

**Moss Park Neighborhood Needs Assessment Report- Community Well Being
(2012-2013)**



Toronto Centre for Community Learning & Development

Fatma Bafagih

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2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The survey used in this study covered the Moss Park Neighbourhood. The purpose of the survey was to assess and gain a deeper understanding of the community needs of neighbourhoods and to measure the index of wellbeing at the community level, through a hardcopy survey, online survey, face to face interviews, and observations.

The Moss Park neighbourhood was originally home to William Allen, one of early Toronto's wealthiest citizens. In 1830, Allan built a huge mansion on his estate and named it Moss Park. Almost 200 years later the area has developed into a vibrant community. Resources available in the community include the John Innes community centre and the Moss park arena. The neighbourhood also has several schools, including Lord Dufferin Junior and Senior Public School, École Gabrielle-Roy, a French elementary school, St Paul Catholic school, and George Brown College.

Overall 121 people responded to the survey. The average age of people who responded was 36-55 years of age. The survey respondents included immigrants, both citizens and permanent residents, from various parts of the world, with a high concentration of Canadian-born, South-Asian, Black, African, Aboriginal, Arab, White, and Middle Eastern residents.

Advocating for the residents of Moss Park may be beneficial in order for political parties to recognize the needs of the community, and adopt a plan for change in the form of a variety of community services.

Introduction

The current study is a primary part of the Immigrant Women Integration Program (IWIP) presented by the Toronto Centre for Community Learning & Development. The survey questionnaire was planned and developed by IWIP participants under the supervision of professionals from the Toronto Centre for Community Learning and Development, and is based on the Canadian Index of Well-being, focusing on domains such as Art, Culture, Recreation, Civic Engagement, Community Vitality, Education, Environment, Healthy Population, Living Standards, and Time Use. The survey was conducted in four of the thirteen priority neighbourhood of GTA, represented by IWIP participants in 2012/2013. In the month of October the team designed a questionnaire for the residents in their designated neighbourhoods and with questions for key informant interviews. The purpose of the Needs Assessment Survey was to learn about the issues facing the Moss Park neighbourhood and identify services that the community is lacking in relation to generally accepted standards. The community well-being needs assessment measures various aspects of community life through the collection of information on a chosen set of indicators. “In short, the CIW is the only national index that measures wellbeing in Canada across a wide spectrum of domains.” (CCLD, 2012)

Limitation:

The survey was conducted within a limited time period and with limited human resources. This impacted the ability to cover all areas and all levels of respondents in the neighbourhood. Additionally, some of the respondents were not willing to give real figures of income.

Methodology

Research methods used were: Questionnaires, Key informant interviews and Observations.

The questionnaire was distributed among residents of Moss Park through the use of a paper-based and an electronic version. Bookmarks were created and given to those who were willing to fill the questionnaires online due to time restrictions. The questionnaires were designed to gather the respondent's basic personal information as well as the main sources of information for the assessment in regard to measuring the sense of community well being. Key informant questions were asked through face-to-face interviews within the Moss Park neighbourhood. Among the key informants were: a university graduate, a homemaker, a high school student, and an unemployed resident. The survey was geared towards developing greater knowledge of the problems and issues in the community. The residents/key informants provided a deeper understanding about the community and its issues, for example the stigmas behind living in the area. Moreover, the experiences of the key informants in the Moss Park neighbourhood provided awareness on problems that were not previously known. These key informant interviews helped us breach the gap to answer many questions, details, and concerns that the survey may have left out. Observations were made through participant observation. This method has made it easy to note any hidden actions that may indicate certain feeling such as discomfort in certain subjects or interest in others.

Neighbourhood profile

History



In 1830, William Allen, one of early Toronto's wealthiest citizens, built a huge mansion on his estate and named it Moss Park. Today Allen's plot land is still known as The Moss Park neighbourhood and where the mansion stood is a city park of the same name (Wikipedia, 2013).



When Allan passed away in 1853, he left his Moss Park estate to his son George Allen, who immediately subdivided his father's estate and this area soon became known for its Victorian homes. Today, little is left of the original Moss Park neighbourhood. Its houses were demolished in 1962 in order to make the Moss Park apartment buildings that comprises the current Moss Park neighbourhood (Wikipedia, 2013).

Schools and resources



Moss Park Arena

The Moss Park Arena Rink is 170 ft x 80 ft in size and is insulated from the elements to avoid the ice melting during Toronto's warm summer months. There are 6 dressing rooms around the arena with shower and washroom facilities. The dressing rooms are cleaned after every use to ensure cleanliness. They offer Youth Hockey Programs that are designed to help children improve their skating and hockey abilities in a fun atmosphere. The Camps offers both on ice and off-ice instruction and activities to provide a fun filled day of learning. In addition there is the Adult Hockey School which is designed for adult hockey players of various skills (Moss Park Arena, 2013)

John Innes community centre

John Innes Community Centre offers a wide variety of programs for all ages. The centre is at 150 Sherbourne St (John Innes Centre, 2013)



There are plenty of education resources in Moss Park. Firstly, Moss Park has schools, Toronto public school – Lord Dufferin Junior and Senior Public School, French elementary school – École Gabrielle-Roy, Toronto catholic school – St Paul catholic school, and a post secondary college - George Brown College (St. James Campus). In addition, there are more than three daycare facilities in this area, which help full-time working or studying parents to care for their children, and provide after school programs for elementary school students. Free after school programs include arts, music, sports, tutoring, and camping programs. There are two public libraries, Parliament Street branch and St. Lawrence branch. In addition, there is the unique “Children’s Book Bank” at 350 Berkeley Street within Moss Park. The Children's Book Bank focuses on the literacy needs of children aged 2 to12 and works to support and develop

each child's interest in and success with reading. In addition to providing books, The Children's Book Bank offers literacy support and programming (Wikipedia, 2013).

There are two community health centres, a TD Canada Trust Bank, plenty of restaurants, shops and groceries, lots of service agencies, and leisure entrainment places in Moss Park.

Around Moss Park, easy access to the TTC helps resident to reach anywhere of Toronto. Outside of Moss Park, government offices, shopping malls, hospitals, universities, parks, and markets are not far (Wikipedia, 2013)

The three tall triangle buildings in Moss Park are managed by The Toronto community Housing Corporation (TCHC, 2013). They were originally built by the Metropolitan Toronto Housing Authority (MTHA), which was created by Metropolitan Toronto in the 1950s to provide housing for the poor, and to eliminate the development of slums in the old City of Toronto, and adjacent suburbs. In 2002, four years after the amalgamation of Toronto, it merged with other public housing providers to form the Toronto Community Housing Corporation, which is one of the largest public housing providers in North America.

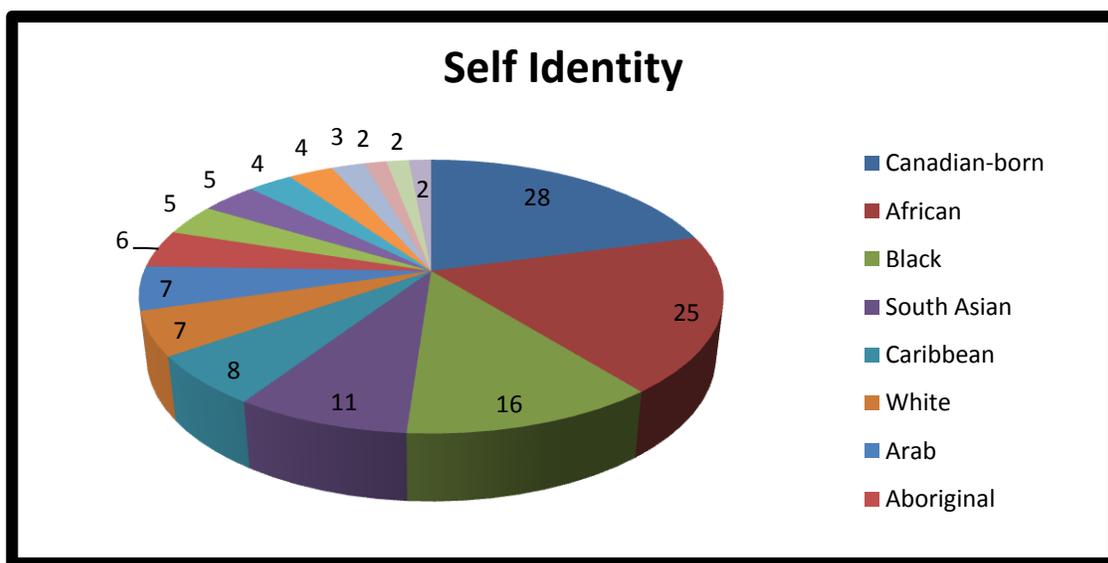
Data analysis

The Moss Park neighbourhood survey involved 121 respondents, most respondent were between the ages of 17 to 65.

1 Self-identify

	Description	Number	%
1	Aboriginal	6	Aborigina
2	Canadian-born	28	Canadian-
3	Western European	2	Western
4	Eastern European	5	Eastern
5	Caribbean	8	Caribbean
6	East Asian	4	East
7	Southeast Asian	2	Southeast
8	South Asian	11	South
9	South American	2	South
10	Black	16	Black
11	White	7	White
12	African	25	African
13	Arab	7	Arab
14	Mixed	4	Mixed
16	Middle Eastern	5	Middle
17	Other	3	Other

The Moss Park survey conducted for the year of 2012/2013 showed that of residents: 23.14% indicated that they are Canadian born. 20.66% stated that they are African, 13.22% are black, 9.09% indicated that they are south Asian, 6.61% are Caribbean. Therefore, many of the survey respondents are Canadian born or African.

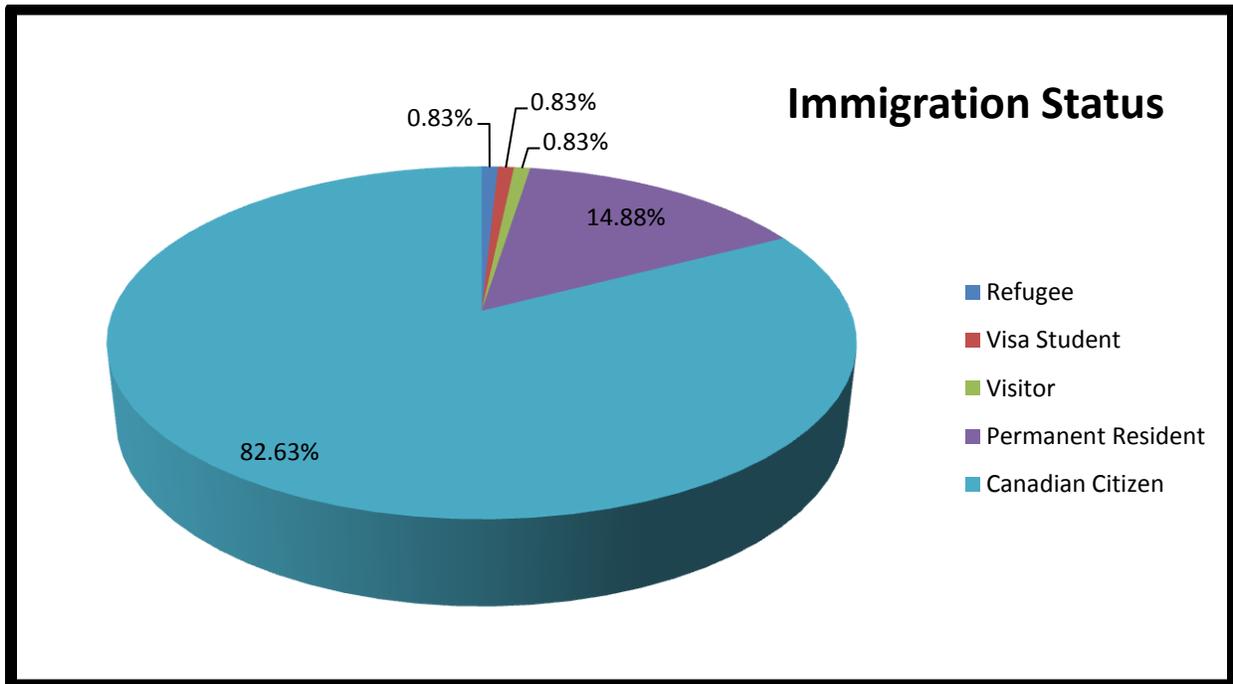


2 Civic/Immigration Status

Your immigration/resident status is:

Value	Description	Number	%
1	Canadian Citizen	100	82.63%
2	Permanent Resident	18	14.88%
3	Refugee	1	0.83%
4	Visa Student	1	0.83%
5	Visitor	1	0.83%

82.65% of the moss park well being survey respondents are Canadian citizens, 14.88% are permanent residents. The number of refugees, visa students and visitors combined is significantly smaller than the amount of permanent residents and Canadian citizens. This means that Moss Park residents are not newcomers and have been in Canada for some time.

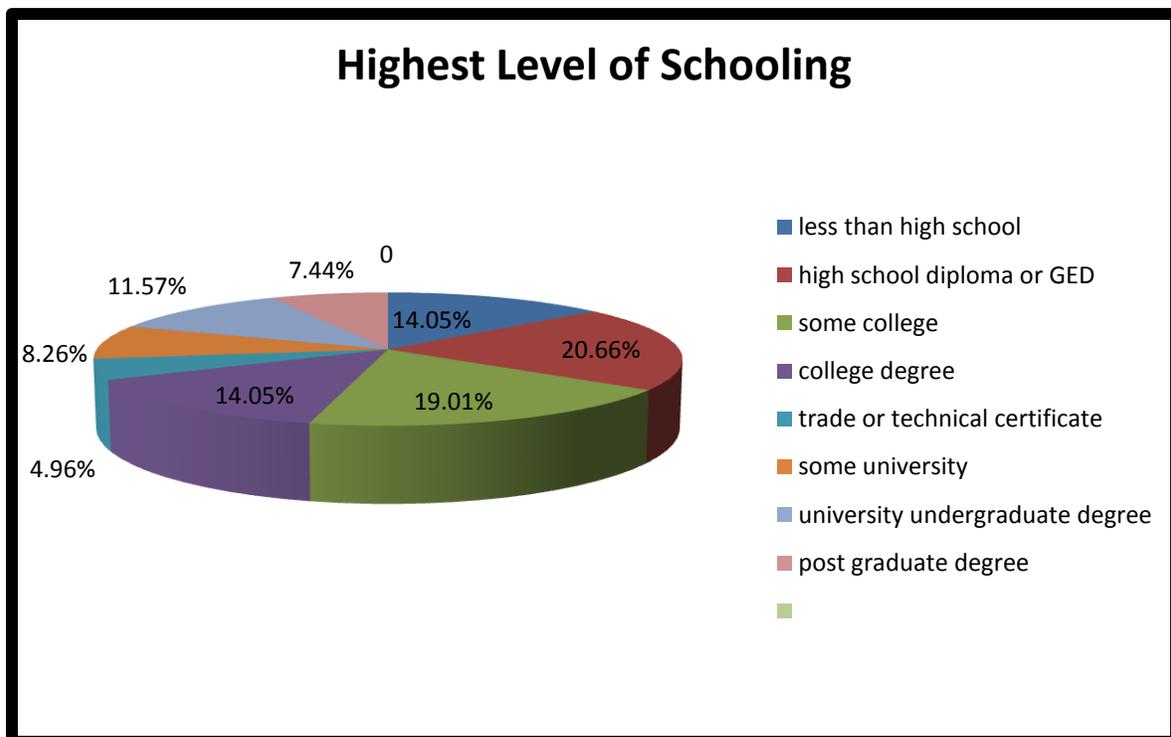


3. Highest Level of Schooling

What is your highest level of schooling?

	Description	Number	%
1	Less than high school	17	14.05%
2	High School Diploma or GED	25	20.66%
3	Some college	23	19.01%
4	College Degree	17	14.05%
5	Trade or Technical Certificate	6	4.96%
6	Some University	10	8.26%
7	University Undergraduate Degree	14	11.57%
8	Post-Graduate Degree	9	7.44%

20.66% of the people who completed the survey indicated that they have their high school-diploma or their GED. And 19.01% have some college education. 14.05% of people have not yet completed high school. These numbers indicate that majority of respondents did not complete any form of post-secondary education. This means that education levels are generally low in Moss Park.

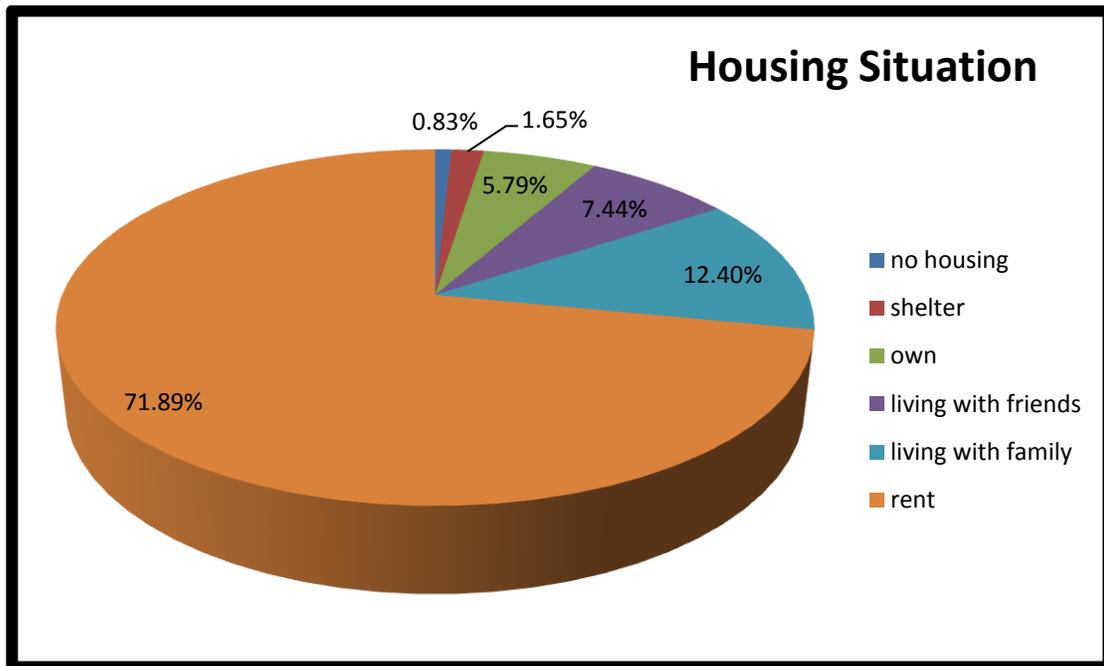


4. Your Housing

What is your housing situation?

Value	Description	Number	%
1	Own	7	5.79%
2	Living with friends	9	7.44%
3	Shelter	2	1.65%
4	Rent	87	71.89%
5	Living with family	15	12.40%
6	No housing	1	0.83%

71.89% of people indicate that they have been renting their accommodations. 12.40% of people are living with their family, and few people own a house. This shows that many people in the area cannot afford to buy a home.

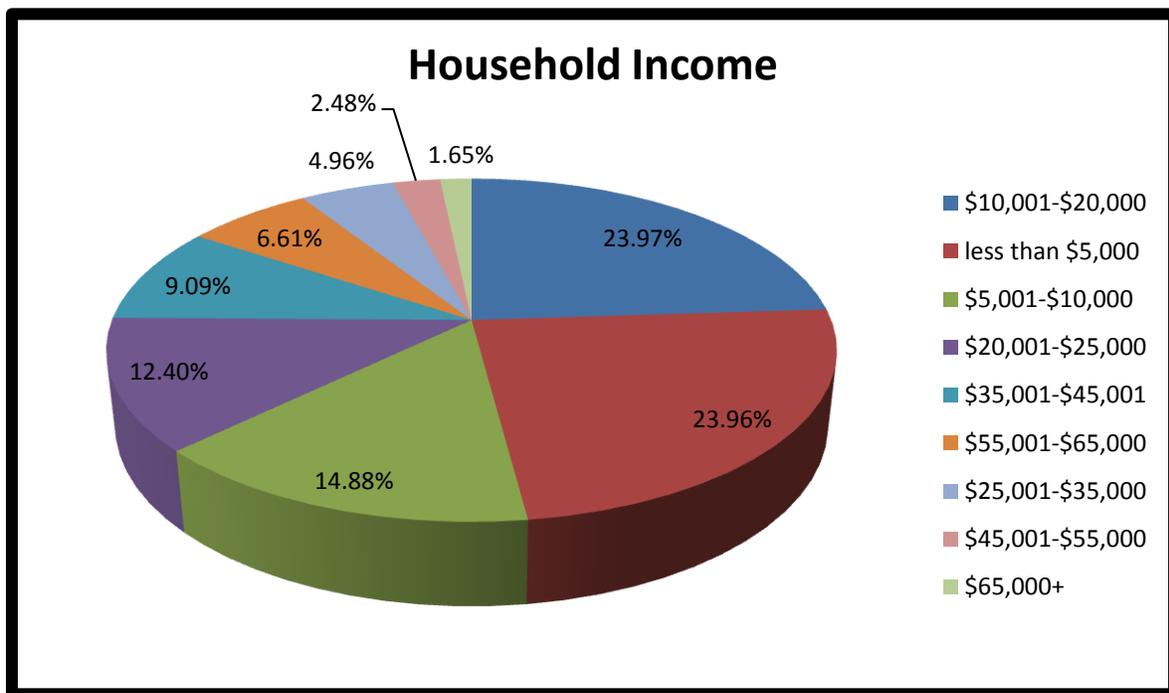


5. Household Income

What is your annual household income?

Value	Description	Number	%
1	Less than \$5,000	29	23.96%
2	\$5,001- \$10,000	18	14.88%
3	\$10,001 to \$20,000	29	23.97%
4	\$20,001 to \$25,000	15	12.40%
5	\$25,001 to \$35,000	6	4.96%
6	\$35,001 to \$45,000	11	9.09%
7	\$45,001 to \$55,000	3	2.48%
8	\$55,001 - \$65,000	8	6.61%
9	\$65,001 +	2	1.65%

23.97% are people who have an income between \$10,001 - \$20,000. 23.96% of people specified their income is less than \$5000. This survey indicates that according to income, there is poverty in the Moss Park area.

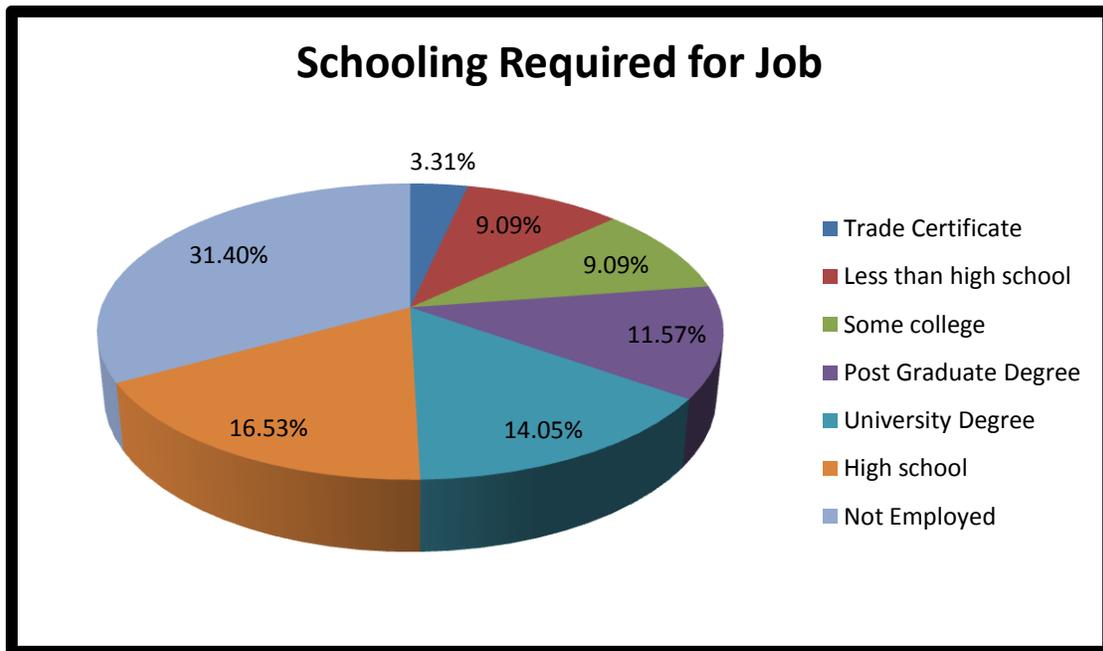


6. Schooling required for job

If you are currently employed, what level of education is required to perform your job?

Value	Description	Number	%
1	Less than high school	11	9.09%
2	High school	20	16.53%
3	Some college	11	9.09%
4	Post Graduate Degree	14	11.57%
5	University Degree	17	14.05%
6	Trade Certificate	4	3.31%
7	Not Employed	38	31.40%
8	Don't Know	6	4.96%

31.40% said that they are not employed, 16.53% said that they have their high school diploma. 14.05% have their university degree. Therefore, the Moss Park area seems to have a high unemployment rate.

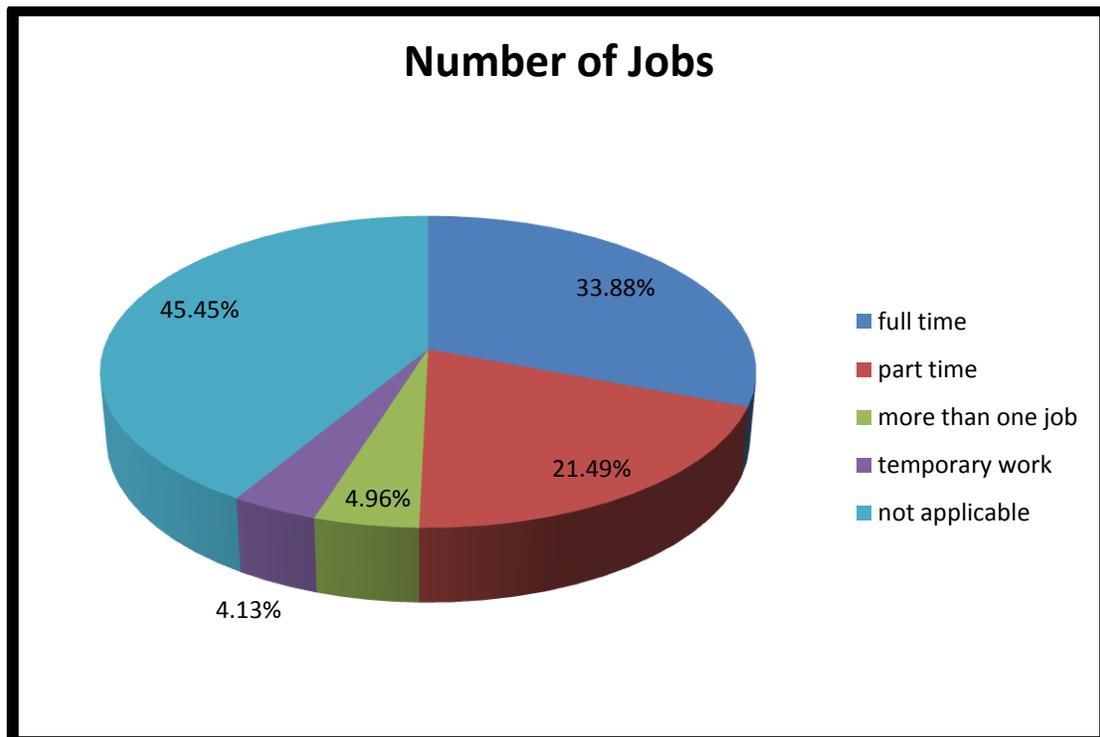


7. Number of jobs

If you are employed, is it ...? (Pick all that apply)

Value	Description	Number	%
1	Full-time	41	33.88%
2	Part-time	26	21.49%
3	More than one job	6	4.96%
4	Temporary work	5	4.13%
5	Not Applicable	55	45.45%

45.45% indicated that this question is not applicable to them, 33.88% said that their jobs are full time. These findings indicate that, just as the above question, unemployment rates are high in the Moss Park area.



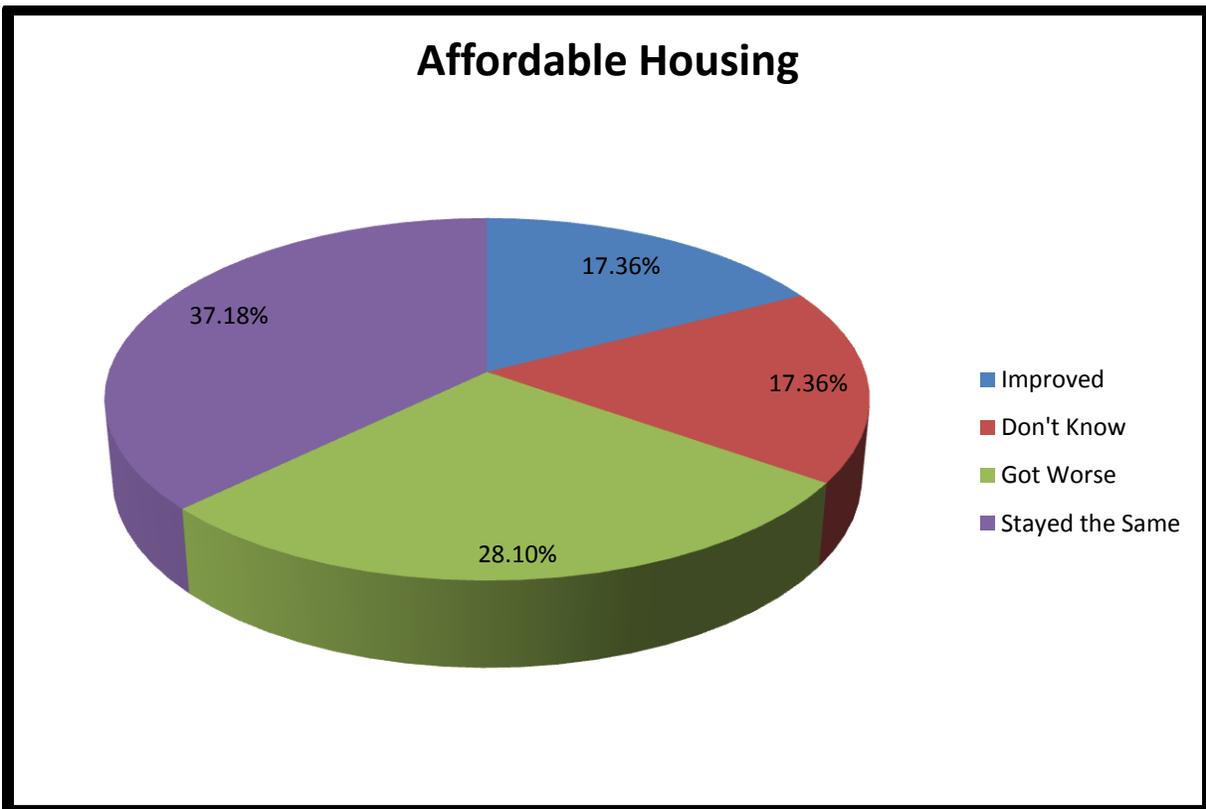
8. Change in Services

Housing

Affordable housing

Value	Description	Number	%
1	Improved	21	17.36%
2	Stayed the Same	45	37.18%
3	Got Worse	34	28.10%
4	Don't Know	21	17.36%

28% demonstrate that the residents feel the affordable housing situation got worse while 37% say that it stayed the same. Which indicates that access to affordable housing has not improved.



9. Final Comments/Feedback

Please make any additional comments, below.

Poverty is the most crucial issue this community is facing.

The Moss Park area is infiltrated with crack heads and dealers and there is also prostitution. I would like to see these things abolished. They are tarnishing this area and I feel unsafe and unsure about trusting any of my neighbours.

Who honestly knows their MP? This community needs more attention. There are some great people here who are over looked.

The area of Moss Park and surrounds is a shame. They smoke crack cocaine right in front of my building, they come and smoke in the lobby etc. Possible to police sweeps maybe they would stop hanging around.

Drug Culture has diminished this community into an inner city --

I'm looking for housing and meaningful work.

This Community needs more safety, more housing, more development and more structure. The government should focus more in this community in terms of more resources for - low income people, such as seniors, mothers with children and the disable.

Sometimes I sleep outside

Shelters have to move out. Not too many shelters in one community.

More job opportunities for the residents

Just feeding the homeless doesn't help to improve their lives, but helping them to work does something will help them.

We need to take care of the homeless in our community better.

Housing that is affordable & desirable is hard to find anywhere near downtown

Recommendations

Moss Park needs improvements in the education level of residents as well as accessibility to applicable resources. There is also a need for increased funding to update education programs and increase the availability of the programs in the community. This will help increase education levels of residents, which may in turn help to increase employment rates. For those who wish to participate in programs and access services, financial support should be provided to act as an incentive towards encouraging people to participate. This financial support would assist with childcare, TTC tokens for transportation to and from services, scholarships, and more. Furthermore, awareness programmes are needed in Moss Park to encourage participation in education programs. An example is skill-counselling programs, which are an essential service for individuals who want to enter the work force. Job training programs can also create more opportunities and improve relevant skills for the individual's chosen job.

31.40% of Moss Park residents indicated that they are unemployed, which means that there should be a greater focus on employment services. 71.89% of people indicated that they have been renting their accommodation, which indicates that many people in the area cannot afford to buy a home. A possible solution is to increase education, which in turn will increase employment rates, and obtain the financial independence to afford owning property. 23.96% of people specified their income is less than \$5000. This survey indicates that there is poverty in the Moss Park area according to the respondent's income, and the solution to this would be the same as above, to increase education. Education is the key to ending the poverty rates in the Moss Park area.

The Moss Park residents stated that their area is infiltrated with drug related activities as well as prostitution; they voiced their concerns and would like these issues to be resolved.

Residents indicated that the community needs more attention since there are people who are being overlooked because of factors such as their race, income level, and so on. Other commented that an increase in police activity is needed to combat the problem.

Many people voiced their concern regarding their struggles with finding housing and looking for meaningful work. This indicates that we need more housing, education, and structure/organization. Reaching out to the government and other authorities could assist the community in terms of more resources for low-income people, such as seniors, mothers with children, and the disabled. Another respondent said that simply providing food to low income people doesn't help to improve their lives instead, helping them to find meaningful work or education will help them in the long run. Also, housing that is affordable is hard to find downtown, and the government may want to increase the amount of affordable housing to decrease the amount of poverty in the area.

Conclusion

Research methods that were used in the process of collecting data were

- Questionnaire
- Key informant interviews
- Observations

Moss Park has been around for a very long time and the resources that are offered in the area are inadequate compared to the amount of people, as well as the situation of the people who were include in the research. The data analysis indicated that the key areas that needed to be considered and improved are income, education and housing. I recommend that there needs to be an increase in police presence. Moreover, Moss Park resident must be aware of current issues in order to bring them to government attention, and implement important changes to issues such as housing, poverty, job resources etc.

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Appendix A (questionnaire)

The Survey

The survey covered Moss Park neighbourhood Toronto.

The purpose of the survey was to gain a deeper understanding of the community, assess the community needs of Moss Park, and to measure the index of wellbeing in the community. The survey covered any/all residents of Moss Park, from various parts of the world with a high concentration of Canadian Born individuals and people of African descent.

The survey identified the following critical areas:

- Demographic information
- Marital status, household, children
- Self-identity
- Living standards: Income, Living
- Health; General health
- How happy am I
- Engagement: democratic engagement, elections and voting
- Community vitality: sense of belonging community spirit and support, change in services
- Leisure and culture: free time use, recycling services, environment, sharing information, final comments or feedback

Appendix B (key informant interview)

The key informant is a long term resident of Moss Park. She has lived in Moss Park for over 10 years. She says that the area is her home and she can't imagine living elsewhere. She likes that the neighbourhood is lively and vibrant with many different ethnicities. The best thing about it is that immigrants can feel at home and are welcome. Also they are close to transportation and like the easy access to schools, malls and grocery stores. There are many social services, including services for women, their children, and immigrants. the services available in the area do not match the needs of Moss Park , because a large portion of the population is immigrants, who are low income. Her number one priorities and greatest concerns are the drug infestation, the rundown houses, and lack of repair and safety issues. Also the employment rate in the area is very low. Her husband has been in the area for a very long time too and has work experience, but since he could not find a job, he has become depressed and his health has deteriorated.