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Regent Park Neighbourhood Needs Assessment Report

Toronto Centre for Community Learning & Development -
Immigrant Women Integration Program



Irum Siddiqui

2014 - 2015



Acknowledgements

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Especially, Alfred Jean-Baptiste, Executive Director of the Centre for Community Learning and Development (CCL&D) who support us dramatically through this process. , Deputy Director of Training and Development (CCL&D), was the person who always encouraged and guided us in a proper direction through of this program. In particular, I would like to acknowledge Sureya who is a staff at the Regent Park Centre of Learning, and also resident of Regent Park for a long time. She supported me through the process of survey distributing, and introducing me to other staff organizations of Regent Park. Also, I would like to thanks Sarah Gaikwad from Ryerson University, Sara Abdulhussan and Mercedes Sharp Zayas the university of Toronto.

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Executive Summary

The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of the community needs assessment based on the community index of well-being survey. It includes demographic information, living standards, health status, democratic engagement, community vitality, time use, leisure and culture and the environment. The survey was distributed in two different ways; online and hard copy. The survey was done during the years 2014-15 and it was distributed among Regent Park residents and some organizations. This survey helped to identify different factors that resident's enough. The community resources and needs assessment identifies the gaps in the community, and raise awareness to the available community. To re build a healthy community, emphasis will be given to community strength and high light the challenges that the community is facing. The accessibility challenges which community residents face, and to determine the gaps and how we can provide a healthy condition for resident community. Facing in terms of accessibility, sources, and entering in the neighbourhood.

History



Figure 1. Map of Regent Park
(Google Images)

arrangement. 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, and both were considered slum clearance projects (City of Toronto, 2011).

Regent Park was originally designed as a transitional community for those who are on social assistance, or low-income workers paying rent-geared- to- income. In the last two decades, it has evolved into largely an immigrant settlement community, as immigrant or newcomers having difficulties settling in Canada end up living there so that more than half of its popular Regent Park was very popular with residents, politicians, and media for the first few years of its existence. Before the redevelopment, Regent Park was popularly known as Cabbage town because the mainly Irish residents often grew cabbages in their front yards to survive



Figure 3. Old Regent Park
(Google Images)

Regent Park is one of the oldest and largest public housing developments in Canada. It is 69 acre (280.00 m²) public housing community in downtown Toronto which houses approximately 7,500 residents in 2,083 rent-geared-to-incomes (RGI) units. Regent Park was developingend in two sections. (North and South) North Regent Park was built from 1947 to 1957 as a low-riseand townhouse development that occupies the area north of Dundas Street to Gerard Street. It was designed along British "Garden City", ideals to encourage low rise development, limit car use, and provide modern living



Figure 2. Old Regent's Park
(Google Images)

themselves from poverty. After the redevelopment, the new area was called "Regent Park" which reflects the increased green space, and the presence of Regent Park in the Street in the new development. In fact, it was generally regarded as a new beginning for the residents and for the neighbourhood. The community was entirely composed of subsidized housing, and the buildings were oriented to look inward which disconnected Regent Park from its neighbouring communities, and. The rest of city, and consequently from the many benefits of city life;

however, the development was cut off the noise and aggravation of city life which means it was completely residential. The structure of the public housing was designed for large Irish Catholic families that every units had 4-5 bedrooms. Therefore, thirty percent of Regent Park's 2,083 units are four bedrooms or larger.



Figure 4. New Regent Park

Google Images

The first tenants of Regent Park were mostly Irish or British families and almost all residents spoke English. Only two-parent families were allowed to live in Regent Park; singles; and single-parent families were barred.

Despite some initial successes, tenants gradually faced many issues through these long-term years. They have suffered from inward-looking space of the area which isolated them from the rest of city, and brings a number of problems such as, violence, crime, drugs, and prostitution. But people in Regent Park were building a

strong community with each other, and strong ties to their neighbourhood to solve the problems, although they were facing poverty. Residents and service providers

have been advocating for change in Regent Park for many years.

Finally, the City council and the Toronto Community Housing Corporation (TCHC) have decided to fix some past mistakes and tackle these issues, rooted in poverty and social isolation by redeveloping and revitalizing the neighbourhood. After some community consultation, the Regent Park Revitalization Plan was launched in 2005. The entire project will cost upwards of \$1 billion will last fifteen years, and

Figure 5&6. New town Houses & Dundas Street

Google Images



comprise of six phases. Phase one is almost finished, while phase two was launched in April 2009.

The new neighbourhood is planned according to modern urban ideas, mixed-income, mix-use neighbourhoods, mid-rise buildings studded with taller ones. The new development will include the same number as rent-geared-to- income units, but the most important change will be the reintroduction of cross-street in the area and the replacement of the regular social housing with a mix of social housing, market-priced housing and retail. In addition, the purpose of the revitalization is that with a mix of housing and with a more visually appealing neighbourhood, residents will feel less socially stigmatized. It is also hoped that the introduction of through traffic and mixed uses will

reduce crime. Another reason is to spread social housing out across the city, with the hope that will integrate and mix- income with middle. There are already some indications the plan is working. The first market-priced condominium in the project, 1 Cole, has sold out and residents are settled. The RBC Bank and Tim Horton's, and Sobeys (Fresh Co) are already opened and they work. Remarkable transition of Regent Park will going through a big changing exciting opportunities for both current residents and people who are interested living in Toronto's vital downtown east area in the future .



Figure 7. Tim Horton

Google Images

Social Inclusion of Regent Park Revitalization



Figure 8. RBC Bank

Google Images

Research shows that mixed-income communities can have a positive impact on opportunity and outcomes for residents from all backgrounds. It also shows that successfully achieving that goal depends on a commitment to buildings connect with each other, they can form engaged and equitable relationships. That makes them more likely to work with their neighbours to make the community as successful as possible and support the success of the people in it.

Research also shows that without interventions, there are often division between groups of residents in new mixed-income communities based on income, ethnicity, age, ability

and length of stay in the community. Those divisions separate residents, create conflicting interests and often result in their working at cross-purpose. Socially inclusive neighbourhoods are the best guard against that kind of divided and self-defeating community. The Regent Park Social Development Plan provides a guide to building a successful, cohesive and inclusive community in Regent Park throughout the process of redevelopment and in the years that follow.

Just as the redevelopment of Regent Park required a development plan, the revitalization of Regent Park requires a Social Development Plan to guide its social development and promote social inclusion as key ingredients in the success of the community. The City of Toronto and Toronto Community Housing recognized that both plans were necessary for a project of this significance. Regent Park was not identified as one of the 13 “priority communities” under the “Toronto Strong Neighbourhoods Strategy” because it does not meet the criteria regarding a relative lack of community services and facilities. However, the current revitalization process provides a new focus on Regent Park and the community-building initiatives that will strengthen the community, and this makes the initiative for the City Of Toronto Research shows that mixed-income communities can have a positive impact on opportunity and



Figure 9. Regent Park Community Health Center

Google Images

outcomes for residents from all backgrounds. It also shows that successfully achieving that goal depends on a commitment to buildings connect with each other, they can form engaged and equitable relationships. That makes them more likely to work with their neighbours to make the community as successful as possible and support the success of the people in it.

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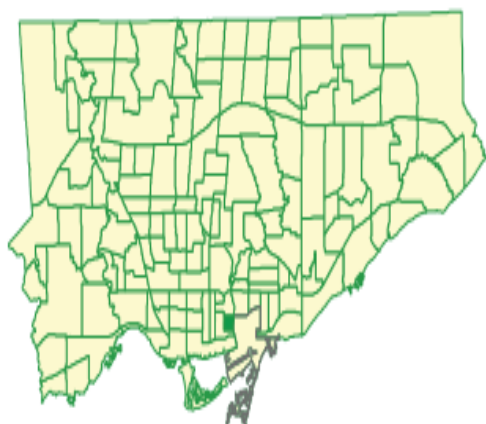
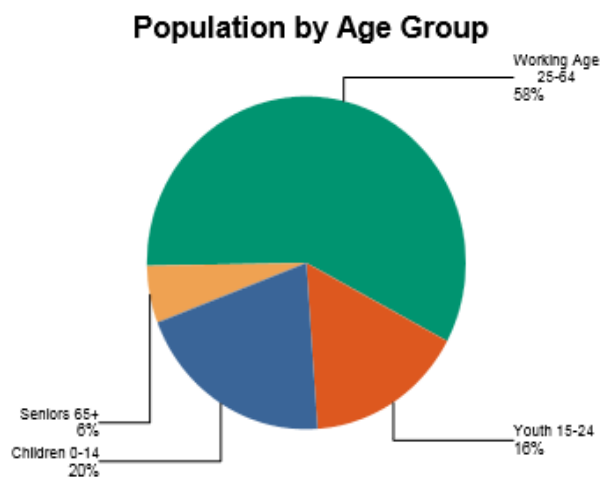
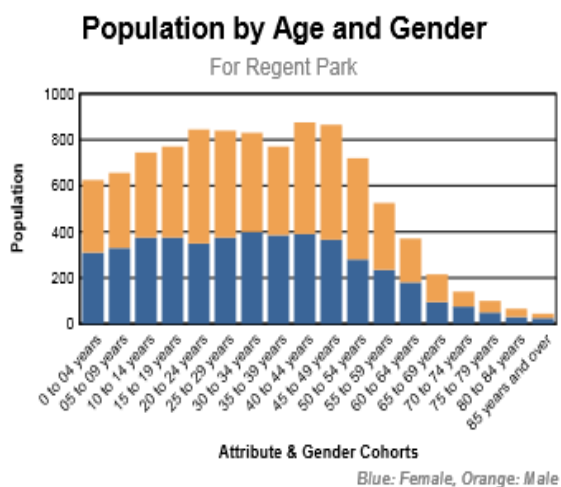


Figure 10. New Aquatic Center in Regent Park

Google Images

Demographic of Regent Park Based on Statistics from City of Toronto (2011)

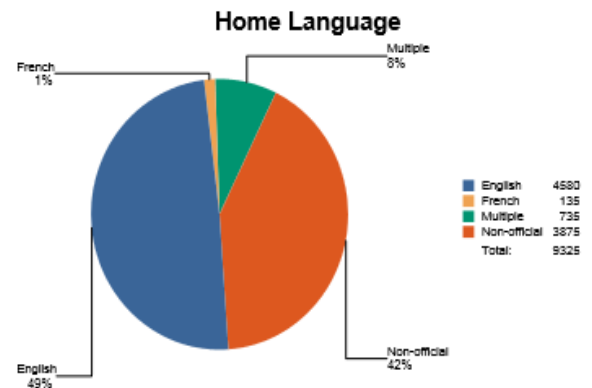
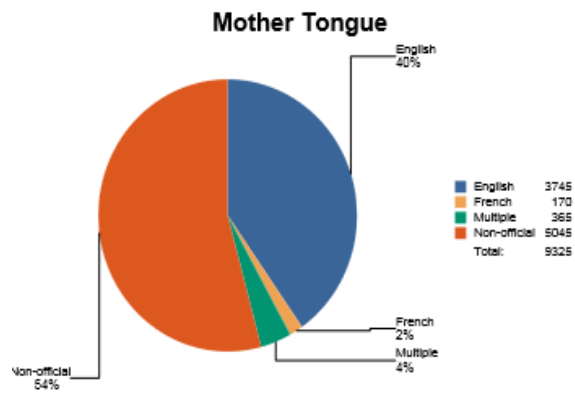
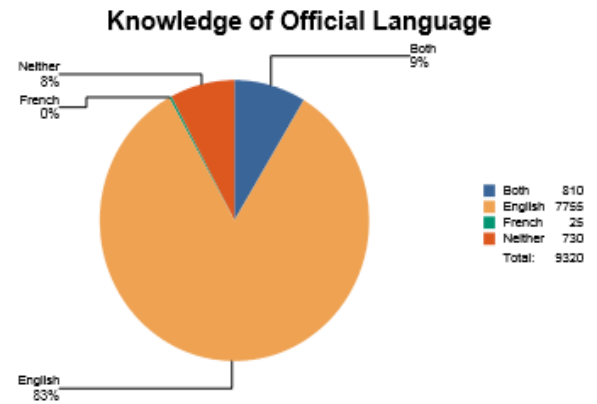
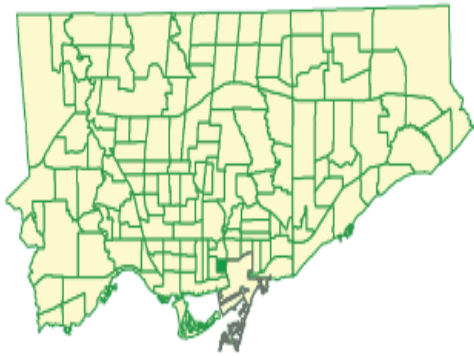
Age and Gender



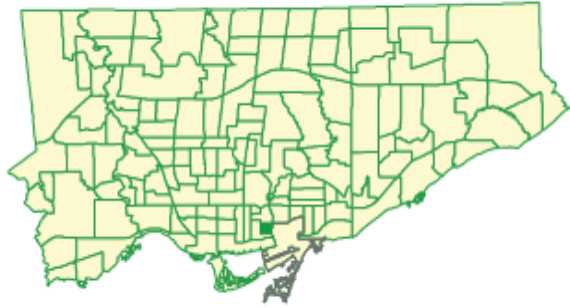
How does Regent Park differ from the equivalent City of Toronto Age Groups?

Children 0-14	32.1%
Youth 15-24	26.6%
Working Age 25-64	0.8%
Seniors 65+	-60.9%

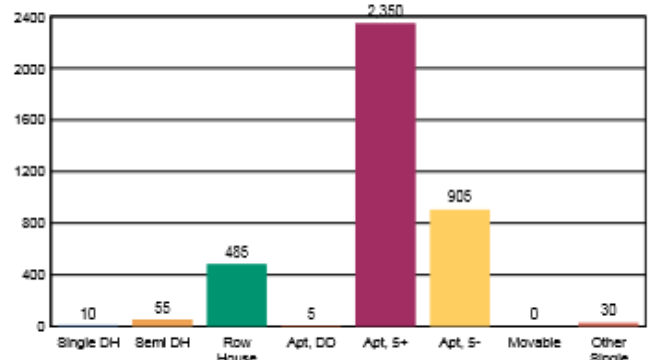
Regent Park Language & Ethnicity



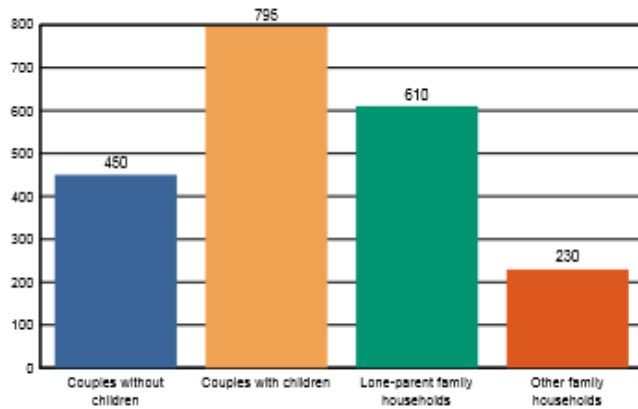
Regent Park Families & Dwellings



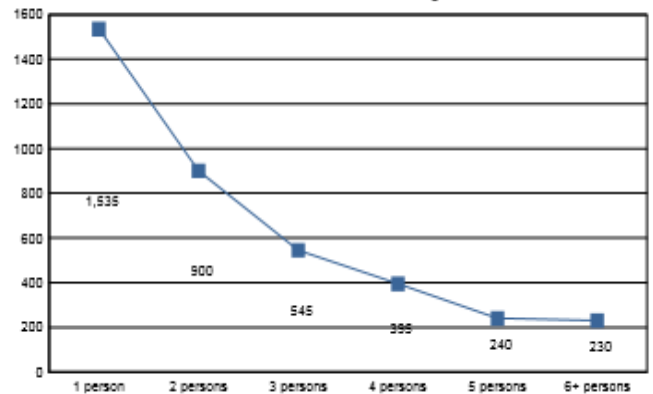
Private Dwellings by Structure Type



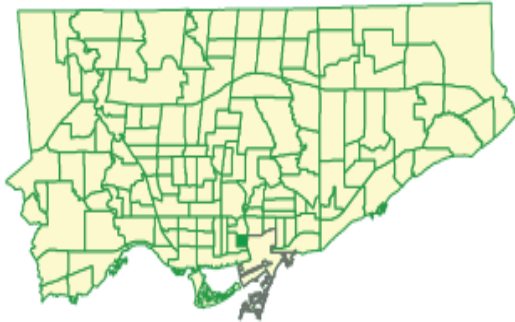
Private Households by Living Arrangements



Private Households by Size



Regent Park Population (City of Toronto)



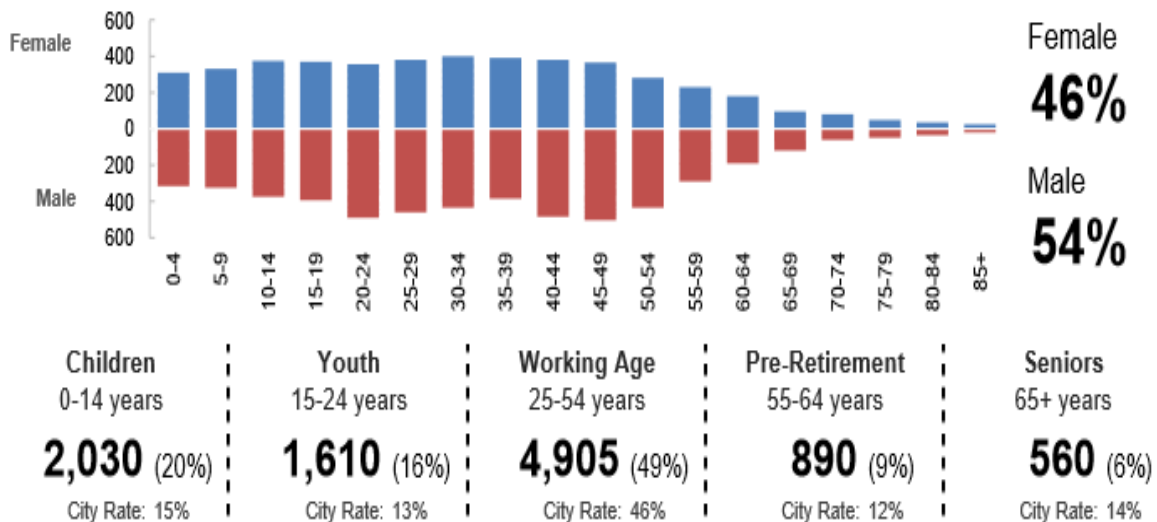
Neighbourhood Snapshot

Population 10,007

Population Change
2006-2011 **-3.7%**

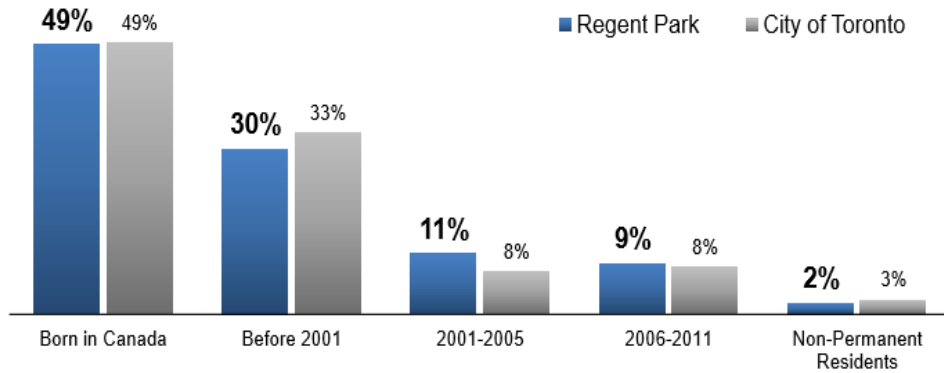
Population Density **15,636**
people per square km

Population

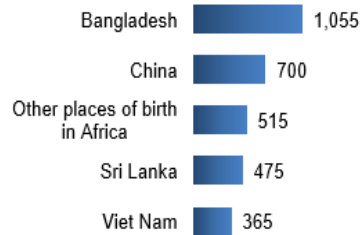


Regent Park Number of Immigration

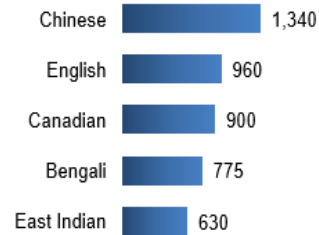
Period of Immigration



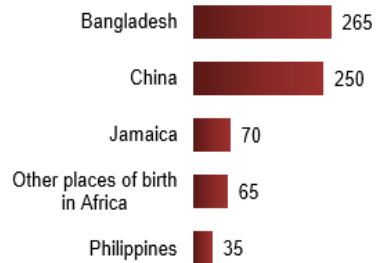
Top-5 Birth Country for All Immigrants



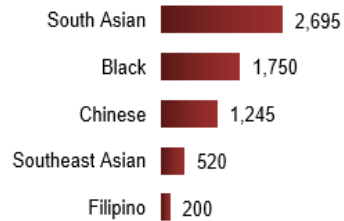
Top-5 Ethnic Origins



Top-5 Birth Country for Recent Immigrants (2006-2011)



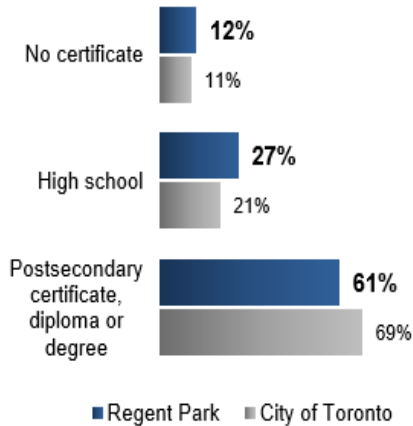
Top-5 Visible Minority Group



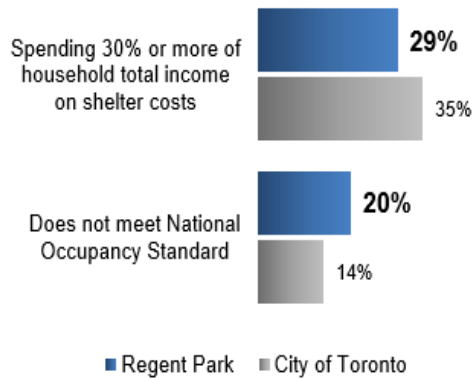
Visible Minority as Percentage of Pop. **75%** Overall City of Toronto Rate **49%**

Regent Park Highest Education (City of Toronto)

Highest Educational Attainment for Pop Age 25-64 Yrs



Housing Affordability and Suitability



Notes on Data Quality:

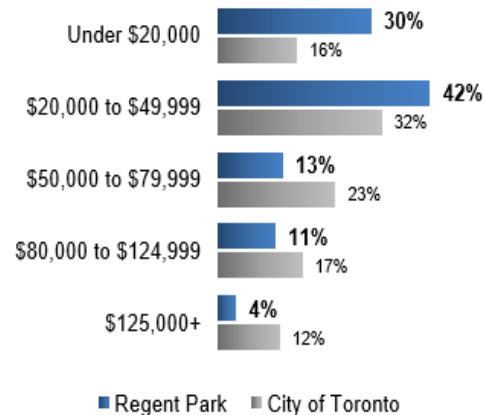
Some data in this profile relies on the 2011 National Household Survey (NHS). Users should use caution when using NHS data. See the Frequently Asked Questions for more information.

Labour Force Status

Total Population 15+ Years	7,285	
In Labour Force	4,090	
Participation Rate	56%	64% City Rate
Employment Rate	47%	58% City Rate
Unemployment Rate	16%	9% City Rate

After-Tax Household Income

(Percentage of Households)



	Neighbourhood	City
Median After-Tax Household Income	\$30,794	\$52,149
Average After-Tax Household Income	\$43,038	\$70,945

Percent of Population in Low-Income (LIM-AT) **46%**

City Rate: 19%

Education

The level of education graph shows that the majority of Regent Park residents have some college degree or certificates which in this graph some college bar has the most percentage number is 44.74%.

The level of schooling of this graph in order is: 10.53%

- Some college,44.74
- High school diploma GED 13.16%
- college degree 15.79%

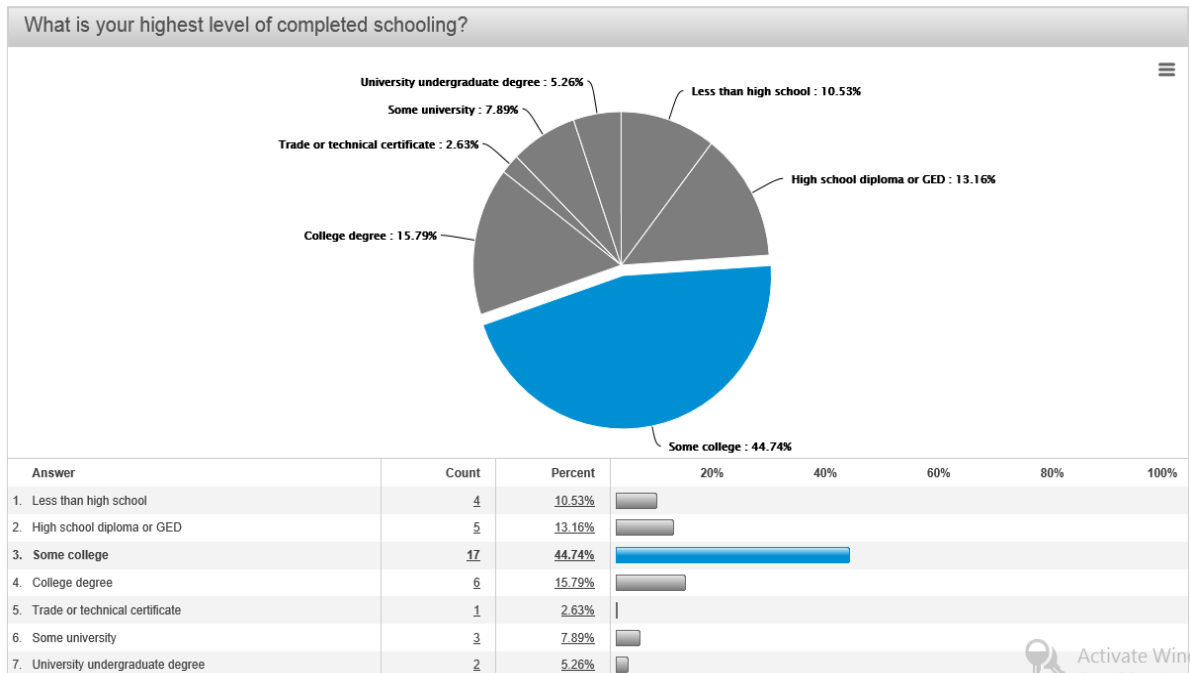


Figure 11. Survey Findings: Highest Level of completed schooling

House Hold Income

This pie chart represents people who have salary (wage) between \$10,001-\$20,000 are the majority of Regent Park residents which considered as low-income family.

The level of household income in order is:

- \$ 10,001-\$20,000,47.37%
- \$20,001-\$25,000,26.32%
- \$25,001-\$35,000,13.16%

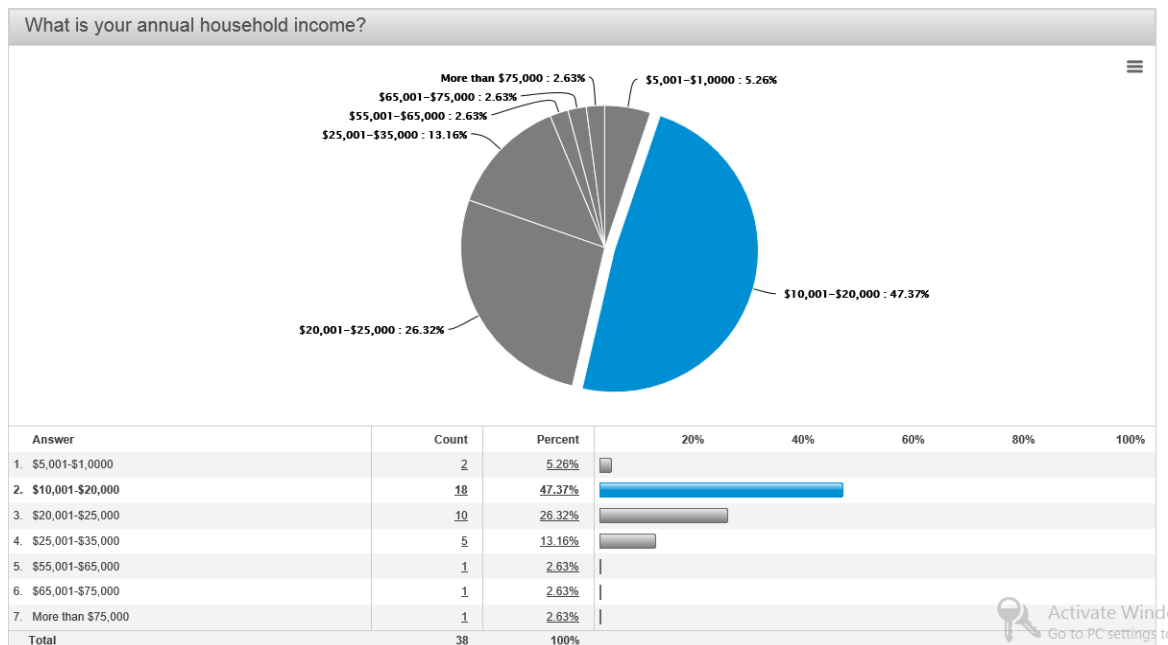


Figure 12. Survey Finding: Annual Household Income

Civic/Community

This pie chart demonstrates that the majority of Regent Park residents have Canadian Citizen.

The level of immigration status of this pie chart in order is:

- Canadian Citizen 100,%

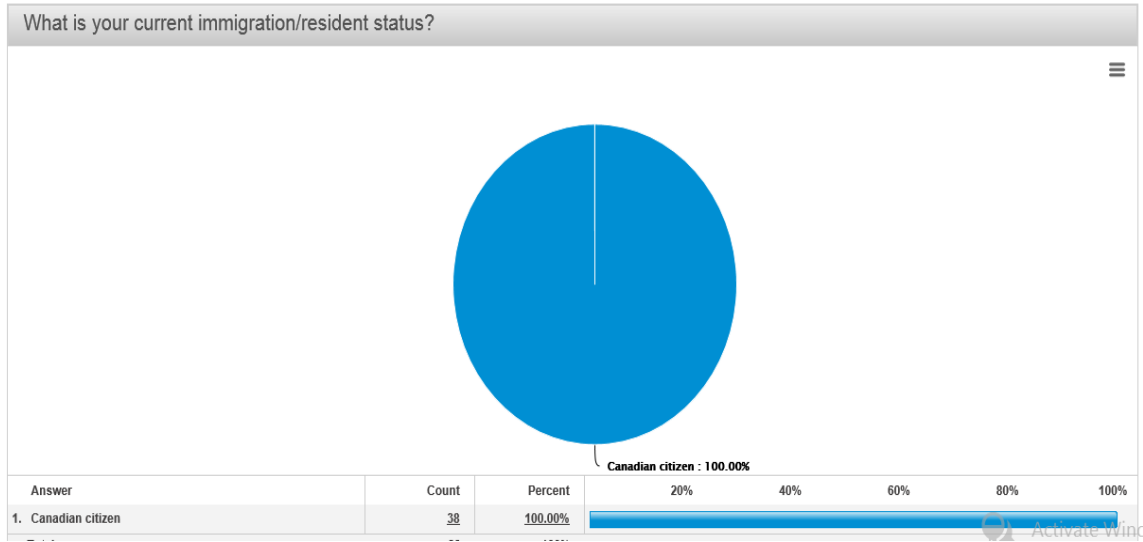


Figure 13. Survey Finding: Current Immigration Status

This pie chart demonstrates that the majority of Regent Park residents have Canadian Citizen.

The level of immigration status of this graph in order is:

- 10+(86.84)
- 1 to 5 years:5.26
- All my life:2.63

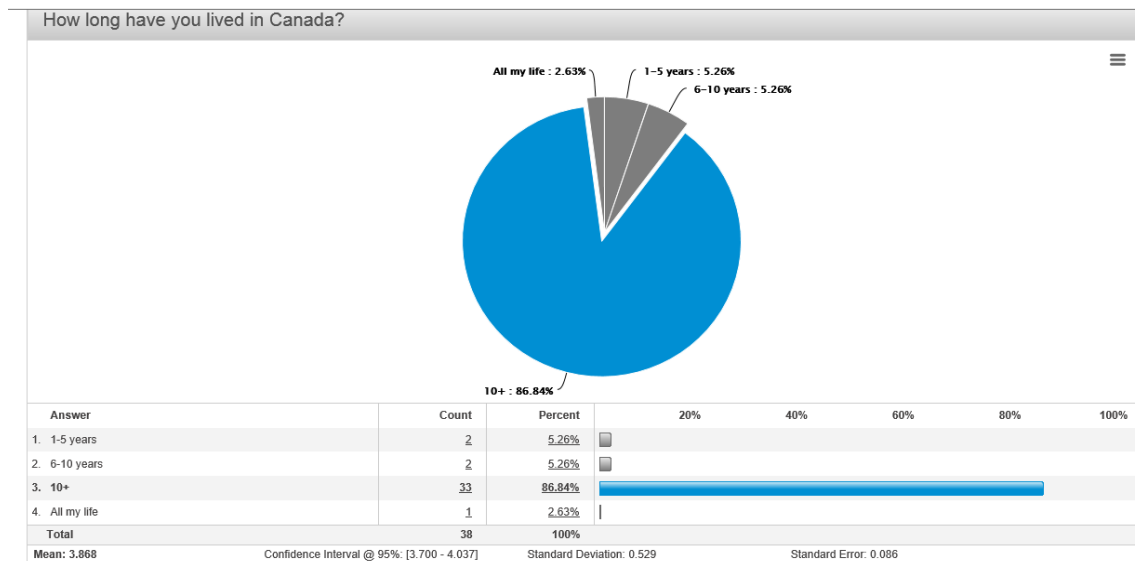


Figure 14. Survey Finding: How Long Lived in Canada

General Health

In general, would you say your health is...?

This graph represents that general health in Regent Park either is good or very good. Almost, half of the population of this pie chart 73.68% of residents good 18.42% are very good.

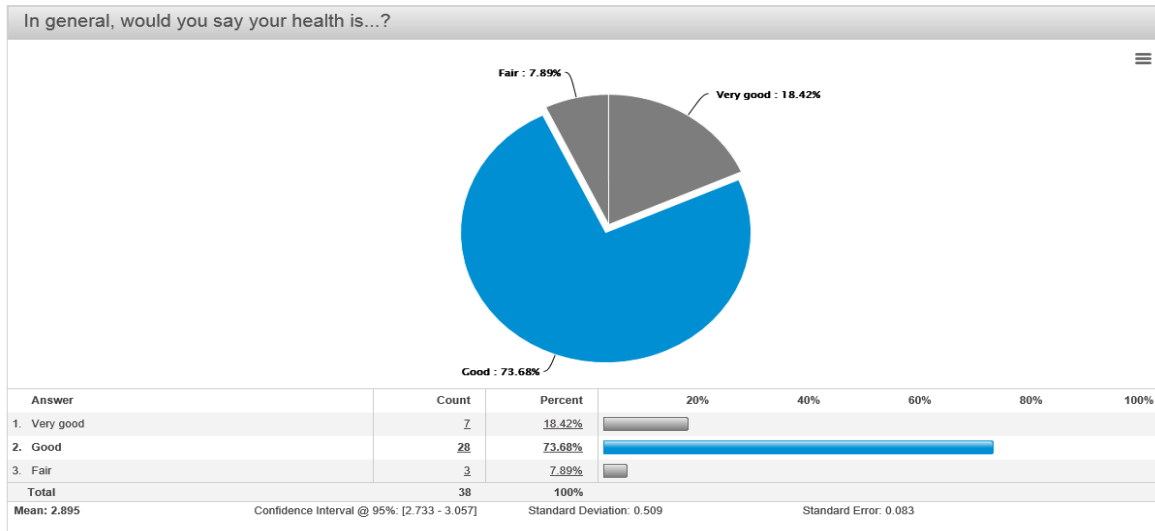


Figure 15. Survey Finding: In general your health

Physical Exercise

Once a week 57.89%

Twice a week 26.32%

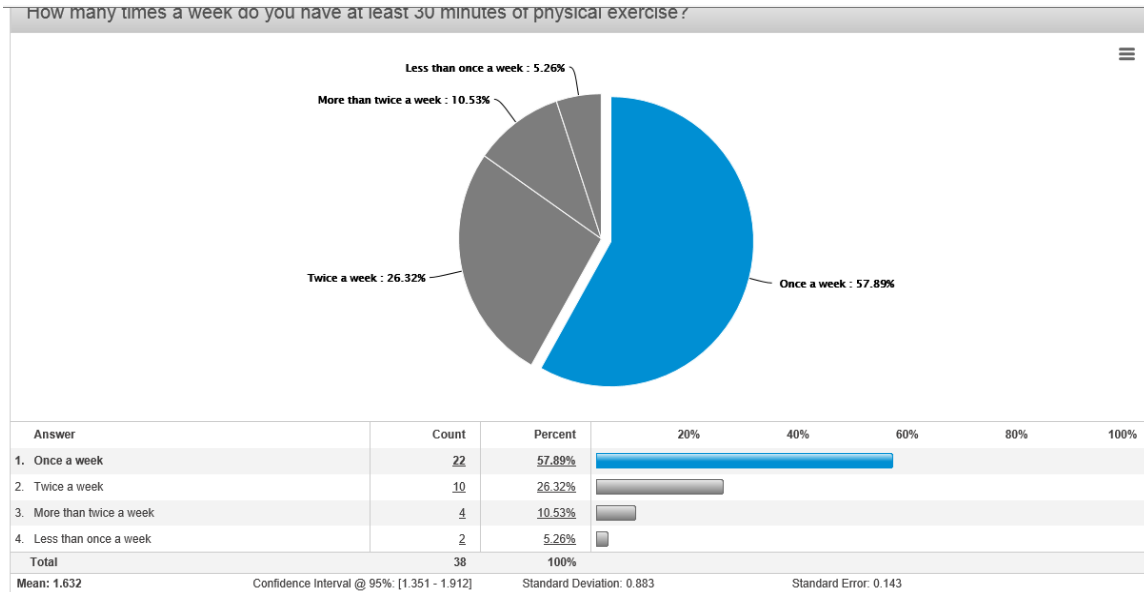


Figure16. Survey Finding: Physical Exercise

Community Engagement

Community events attended 1-3 ,52.67% and 4-7 42.11%

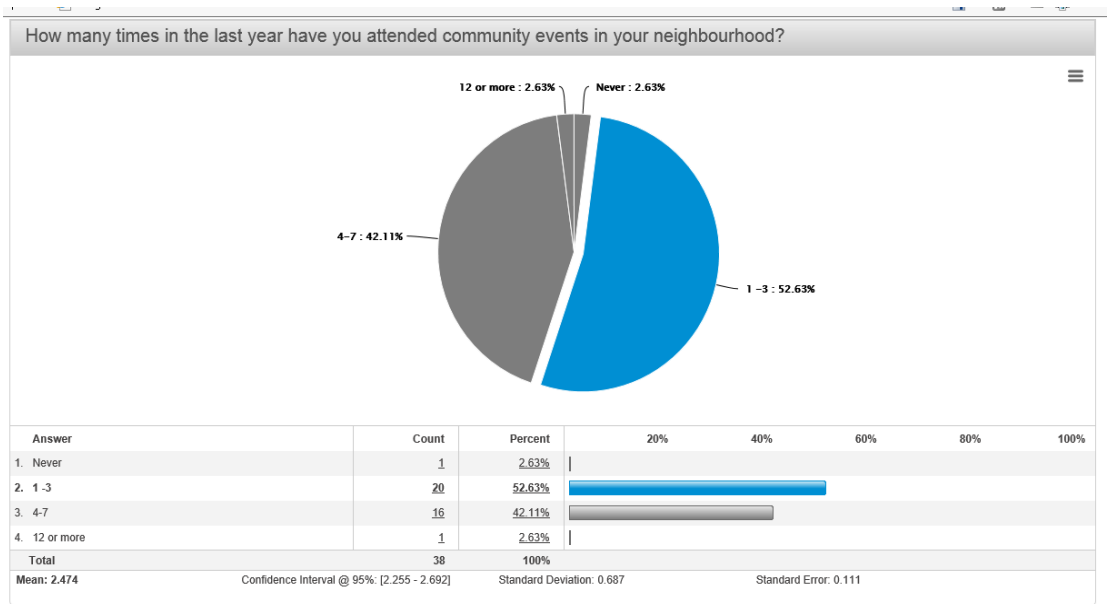


Figure 17. Survey Finding: Community Engagement

Resources

Resources Inside of North Regent Park ☐

- Skating Computer lab
- Indoor swimming pool
- Play ground
- Multipurpose center(rpkc)
- Residents have a library
- Computer lab
- Hritage club
- Community center
- Senoior club
- Religion class
- Computer and english class wich is located behind the revitalization center.
- Big park
- Out door swimming pool
- Regent park aquatic center
- Community art center
- Denil spactarm
- TD learning center
- RBC bank
- Sobes (fresh co)
- Timhortin
- Rogers stor
- Daycare

Recommendations

This section provides many recommendations for Regent Park community based on the community need assessment. First of all, it is about decreasing the rate of poverty in this community by bringing more employment opportunity for residents. Secondly, it is about the increasing much more recreation activity for youth.

As we know, Regent Park is one the multiculturalism immigrant community in Toronto which it has lots of children and teenagers who are living in poverty condition. Also, this community has a bad reputation for violence, crime, drugs, and other factors which this type of environment would increase more uneducated population, unemployment, and principal of poverty.

Based on community needs assessment, we can create more employment condition for residents, and also building capacity and partnership in a positive way to remove the root of poverty. In addition, when there is no poverty in this community that would influence on each family of Regent Park population, especially for youth who are really in dangerous situation.

Although Regent Park has undergone revitalization and redevelopment, it would create more employment opportunity for residents, but there is still social housing that they cannot afford to provide healthy family.

We need to develop more recreation programs for youth to encourage and engage them to build up the leadership and skill trainings, jobs so that there is an opportunity to have a bright future. Moreover, we need to create action plan to engage the youth to participate in leadership programs. The strategies of this action plan could be in short-term and long-term outcomes.

Short-term outcomes can increase awareness in different sector of social services and organization to work together in a better avenue for providing services. Also, to increase self-esteem, and the number of youth who are using these services, so there are more the number of community leaders in the neighbourhood.

Long-term outcomes can increase community leaders and youth leaders who have received the appropriate training. The trained youth can share their knowledge and experiences with other community as a role-model.

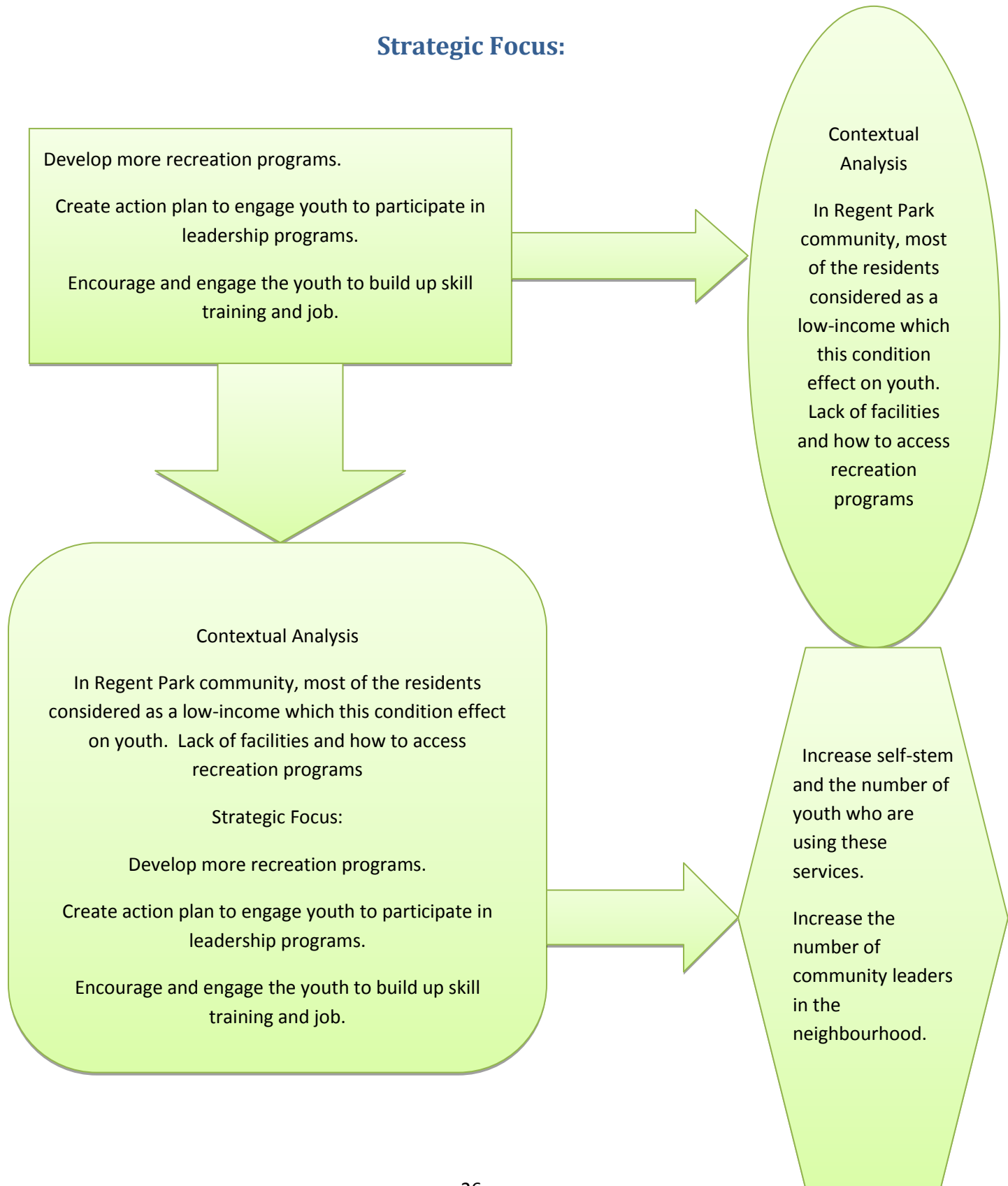
Conclusion

This survey represents that Regent Park is known for low-income neighbourhood with more than half of its population being immigrants. Regent Park residents mostly are living in poverty because 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 the neighbourhood are children who are highly needed recreation programs, and social activities.

The poverty of neighbourhood has influenced directly on family members especially young people such as teenagers, and youth so that the government should provide more job opportunities for Regent Park's residents. We should help and guide residents gain social independence by providing support to start their own business in their local area. In addition, we need to develop more recreation programs to build capacity and partnership for youth to encourage and engage them to build up self-confidence, leadership, skill training, and job development.

Theory of Change for Youth Programs

Strategic Focus:



References

All images retrieved from Google Images

City of Toronto (<http://preservedstories.com/2013/01/27/history-of-re>)