario Mapping Project*, the question of 'relationship building' hinged on the involvement of organizations with regards to the issues of the communities they were trying to engage.

CONCLUSIONS BASED ON PAST PROJECTS

This section has revealed that while there has been an extensive assessment project carried out in the Regent Park community of cultural organizations, information gaps pertaining to community-based cultural groups and design of cultural spaces still exist. Both of these areas are vital for cultural planning in Regent Park. As noted, there are many barriers to accessing cultural services including: provision of language,

² For information on video copies see Catch da Flava CED projects http://www.catchdaflava.com/C_2eE_2eD_20Projects

religion and economic capability. Therefore, cultural groups that cater to these diverse needs remain fundamental for community development and health. These cultural groups require space considerations in the revitalization plan. Co-locating organizations, in culturally sensitive designs will contribute to networking and a reinforcement of a strong cultural infrastructure.

With few economic opportunities and limited cultural support resources, the Regent Park community has developed a strong cultural capacity. This is, however, tenuous with marginal-to-no-funding and lack of space for cultural groups. With the revitalisation of Regent Park underway, the inventory of, and networking of cultural groups in Regent Park is not just timely, but pertinent to maintaining the cultural structure of the existing community as the neighbourhood faces many changes.

Cultural mapping in Toronto and Ontario is still a relatively new practice. Cultural Mapping projects that have been carried out show us that the methodological process of community engagement can be the difference between inclusive and exclusive research. A participatory action research approach has the researcher acknowledge their place within the research process and positions them as 'analysers' of organisation relations and functions. The publication and dissemination of this information should be made available to the organisations interviewed for them to take these findings into consideration. The Open Door Centre project shows that central community involvement in the research process provides both the trust needed for community engagement (to accept that 'invitation to the party') and the possibility for sustainable action with newly acquired skills.

The *Community Services and Facilities Study* carried out by TCHC was extensive involving government data and numerous community consultations using animators. This study should be complimented by an update of cultural organisations within the study and in doing so, extensive consultations with cultural groups within the Regent Park area. These cultural groups need to be accounted for in the revitalisation process in terms of space. Additionally, a report on the cultural organisations, including community-based organisations, needs to be disseminated within the community to reinforce the cultural infrastructure through facilitating networking opportunities. These networking opportunities can also play a role in the creative use of space in the re-design of the built form in housing various organisations that can benefit from spatial proximity.

Section 4 – Conclusions

As we have seen in the in this literature review, a strong cultural infrastructure is the basis for a healthy community, which includes not only the arts for community expression and identity, but also local organisations. From language classes to sewing circles to dance organisations to daycare centres, all of these organisations, both formal and informal, create the necessary infrastructure to ensure a healthy and prosperous community. Cultural mapping seeks to identify existing organisations and gaps in the present cultural infrastructure, which in turn can help organisations, government and the local community decide what areas need to be developed in the planning and ongoing community development process.

When we speak of community cultural mapping we are talking about public participation. Civic groups designing the process by virtue of the space they have already created. To this end, the mapping project becomes an exercise in discovering: what organisations and groups currently exist in Regent Park and what their needs are, including spatial, economic, organisational and social considerations. The results of these mapping projects are used by the commissioning agency to allocate funding, discover needs and create resources.

The creation of the internationally acclaimed Media Centre in Regent Park 'Catch da Flava', for example, was the result of a mapping project carried out by the Community Health Centre in Regent Park. The needs assessment determined that youth in the area needed an alternative to 'hanging out' in arcades where they were coming into contact with drugs and violence (Health Canada, website entered August 2005). The Media Centre program began as such an alternative and has now been operating for over ten years, turning youth into filmmakers, radio technicians, journalists and overall, engaged community members.

Therefore, this literature review raises the important question: have community cultural groups been included in cultural mapping projects of Regent Park? As this literature review suggests, this cultural mapping project should adopt methods outlined in the literature review to update information on "formal" cultural groups (incorporated, having a charitable status, etc.), and then find contacts in the community cultural group sector (non-registered, non-incorporated, no charitable status) to be incorporated into the cultural mapping process.

:: CHAPTER 3

Statement of Purpose and Research Methodology

The intention of this research project was to identify Dixon Hall's existing cultural resources, to determine the value of these resources, and to gain an understanding of the gaps in Dixon Hall's current cultural service provision. The overall purpose of this approach was to inform Dixon Hall's Strategic Plan, which incorporates cultural programming for building a strong community. Particular emphasis was placed on how Dixon Hall's services may anticipate and be responsive to the needs of the community with the upcoming revitalization of the Regent Park area. In order to gather information on local community groups in and around Regent Park with service mandates in the area, including their purpose, target groups, activities and needs, we employed a cultural mapping research methodology.

Cultural planning is the strategic and integrated planning and use of cultural resources in urban and community development which considers the circumstances and needs of a specific community. Essentially, cultural planning is a unique approach to the planning process, which strives to build an environment in which local culture may flourish. It focuses on mobilizing resources and building capacity across a wide range of community interests – local business, school boards, volunteer groups, as well as local community groups. Cultural planning assumes the need for indicators or measures to demonstrate the impact or contributions cultural developments make to communities.

Cultural mapping comes out of the belief that healthy communities need a strong cultural infrastructure, which provides residents with resources for a physically and emotionally healthy life. By employing this research method, we were able to present findings to the contracting agency, Dixon Hall, in the areas of gaps in service provision, the impact of culture on community and the needs of service providers in the area.

The process of this cultural mapping project began with consultations with Executive Director, Kate Stark, regarding the goals that Dixon Hall sought to achieve from this research project. After the project purpose was established, a literature review was conducted on cultural mapping and other similar projects carried out inside and outside of Regent Park to establish our approach. Included in this literature review was

a survey of concepts including culture, diversity, social inclusion, identity, social cohesion, and community, which served to establish the relationship between culture, community and social assets.

It was determined early in the literature review that there had been a previous study conducted for the revitalization on community services and facilities in Regent Park. As a result, the research project built upon this existing research and complimented the list of consulted organizations in this study with a) follow-up interviews of identified organizations and b) a list of not-yet consulted local community groups and organizations.

Survey questions were then identified based on the literature review as well as upon the information requested from Dixon Hall (See appendix A) and the interview process commenced. Beginning with Dixon Hall agency workers, the semi-structured interviews were guided by the survey questions and generally lasted between 30 minutes to an hour. Depending on the agency workers' availability, some interviews were held on-site, while others were held via teleconference. A representative from almost every department of Dixon Hall was interviewed and the information gathered was recorded and stored for use at a later point.

Following the Dixon Hall interviews, further interviews were conducted in the same fashion with established organizations in the Regent Park area (i.e. those that were included in the initial study on community services and facilities). From these interviews smaller, local community groups were identified and located by the agency workers as well. The smaller organizations are referred to as 'local community groups' in this study and connections to them were also made through attendance of community days, festival gatherings and informal consultations with community members. The researchers generally met with these local community groups in their work environments for a one to two hour semi-structured interview involving: a description of the organization; venues-of-activity; partnerships in the community; inquiry into local community groups; requesting information on any studies or research that the group has conducted; and preferred method of information dissemination of this research project.

After the interview stage of research, information from the interviews regarding existing cultural resources was compiled into a brief summary chart of organizations.

Findings based on themes, observations and issues voiced by local community groups were then compiled in the final report for Dixon Hall.

This report provides Dixon Hall with information on both formally established local organizations as well as local community groups, regarding cultural resources in and around the Regent Park area. With the focus of the interviews on the cultural contributions of organizations, this report not only investigates how and why cultural resources enhance the vitality and social cohesion within a community, but also how local community groups are important cultural resources as an interface between the individual and the larger community. Finally, this report provides recommendations for how Dixon Hall can deepen its engagement in the Regent Park community through establishing a network and incorporating cultural planning into its strategic plan.

Employees from almost every department of Dixon Hall were invited to reflect upon the value of the existing cultural resources in the organization, as well as to express their vision for future cultural programming. They were also invited to express their thoughts on any perceived limitations to achieving their goals for future cultural programming at Dixon Hall. Furthermore, interviews were conducted with representatives of local organizations and community groups in the Regent Park area in order to identify the existing cultural resources of the Regent Park community, as well as the emerging needs for cultural resources in the face of the upcoming changes to the community.

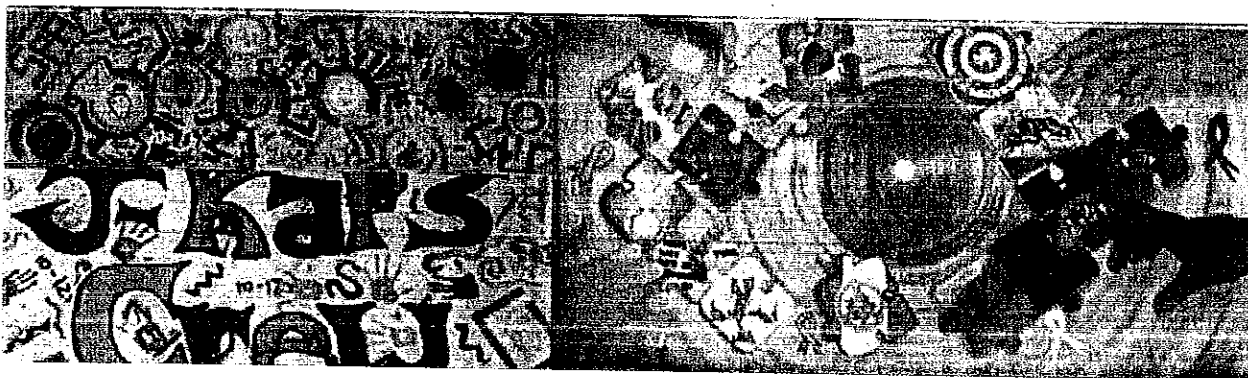
Through the extensive interview process, we were able to identify a number of emerging themes which capture the many visions for diverse and integrated cultural programming at Dixon Hall. Although they overlap, each theme reflects the potential for Dixon Hall to be an innovative not-for-profit organization serving the diverse needs of its community. This source of qualitative information is important as it allows for an understanding of the true needs and desires of the community at large.

The following is a summary of our findings based on the aforementioned interviews with agency workers, Regent Park service providers, local community groups, as well as our consultations with Regent Park community members at various community festivals and events. They are grouped into categories and themes:

Dixon Hall's main office location at 58 Sumach was designed by Hilditch Architects to create various rooms that could service a multitude of different functions ranging from counseling to music lessons, community meeting rooms to a student study centre, and staff room to recital hall. Hilditch took into account that the need to accommodate different uses at different times of the day, different types of spaces for different activities, all the while maintaining the gentle jostling and cross-pollination between the various groups that use Dixon Hall. The result was a dynamic and colorful space (Hilditch Architect website 2005). As programming continues to expand, however, and with the anticipated increase in population of the surrounding area, many have

expressed their need for *more* space. While much of this need for space concerns issues of privacy, accessibility and inter-organizational collaboration, there was also a strong desire to improve and increase space for cultural activities such as:

- Theatre Performance and Practice
- Cooking
- Horticulture
- Dance
- Exercise
- Arts and Crafts (painting, sewing, etc.)
- Music
- "Hanging Out"
- Movies
- Games
- Multi-Media (film production, web design etc.)
- Infant\toddler play area



Similarly, agency workers in the Homeless, Hostel and Housing department expressed a serious need for recreational space. Many of the agency workers described their innovative strategies to make the best possible use of space for activities such as Bingo and movie-watching, however, it often involved the disruption of other essential activities such as sleeping or eating. Many also expressed the desire to provide more of a "sense of place" to the hostel and shelter spaces. Some of the shelters, such as Heyworth House, have completed several murals in order to instill a *sense of place* and *sense of community* to the building, yet more resources are needed to continue the initiative. Furthermore, almost all of the shelter workers expressed the need for kitchen facilities. The needs of the HHH department will be discussed in further detail later in this report.

i) Leaving the "Safe Haven"

One of the major concerns of Dixon Hall agency workers is that the "people of Regent Park don't leave Regent Park." Many expressed that Regent Park is a strong and positive community, however, given the structure of the enclosed space, a very powerful "us vs. them" mentality has pursued with regards to the community's attitude



to the rest of the city. In many cases, those living in Regent Park North will not even cross over Dundas Street to Regent Park South and vis a vis! As a result, residents of the park (the youth in particular) have tended to see the community as a "safe haven". Dixon Hall agency workers have expressed concern that this can be a very dangerous mentality as it limits opportunity for economic advancement, it lowers levels of self-esteem and, given the plans for the revitalization, community members may be at a serious disadvantage. In lieu of these concerns, many have expressed the desire for programming which branches outside of the community. Likewise, hostel and shelter users have had a tendency to find a "safe haven" in the shelters, thereby diminishing motivation to advance and move forth. Thus, with regards to programming for the youth, the elderly and the shelter users alike, Dixon Hall agency workers would like to see more opportunities for programs which break down the barriers of their "safe haven" and build capacity for communication and sense of belonging in the rest of the city.

Facilitating internship programs with companies/organisations both outside and inside of Regent Park are another excellent way of breaking down the "us vs. them" mentality while gaining valuable work experience outside of the "safe haven".

ii) Environment Matters

While Regent Park is home to an abundance of community gardens and green space, environmental education appeared to be a top priority of Dixon Hall agency workers. Perhaps for the very same reason mentioned above, many seemed to believe that there is a lack of understanding of and interaction with the environment. For reasons ranging from therapeutic benefits of gardening, to fostering a sense of place, and from respect for one's surroundings to the basic need to improve the current environmental climate, Dixon Hall workers of almost every department identified a need for environmentally based programming. Some suggestions were for green roofs, green rooms and more community gardens, while others advocated for excursions to Riverdale Farm, camping trips or other activities which focus on the environment. With respect to hostel and shelter users, it was felt that a garden or green roof would provide recreational activities while fostering respect for the building itself.

iii) Teaching Life Skills

Currently, one of the main priorities of almost all Dixon Hall programming is geared towards teaching life skills. Whether it is in the shelters, the children and youth programs, the senior programs, the SEED programs, or any other Dixon Hall run programs, life skills are embedded in their mandate. These skills may range from conflict resolution to cooking or from dealing with peer pressure to writing a resume. No matter what the skill type, Dixon Hall workers are adamant about incorporating life skill lessons into everything they do. Still, there is always room for improvement. Cultural programming offers a fun, communicative and challenging approach to learning a variety of life skills and Dixon Hall workers have recognized the need to develop a more cohesive, organized and integrated approach to such programming which teaches all the relevant and specific life skills needed in an entertaining and encouraging manner. One example of existing programs offered by Dixon Hall were coupon cutting circles sometimes organized at Heyworth House, which provide an opportunity to open up and discuss life issues while cutting supermarket coupons and learning about healthy and affordable food choices. Another example is Drum Talk offered by the Youth Centre, which provides a comfortable and fun atmosphere for children with behavioral problems to discuss their feelings on problems or issues they may be facing, while drumming.

iv) The Diversity of Activities Should Reflect the Diversity of Users

Dixon Hall is host to a wide variety of programs and activities including music, theatre, and arts and crafts. Dixon Hall workers have expressed their content with a range of

programs, however, they also expressed that they would like to see more diversity *within* these programs. For instance, the music school offers 15 musical subjects including theory, choir and music camps, however, the musical style tends to be centered on traditional and classical forms of music. The Children and Youth department feels that in order to engage the youth in music, there needs to be more programming which appeals to their tastes, such as hip-hop.

v) Inclusiveness: Promoting Cross-Cultural and Intergenerational Communication

On the other hand, programming that does cater to specific communities, such as the Mandarin Outreach program, Tai Chi, and monthly picnics for the Chinese community, tend to be exclusive. While, those programs are very beneficial to the communities that they cater to, many agency workers expressed their desire to see more inclusive programming which appeals to diverse crowds of all ages, genders and racial and ethnic backgrounds.

As noted in the literature review, bonding *social capital* denotes bringing together groups/individuals with a pre-established affinity to one another (such as language or ethnicity) (Gittel and Vidal, 1998). Programming held exclusively for one group can be used to enhance bonding social capital between members of a particular group. Bridging *social capital*, on the other hand, describes new connections created between groups/individuals with no previous association and can refer to connections between groups/individuals with diverse interests or specific groups/individuals and mainstream society. While having strong bonds within particular groups positively



impacts a person's life, bonds *across* social groups are equally, if not more important, because they allow one's network to expand and gain access to new economic and social benefits which the particular group one belongs to may not have access to. As such, it becomes very important for Dixon Hall to create inclusive programming which bridges the differences across various groups and individuals.

i) Inter-organizational Networking: Fostering Working Connectedness

With 12 locations and seven different departments, Dixon Hall is a wealth of resources. Therefore, in order to achieve its highest level of efficiency, Dixon Hall must share its resources effectively. In order to do so, there must be a certain amount of inter-organizational collaboration. Many departments have expressed that with a little more communication within their departments, as well as across all departments, resources may be put to better use. For instance, the Community Education and Development department has recently acquired a new location, however not all four programs are located in this building. It has been expressed by the department that the programming would run much more smoothly and cost-efficiently if all programs were grouped together. At the same time, it would be beneficial for the CE & D department to partner with other departments, such as the Homeless, Hostel and Housing department, in order to encourage use of the programs and facilities. Cultural programming can play a large role in the bridging of departmental activities.

ii) Extra-organizational Networking: Sharing Resources

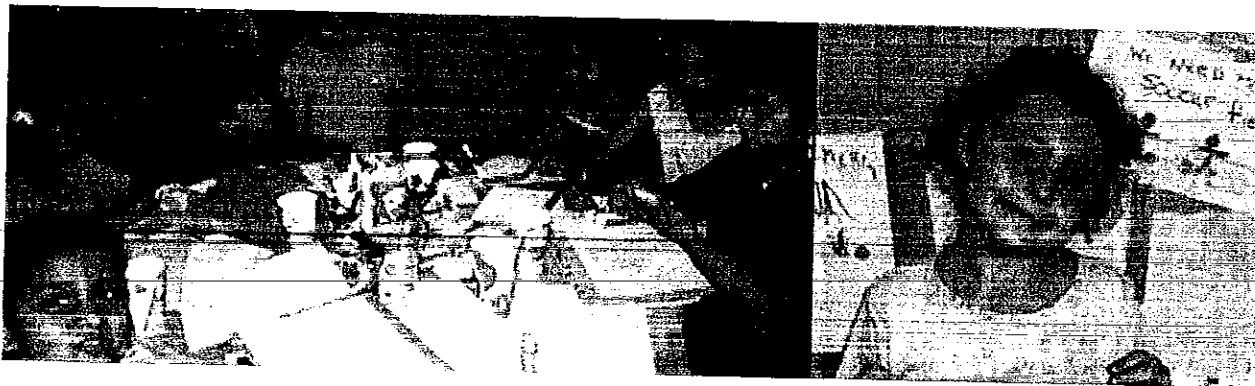
According to Dixon Hall agency workers, the types of mutually reinforcing business and creative working connections seem to arise organically. For the most part Dixon Hall has been very successful in fostering these types of connections. The music school, for example, works frequently with the Royal Conservatory of Music to provide opportunities for young musicians of the school to perform and participate in musical events outside of Regent Park, while Growing-Up Healthy Downtown has partnered with Woodgreen for a Bring Back the Don program which encourages environmental interaction amongst children. Because many of the hostels are currently inadequately equipped for recreational activity, some have made connections with nearby pool halls to provide reduced prices for hostel users. Although these partnerships no longer exist, they provide an example of potential innovative solutions to problems such as lack of facilities or space. One hostel worker from Heyworth House suggested creating partnerships with the Parks and Recreation department of the city to provide the use of

swimming pools and space for physical activity, artist groups for art therapy, and with libraries for reading, training and education. Establishing these kinds of extra-organizational partnerships, especially with local community organizations may provide a cost efficient approach to managing resources, providing services, and creating networks within the community.

Because of Dixon Hall's long established presence in Toronto, it has a wealth of networking capabilities and the potential to introduce new partnerships between and among local community groups and city departments. The suggestion of establishing extra-organizational partnerships with city departments such as Parks and Recreation helps facilitate a sense of community into public space. This close relationship with the Parks and Recreation Department has been successful in Dufferin Grove Park, where many community activities share space with the ice rink, a co-location of city department and local community groups, which reinforces community networks.

iii) Community Outreach: Encouraging Community Involvement

Community outreach is perhaps one of the most important aspects of a social service provider. This can occur on many levels. Beyond the promotion of the services offered by the organization, it is important to ensure that these services meet the needs of the community that it serves. Dixon Hall, in particular, is faced with serving not only one of the most culturally diverse communities in the most culturally diverse city in the world, but it also faces the challenge of serving a rapidly changing community given the upcoming revitalization plans. Therefore, issues of language, customs and integration must factor into every aspect of their services. Being in tune to the needs of the people they serve on an ongoing basis is integral to the success of Dixon Hall. Furthermore, cultural programming can play a very large role in encouraging participation in services which cross culture-specific and language-specific boundaries.



Another important aspect of communication and community outreach is a regular *feedback system*. Currently there are very few departments and programs in Dixon Hall which solicit feedback from users of the services. With the exception of Hayworth House weekly discussion groups and the occasional feedback solicited for an annual report, when asked, many Dixon Hall workers found that there have been limited efforts to obtain regular feedback regarding Dixon Hall programs and services. Having a frequent, documented communication with service users is perhaps the most effective way to engage the community, encourage participation and ensure that Dixon Hall services are meeting the diverse needs of the community.

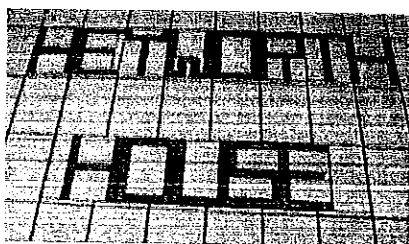
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Dixon Hall approach in its other departments. There is a need to create understanding within Dixon Hall about the emerging role of Social Enterprise, both within the organization and the social services sector as a whole.

There is a need have a better understanding between SEED and Dixon Hall in terms of SEED's role within the organization. SEED expressed the concern that much energy goes into making Dixon Hall understand the specific needs of SEED because they do not conform to the social services model. This pressure is in addition to dealing with competition in the marketplace.

Social Enterprise is emerging as an important force in the social sector, and a report published by the OECD asserts that social enterprise will soon be a key driving force of social and employment policy (Noya and LEED, 1999). Definitions of social enterprise abound, but a useful definition to Dixon Hall may be "any private activity conducted in the public interest, organized with an entrepreneurial strategy but whose main purpose is not the maximisation of profit but the attainment of certain economic and social goals, and which has the capacity for bringing innovative solutions to the problems of social exclusion and unemployment" (Noya and LEED, 1999).

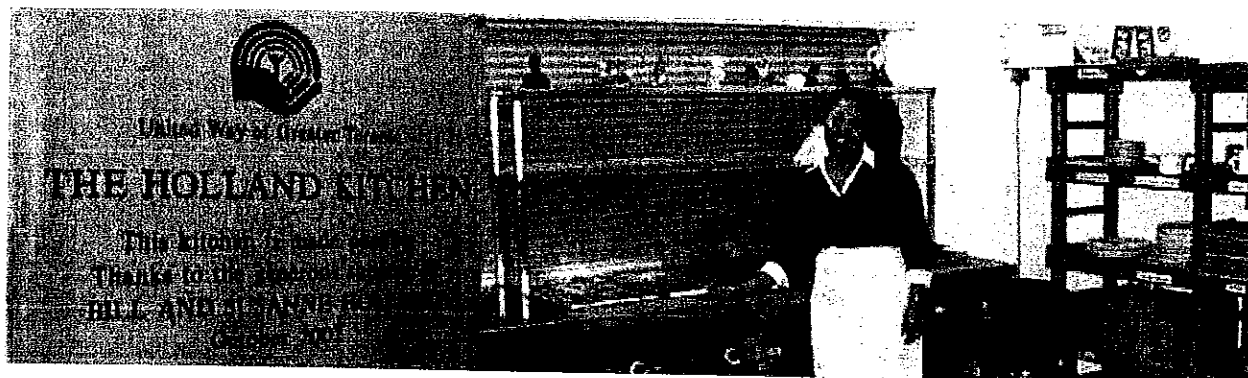
The benefits of social enterprise include having a stable source of income, increased freedom in programming decisions, and the ability to create meaningful employment for the various communities that Regent Park serves while at the same time staying true to its vision.



Findings from the interviews with the HHH department workers revealed many similarities in ideas and opinions. While some locations tended to exhibit a stronger tendency for cultural activity, there were very similar needs expressed. Much like the rest of Dixon Hall, the *need for space for cultural activity* is certainly one of the

top priorities. Currently, many of the facilities have no space for any activities and as a result, sleeping and dining areas are used. Within the spaces being used, lack of proper signage was highlighted as a major problem as well.

Cooking and kitchen facilities were clearly articulated to be another top priority. Many workers felt that having a kitchen would provide the opportunity for acquiring culinary skills, which is considered to be an important life-skill. It would provide a social space for interaction and collaboration, as well as an opportunity to learn about proper nutrition. Furthermore, a kitchen would provide incentive for other cultural gatherings or activities.



In terms of programming, there seemed to be a fair number of cultural activities being employed over the years. Some of these include:

- Murals and mosaics
- Movie nights
- Bingo (with functional prizes such as toothbrushes and combs)
- Music (guitar playing and singing)
- Word on the Street (a program which involves discussing what is going on in the street community)
- Pool (in partnership with local pool halls)
- Painting and interior decorating

Unfortunately, many of these activities are no longer being administered due to lack of staff, space and funding. Still, there were many ideas for future programming should more resources become available. Many HHH workers suggested that cultural programming should be non-invasive, no-pressure, youth-engaging (for family shelters), aimed at dealing with addiction issues, on-going but set up for short-term use (due to drop-ins and turn over rate), and aimed at promoting self-esteem.

Some suggestions for cultural activities were:

- To have shelter or hostel residents participate in the painting of murals or construction of mosaics to encourage a sense of place and a sense of community, in order to encourage respect for the premises (perhaps offer an incentive)
- Horticultural activity would also beautify the space and inspire a sense of pride in the space
- Art Therapy
- Organized trips outside of the shelter\hostel
- Themed months which focus on things happening in the city, in order to promote awareness and provide recreation
- Exercise related activities
- Festivals and events that engage the entire community, in order to debunk myths and establish relationships with the neighbors

Cultural Programming at 60 Richmond

For Children and Youth, cultural programming is a real bonding experience, breaks down fears and boundaries, identifies problems and solutions for how to deal with issues from literacy to violence, sex and drugs. Such programming helps uncover talents and skills to develop and emerge from a downward spiral.

Examining the intersection of healthy communities with arts and culture is a relatively new community development strategy. As identified in the literature review, cultural resources are increasingly acknowledged as vital contributors to the development and maintenance of healthy communities. Recognizing the value of cultural resources, it is important that a community identifies and documents its own local cultural resources including tangibles such as galleries, landmarks, local industries and services, and intangibles such as social services, memories and personal

histories. It is also necessary to support projects which are geared to helping communities celebrate their cultural resources, preserve local history and individual stories. Ultimately these activities should utilize, promote, and maintain cultural resources as an essential contribution to community health. Several programs within Dixon Hall recognize the value of cultural resources and provide programs which promote the connection between culture and health for all ages.

In working with youth, the programs teach kids to respect themselves. Through these programs there is a real bonding experience and a break down of fears and boundaries. Youth learn how to identify problems and solutions for how to deal with issues from illiteracy to violence, sex and drugs. A key feature of the Children and Youth department, as a valuable cultural resource for the health of youth, is that it provides a space for them to feel comfortable to discuss concerns. Furthermore, given the recent climate of increased youth-related gun crimes in Toronto, cultural programming can act as a healthy deterrent from drug and crime-related activities. In the past, Dixon hall ran a program called Black Perspectives. This program was successful in achieving precisely these goals, however, due to budget cuts, it no longer persists.

Self-empowerment

At the very basic level, culture-based programs teach kids that they need to respect themselves; they are programs which empower youth to understand that the only way to get things done is to do it yourself.

Inclusive Programming for All Ages

The programming that is most successful in this community is all about the relationships you develop with people and what we have been aiming for, and I think we have a long, long way to go, is with the inclusiveness of parents.

Heyworth House stresses the benefits of art therapy, which offers an alternative way to discuss issues in a creative way that is non-threatening and provides an end product that people can be proud of. They identified this as a significant gap in programming in shelters. Deborah Deneen of HHH further emphasized this point by explaining that art and culture are a non-invasive way to connect and communicate; that they allow people to participate in a non-stressful way which can help reduce violent behavior. Furthermore, Dixon Hall Music School received feedback from one of its participants who makes a case for music by explaining that music "makes people's brains better."

Cultural resources have a strong role to play in health and well-being seniors, as well. It keeps them active both intellectually and socially. It is also a cost-effective and efficient way to maintain health (much less than prescription drugs and care). The long-term effects are profound and reduce costs in the medical field.

Communication

Gossip is the main way that people communicate on the streets

It is important to ensure that programming focuses as much on cultural production as on experience and dissemination, where a sense of pride contributes to building self-esteem. Therefore, showcasing activities or cultural products at facilities both inside

and outside of Regent Park would help build a sense of community culture. This relates to the aforementioned need to build partnerships with extra-organizational bodies and facilities. It is important to invite people from outside of the community to activities, events and festivals in order to establish a relationship with surrounding communities. This can be done through placing advertisements in local media, and relying on network contacts.

Outside of Dixon Hall, local community organizations and groups were also interviewed. The following is a summary of those interview findings:

1) Need for Space

Lack of adequate space was a central theme of the organizations interviewed. While some organizations do not have any space at all, others are housed in cramped, inadequate facilities. These spaces are insufficient for programming needs and as a result some of their programs are being cut. Those organizations that were consulted about space allocation in the revitalization plan are skeptical that they will see results from this. Skepticism aside, the need for space is urgent and cannot wait until the end of the revitalization process.

Soundtimes and Regent Park School of Music, on the other hand, have received funding to either relocate or renovate their space and were pleased with their ability to do so. These new spaces provided enough room to expand their programs and clients. Adequate space for organizations enables them to carry out program activities, be accessible to the community and to conduct program activities in a safe and healthy manner. Sufficient space also means being visible within the community. It was found that many cultural groups use the church for large events and must pay. Others use Nelson Mandela School, which is dependent upon the principal to give permission. Program activities that are carried out in Regent Park are done so in non-descript apartments or basements within the Regent Park housing complex. In other words, there are few people who walk into an organization "off the street" because they saw the sign or were intrigued by the workshop space. This greatly limits program accessibility and sense of community resources with the Park area, despite numerous cultural organizations and resources that do exist at various stages of development.

When considering space allocation and development, location and difference of needs must be considered and targeted groups must be consulted at the planning stage of the process. Cultural groups can have culturally specific needs that must be planned for.

ii) Inclusiveness

Inclusiveness is important when cultural organizations are operating within a community as diverse as Regent Park culturally and linguistically. The ability to bridge cultures within programming, deal with sensitive issues of generational conduct, breakdown stereotyping of cultures and gender is not easily done.

Regent Park Film Festival bases its entire mandate upon fostering cultural understanding within the Regent Park community and the broader city of Toronto through showing films from the countries of origin of Regent Park residents to encourage people to learn about various aspects of their neighbours' backgrounds.



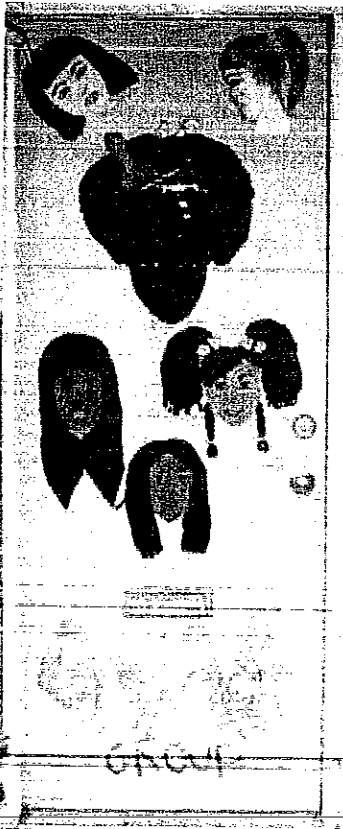
FOCUS struggles with the issue of cultural values. As a program that mainly attracts youth, sometimes its activities or the results of activities may not be in line with particular cultural values and a participant will have to withdraw or have their work withdrawn (though this is by no means the norm). Similarly with Regent Park School of Music, their music programs tend to be dominated by some cultural groups over others and the ability to diversify this with limited staff, money and time is an unresolved issue.

The ability for organizations to respond actively to issues of inclusiveness is limited by the amount of time, staff and program resources.

iii) Funding

Available funding and the necessary skills to obtain it are essential to the continued existence of many community groups. Several interviews revealed a need for more staff, time, and resources. At the root of this problem is lack of funding, which affects local organizations in different ways.

The direct result of insufficient funding is felt by community groups of all sizes. This is an on-going problem for larger groups such as the All Saints Community Centre who receive funding from sources including the government, churches, local foundations, and donations. Smaller ethno-cultural community groups reported a complete lack of external funding including those that have been recognized both within and outside the Regent Park community for over ten years. This was the case with the Regent Park Bangladesh Community, a group celebrating Bengali culture through celebrations, dance and music. The group seems to be prominently featured at cultural events around the city, evidenced by numerous photographs taken at various events and with various politicians, even garnering a front-page photograph in the GTA section of the Toronto Star in the summer of 2005. And yet, despite their recognition, this group receives no external funding and manages to remain operating due to small donations from the Bengali community in Regent Park as well as the many volunteer hours of the dedicated members.



Obtaining funding was also identified as an issue. One group was able to demonstrate with an enormous stack of grant applications, the time and effort put into acquiring funding. This in place a strain on already limited staff, time, and resources. Smaller less experienced groups are in need of greater access to funding, which includes being aware of funding opportunities and gaining the skills necessary for formal grant application processes. While interviewing one of the African Francophone groups, one of the researchers was asked if she could assist the group in identifying possible sources of funding as well as assisting in the completion of funding applications. This indicated the need to build capacity into the emerging cultural groups in order to ensure their continued existence and their ability to meet the needs of the communities they serve.

An indirect funding issue expressed by groups working with children, is a result of the provincial funding cuts of the 1990s, which lead to the loss of many school programs, particularly in relation to the arts. Groups, such as the Cabbage Town Community Arts Centre, are now faced with an increasing demand for services and report a three year

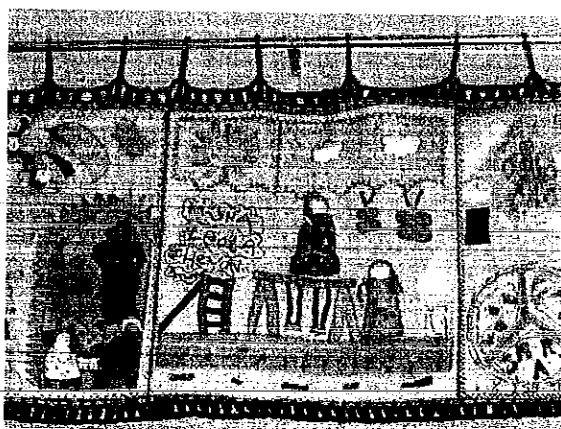
waiting list for music lessons. Likewise, the Regent Park School of Music reported a long waiting list for the after school music program, even though their main advertising is through word-of-mouth.

Funding is a persistent problem for all the organizations interviewed on a variety of levels. The provision of funding, its availability, and the ability of organizations to acquire it, are central to this issue and need to be addressed as these organizations are faced with increases in demand and changes associated with the Regent Park Revitalization. Core funding seems to once again be the central issue. Core funding allows for organisations to make long-term strategic plans as opposed to piece-meal projects based on scraped together resources. Core funding contributes to stability both within the organization and in terms of the programs that they can offer.

iv) Networking

As identified in the literature review, social networks within a community often act as resources to an individual's strategies to cope with changes. These are found in many cultural organizations which foster conditions to share resources and build attachments with others. Networking, however, can also benefit community organizations themselves, in order to strengthen overall assistance to the larger community. By encouraging the sharing of knowledge, space, and resources, strong inter-organizational networks have the potential to enhance resilience and adaptability in the face of funding shortfalls and the upcoming changes in Regent Park. Networking was revealed as an issue for many community groups interviewed, with the key problems including lack of awareness of other groups and/or their activities and lack of networking opportunities.

Lack of awareness of other groups and/or their activities was expressed by many community groups both within and around Regent Park. Groups located outside of Regent Park who do referrals, such as the All Saints Community Centre pointed out the benefit of being informed of other groups and activities in the area particularly in light of the upcoming changes. The Sherbourne Health Centre also expressed an interest in greater networking possibilities suggesting the need for an umbrella organization, or network body system wherein organizations would meet regularly to be informed as to



what everyone is doing. FOCUS informed us that an organization at one time tried to this kind of system but it was difficult to meet and coordinate times.

Groups such as FOCUS and ArtHeart also suggested a need for more cooperation and opportunities to network and share local resources. This could be achieved through the sharing facilities, space and equipment. ArtHeart suggested co-location to be facilitated by a multi-use cultural centre. This could also be achieved through more promotion of each other's programs for instance, as suggested by FOCUS, if the Regent Park School of Music told its students about Focus programs for the summer.

Despite limited funding, staff, and space, community groups in and around Regent Park continue to work hard in order to develop a lively cultural capacity in the area. However, networking may be a crucial factor in the ability of these groups to continue to exist and maintain the current cultural resources in the face of the upcoming changes.

Dixon Hall could facilitate grant-writing workshops between local community groups and funding agencies. Facilitating such workshops would be an excellent opportunity to address issues of accessibility including language, culture and special needs that may hinder community groups from accessing funding, while bringing funding agencies into the community to have a more direct relationship with their clients.

v) Mobilization of Residents

Some groups mentioned difficulty in fostering volunteerism and active participation among some minority women's groups (Somali, Bengali). Participants will come out to some events, but some community groups are finding it hard to maintain regularity and commitment. Some groups spoke of the need to foster culture of participation and activism among the broader resident community, particularly immigrant and ethno-cultural groups. One of the groups indicated that a reason why some of residents who have experienced live as a refugee, or have endured persecution have a distrust of anything 'official'. As such, one of the reasons they may not attend programming is when it is held in public spaces and associated with formal organizational structures.

vi) "Piece of the Pie"

Currently, there are many small community groups which have emerged in Regent Park. They, along with the more established organizations are experiencing a lack of funding/resources, however, many are trying to run the same programs and are

competing for the same participants. As indicated above, there is a lack of networking between organizations resulting in little information being shared between groups/organizations. This results in horizontal growth or mushrooming of organizations and community groups, but very few are growing 'vertically', that is enhancing their resource base, their participants, their influence on the community and larger decision-making bodies.

As revealed by the literature review and interviews with Dixon Hall and community groups, this report finds a tremendous opportunity for Dixon Hall to support and foster culture through a number of strategies. While many existing cultural resources in Dixon Hall have been identified, cultural resources are still needed in each department. Further strategies for Dixon Hall to heighten its cultural profile and improve its services have been identified below.

i) Co-location

As Dixon Hall employees observed, that the types of mutually reinforcing business and creative working connections seem to arise organically. Co-location aides in this process as has been proven in other experiments of this kind in Toronto such as 401 Richmond Street and 219 Spadina. A multi-use cultural centre incorporates common concerns expressed by Dixon Hall employees and local community groups—networking, space and inclusiveness. Such a multi-use cultural centre would provide the space and the opportunity for co-location by a number of cultural organizations including Regent Park Film Festival, FOCUS media centre, and a cinema for the community. In addition to raising the visibility and thus accessibility of these cultural organizations it would also increase networking possibilities and inclusiveness of programming activities and participants with the integrated work environment. Dixon Hall can facilitate this type of environment by partnering with surrounding organisations for sharing space and resources. Dixon Hall could also become a stakeholder in the building of a multi-purpose recreational facility with a theatre, community kitchen, rehearsal space, multi-media centre etc.

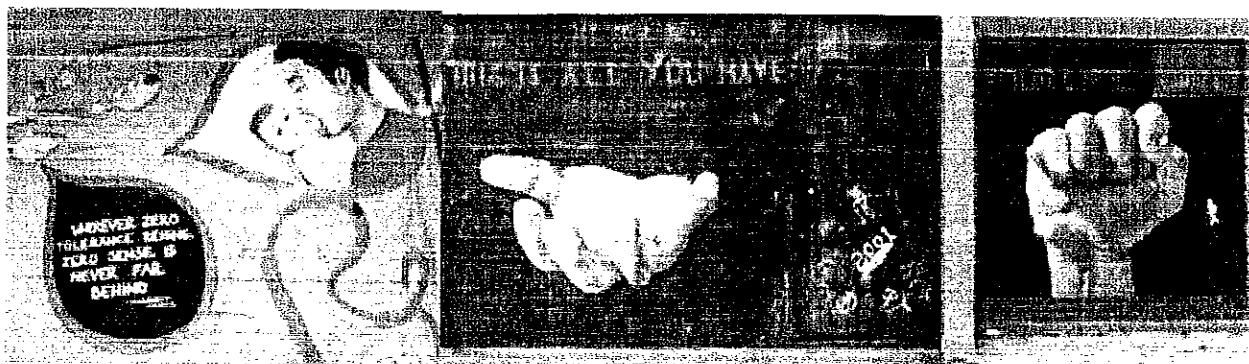
ii) Overcoming Barriers: "Us vs. Them"

The segregation of the Regent Park community has a long history, which stems from both geography and stigmatization. While this challenge is not easily solved there are ways that Dixon Hall can play a role in overcoming these barriers. There are a number

of local community groups that are focusing specifically on overcoming these barriers such as the Regent Park Film Festival with a mandate to bridge cultures both inside and outside of the Regent Park community. Already operating with a strong mandate and successful annual film festival, Dixon Hall could play a role, once again, in sharing space and resources including advertising and aiding in funding applications and support. Environmental programs geared towards youth such as 'outdoor schools' have proven to be excellent ways of both introducing youth to new environments, while providing education in non-urban ecosystems.

iii) Feedback Systems

Finally, it is essential that a system for constant feedback be established for community workers as well as agency workers. Some of the most pertinent recommendations in this report came from Dixon Hall employees as well as local community groups. People tend to know what they want and have an idea of how they can achieve it.



As one of the largest service providers in the Regent Park community, Dixon Hall is in an important position to incorporate cultural programming into its strategic planning for service delivery in the Regent Park community. Interviews with local community groups and Dixon Hall employees demonstrated that cultural activities provide a means of enhancing the community and 'sense of place' through social bonding, employment opportunities and empowerment. Local community groups are already very active in providing cultural resources for the Regent Park area, however there are some overarching challenges that need to be addressed such as long-term strategic planning instability due to lack of core funding, inadequate space provision, need for

networking and ways to be more diverse and inclusive in membership, and overcoming social barriers both within the Regent Park community and beyond its geographical boundaries. By addressing these challenges, Dixon Hall has an opportunity to address identified gaps and needs and initiate positive change through its cultural programming strategies. This report identified four primary overarching needs in the Regent Park community: *Space, Inclusiveness, Funding and Networking*. In response, this report recommends that Dixon Hall can address these needs through cultural strategies that incorporate: *Co-location, networking and partnerships, overcoming barriers, and Cultural Programming*.



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Appendix

A. Semi-structured Interview Questions

Description of Organisation

Mandate/Mission

What are your core activities/programs?

Who are the main participants?

Have you received any feedback about the programs/services you run? What are your strengths? Who benefits and how?

What funding do you receive if any?

What are your future priorities? Are you faced with any barriers or challenges to achieving these goals?

Venues

What types of spaces do you use for program activities?

Are there barriers/challenges to access? Are these spaces adequate?

What specific facilities do you see needed in these spaces?

Is there another organisation that you would like to share a space with or be located close to?

Partnerships

What groups or agencies do you work with?

What is the nature of the partnership (i.e. imposed or voluntary, formal or informal, short-term or long-term etc.)?

Local Community Groups

Do you work with any local community groups?

Do you know of any local community groups?

Do you have their contact information?

Have you done any research or studies?
