

**REGENT PARK NEIGHBOURHOOD
NEEDS ASSESSMENT REPORT - COMMUNITY WELL BEING
2012-2013**



**CENTER FOR COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP & DEVELOPMENT
IMMIGRANT WOMEN INTEGRATION PROGRAM
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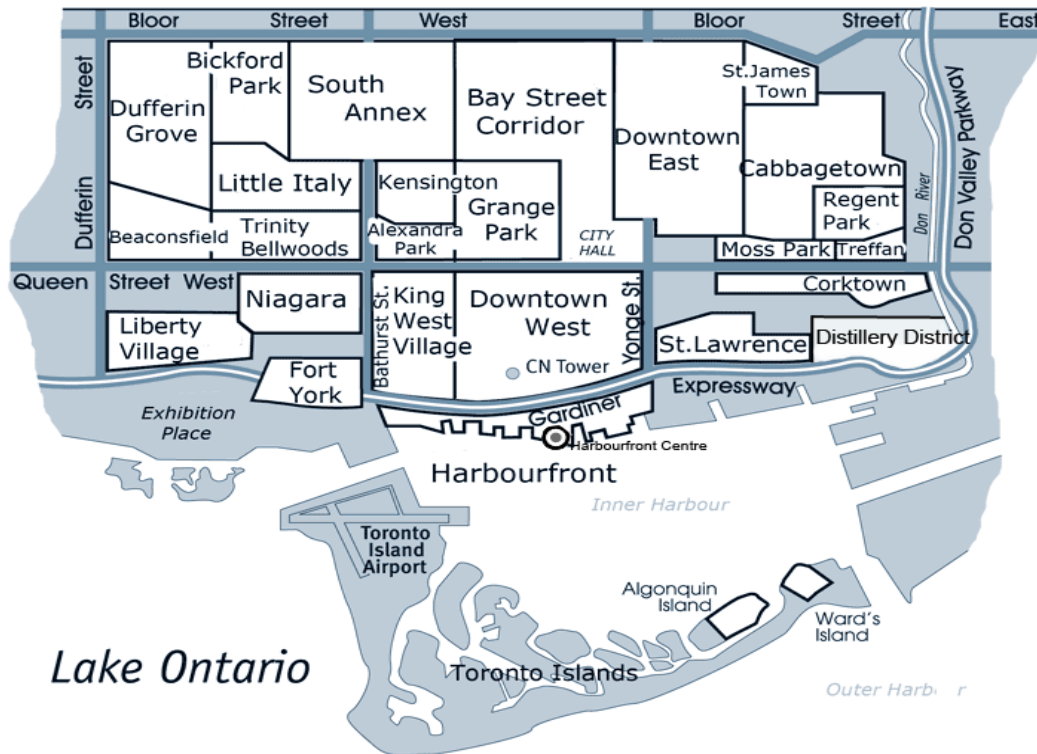
Lastly, I would also like to thank my friends Wangying, Linda and the Community Settlement Worker (Women Immigrants and Newcomers in Regent Park) and Hongmei Cai who supported me in survey distribution.

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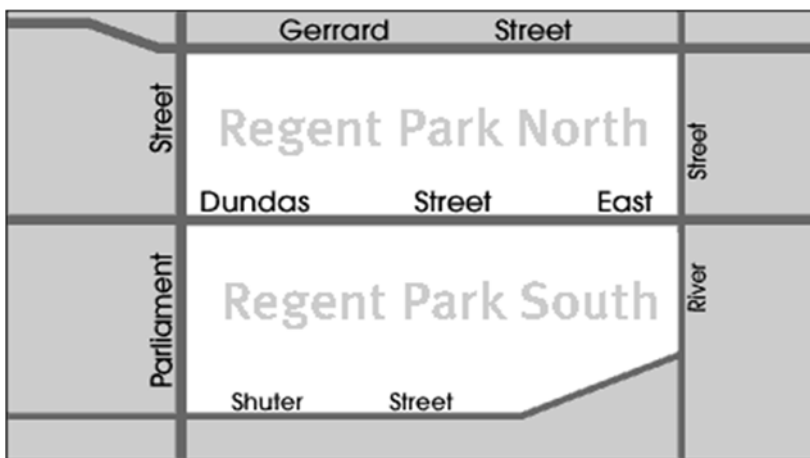
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Regent Park

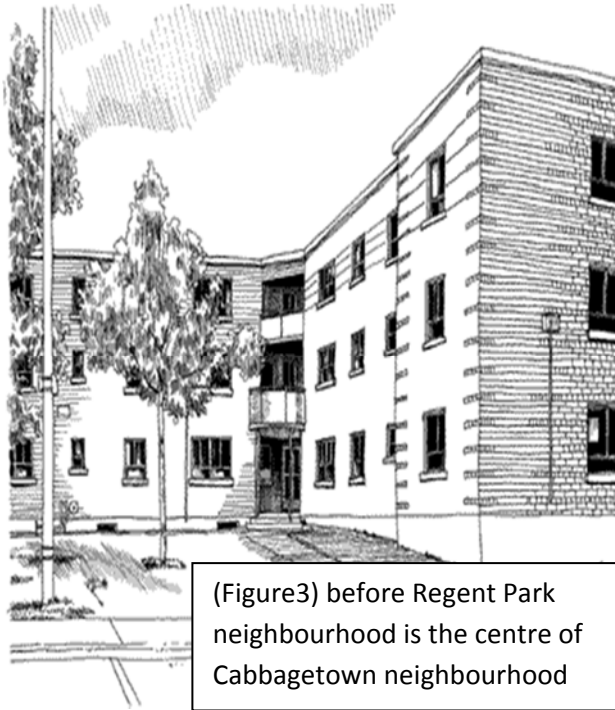
Regent Park is a neighbourhood located in downtown Toronto in the province of Ontario. It is bounded by Gerrard Street East to the north, River Street to the east, Shuter Street to the south, and Parliament Street to the west.(see Figure 1 & 2 below)



(Figure 1) Location of Regent Park within Downtown Toronto



(Figure 2) Regent Park's boundary map



North Regent Park was built from 1947 to 1957 as a low-rise and townhouse development that occupies the area north of Dundas Street to Gerrard Street. It was designed along British “Garden City”, ideals to encourage low rise development, limit car use, and provide modern living arrangement.

Regent Park is Canada's first public housing project, it was built in 1949. Regent Park was expanded in the 1950's to include the area south of Gerrard Street, which came to be known as Regent Park South. The South Regent Park is constructed from 1957 to 1959 in South of Dundas Street which is

composed mainly of high-rise buildings and townhouses.

Regent Park rose from the rubble of what was once the south part of the Cabbagetown neighbourhood. During the 1930's, South Cabbagetown was one of Toronto's worst slums and as such was targeted by Toronto city planners for a grand urban renewal proposal called Regent Park.



REGENT PARK NORTH

Figure 4

approximately 7,500 residents in 2,083 rent-geared-to-incomes (RGI) units.

Regent Park still is Toronto's largest and oldest public housing development. It is home to more than thousand people and is managed by The Metro Toronto Housing Authority. Regent Park's residential dwellings are entirely social housing, and cover all of the 69 acres (280,000 m²) which comprise the community which houses



Figure 5

Regent Park residents come from a wide variety of cultural backgrounds including many new Canadians from Africa, Asia, and Latin America. There are more than sixty different first languages spoken here making Regent Park one of Toronto's most culturally diverse neighbourhoods. The average income for Regent Park residents is around half the average for other Torontonians. A majority of families in Regent Park are

classified as low-income.



Figure 6

Regent Park was originally designed as a transitional community. People were experiencing financial difficulties on housing, for whatever reason. Most

residents were on social assistance, and working residents paid rent proportional from their income. In the last two decades Regent Park has also become an immigrant settlement community, as immigrants facing difficulties settling in Canada end up living there. Therefore, the community is always viewed and administrated as a transitional community. This contributed to the concentration of a socially marginalized population, and various social problems of Regent Park. In particular, a transitional community need to generate the awareness, interest, and commitment of its residents to invest in the development and sustainability of a higher quality of life.

Finally, the city council and the Toronto Community Housing Corporation



Figure 7

(TCHC) have decided to fix some past mistakes and tackle these issues, rooted in poverty and social isolation by redeveloping and revitalization. After some community consultation, the Regent Park Revitalization Plan was launched in 2005. A promising new section in the history of Regent Park has begun with a revitalization project that is projected to cost \$1 billion and take 15 years to complete and will comprise of six phases. Phase one is finished, phase two has launched in April 2009, currently in its second phase of construction (to be completed in 2015). The purpose of this thread is to look at the evolution of the neighbourhood up to its present plans for redevelopment. The new Regent Park will consist of a mix of market condos, affordable housing units and vibrant new retail and community space. (See Figure 7, 8, 9)



Figure 8



Figure 9

Regent Park community profile

Community Services:

The Regent Park Community Centre: at 203 Sackville Green, has a gymnasium, a games room, an arts and crafts room, and a weight room. The Regent Park Recreation Centre, at 415 Gerrard Street East, includes a small gymnasium, a meeting room, and an outdoor pool.

Parents For Better Beginnings: Early Years Social Work, Prenatal And Postnatal Programs, Family Home Visiting Program, School Readiness and Family Resource Program, Parent and Child Groups, Preschool Speech And Language, Child Development Clinic.

Website: <http://www.regentparkchc.org/infant-child-development>

There is a unique “**Children’s Book Bank**” in Toronto downtown. The Children's Book Bank focuses on the literacy needs of children aged 2-12 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

Christian Resource Centre is place where people do not just get a hand out; they get engaged and form community. Social inclusion happens because people help themselves while helping others whether it is through the provision of food, clothing or shelter and advocacy, each person who is helped, helps another.

Libraries: Regent Park is served by two close public libraries.

The Toronto Public Library – Parliament branch is located at Gerrard and Parliament junction, and houses a special local history archive about Regent Park. The other nearby branch is the Riverdale branch, and it is located at Gerrard and Broadview junction.

The Regent Park Neighbourhood Initiative (RPNI) is a social planning body in Regent Park Formerly known as the Regent Park Resident Council, RPNI was formed in 2002 to advocate and protect the interests and assets of residents and to work in partnership through its committees and other means to identify, assess, address and evaluate issues brought forward

by the community. It is a voice of the residents that provides a vision for the changing community. In 2004 the RPRC changed its focus to be better equipped for the changing community. Now called the Regent Park Neighbourhood Initiative (RPNI), our goal is to work with the whole community to ensure Regent Park is a healthy and vibrant community where everyone belongs, is heard and celebrated. Website at: <http://rpni.ca/>

There are two outdoor artificial ice rinks in Regent Park. The Regent North rink is located north of Dundas Street East, and west of River Street. The Regent South rink is located at Shuter and Sumach Streets. These two single surface rinks have allotted times for pleasure skating, permit hockey, shinny hockey, learn to skate and hockey school programs.

Community Health:

Regent Park community health centre: Health Services, Chronic Conditions, social work& Community Health Work, Homeless/Outreach/Harm Reduction, Immigrant/Refugee Programs, Infant/Child Development, Youth Programs, Community Development.

Regent Park Aquatic Centre: is the newest development in the Toronto/East York District. This stand-alone aquatic facility is located in the heart of Regent Park and features a Lap Pool, Leisure Pool, Warm Water Pool, Tarzan Rope, Diving Board and Water Slide. Our universal change rooms allow for full accessibility for all patrons. Our programs accommodate participants from preschoolers to older adults. This centre is easily accessible by transit, bike, and foot.

Community Education:

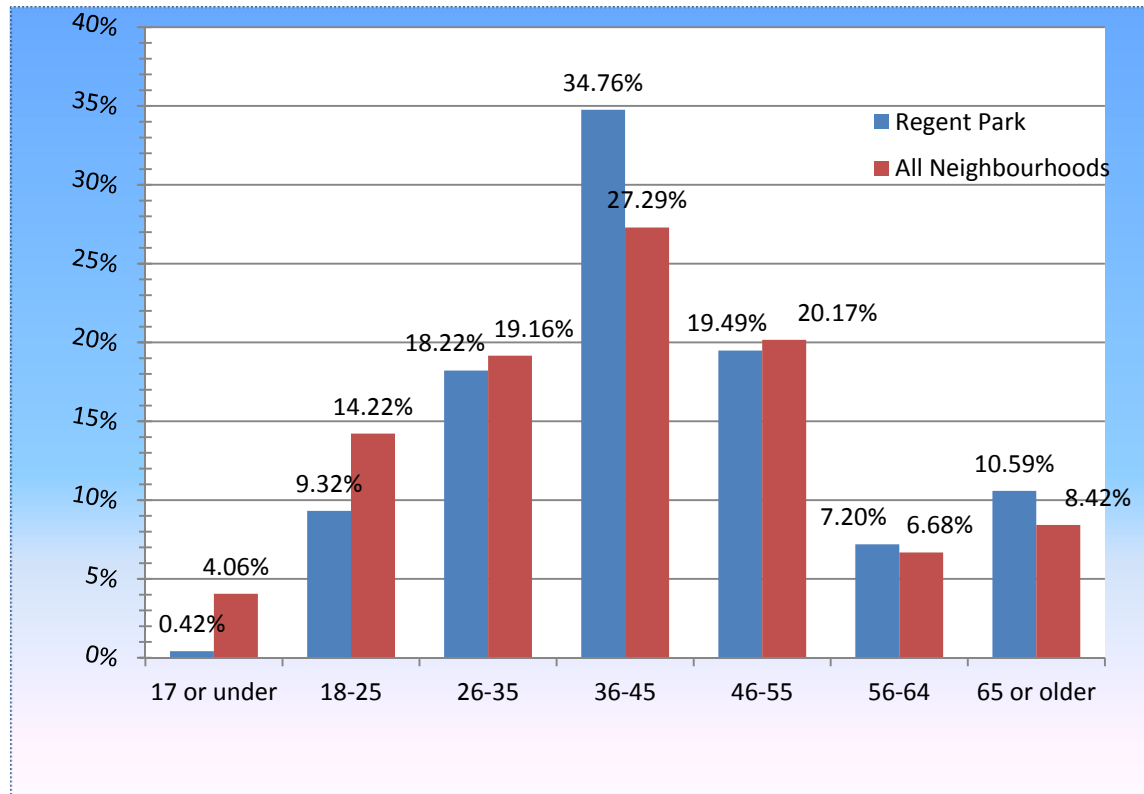
The Pathways program is delivered through local community organizations, all high school aged youth living within the program`s catchment area are eligible to participate. With average sign-up rates over 85%, Pathways is a collective movement of the community for education. In addition, Norman Rowen, Program Manager of The Pathways to Education Program, and researcher Kevin Gosine has published research that documents the success of Pathways in improving academic achievement and reducing the high school dropout rate among Regent Park youth

Regent Park Community Wellbeing Survey analysis (2012-2013)

Demographic Information

What age group are you in?

Age Range

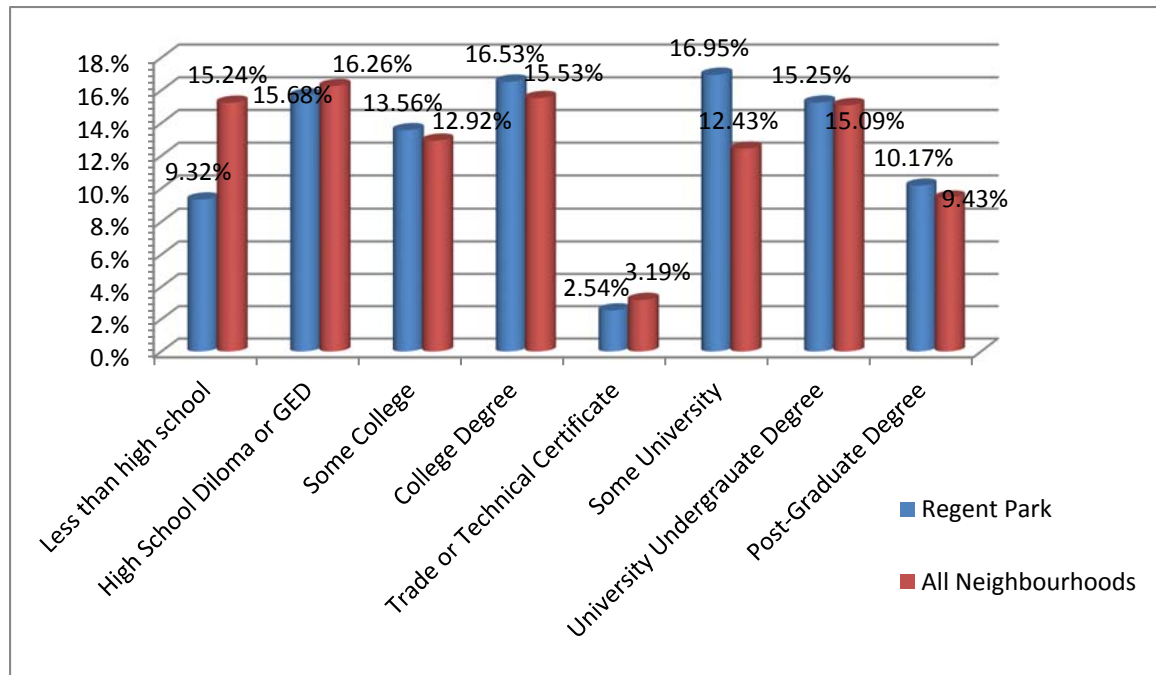


The age range in Regent Park 18-25 age group is 9.32%, 36-45 age group is 34.76%, 46-55 age group is 19.49%, 26-35 age group is 18.22%, 56-64 age group is 7.20%, all those age group percentage add together is 85.99%. That means these residents are in the working age range, this shows that the population in Regent Park have the ability to work. There is 19.5% has full-time jobs, 25.4% has part-time jobs.

As well as RP age range group, age range in all neighbourhood residents have ability in work age is 87.52%, in this work age 24.8% has full-time jobs, 23.4% has part-time jobs. Also Compare RP age range employed group with all neighbourhood age range employed group. Percentage of RP full-time residents is lower than all neighbourhoods

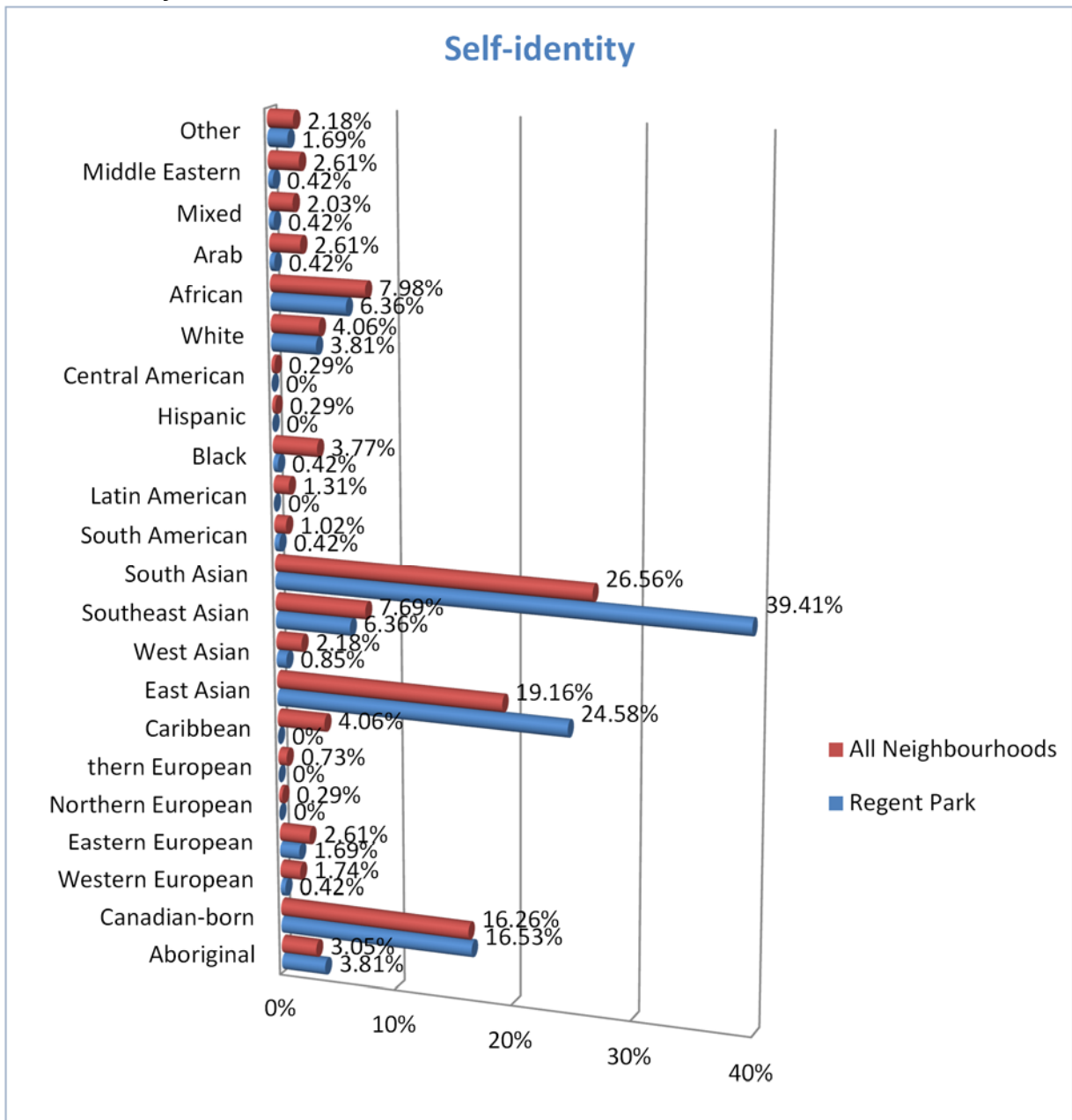
Highest Level of Schooling

What is your highest level of schooling?



It shows us in RP some university is highest percentage 16.95%, Trade or Technical Certificate is lowest percentage 2.54% and all neighbourhood high school diploma or GED is highest percentage 16.26%, also Trade or Technical Certificate is lowest percentage in all neighbourhood, so Trade or Technical certificate level of education is very weak part of both RP and All Neighbourhood. Another similarity percentage part we may need aware that both RP and All Neighbourhood is University Undergraduate Degree. This low University Undergraduate Degree percentage means there is a small number of post-secondary qualified students. Also this will impact Regent Park job market, affecting residents income levels--more than half Regent Park residents have low income.

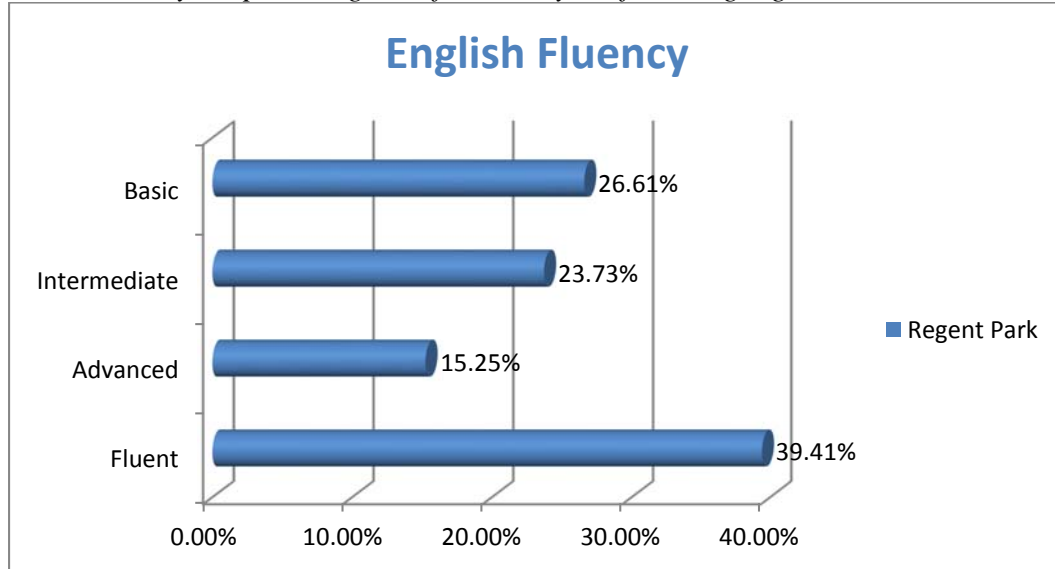
Self-Identity



This chart show that 2012-2013 RP South Asian residents in highest percentage 39.41%.compare 2012-2013 All neighbourhood South Asian residents forms the highest percentage 26.56%. Obviously Regent Park is where most South Asian residents lived. This shows that Regent Park is mainly only one race, which is South Asians.

English Fluency

How well do you speak English, if it is not your first language?

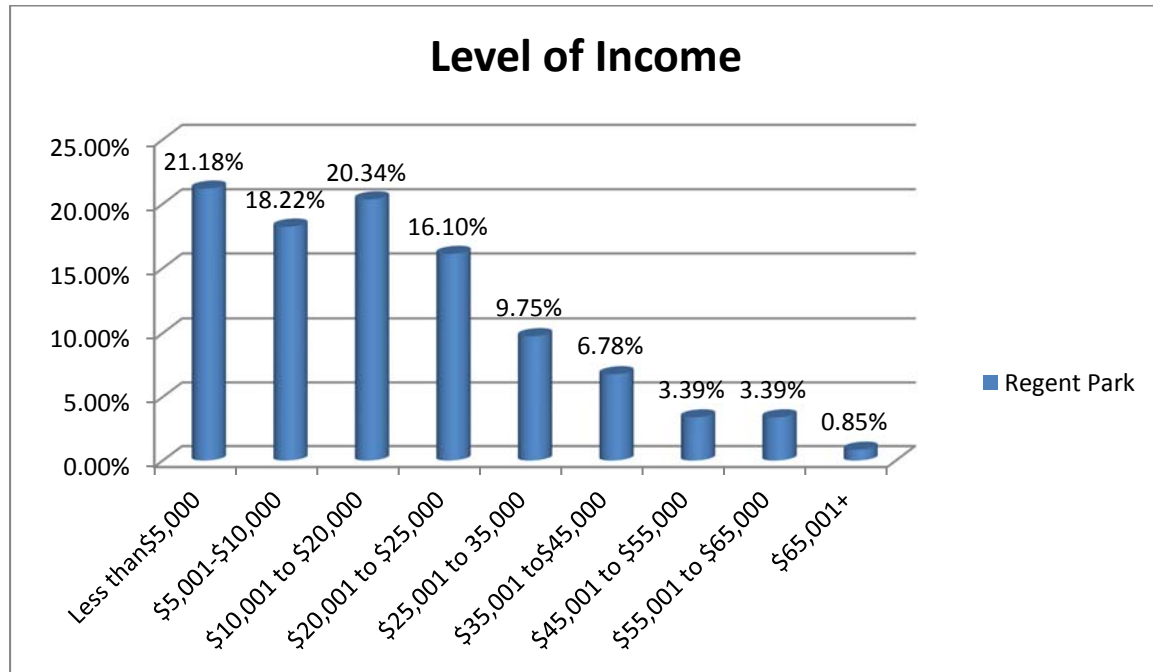


This chart shows RP residents English speak levels, intermediate and Basic English speaker is 45.34% that mean this group of residents doesn't have the skills to earn high income. The Fluent and advanced English speaker (54.66%) may have priority and more skills to earn a high income. So why more than half Regent Park residents are in low income? English speaking level is one reason.

Income, Living

Household Income

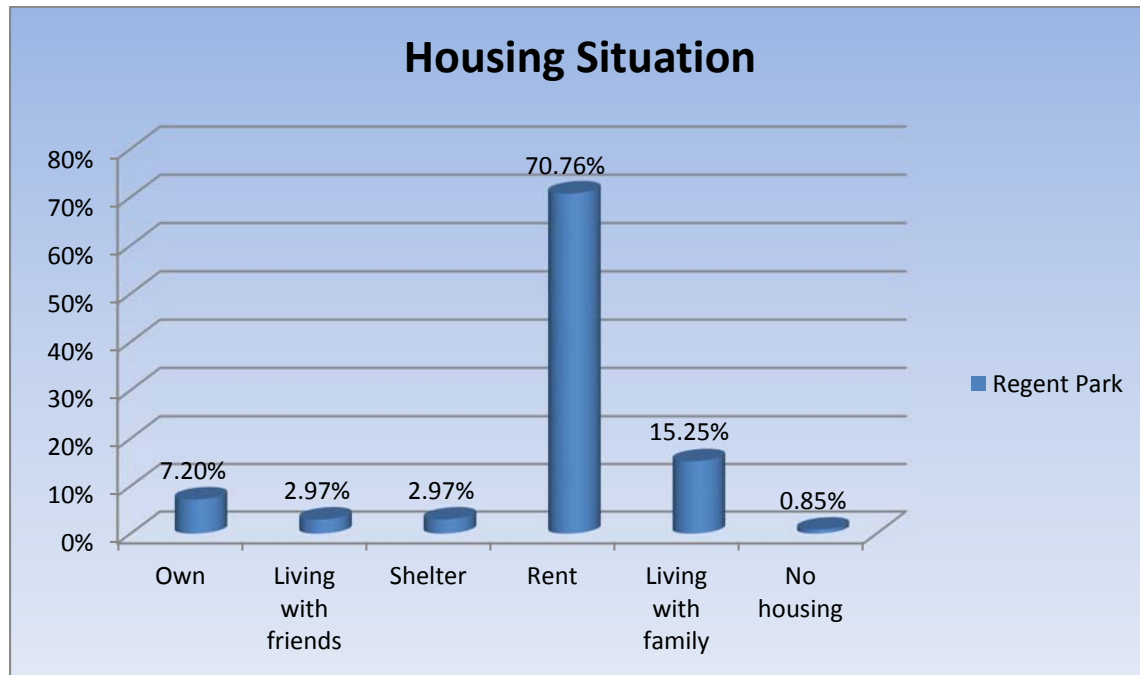
What is your annual household income? (RP)



This chart represents people who have income (wage) less than \$5,000 (21.18%)+\$5,001to\$10,000(18.22%)+ 10,001 to \$20,000(20.34%) +\$20,001to \$25,000(16.10%)=75.84% are the majority of Regent Park residents which are considered as low-income family. In this income group, that has53.0% % residents own a housing. This shows that low-income family have difficulties paying mortgage to finance housing. So it will affect the family's quality of life. In those income level: \$25,001 to \$35,000(9.75%) +\$35,001 to \$45,000(6.78%) +\$45,001 to\$55,000(3.39%) +\$55,001 - \$65,000(3.39%) + \$65,001 + (0.85%)=24.16%,

Your Housing

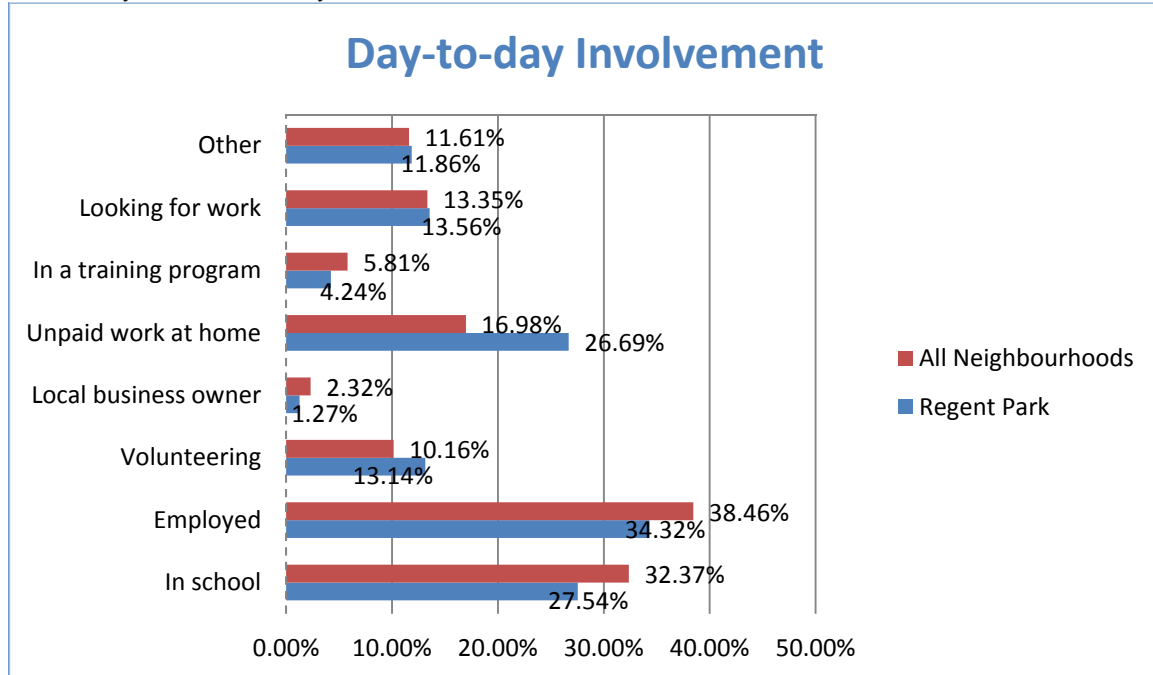
What is your housing situation? (RP)



This chart shows that most (70.76%) RP residents are renting. Only 7.20% of residents own their housing. In residents renting group 70.76%, higher income only has taken up 24.0%. For this group of residents, government can have an issue or a permit to encourage this group of residents to have their own housing. Why? It can help this group of residents keep economy security.

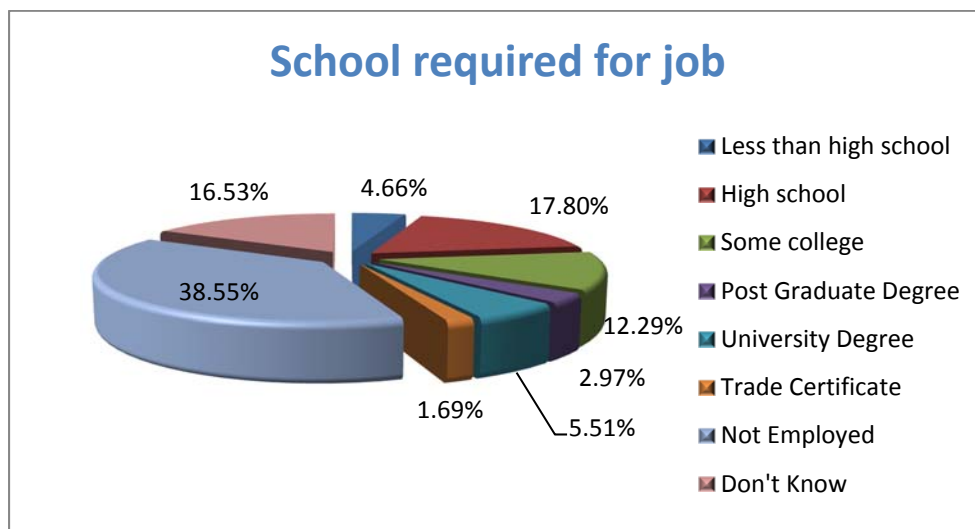
Day-to-day Involvement

What do you do most days?



Compare Regent Park and all neighbourhood day-to-day involvement the biggest different is Unpaid work at home, obviously Regent Park resident with unpaid work at home is higher than all neighbourhoods almost 10%.

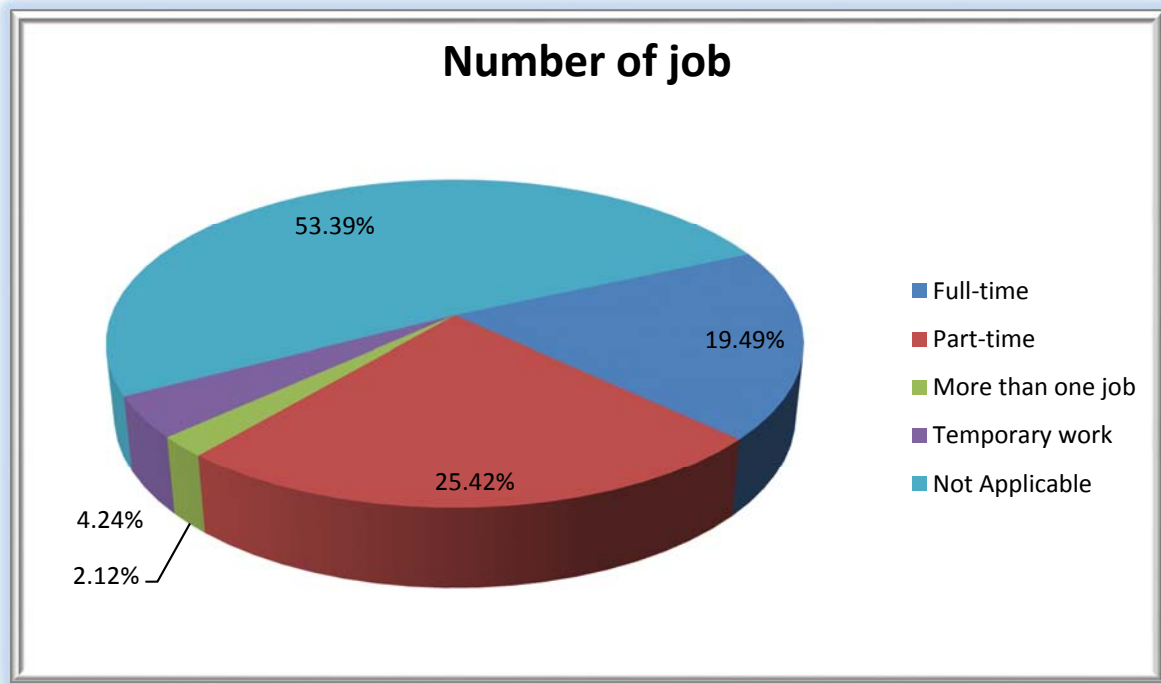
Schooling required for job



This level of education is required to perform their jobs chart shows high school (17.80%) is the most educated Regent Park Residents required to

perform in their jobs. And 38.55% Regent Park residents not employed. This is a problem in Regent Park, the government and community should create more job opportunities, training and development programs to increase the resident's ability to obtain a job and reduce the unemployment rate. Only 5.51% have University Degree and 2.97% have Post Graduate Degree required to perform in their job. That's why many RP residents do not earn income in high range.

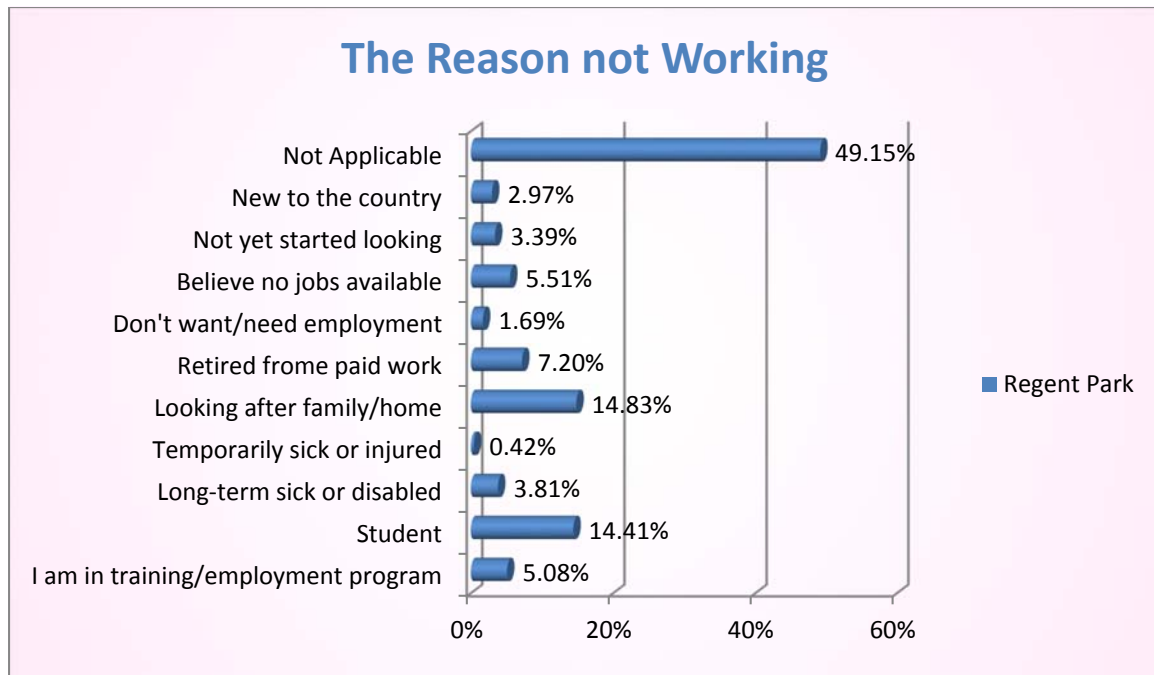
Number of jobs



This chart shows those RP residents 19.49% have Full-time job. 25.42% residents have Part-time job. The part-time residents more 5.93% than full-time residents in Regent Park.

Looking for work

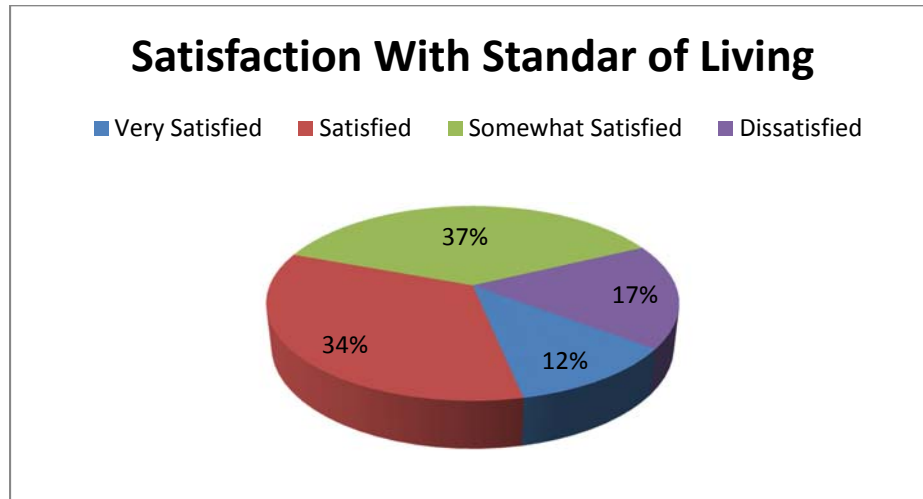
If you are not working, is it for any of the following reasons? (Pick all that apply)



This chart shows that most residents are not working because they are looking after family/home. Some of those residents are immigrants from other countries. If they are immigrants, and no family member or relatives to support (looking after family/home) them, they can't look for work. So who can help them with this situation? They may ask your friends and neighbours to help, but if you don't have any friend and neighbours to help, it will have a difficult time to look for help. So we need to build strong relationships with friends and neighbours, and the community needs to help each other too.

Satisfaction with standard of living

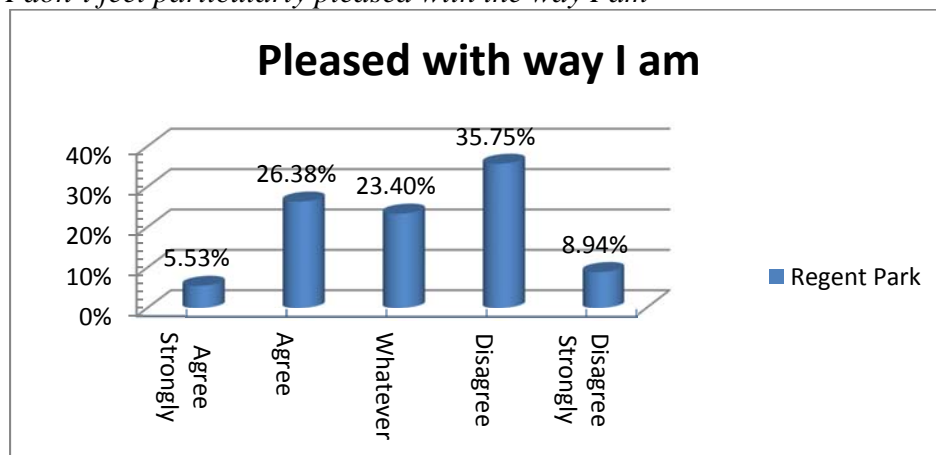
Overall, how would you rate your level of satisfaction with your standard of living?(RP)



The chart demonstrate more than 50% RP residents are not satisfied with standard of living, those residents probably have a reasonable reason to say so, whatever what kind of reasons they give, this is an issue that will let people think about it. Dissatisfaction is due to low income, unemployment, lack of skills and knowledge, insecure with the neighborhood's safety, inadequate services for assistance, and lack of confidence in our government. So what the government and community should do is to provide more training and development programs, employment services, more regulation or police in the neighborhood to improve the neighborhood's safety, and the government should develop and create new policies that are beneficial to Regent Park which will then improve resident's satisfaction.

How happy am I

I don't feel particularly pleased with the way I am

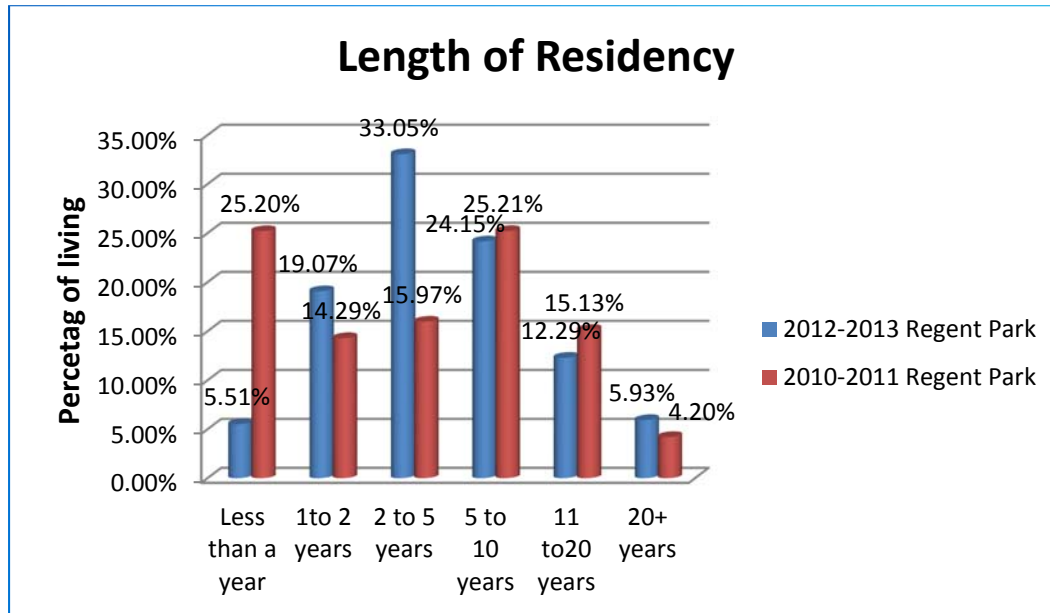


This chart shows that RP resident only 45% pleased with way I am, 55% can't pleased with way I am.

Sense of Belonging

Length of Residency

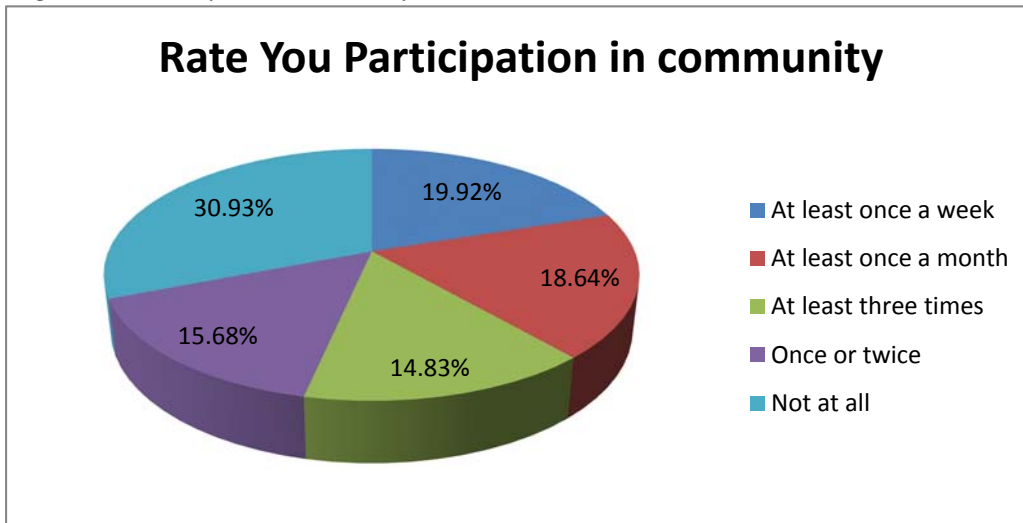
How long have you lived in your neighbourhood?



This chart shows that 2012-2013 residents who live in RP for less than one year is decreasing 19.65% compared to the residents 2010-2011 report, why is this result? This report shows that percentage of length of residency is decreasing because of the revitalization. Revitalization has its advantages and disadvantages. The advantage is that it attracts more population into the neighborhood, but the disadvantage is that it may displace the population into other neighborhoods. This community revitalization planer and government should think about the issues that revitalization will cause.

Groups and organizations

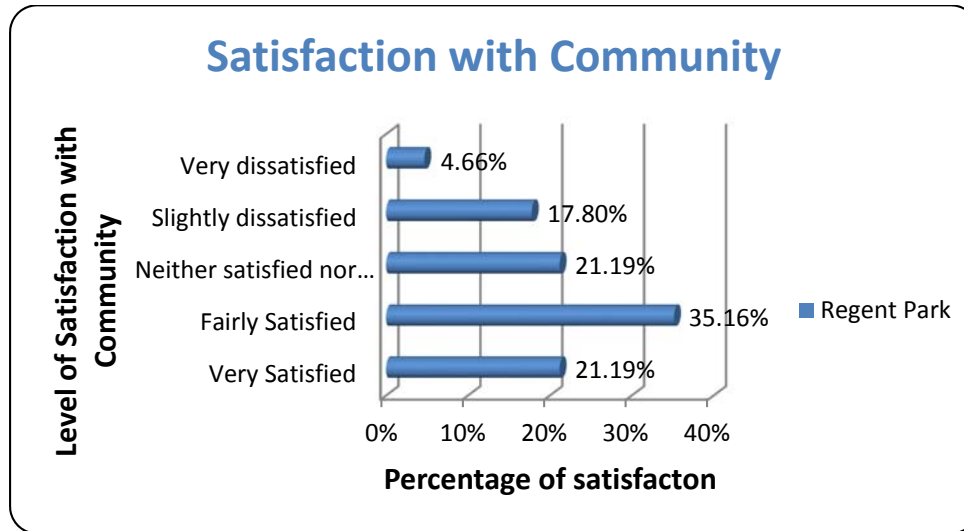
In the past 12 months, how often did you participate in the activities of any group or organization in your community?



This survey result shows how often you have participated in the activities of your community. The data shows that most residents have participated, but 30.93% of the residents did not participate at all. This shows that not a lot of the residents are involved within the community. This will create lack of cohesion, lack of community sense of belonging. As a result, residents will lack support and assistance for each other, due to resident's low connection within the community.

Level of Satisfaction with Community

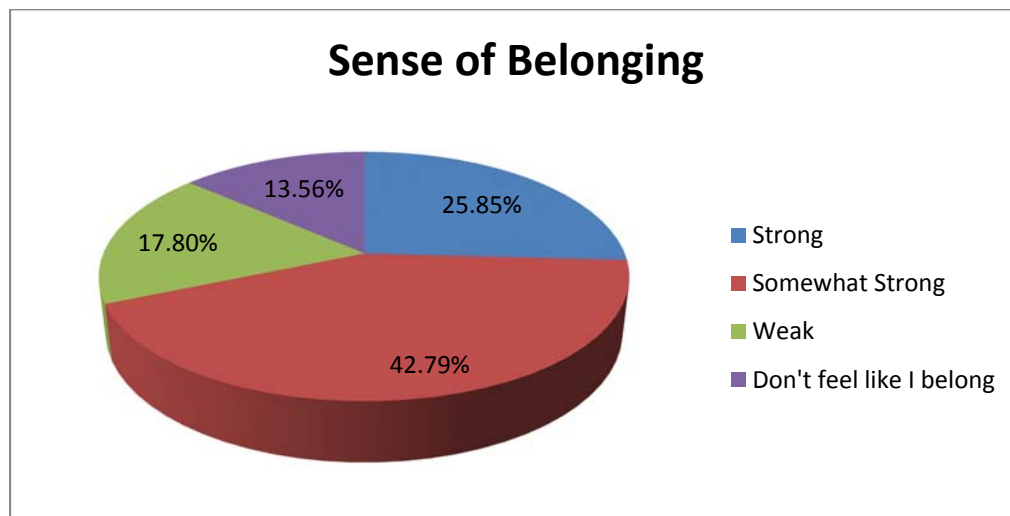
Thinking about your neighbourhood, how satisfied are you with this area as a place to live?



This chart shows that more than half of RP residents are satisfied with the community. This shows that Regent Park is providing the services and assistance for the residents. However, the community will require more assistance from the government in order for the residents to achieve full satisfaction.

Sense of belonging

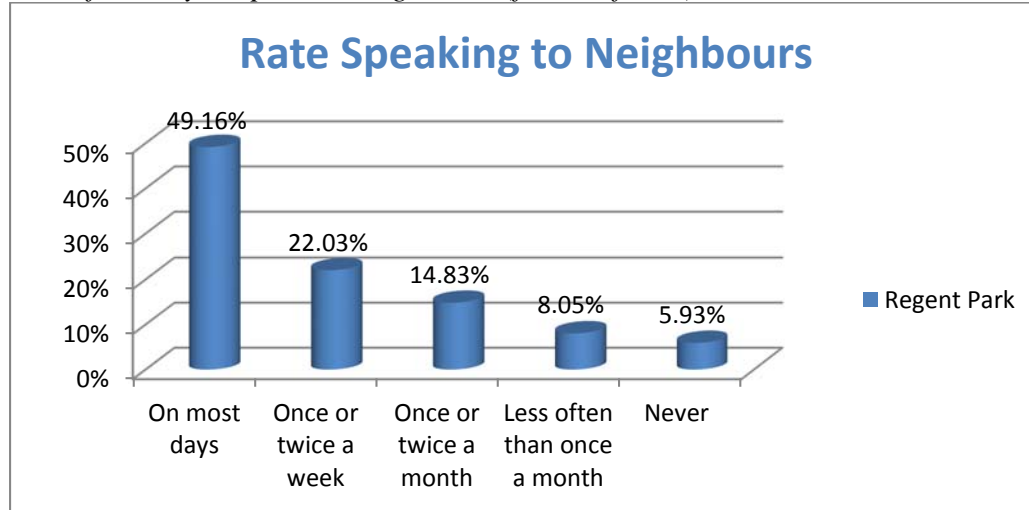
How would describe your sense of belonging in your community?



Survey result shows Regent Park residents have a strong sense of belonging in their community 25.85%. That means the rest do not really feel belonging to their community. This is a big problem we are facing in RP neighbourhood; because it is multi-ethnic mix community and multicultural community, and so there are language barriers etc.

Speaking to neighbours

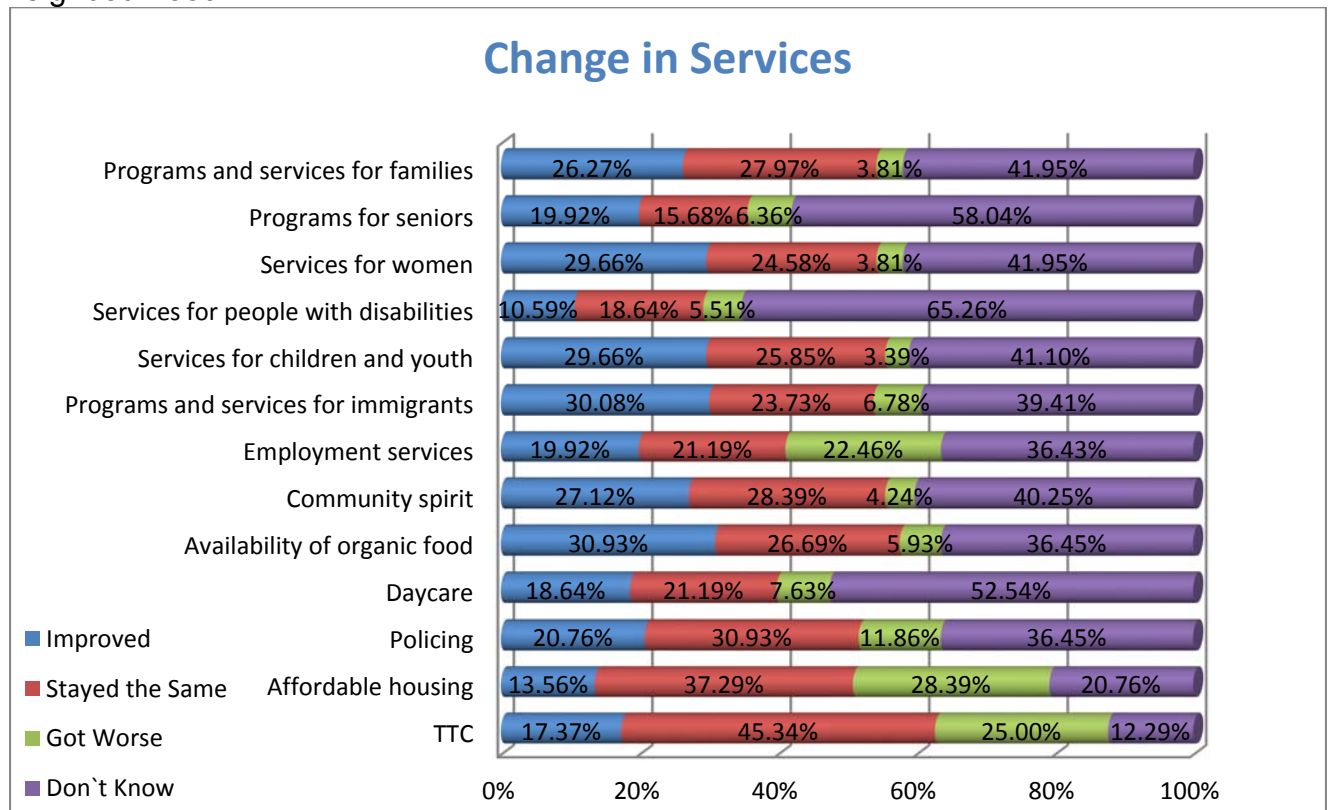
How often do you speak to neighbours (face-to-face?)



This chart shows only 5.93% of RP residents never speak to neighbours (face-to-face), this result needs improvement. Lack of communication with neighbors will create lack of cohesion and lack of community sense of belonging. However, most residents in RP are speaking to neighbours on most days. This is good as it creates a good relationship with other neighbors, and so this should be maintained.

Change in Services

In the past few years, how has provision of the following changed in your neighbourhood?



TTC: This chart shows 25% of residents said provision of TTC in RP has gotten worse in the past few years, most reason by residents saying that because take TTC's price is getting more expensive. This shows that public transit in the community needs to be improved.

Affordable Housing: This chart shows 37.29% residents saying provision of Affordable Housing has stayed the same in the past few years. The data shows that 28.39% of residents said it has gotten worse. Government needs to put more effort on affordable housing provision. This result shows us Regent Park resident's real regard on Affordable Housing. Low income and unemployment are the reasons RP residents need rely on Affordable Housing.

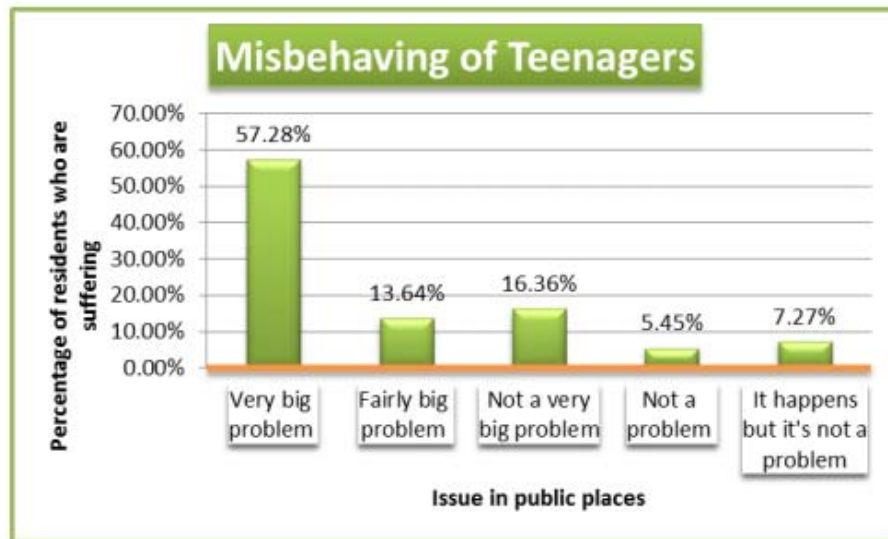
Employment Service: This chart demonstrates 36.43% residents don't know about the Employment Services in RP, which means Employment Services worker, need do more advertisement. This shows that employment services are required to publicize and make their service available for residents in Regent Park.

Service and programs for immigrants: This chart demonstrates 39.41% residents don't know about the service and programs for Immigrants in RP. A reason for this is because residents in Regent Park are not involved or not participating in community activities and so residents will not be aware of the

services. This also means that services and programs for Immigrant workers need to do more advertisement.

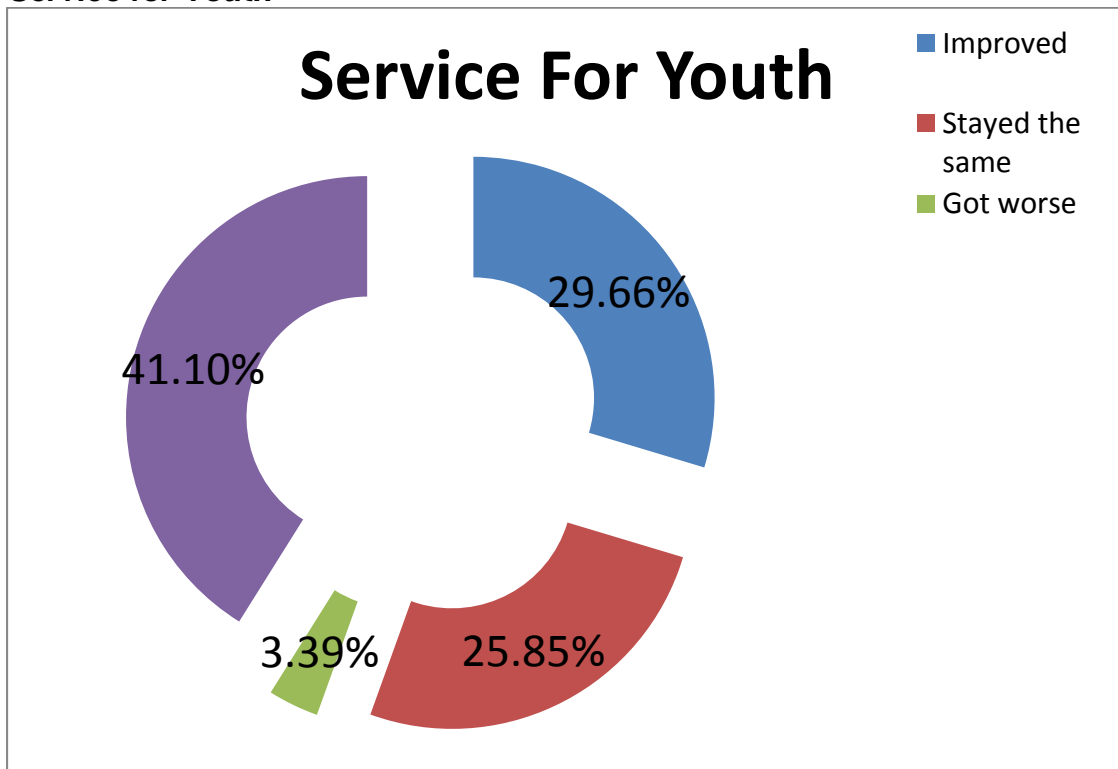
This charts shows that most residents have “no” idea about how these services change, and the services are “stayed the same” are the second high number of the participators answers. These results indicate that the social service sectors should improve their service programs to reach and involve more residents and more engagement programs should be provided in future.

Ideal Teenagers



This graph shows that residents are suffering from teenagers hanging around and misbehaving with 57% said very big problem. This result shows us Teenagers need Parents conduct, encourage, and educate in right methods. And also parents need communicate or connect with school teacher, been known your kids build strong relationship with them, talk to them often, give them right direction. This will affect their whole life.

Service for Youth



We need to develop more learning programs for youth to encourage and engage them to build up team work skills, leadership, and knowledge. Volunteer opportunities should be created to enhance the sense of learning, so that youths can gain more opportunities and knowledge for a bright future. However, we need to create action plans to engage the youth to participate in those programs.

What we can do in Regent Park?

Through completing the survey experience I understand that Regent Park represents as low-income neighbourhood, it has a high unemployment in neighbourhood, higher refugees and immigrants neighbourhood, a low educated rate in the neighbourhood, Regent Park also has community housing and a subsidising housing neighbourhood. It is a multicultural and diverse neighbourhood. Residents in Regent Park struggle with those entire external factors which influence the community wellbeing.

Recommendations

1. sense of belonging: as I talked about the key finding the most RP residents not satisfy to feel sense of belonging of RP neighbourhood, now I would like to suggest certain organizations how to enhance sense of belonging of RP neighbourhood. First I would like to suggest our organization to create a community kitchen program(Cooking Culture Club), to Motivate and inspire RP residents to join together, also give them example how this program works (every week we will have different kitchen program from each country, like first week Canada food, we will have invited one person who familiar with Canadian food or cooker in Canadian restaurants and give a lesson how to prepare one easy dish of traditional Canadian food.) mentor and coach them, give them right vision, work as a team and get feedback. We can enrich our diet; feel the sense of belonging of our community.

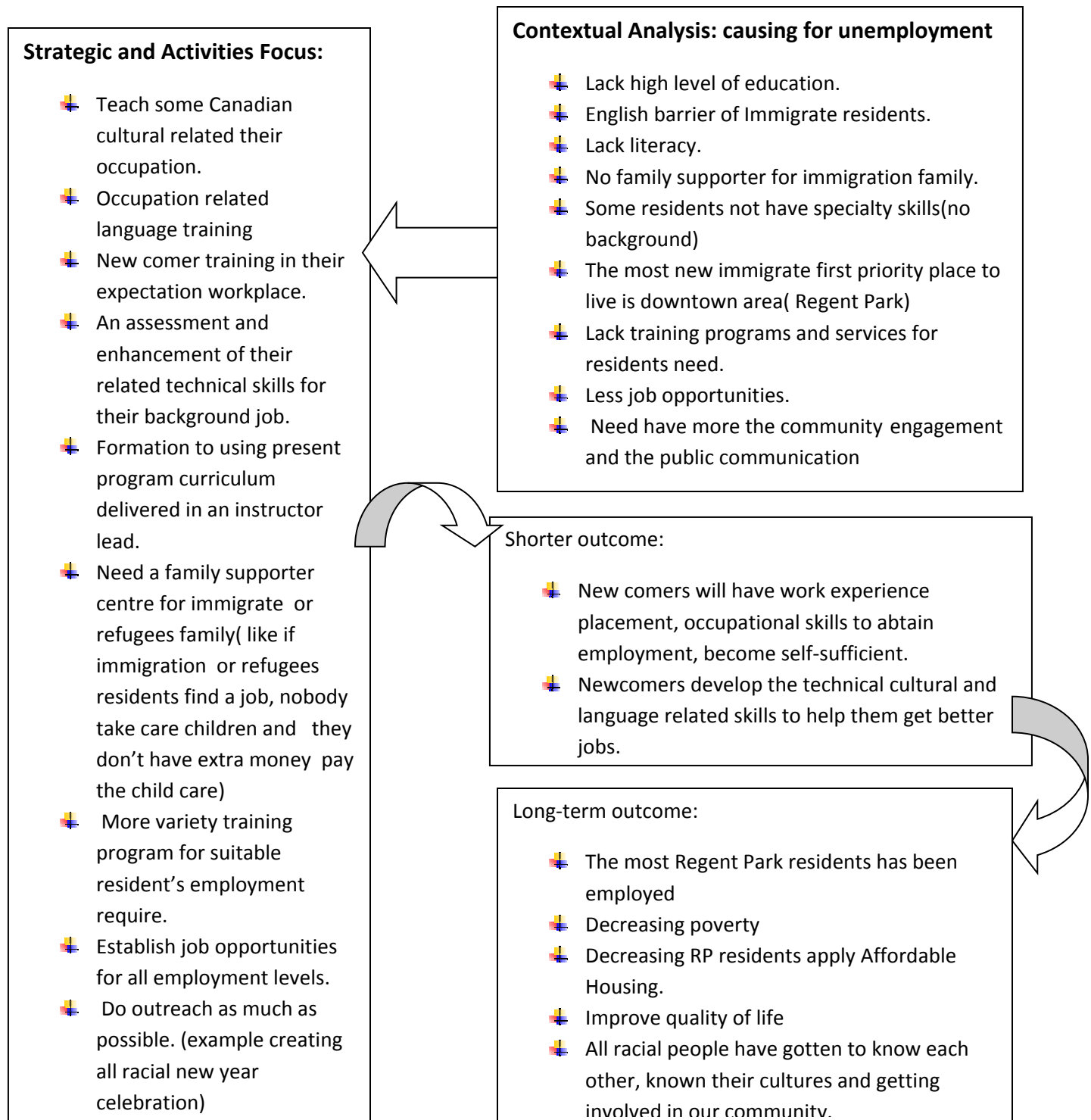
2. According to the key finding, need to increase service for youth by Create action plans to engage youth and their parents to join learning programs, enhance the sense of learning& foster youth study interests, school & parents make connections, increase parents and youth relationship and mentor youth & educate in right methods to target future goals. Example creates a Reading Corner, engage youth and their parents to join together, each youth and their parents will read a book depend on their knowledge and understanding share their ideas, after youth present by telling a story about the books, have to make sure to connected with the school teacher to know what their children learn and behaviour in school. Integrate with this program, and help youth to find out the future goals.

Conclusion

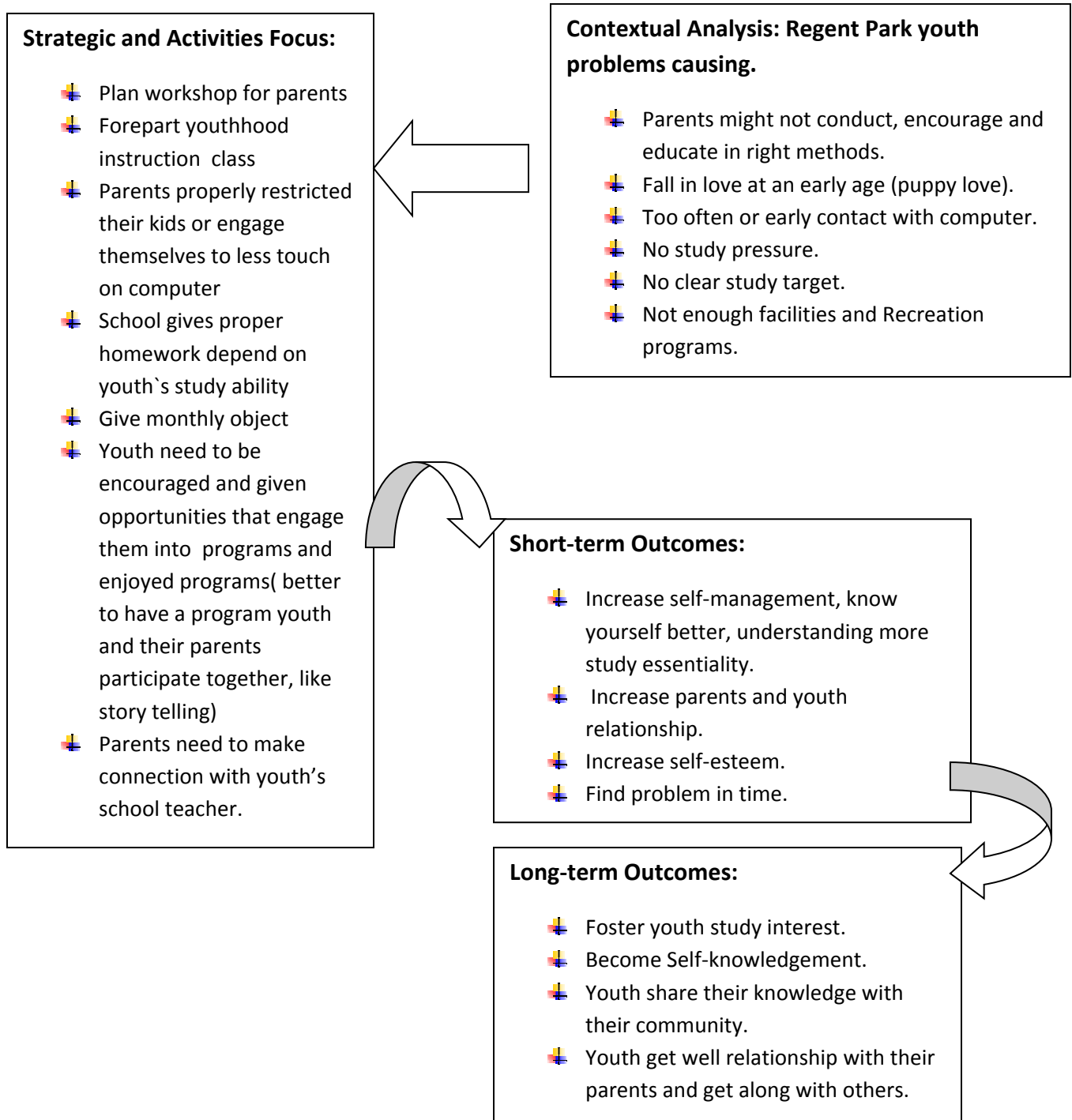
This survey illustrated that Regent Park is a known low-income neighbourhood with more than half of its population being immigrants. Regent Park residents are mostly are living in poverty condition in which the main issues are unemployment, level of education, and language barrier based on the survey findings. In addition, almost half of the population living in this neighbourhood are children who need recreation programs, and social activities. The poverty in Regent Park directly influenced family members especially young people such as teenagers, and youth. The government should provide more job opportunity for Regent Park residents. They should help and guide residents gain social independence by providing financial support to start their own business in the area.

In addition, there needs to be a development of recreational programs to build capacity and partnership for youth. Also can encourage and engage youth people to build self-confidence, leadership, skill training, and job development. Also public communication is needed in Regent Park. Community centres should provide programs and activities that would benefit residents, increase community engagement and public communication. Lastly, who, how and what the community centre can do I would recommend the theory of change for youth and decreasing poverty in Regent Park neighbourhood.

Theory of Change for Increasing employment in Regent Park



Theory of Change for Youth



Theory of Change for Sense of belonging

