A PROMISING PRACTICES GUIDE ON COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

LESSONS FROM THE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SYMPSOSIUM

FLEMINGDON THORNCLIFFE
INTER-AGENCY NETWORK (FTIAN)

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

For several decades, the Flemingdon Thorncliffe Inter-Agency Network (FTIAN) has been a table that brings together nonprofits, public sector partners and resident-led groups serving Flemingdon Park and Thorncliffe Park areas. This has been a space to share information, build partnerships and meet community needs. For nearly 15 years, these two communities have been what were formerly known as a Priority Neighbourhoods and now known as Neighbourhood Improvement Areas (NIA). NIAs are a designation created by the City of Toronto - under the Toronto Strong Neighborhood Strategy 2020 - that recognizes the complex and high needs of the neighborhood, such as: poverty, economic inequality, a lack of public space / infrastructure and social isolation.

Between Flemingdon and Thorncliffe Park, many agencies and residents have been working together to enhance both communities.
This **Promising Practices Guide** aims to strengthen connections among the network and community as well as encourage innovation in agendas, policies and programs.

FTIAN is a space to share information, build partnerships and meet community needs.

It serves as a tool to support community engagement for resident-led groups, funders, governments and non-profit organizations interested in drawing from local knowledge based in Flemingdon Park and Thorncliffe Park.

OVERVIEW

Drawing from local community knowledge, this guide shares best practices of community engagement in Flemingdon and Thorncliffe Park communities.

In September of 2017, after extensive planning and collaborating, the FTIAN hosted the Community Engagement (CE) Symposium. A wealth of knowledge was provided by groups or agencies that actively practice community engagement. This guide is informed by that knowledge and aims to share it with a wider audience. It contains lessons from the FTIAN Community Engagement Symposium, six CE principles, and nine local CE case studies. The FTIAN hopes the community's insights and experiences may inform new principles and promising practices for community engagement specific to Flemingdon and Thorncliffe Park areas, as well as other NIA's facing similar issues.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Land Acknowledgement

The Flemingdon Thorncliffe Inter-Agency Network (FTIAN) would like to acknowledge that the land on which we work is the traditional territory of the Huron Wendat, Anishinaabek, Haudenosaunee and, most recently, the Mississaugas of the Credit Indigenous peoples. The territory is covered by the Dish With One Spoon Wampum Belt Covenant, an agreement between the Anishinaabek, Haudenosaunee and allied nations to peaceably share and care for the resources around the Great Lakes. Toronto is the home to many Indigenous people from across Turtle Island and we are grateful to have the opportunity to work on this territory.

Contributors

We would like to acknowledge the valuable contributions by all the resident-led groups and local agencies that made this resource possible, as well as the FTIAN CE working group who supported its development. It is important to note this guide is only a snapshot of community engagement in these neighbourhoods. There is plenty of local work happening by groups that we did not have the opportunity to involve. Moreover, the case studies in this guide provide only a summary and not the full extent of their work. We are appreciative of all grassroots community engagement that happens by committed residents and agencies. A special thanks to FTIAN members and partners that provided staff time or financial support, to everyone who presented or attended the symposium, and to the residents that were engaged with the FTIAN during the symposium plans or toolkit drafts.

[1] Symposium sponsors: AWO Refugee and Immigrant Services (formerly Afghan Women's Organization), Ansaar Foundation, City of Toronto, Flemingdon Health Centre, New Circles Community Services, Social Planning Toronto, The Neighbourhood Organization, Helena Houldcroft.
[2] Three of the nine groups featured in the case studies were added to the case studies later on. The same criteria for symposium presenters were used to add two youth groups: Hijabi Ballers and SExT, as well as Wellness Café, a group that started as an agency-led project but evolved into a community-led group.

FTIAN COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT WORKING GROUP MEMBERS

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LOCAL CASE STUDIES

Wellness Café (AWO)
Flemingdon Community Support Services
Flemingdon Health Centre
Friends of Angela James Arena
Friends of Flemingdon Park
Hijabi Ballers
Neighbours Night Out
Sex Education by Theatre
Thorncliffe Collaborative for Muslim Children and Families
Thank you!

THE FTIAN COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SYMPOSIUM

The FTIAN Community Engagement Symposium was a full day event with 80 attendees that featured presentations from resident-led groups, small group discussions, a performance by local artists, catered lunch and ended with more presentations. The information shared at the event went into developing this Promising Practices Guide. We would like to acknowledge there was only space in this guide to feature groups that are working in Flemingdon Park and Thorncliffe Neighbourhood despite the inspiring presenters from other neighbourhoods. This guide will first highlight the learnings from developing the event. The second part is a summary of discussions at the event to shine light on participants' knowledge and experiences. Please note that in this guide, the acronym CE is used for 'Community Engagement.'

THORNCLIFFE PARK

Thorncliffe Park is a dense, mostly high-rise neighbourhood that is home to many newcomer families. It is estimated that 21,000 people live here, nearly 75% of whose first language is not English or French and almost 60% of whom do not speak these at home.


City of Toronto (2017). Neighborhood Profile, 2016: Thorncliffe Park
Photo: http://towerrenewal.com/thorncliffe-park/

This is a culturally and linguistically diverse community. The physical design has community resources (e.g. park, library, services, shops) at the center of this area. This helps to foster partnerships and collaboration, with resources accessible to all residents. Thorncliffe Park was recently identified as an NIA with high needs. The community has strong resident leadership from actors that are new to CE and actors that have done CE for at least a decade.

FLEMINGDON PARK

Flemingdon Park is a dense, newcomer neighbourhood. It is estimated that 22,000 people live here, 70% of whose first language is not English or French and 50% do not speak these at home. It is physically separated from the neighbouring Thorncliffe Park by a bridge that is above the Don Valley.
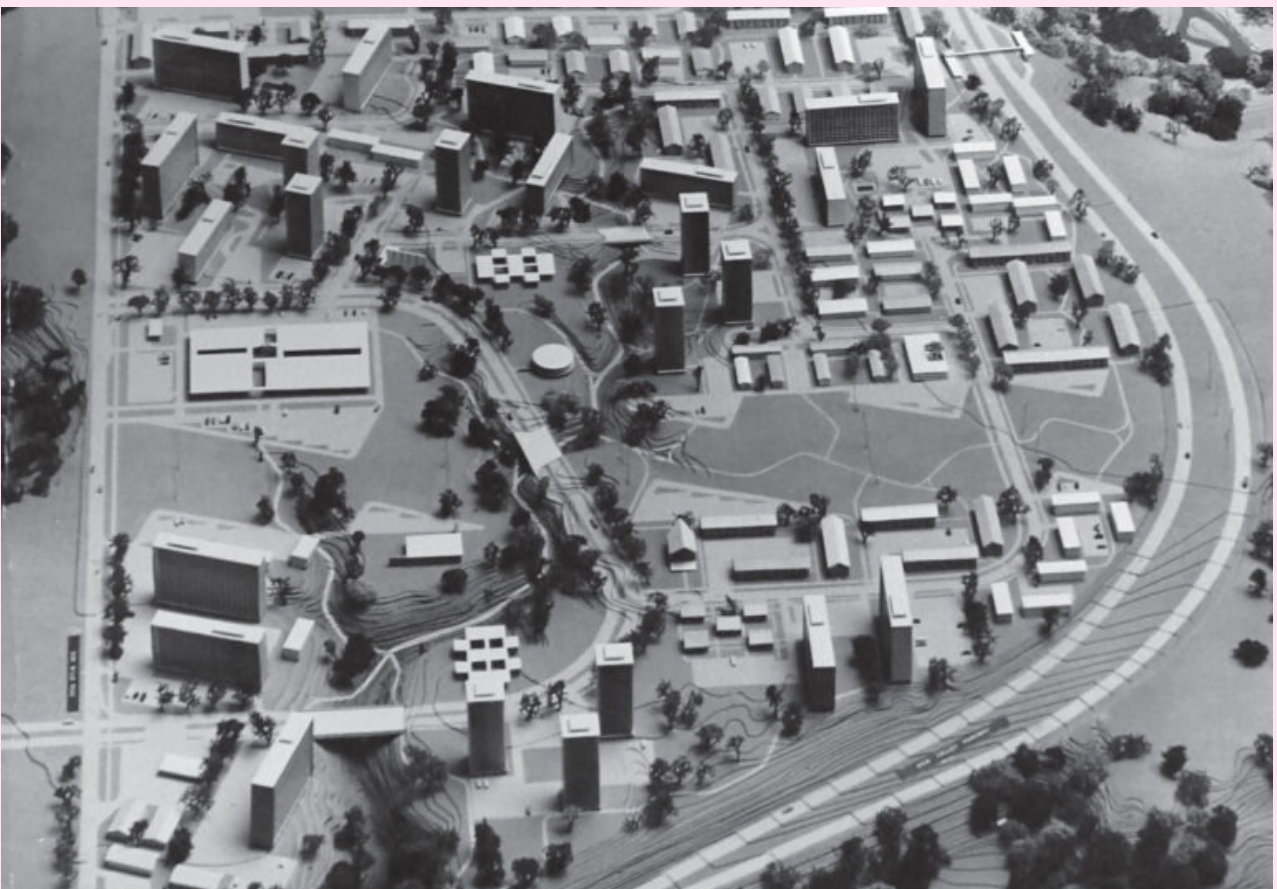
Flemingdon Park master plan, including housing, community facilities, commerce, employment and natural space, 1958

Access to space and resources are a main concern, which has fostered strong partnership and collaboration in the neighbourhood. It has been known to have high needs, first as a Priority Neighbourhood and now as an NIA. In recent years, many new actors have led CE to improve the area.

City of Toronto (2017). Neighbourhood profile, 2016: Flemingdon Park.
Photo: http://towerrenewal.com/built-resource-guides-future-plans/

THE PLANNING PROCESS

Chapter 1

THE PLANNING PROCESS

The **FTIAN Community Engagement Symposium** took about two years to organize. FTIAN members had the opportunity to join a planning committee, which also broke into small sub-committees for certain tasks. While there was strong interest in the event, securing funds and developing a plan was a slow process. The benefit of this was having time to engage more stakeholders or partners to ensure that many voices could be at the table. Importantly, it was decided to have resident representation. Two residents who were active in different grassroots groups were invited to join the planning process. The planning process was led by nonprofit partners but resident involvement helped strengthen ideas. There were 5 lessons to take away from the planning process:

Principles - What do we look for? Near the start of our planning process, a list of principles that were important to CE was made (see pg. 16). These provided an idea of what was good about grassroots work. Using these principles, it was possible to identify the work of local groups. While the principles were reassessed after gathering case studies, it was useful to start with a list of what to look for. Please refer to 'Principles of Community Engagement' section, as well as the last page of the appendix for this list.

Criteria - How do we frame this? A chart was made with criteria to look for in CE such as the group's leadership, their expertise and uniqueness. This was to frame what the groups would present about. The criteria served as a guide to plan coherent presentations and support groups to prepare to speak about their work.

THE PLANNING PROCESS

Tasks - **Who does what?** It was necessary to have strong leaders at the planning table. This made it easier to assign tasks and keep on track. It was helpful to use some planning tools, have meetings as needed and use email to follow-up on tasks.

Partners - **Who can help?** It was slow to find enough support, but seeking out partners overtime was beneficial. This ensured that many in the community knew about the event plans and did not forget about it due to the planning delays. It was necessary to ask, remind and confirm potential partners when opportunities arose.

Advice - **Are we on the right track?** This came later in the planning process. It was beneficial to involve residents because they had provided input about what needed to be done. The intent was not to put too much pressure on them to plan the event. Resident advice was useful to provide their insight for improvements.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Chapter 2

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

What is **Community Engagement (CE)**? The FTIAN provided time during the event to have group discussions to define, "What is community engagement?". Each group was led by a facilitator and had a notetaker. Participants were from nonprofits, the public sector and resident groups. They brought a range of local experiences to the discussion. Below are their answers categorized into themes.

1. Unique qualities to engage communities:

It is important to be present in a community, use neighbourhood space and have work with a topic that is relevant. Avoid assumptions that have a focus to fit an organization's existing mandate or that a community will come to you. There should be a familiarity with the community, the culture and long-time or influential residents. It is beneficial to try creative approaches, including: beyond 9-5 schedule, multilingual, cultural sensitivity, fun activities, empowerment and leadership. You will need genuine interest, patience, humor, commitment and passion.

2. Features of resident-led initiatives:

Residents are likely to have expertise from knowing the community, experiencing the issue and recognizing common needs. They may bring passion and opinions. Their effort can cause change such as reducing social isolation and addressing service gaps. It is a local investment to support their initiatives but it can be difficult to have funders recognize their credibility. This work should empower the community by acknowledging their ideas and including them as key partners in decision making processes.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

3. Strategies for building trust:

People come together for a common goal with voluntary commitment to the cause and dedication of time or resources. There needs to be honesty about your capacity, intent and ability to contribute. Use active listening and be open to ideas, while remembering the goal is for action and not just talk. Trust grows from being consistent, patient, respectful and inclusive. The word will spread about quality effort and positive impact. Residents can effectively build trust because they have direct connections. Social events or community gatherings can help to mobilize that trust

4. Innovation in community engagement:

There is no right answer to community engagement; this is about trying something different. New approaches should emphasize collaboration. It may be helpful to consider starting with needs assessments that involve residents and multiple agencies. There may be opportunity to share community knowledge and experience. This should look beyond single outcomes or one-time projects and consider long-term, sustainable improvements that enhance a community.

5. Supports for community engagement:

Flyers, word of mouth, social media, emails or newsletters can communicate about programs, events and initiatives. Regular communication and strategies for specific populations, such as having welcome packages for newcomers, are helpful. Inclusive programs should be at various times of the day. Referrals should aim to lessen duplication across services. Local nonprofits should offer space for community initiatives as well as support, motivate and when possible, provide honorariums for residents. Partnerships can share information about resources (e.g. training, funds) and connect residents, or others stakeholders.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Principles of community engagement

This section identifies principles of community engagement and useful questions when grassroots groups or nonprofits are at the early stages of planning a collaborative project with multiple partners. It should be understood that reality may not fit nicely into a table like this. You may only use some of these principles and only need to ask some questions. While CE can be complex, this may help to guide your work.

1. Preparation:
Start with a plan to identify a purpose and goal(s). You may think about what you do or do not know about the community. It is important to know who to engage and why.

2. Relationships:
Identify stakeholders and build trust. You will need others to commit to the goal. It is important to have partners and allies for strong, successful change.

6. Commitment:
Actions can have unexpected impacts on the community, either positive or negative. This may go beyond the planned length of time. Prepare a strategy for sustainable, continuous effort or collaboration.

3. Diversity:
There should be recognition of and respect for diversity of identities (e.g. culture, religion, abilities, race, gender, class, sexuality). Design an approach that is inclusive and anti-oppressive.

5. Capacity:
Successful engagement will develop capacities. This may change relationships, institutions, individuals, coalitions or partnerships and policies, programs or resources. This can spark leadership and be willing to let others take control.

4. Transparency:
Engagement should be open to ideas, solutions and changes. Make opportunities for meaningful contributions, or a process that is open and flexible. Have clear rules, tasks and records that are known to everyone.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Other Questions for Consideration:

What is the **purpose or concern of the project**? Why?

Is it a requirement of funding, an agency mission, professional goal or **was it identified by community members**?

Is there evidence or **relevant history**? Who has the information?

How will you **collect information**?

How much **time, effort and resources** does the goal need?

What are the existing **partnerships, groups, assets** or **capacities**?

Do community members know you? How can you be known and **build trust**?

Is there benefit or **harm to engagement**? How will this be communicated?

What sources of **diversity** are relevant? (e.g. economic status, education level, health, ability, age, ethnicity, etc.)

Are there dynamics of **power and politics**? Who has influence?

How can this be **inclusive**?

Are there barriers to **inclusion**?

Who is responsible for an outcome? Can the community hold you and partners accountable? How can this be **equitable and transparent**?

What are the **capacity differences** between organizations, residents and other stakeholders?

Will there be **community control** of the process and ownership of the outcome?

What do community members and partners **expect** from one another?

How will this make **new resources** or capacities? What happens at the end?

How will the community **benefit from the outcome**?

What will the community receive as a **tangible deliverable**?

CASE STUDIES

Chapter 3

Thorncliffe Collaborative for Muslim Children and Families

Thorncliffe Collaborative for Muslim Children and Families receives support from the Children's Aid Society, and is made up of local nonprofits and residents in Thorncliffe Park. It began as an agency committee seeking resident advisors but has become a resident-led table. Its goal is to support Muslim families and children by improving access to culturally appropriate services. The residents lead work to empower parents with information and build the capacity of service providers to support Muslim families. Their efforts create strong resident representation that strengthen community networks and resources.

Impactful practices and examples:

1. **Education:** providing workshops and raising awareness for Muslim families. Topics such as children with special needs (e.g. autism), mental health supports.

2. **Knowledge:** seeking and sharing information to identify local views. Needs assessment, focus groups and feedback from residents.

3. **Connector:** networking with service providers and outreaching to residents. Bringing people together for local projects or programs.

Principles in practice:

Diversity: emphasize diversity as strength and support inclusion of Muslim families.

Relationships: partner with organizations, build trust with families and maintain a strong presence in community.

Capacity: build on resources to empower parents and seek more residents to have voice in collaborative.

Safeera Mulla and Munira Khilji, Founders of Thorncliffe Collaborative

Neighbours Night Out in Thorncliffe Park

Neighbours Night Out was started by a group of residents who had initially participated on an advisory committee for the community center. The goal of their event is to improve the community space and public safety by encouraging neighbours to meet in a local park. Since 2006, it grew from few resources to many partners, sponsors, and volunteers. This has been a popular multicultural and social event with 1,000+ attendees for over 10 years.

Neighbours Night Out, 13th Annual Event, July 2018

Impactful practices and examples:

1. **Engagement:** organizing community event for resident participation.

Annual event for residents, volunteers or local vendors.

2. **Connection:** networking with sponsors or partners and outreach to residents.

Use relationships for event success, such as efficient permit process.

3. **Diversity:** inclusion and celebration of residents' cultures.

Principles in practice:

Relationships: connect with residents, sponsors and other stakeholders.

Commitment: long-term project that has grown and has credibility.

Diversity: inclusion and celebration of residents' cultures.

Flemingdon Community Support Services

This is a resident-led grassroots group committed to building a strong and vibrant Flemingdon Park. In 2013, they began after a steering committee identified many community needs and priorities. Since then, FCSS has developed community development projects to improve resident capacity, food access, public spaces, employment and more. This has been a consistent effort to engage residents, nonprofits, governments and other stakeholders in local improvement.

FCSS, Steering Committee - Multicultural Fall Festival, 2018 (1,200+ participants)

Impactful practices and examples:

1. **Advocacy:** lobbying decision makers or completing applications to improve community. a. Partnership Opportunities Legacies (POL) Fund and Section 37 funds for community assets.

2. **Knowledge:** using public opinion surveys to identify needs for advocacy.

a. Survey for community kitchen need.

3. **Engagement:** organizing community events for residents' civic engagement.

a. Annual Multicultural Festivals and nature walks.

4. **Education:** skill building for resident's knowledge and capacity.

a.   Food Handling certification and many health/wellbeing workshops.

5. **Innovation:** providing support and opportunities to local entrepreneurs.

a.   Urban Café (Flemingdon Park caterers)

Principles in practice:

1. **Preparation:** knowledge of community and needs, still continue to learn from community.

2. **Relationships:** build trust, collaborate and partner with residents or organizations.

3. **Capacity:** empower community members with skills building opportunities.

4. **Commitment:** work consistently for over 5 years for community improvements.

Friends of Angela James Arena

Friends of Angela James Arena (FAJA) is a group of residents who came together to advocate for improvements to the Angela James arena. The goal of arena improvement was inspired by engaging the community in physical activities and needing space for this. For 5 years, they have done outreach, advocacy and more to successfully improve the local arena in Flemingdon Park.

Impactful practices and examples:

1. **Innovation:** seek new funders/opportunities and grow local interest in hockey.

a. Partnership Opportunities Legacy (POL) Fund and Kraft Hockeyville Contest for arena funding.

b. Ontario Sledge Hockey Exhibition Game to engage community.

Principles in practice:

Relationships: build trust with residents, stakeholders and partners.

Commitment: consistent over years and able to work anytime as this is not a '9-5' job.

Arena Renovation, Unveiling Ceremony, December 2018
with Toronto Mayor John Tory

Friends of Flemingdon Park

Formed in 2015, Friends of Flemingdon Park (FOF) is a grassroots collaborative of residents from both Friends of Angela James Arena and Flemingdon Community Support Services. Led by four volunteer community leads who are residents of the Flemingdon park neighborhood, they regularly meet with other residents, local agencies, government actors and other partners. FOF has become a strong voice for the neighbourhood by finding common goals and working on local priorities. They have a unique table for the neighbourhood to collaborate. In the past four years, their focus areas have been information sharing, enhancing community infrastructure, recreational facilities and public spaces, improving accessibility to spaces for community use, community safety, and civic engagement.

When the opportunity was presented to apply for a Partnership Opportunies Legacy (POL) Fund - a large infrastructural fund offered by the City - FOF came together with multiple partners to come up with a number of grant ideas to make improvements to the neighborhood. Altogether, FOF partners applied to the POL fund with seven project proposals. They collectively planned which partners were best positioned to lead each project, and were able to coordinate their grant applications together. This inclusive model of community engagement has enabled partners to avoid duplication and lessen competition for funds, that way each group is supporting each other towards a common goal to enhance community development and engagement within Flemingdon Park.

Friends of Flemingdon Park Continued

Impactful practices and examples:

1. **Knowledge:** collecting information to advocate for local needs.

a. Public opinion surveys and community safety audit to validate advocacy.

2. **Engagement:** creating space for community members to gather or share information.

a. Quarterly FOF newsletters, advocacy and regular community building events.

b. Making improvements to public spaces and recreational facilities through community input, ie. basketball court renovation,Flemingdon Park mural and community gardens to increase sense of community belonging and public safety

3. **Connector:** bringing people together to discuss and advocate for community

a. Town halls and All Candidate meetings to increase voter education, connecting residents with politicians from all levels of government.

Flemingdon Park mural commemorating residents lost to gun violence

Sex Education by Theatre

Sex Education by Theatre (SExT) began as a participatory action research project focusing on the issue of equal access to sexual health education during public protests against sex education reform in Thorncliffe and Flemingdon Parks, communities with a high Muslim population. In 2014, a university researcher in partnership with the local health centre and high school, engaged and empowered youth to use theatre to facilitate education and discussion about sexual health. Since then, nearly 20 youth were trained as Peer Educators and have used performing arts (songs, dances, plays) to express topics affecting their health and wellbeing (e.g. gender roles, consent, racism). For over four years, local youth have performed over 60 times reaching more than 6,000 young audience members.

Impactful practices and examples:

1. **Education:** using health promotion and theatre to improve access to information. Workshops for youth about sexual and mental health promotion. Performances to explore preconceptions of youth, diversity and sexuality.

2. **Knowledge:** using qualitative and quantitative research to study project benefits.Data collection about impact on youth participants and audiences.

3. **Innovation:** designing arts-based education and fostering a non-judgmental environment.
SExT Peer Educators performances across Toronto and Canada.

Principles in practice:

1. **Capacity:** engage and empower youth to voice their perspectives on sexual health.

2. **Diversity:** focus on culturally relevant peer education and celebrate diverse identities.

3. **Commitment:** beyond one-time research to continue performances for over 4 years.

Cast of SExT

Hijabi Ballers

Hijabi Ballers is a youth-led group that engages the Thorncliffe and Flemingdon Park communities, as well as people across Toronto and worldwide. The goal is to celebrate and support Muslim female athletes. Local youth, agency partners, industry experts and more, commit their time to this goal. The group has succeeded in creating a powerful online presence. They are creating dialogue and fostering allyship for Muslim female athletes beyond their community. In these neighbourhoods, the group focuses on sport and mentorship opportunities.

Impactful practices and examples:

1. **Representation:** having a group that community and wider audience can identify with. Social media posts to celebrate Muslim female athletes.
2. **Engagement:** organizing opportunities to celebrate and support athletes. Annual events for community and drop-in sports activities for girls.

Hijabi Ballers Summer Festival, 2018

Principles in practice:

Relationships: seek local and industry partners to reach goal.

Diversity: recognition of the Muslim female's abilities and focus on role models for Muslim girls to identify with.

Capacity: build Muslim females' confidence and ability to succeed in sports.

Flemingdon Health Centre

As a community health centre, FHC provides support and resources for many community engagement projects. The goal is to contribute to health equity and community capacity building. Over many years, they have engaged the community while the agency has also collaborated with other groups and partners. These efforts take careful planning to consider all engagement and collaboration processes. Flemingdon Health Centre provides consistent support for existing and emerging resident-led groups.

Impactful practices and examples:

1. **Consultation:** involving community members to inform them on project implementation.
a. Resident Advisory groups to collaborate with and empower community.
b. Food Town Hall meeting to hear from community members and stakeholders.
2. **Education:** training and supporting residents to educate their community.
Peer Health Ambassadors to lead health promotion programs.
3. **Innovation:** advocating and collaborating to address food security needs in community, ie. Oriole Food Space in partnership with North York Harvest Food Bank and Working Women Community Centre.

Principles in practice:

Relationships: build trust and work with residents, nonprofits and other stakeholders.
Diversity: recognize diversity to make space for all voices or perspectives.
Capacity: strengthen community resources and skills building for residents.
Commitment: prioritize community engagement and continue or start new initiatives.

Wellness Café

This was a three year resident-led project funded by Ontario Trillium Foundation and developed by Afghan Women's Organization (AWO) Refugee and Immigrant Services. The goal was to raise awareness about mental health in immigrant and refugee communities. A group was trained to lead workshops and activities at various partner agencies or community spaces. Through peer support, the project was able to increase awareness of mental health and decrease stigma in talking about it or seeking help for immigrant and refugee communities. Upon completion of the Wellness Café, some participants went on to be leaders for new projects or active volunteers in the community. This built their capacity to support one another, contribute to local goals and advocate for local needs. Although it was started by an agency, Wellness Café was able to sustain itself independently beyond its initial grant cycle, even going on to acquire new funds without financial support or agency affiliation.

Welness Café Group

Wellness Café Continued

Impactful practices and examples:

1. Socialization: making space for residents to talk and build social support networks.

a. Regular meetings to discuss experiences and challenges, such as a family separation due to immigration.

2. Education: providing workshops for mental health information.

a. Peer Leaders facilitate culturally and linguistically appropriate activities.

3. Innovation: learning from participants and developing project over time.

a. Design peer model for mental wellbeing in immigrant and refugee communities.

4. Engagement: seeking community involvement throughout the project.

a. Peer led events such as Wellness Fair and Wellness Walk.

b. Event for agencies to share best practices about peer support model.

Principles in practice:

1. Relationships: build trust with residents, share resources with partner agencies and link groups with community.

2. Diversity: use of culture and language to engage immigrant and refugee communities.

3. Capacity: empower and motivate community members through support and mentorship.

DISCUSSION

Chapter 4

DISCUSSION

This section will discuss factors to consider when moving forward with a CE project, partnership or initiative. The first part will highlight some ways to measure and account for CE. The second part will describe connectors, enablers and opportunities. The final section will briefly discuss some limitations to identify.

Accounting for Community Engagement

The impact of community engagement is not necessarily measurable with normal accountability standards. While it can have positive local benefits and reduce future costs for governments or funders, CE uses the time and resources of nonprofits and citizens. This may be draining without enough support. A civic footprint model can show the contributions by a nonprofit (e.g. programs and space) as well as connections between nonprofits and citizens (e.g. volunteering, collaborating & advocating), (Shier, M., McDougle, L. and Handy, F, 2014). Social reporting or accounting can measure how contributions and connections provide benefits (Richmond, B., Mook, L. and Quarter, J, 2003). These help to identify the time and resources needed. It is important for nonprofits and funders to consider the actual costs of this work.

Other accountability considerations:

 Grassroots or resident-led groups may struggle to fund CE projects because of accountability requirements set by funders. When funding is made available, the burden of accounting for and evaluating their work may be too much.
Funds may create competition instead of collaboration. This may be direct competition, such as an agency having to choose between applying for the fund or trusteeing for a group to apply. Indirect competition may be when residents and agencies work together but one takes the lead.

Community engagement is not possible without strong relationships among residents and nonprofits. There should be consideration into how policies or processes will impact these relationships. Engagement may be how programs gain participants and volunteers or it may be how public space gains a new purpose. This work can be difficult when there are too many delays, rules or bureaucracy and not enough resources or time.

Connectors and Enablers

There are three types of connectors that enable communities: bonds, bridges and vertical ties.

1. **Bonds**, for residents, could be with neighbours that live nearby, who are part of a sports program, a school parent council, or attend other programs together. For nonprofits, there can be bonds among staff in local networks. These are the people that are likely to support a community initiative.
2. **Bridges** connect residents and nonprofits to support outside of their community. A resident group may partner with similar grassroots groups or a nonprofit may join a network of service providers. These bridges make it possible to share ideas and advocate for issues that impact many communities.
3. **Vertical ties** are really bonds and bridges to influential persons or institutions. Residents or nonprofits can have bonds at the local level or bridges out of the community that connect to funders, decision-makers or others. These create opportunities to fund initiatives or advocate for change.

Opportunities in Toronto

There are many ways to enable community engagement, particularly efforts led by residents. For nonprofits, this could be done by creating resident advisory positions or supporting local leaders. It is worthwhile to consider how a project can plug into the community. For residents in certain neighbourhoods, there may be specific funds or opportunities.

Some recent City projects include: the Neighbourhood Grants program, the Partnership Opportunities Legacy (POL) fund and resident advisory positions. The benefit of involving the community can be that local priorities and appropriate practices will be at the center of work. Future CE should aim to collaborate across the City to build new bridges and strengthen grassroots mentorship. There may be untapped potential in reaching governments and businesses. It is important to consider how supporting residents can foster government accountability for local needs. Furthermore, corporate partners may have expertise, volunteers, funds or other resources set aside for community work. Oftentimes, opportunities can have a domino effect where the right connections will enable future efforts.

City of Toronto grants, opportunities and partnerships can be found online:
https://www.toronto.ca/community-people/get-involved/community/

An Illustrative Case of Community Connections
Think back to Friends of Flemingdon Park.
Here is an example of how to enable CE:
Residents and nonprofits were concerned about community safety in a park. Ties to municipal staff made the opportunity to fund the painting of a mural. A member bridged the group to an outside nonprofit that had the skills for this. Bonds with residents and nonprofits helped with completing the mural. When it was time to unveil the project, members took the chance to make vertical ties. In addition to politicians they were already connected with, they invited some local celebrities, media outlets and charitable funders. Their mural was not only an impactful CE project, but their effort in making new ties led to future work. Friends of Flemingdon Park was able to continue with more funds to improve an area near the mural.

Limitations

Although this guide aims to strengthen local knowledge, there are gaps it is unable to fill. Many of these gaps were identified by the community at the 2017 Community Engagement Symposium. Throughout the guide development, efforts were made to address these limitations but these will remain ongoing issues. This information may be helpful to think about how you, your organization or group can impact sustainable efforts in the community.

Lists - **there is a need for comprehensive information about community resources.** information like a **community calendar** or 'yellowpages'

- ie. resident leaders / trained residents, spaces, activities, services, politicians, trainings / workshops, funds, networks / members, meetings.

Local data - there is a need to share all of the data collected about the community.

- any **evidence** to inform plans and actions
- ie. case studies, program evaluations, project reports, needs assessments.

Tools & templates - there is a need for easy access to resources that will help with community engagement and development.

- resources that are like **'how to' guides and toolkits**
- ie. resident leadership, needs assessments, planning, budgeting, grant writing, deputations / advocacy, collaboration / collective impact.

These particular requests were implying the integration of web resources for a guide that is interactive and updatable. Further, there was interest in continuing annual events, writing different language translations and supporting the guide use with workshops. At the time, this was beyond the capacity of FTIAN members. However, it is important to acknowledge these needs. Please contact **ftiancontact@gmail.com** if you have any questions, helpful information or feedback on developing resources for the community.

Conclusion

Ultimately, this Promising Practices Guide is meant to give a basic overview of community engagement grounded in local case studies from Flemingdon Park and Thorncliffe Park communities, with the hope of encouraging positive outcomes in other communities across Toronto and beyond . We would like to acknowledge all those attendees of the FTIAN Community Engagement Symposium, the FTIAN CE Working Group, resident groups, nonprofits, funders and the public sector for contributing to this Promising Practices Guide. We would also like to thank Katelynn Trotter, the principle author of this guide. For further support, the last section of this toolkit is a Resource List for community partners to draw from when embarking on future community engagement initiatives.

Additional Sources:

Shier, M., McDougle, L. and Handy, F (2014). Nonprofits and the promotion of civic engagement: a conceptual framework for understanding the civic footprint of nonprofits in local communities.

Richmond, B., Mook, L. and Quarter, J. (2003). Social accounting for nonprofits: two models.

Dale, A. and Newman, L. (2010). Social capital: a necessary and sufficient condition for sustainable community development?

http://www.artscapediy.org/Creative-Placemaking-Toolbox/Who-Are-My-Stakeholders-and-How-Do-I- Engage-Them/A-Guide-to-Engaging-the-Community-in-Your-Project.aspx#

We are truly appreciative for the many valuable tools created by ArtReach and their partners.

RESOURCE TOOL BOX

Resource Toolbox

Community Building Skills (https://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents)
This is like an online book that has many chapters about skills and topics to learn about. It is a website with access to valuable knowledge for community building. Try this if you want to know a specific topic, such as: leadership, advocacy, finances and partnerships.

Community Consultation
(http://www.artscapediy.org/Creative-Placemaking-Toolbox/Who-Are-My-Stakeholders-and-How-Do-I- Engage-Them/A-Guide-to-Engaging-the-Community-in-Your-Project.aspx#)
This toolbox will explain what to consider before engaging stakeholders and provide tips for the consultation process. This is specifically for urban planning and building developments. It may be of use if you want to learn about consultation methods or to approach a developer about their consultation process. It is particularly useful to find links for learning more about a consultation technique.

Community Organizing
(https://residentactionproject.files.wordpress.com/2017/05/rap-toolkit-for-organizing.pdf)
This toolkit will guide you through getting together with your neighbourhoods and having a successful meeting. It covers identifying action / issue, planning a meeting, facilitating discussion, canvassing the neighbourhood, posting on social media and taking care of yourself. Try this for many tips about starting to organize or simply improve your skills.

Evaluation (https://artreach.org/toolkits/evaluation101/)
This guide will introduce you to tools and approaches for evaluation. It can be a difficult process but it is very rewarding to identify outcomes and impacts for future support. You will learn about more than written reports, an entire section is about creative arts-based approaches. Use this to develop a plan and select tools that will help your evaluation.

Event Planning (https://artreach.org/toolkits/eventplanning/)
This resource will teach you about how to plan events of all types. It explains the important first step of finding a sponsor or grant to fund an event. It will guide you through each detail, including: event design and plans, coordination, implementation and evaluation. Try this if you are unsure of what to expect during event planning.

Fundraising (https://artreach.org/toolkits/fundraising101/)

This is an in-depth (i.e. long but useful) resource to learn about fundraising techniques and principles. It will teach you about how to share your message with letter writing and engage potential or current donors. These tips and strategies are mostly for letter mail or events; online fundraising is a new strategy you can research too. Try this if you don't know where to start or if you think it won't help your cause (because it really can).

Grant Writing (https://artreach.org/toolkits/grantwriting/)

This guide will describe the process of applying for grants and provide tips to strengthen your proposal. It is very helpful if you are feeling overwhelmed by a grant or are wanting to review an application. Try looking at key sections if you think a specific part needs improvement, such as: background, project, budget or evaluation.

Neighbourhood Action Tools
(https://www.hamilton.ca/sites/default/files/media/browser/2015-03-06/naptoolkit.pdf)

This toolkit, made for Hamilton neighbourhoods, will provide information on how to engage and change your community. You can learn about action plans, asset maps, meeting checklists, terms of reference, decision making, media releases, data collection, vision statements and workplans. This will give you step by step details and some useful templates or links. Try this to turn ideas into actions.

Workshops (https://artreach.org/toolkits/creatingaworkshop/)

This is a 4-step outline for planning a workshop. It will help if you are new to creating workshops or you are looking for tips to improve workshops. There are many questions to ask about your plans and tips for a smooth process. Try this to learn more and use new tools for workshop planning.

APPENDIX

Symposium Budget

Expenses		Resources	
Facility	600	Supplies (stationary)	300 (in-kind)
Refreshments	1,300	Transit	300 (in-kind)
Honorarium (10 speakers $50)	500	Prints	300 (in-kind)
Child care	'free'	Agency Pledges	2,550
Misc.	in-kind		

Case Study Criteria

Group / Speaker	Neighbourhood / Population	Leadership	Issue / focus	Uniqueness / expertise

Symposium Agenda

9:30 – 10:00am	**Registration & Networking**
10:05 -10:14am	Welcome Remarks: Moderators Mussarat Ejaz and Geoff Kettel
10:14 - 10:20am	Dignitary welcome and remarks: Michael Coteau, MPP Don Valley East
10:20 - 11:20am	Presentations by local resident led groups, 10 mins each
	1. Friends of Angela James Arena
	2. Neighbours Night Out
	3. Flemingdon Community Support Services
	4. Thorncliffe Collaborative for Muslim Families and Children
11:20 -11:35am	**15 min break**
11:35 – 12:35pm	Break Outs
12:35 – 12:40pm	Introduce SExT and show film clip
12:40 – 12:50pm	Performance by SExT (5min) and Q&A (5min)
12:50 - 1:30pm	**Lunch**
	1:30 -2:15pm - Presentations by one local health centre and two community groups/organizations outside the community, 10 mins each
	1. Flemingdon Health Centre
	2. Jane Finch Action Against Poverty
	3. RISE Edutainment
2:15 -3:00 pm	Group Activity
3:00pm – 3:20pm	Summary and evaluation
3:20 – 3:25pm	Dignitary Closing: Yasmin Ratansi, MP Don Valley East
3:25 – 3:30pm	Thanks, wrap up
3:30pm – 4:00pm	**Clean Up**

<div align="center">

Breakout Session Questions

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1. What are the unique qualities the presenters used to engage their communities?
2. What makes a resident led initiative unique?
3. What are the different approaches that stood out?
4. After hearing the presentations, what trust building strategies stood out?
5. How do you build trust in your community?
6. What does innovation mean to you in regards of community engagement?
7. How can you support community engagement in your community?
8. How can you support residents/groups/agencies in the building of a resident-led leadership, partnership and infrastructure in the community?
9. If a resource toolbox were to be developed, what would you like to see in it?
10. What innovative community engagement opportunities can you think of that could be used in the Thorncliffe, Flemingdon, Victoria Village and/or O'Connor neighbourhoods?
11. What are some challenges within community engagement?

1. Please describe yourself: (check all that apply) ❏ community resident   ❏ grassroots leader   ❏
funder   ❏ researcher   ❏ work/volunteer for organization/group ❏ other:_____

2. What did you like or find useful about this event? (please check all that apply)

❏ Interesting speakers/good presentations
❏ Good discussion
❏ Well organized
❏ Opportunity to meet others/resident groups
❏ Opportunity to share my experience and get
feedback
❏ Opportunity to learn more about the issues

❏ Opportunity to learn about other community
initiatives
❏ Opportunity to network
❏ Comfortable meeting space
❏ Convenient location
❏ Convenient meeting time

Comments:_____
_____
_____

3. How will you use the information presented at the event? (please check all that apply)

❏ Use it in my work
❏ Use it to develop my skills
❏ Share it with my co-workers
❏ Use it in my community

❏ Share it with community/family members
❏ Use it to advocate for social change
❏ Make a public deputation
❏ Other (please specify below)

Comments:_____

4. How could this event improve in the future?
_____
_____
_____

5. How did you hear about this event?
❏ Invitation   ❏ Facebook   ❏ Email   ❏ Word of mouth   ❏ Flyer   ❏ Other _____

6. What was your biggest learning from today's session?
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____