



United Way
of York Region

Community Investment Priorities 2011-2016

November 2009

United Way of York Region's Community Investment Priorities 2011-2016

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Background

In September 2008, United Way of York Region (“UWYR”) released the document: *...if addressed*. This report identified the need for open discussion on the *pace, face and place of growth in York Region* to help UWYR align its planning and work to address the Region’s most pressing issues.

In October 2008, UWYR initiated discussions with its key stakeholders to explore opinions on how to best realize the burning platform presented in the *...if addressed* report. It was agreed that UWYR would take consideration of the geography and demographics of the Region in determining its future priorities and that the process should utilize community and evidence-based decision-making. As a result, a community engagement and research plan was mapped out to support two complementary and parallel processes: development of strategic plan, 2010-2013, and community investment priorities, 2011-2016.

In 2009, UWYR undertook a series of community engagement and research activities, the aim of which was to identify critical social needs in York Region. These activities provided essential information in helping to determine UWYR community priorities for 2011-2016. Community engagement activities undertaken in 2009 included:

York Region Community Survey (conducted by The Nielsen Company)

An online survey was sent to an e-panel comprised of York Region residents. The purpose of the survey was to identify the critical social issues in York Region and to explore residents’ opinions on charities, UWYR and donating. The top six most critical social issues of concern identified by residents were youth, employment, families, affordable housing and homelessness, poverty and population growth. When asked to identify the single most important critical issue, residents identified youth, employment, and population growth.

Community Dialogues

Six Focus Groups further explored the critical social issues of youth and employment as identified in the Community Survey. Participants were asked to further define the critical issues regarding youth and employment, and programs or services that may address these issues.

Community Issue Panels

Two open discussions were held with expert panels, bringing together a broad range of constituents including community residents, service providers, government representatives and planners. Each of the two Issue Panels included a panel of experts presenting on a select area of focus, followed by roundtable discussions that gathered feedback from participants on best practices, neighbourhood support models and new or innovative programs.

Review of Supporting Research

UWYR completed a review of Statistics Canada, Census 2006 data; York Region statistical information; investment areas of other United Ways and related research.

In addition, UWYR met with member agencies and conducted a survey to gather their feedback on critical social needs within York Region.

During this year-long process of extensive community engagement and consultation, UWYR listened to the many and diverse voices across the Region. UWYR heard not only stories of issues and needs but also stories of strength, opportunity and resilience. As noted in the document **addressing OUR STRENGTHS** released by UWYR in October 2009, it was clear that York Region residents, service providers and donors are proud of their overall quality of life and that they felt UWYR could play a key role in investing in community strengths.

Based on input from a broad range of community stakeholders, findings from qualitative and quantitative research and other sources of reliable and relevant information, three community investment priorities were proposed. A set of principles were followed in determining the community investment priorities. Each priority:

- Respects the vision and mission of UWYR
- Values the overall goal of creating self-sustaining and healthy communities within York Region
- Is based on reliable evidence and research that supports an identified community need
- Recognizes the social determinants of health as being the basis for establishing measurable outcomes
- Provides leveraging opportunities that are essential for maximizing the financial and human resources of UWYR
- Aligns with the strategic directions of the Regional Municipality of York, Government of Ontario and other United Ways in Canada

In October 2009, the UWYR Board of Directors approved the following three Community Investment Priorities:

- | | |
|----|--|
| A. | Helping Youth Grow Up Strong |
| B. | Enabling Individuals and Families to Achieve Economic Independence |
| C. | Improving the Wellbeing of Individuals and Communities |

This document provides details on the community investment priority framework which will guide UWYR in the development of a community investment model for 2011-2016. A summary of UWYR community investment priorities and summary reports on each of the afore-mentioned community engagement and research activities are included as Appendices.

Community Investment Priorities 2011-2016

A. Helping Youth Grow Up Strong

What did the community tell us?

- In the York Region Community Survey, residents identified Youth as one of the single most important critical social issues.
- When asked to imagine they had dollars to donate to address critical social issues in York Region, residents agreed that a sizeable portion of funds should be allotted to support programs and services that address issues and needs associated with youth.
- In the focus groups, participants identified the greatest areas of concern associated with youth were: mental health, addictions/drink/drugs, and engagement of youth.

What does the research tell us?

- *Statistics Canada and Region of York statistical information demonstrate the population growth of children and youth.*
 - According to Statistics Canada (2006 Census) there are 126,475 youth (aged 15-24) living in York Region – accounting for 14% of the total population.
 - From 2001 to 2006, youth 15-24 years increased by 24%.
 - From 2001 to 2006, the number of children between 0-14 years increased by 14%. This is much higher than the growth experienced in the rest of Ontario for this age group.
- *Research supports the use of evidence-based models for youth program planning and evaluation.*

40 Developmental Assets: The Asset Building model¹ is an example of an effective model that helps youth grow up strong. This model is broadly recognized within the United States and Canada as an effective tool for program planning and implementation.
- *Research supports the importance of youth engagement.*

“The Cost of Excluding Ontario’s Youth from Play, A Call to Action!”, Dr. Mark Totten, Youth Services Bureau of Ottawa, in collaboration with Playworks Partnership.

“Helping youth find the means to feel better and engage more fully in society costs no more at minimum and can result in substantial savings. Savings can be achieved because increasing the competencies and opportunities for engagement results in savings in other sectors. Physical activity has been referenced as resulting in fewer nervous system

¹ *40 Developmental Assets* – ages 12-18 - the building blocks of healthy development that help young people grow up healthy, caring, and responsible: Search Institute, Minneapolis, MN.

problems, less medication usage, lower anxiety, reduced reliance on subsidized child care, less counselling and reduced usage of food banks. It is estimated that \$1 invested in physical activity can save \$3 in health care costs. Taxpayers will be better off: for each dollar spent on quality programs, more than a dollar's worth of benefits are generated. Investments in the voluntary recreation sector can achieve substantial savings to the publicly funded health, social and corrections systems while at the same time improving the quality of people's lives. Huge savings in corrections can be made with a modest reinvestment in programs for youth who are at highest risk of engaging in criminal behaviour."

- *Research supports the importance of investing in early learning and children.* Implementing Early Learning in Ontario, Summary of the Report to the Premier by the Special Advisor on Early Learning Charles E. Pascal, June 2009
 - “Establishing a strong foundation in the early years, and building on it, is the single-most powerful key to Ontario’s social and economic future. Our best future is one where all our children are:
 - healthy and secure;
 - emotionally and socially competent;
 - eager, confident, and successful learners;
 - respectful of the diversity of their peers.”

What are others doing to support youth?

- The Ontario Government, Ministry of Children and Youth Services envisions an Ontario where all children and youth have the best opportunity to succeed and reach their full potential. The strategic framework 2008-2012, *Realizing Potential: Our Children, Our Youth, Our Future* guides the Ministry and its partners in delivering a shared commitment to children and youth. The Ministry is focussed on strategic goals that can only be reached if a mix of providers work together.
- United Ways of Ontario have launched a coordinated effort entitled: *“Supporting the Call for a Youth Provincial Framework”*, as recommended in the Roots of Violence Report, authored by former cabinet minister Alvin Curling and former Ontario Chief Justice Roy McMurtry. It is recognized that there needs to be better coordination of programs, services and investments aimed at improving the lives of young people. The call to action is for the Province of Ontario to take the lead in developing a strategy for meeting the basic human and developmental needs of young people. The needs of young people will be better met by working with a broad group of stakeholders to establish a shared vision for youth outcomes, and by building on existing programs and successful.

- York Region District School Board supports an integrated school/community model and is calling for a more focused, intentional framework of integration, supported by the broader community.

What is UWYR doing to support youth?

In 2009-2010, UWYR invested 55% of its funding in 49 programs across York Region that help youth grow up strong.²

Moving forward, what will UWYR's community investment priority framework look like for youth?

UWYR will support initiatives that reflect the building blocks of healthy development that help young people grow up healthy, caring, and responsible.

Identified focus areas

UWYR will direct resources to the following focus areas, i.e. youth affected by the following:

- Mental health issues
- Substance abuse/addictions
- Social exclusion

Priority populations

Considering the above focus areas, the priority populations to be addressed within these focus areas are youth (primarily ages 12-18) that self-identify, or are identified by an agency, as being from one or more of the following groups:

- Low income
- Newcomer (0-10 years in Canada)
- Youth in lone parent family

Expected outcomes

UWYR will direct resources to programs and activities that demonstrate success in helping youth to grow up strong with the following expected and measured outcomes:

1. Increased self esteem, sense of purpose, and optimism.
2. Increased positive/healthy behaviours, and constructive use of time.
3. Increased sense of belonging, connectedness and social support net.
4. Increased motivation to do well at school and to be engaged in learning.

²... addressing OUR STRENGTHS, United Way of York Region, 2009

Community Investment Priorities 2011-2016

B. Enabling Individuals and Families to Achieve Economic Independence

What did the community tell us?

- In the York Region Community Survey, residents identified Employment as one of the single most important critical social issues.
- When asked to imagine they had dollars to donate to address critical social issues in York Region, residents agreed that a sizeable portion of funds should be allotted to support programs and services that address issues and needs associated with employment.
- In focus groups conducted by UWYR, participants identified the greatest areas of concern associated with employment were “working poverty”, gaining and retaining meaningful employment, life skills and job skills training. In addition, participants identified the need for accessibility to affordable housing.

What does the research tell us?

- *Statistics Canada and Region of York statistical information and research findings demonstrate the growth in the number of lone parent families and low income families.*
 - According to Statistics Canada, 2006 Census: from 2001 to 2006 the number of families in York Region increased by 23%.
 - Lone parent families grew by 37%; 12% of children lived in lone parent families. Georgina had the highest proportion of lone parents at 16%.
 - York Region has seen an increase in high income households, but at the same time, the low income population in York Region is increasing. In 2006, about 13%, or 112,501 residents lived in low income households – 55% more than in 2001.
 - With the exception of one York Region municipality, the number of children living in low income households increased at a faster rate than the change in the overall child population between 2001 and 2006.
 - “Greater Trouble in Greater Toronto, Child Poverty in the GTA” reveals that 50 per cent of Ontario’s children in poverty now live in the GTA, up from 44 per cent in 1997. In the City of Toronto, all growth in the number of children living in poverty since 1997 occurred in the inner suburbs, where abysmally high rates of child poverty now surpass those of downtown.
- *Statistics Canada and Region of York statistical information demonstrate an increase in unemployment.*
 - As of 2006, York Region’s labour force was 500,060 making it the third-largest labour force in Ontario. The unemployment was 5.4% - the second lowest rate in the GTA. However, between 2001 and 2006, unemployment rates increased in all nine municipalities with Markham and Newmarket having the highest increases.

- *Statistics Canada and Region of York statistical information and research findings demonstrate an increase in housing costs and demand for affordable housing options.*
 - In 2006, 27% of owned residences in York Region spent 30% or more of their household income on housing costs compared to Ontario at 21%.
 - In 2006, 48% of the tenant-occupied residences spent 30% or more of their household income on housing costs. This was the highest proportion in the GTA.
 - Between 2001 and 2006, the percentage of low income residents increased by 55% and the demand for affordable housing options continued to rise.
 - In 2008, there were 6,028 social housing units operated or administered by the Region and over 5,838 households were on the waiting list for a unit. From January to December 2008, the waiting list increased by 5% (301 households).
 - *At Risk in the Suburbs? Immigrants' Housing Needs and Challenges in York Region.* Conclusions of this research report include housing challenges in suburbs are largely due to immigrants' low incomes exacerbated by shortage of affordable housing, lack of services in suburbs and household size. These issues are more pronounced for women, seniors and certain classes of immigrants.

- *Research findings demonstrate troubling trends in food security.*
 - *Hunger in the Midst of Prosperity: The Need for Food Banks in York Region: 2008 (York Region Food Network):*
 "While the socio-economic status of Region residents continued to improve, food bank utilization continued to grow. We witnessed that over the past decade socio-economic status of food bank clients also improved but that the costs of shelter in the Region continued to pose a barrier to food access. While food bank utilization has not increased as forecast, troubling trends in the Region and food bank clientele continue."
 - 42% of clients fed in 2007 were children.
 - Every month 5,000 residents access emergency food programs in York Region.

- *Research supports the need for services specifically for identified high risk groups.³*
 - Particular groups tend to be at a higher risk for living in low income households. These groups include: people with disabilities, female lone-parents, people living alone, recent immigrants and aboriginal people. It is these groups that require a strengthened safety net by improving their

³ From Just the Facts About Your Community, Diversity of Residents Living in York Region: Employment and Income, York Region, Statistics Canada, Census, 2001 and 2006.

- connectedness to programs and services that will help them seek employment, housing, food security and social supports.
- Markham and Vaughan are the two most highly populated areas in the Region with significant growth. Research findings indicate that in each of these areas there are neighbourhoods that face risk factors that may affect the quality of life for residents, e.g. housing costs have increased disproportionately to residents' income; skilled immigrants and newcomers unable to find meaningful employment.

What are others doing to support those trying to achieve economic independence?

- Employment Ontario, through a network of employment and training programs and services, provides job creation partnerships and labour market partnership programs.
- The Regional Municipality of York is committed to significant funding that addresses homelessness issues and creating and maintaining affordable housing and shelter for those in need.
- York South Simcoe Training and Adjustment Board works with the community to identify and implement local labour solutions to address local labour market issues. *The Trends, Opportunities & Priorities (TOP) Report* released April 2009, identifies current trends and issues related to employment. It identifies an increasing unemployment rate (though not significant) and the needs of marginalized workers in York Region.
- The York Region Alliance to End Homelessness, a coalition of social service agencies and other stakeholders, has initiated and managed a variety of studies and activities that identify the need for transportation, housing and food security to assist those in need.
- The primary mission of the Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council (TRIEC) is to create and champion solutions to better integrate skilled immigrants in the Greater Toronto Region labour market.
- The Wellesley Institute and the Ontario Housing Network are dedicated to one goal: stable and affordable housing for all Canadians. Their research and reporting is critical to supporting policy changes and community action on improving housing security.

What is UWYR doing to support individuals and families to achieve economic independence?

In 2009-2010, UWYR invested 17% of its funding in 14 programs across York Region that enable people to achieve economic independence.⁴

Moving forward, what will UWYR's community investment priority framework look like in order to enable individuals and families to achieve economic independence?

UWYR will support initiatives that increase the capacity of individuals and families to become economically independent.

Identified focus areas

UWYR will direct resources to the following focus areas, i.e. those that assist individuals and families to obtain stability with:

- Employment
- Housing
- Food security

Priority populations

Considering the above focus areas, the priority populations to be addressed within these focus areas are those that self-identify, or are identified by an agency, as being from one or more of the following groups:

- Newcomer (0-10 years in Canada)
- Marginalized worker and marginalized unemployed, i.e. those with disabilities and aging workers
- Female lone-parent

Expected outcomes

UWYR will direct resources to programs and activities that demonstrate success in helping individuals to build their capacity with the following expected and measured outcomes:

1. Increased literacy and job skills training.
2. Increased capacity and success in obtaining meaningful employment.
3. Increased capacity and success in accessing and maintaining stable housing.
4. Increased food security.

⁴ ...addressing OUR STRENGTHS, United Way of York Region, 2009

Community Investment Priorities 2011-2016

C. Improving the Wellbeing of Individuals and Communities

What did the community tell us?

- Through the York Region Community Survey, residents identified population growth as a critical social issue: how do we keep pace with supports to ensure the wellbeing of individuals and communities?
- UWYR member agencies identified the growth in population as an issue due to the increase in demand for services. Agencies' ability to meet client needs is challenged due to the rapidly changing and growing demand and profile of clients (e.g. increase in diversity of newcomers and immigrants).
- To improve the wellbeing of individuals and communities, the findings from a member agency consultation and two Issue Panels hosted by UWYR, express the critical need for open, accessible space for community engagement and the provision of social services.

What does the research tell us?

- *Statistics Canada and Region of York statistical information demonstrates continued population growth and increased diversity.*
- Between 2001 and 2006, York Region population grew by 22% to 892,712. Markham, Vaughan, and Richmond Hill account for 74% of the total population of York Region.
Population Distribution (%) By Municipality

Markham	29%
Vaughan	27
Richmond Hill	18
Newmarket	8
Aurora	5
Georgina	5
Whitchurch-Stouffville	3
East Gwillimbury	3
King	2
- From 2001 – 2006 Immigration and language trends:
 - The number of recent immigrants in Newmarket almost doubled.
 - Aurora had the highest growth rate for all immigrants.
 - 57% of Markham's residents are foreign born – the 2nd highest proportion in Canada.
 - The municipalities with a significant number of residents with no knowledge of English or French are: Markham, Vaughan and Richmond Hill.
- The number of people with disabilities⁵ increased by an estimated 49,700 (55%).

⁵ Definition for disabilities: difficulties with daily activities and the reduction in the amount or kind of activities due to physical or mental conditions or health problems.)

- *Research identifies indicators of mental wellbeing for individuals.*
Public Health Agency of Canada. Indicators of Mental Health
 - Conceptually, mental health is treated as a set of attributes that permit an individual to carry out valued functions with *reserve capacity or resilience* and thus to cope effectively with challenges to both mental and physical functioning.
Indicators of mental health and determinants:
 - sense of coherence or wellbeing
 - self-esteem
 - sense of mastery
 - happiness and interest in life
 - depression
 - distress
 - cognitive impairment
- *Research identifies populations who face particular mental health challenges.*
Canadian Mental Health Association, Ontario
Mental illness affects everyone, directly or indirectly, but some groups face particular challenges, for example:

Aboriginal People

 - Many mental health problems of Aboriginal people arise from a long history of colonization, residential school trauma, discrimination and oppression, and losses of land, language and livelihood.

Children and Youth

 - People recognize the importance of a healthy childhood, but few understand the critical part played by mental and emotional problems and how important and harmful they can be for children and youth throughout the growing years.

Immigrants and Refugees

 - Although mental illnesses have similar symptoms across cultures, their manifestations and how people describe and interpret symptoms vary with ethnicity and culture.

Women

 - Women have unique experiences of mental illness. Women have depression more often than men, for example, and are depressed in different ways. Mothers with mental illness face particular challenges.

Seniors

 - Many seniors lead fulfilling lives without significant physical or cognitive changes. But for others, the challenges that come with aging can be debilitating.

- *Research identifies recognized markers for determining an individual's wellbeing*
 - Social determinants of health include for example, education, employment and working conditions, food security, health services, housing, income and income distribution, social inclusion/exclusion, social safety net and unemployment. These are recognized markers for determining a person's health and wellbeing.
 - *On Community Quality of Life*, Raphael, D., Renwick, R., Brown, I., Steinmetz, B., Sehdev, H., Phillips, S., Jan. 2001. *Making the links between community structure and individual wellbeing: community quality of life in Riverdale, Toronto, Canada.*
 "Being healthy involves more than avoiding being ill. Being healthy is being able to cope with life. We are interested in community and neighbourhood factors which affect health. These may involve how people within a community interact or the opportunities for employment and recreation. For many, an important factor may be the services which are available."
 - Programs and initiatives that build community supports and citizen involvement are valued as a means to help individuals and families to be more successful and achieve economic independence.

- *Research identifies new ways of measuring wellbeing.*
 The Institute of Wellbeing: The Canadian Index of Wellbeing
 - The Index provides data on eight key areas (health, standard of living, quality of the environment, time use, education and skills, community vitality, civic engagement, and arts and culture) which reflect health, social and economic measures including Community Vitality. The Index will report on trends and changes in areas that are vital to Canadians' quality of life.

- *Research supports strengthening neighbourhoods as a means to improve overall quality of life for residents.*
 The Caledon Institute of Social Policy: Action for Neighbourhood Change, Orienteering Over New Ground: A Neighbourhood Theory of Change
 - This report concludes that strengthening neighbourhoods is important for a variety of reasons that include investing directly in neighbourhoods can have a positive impact upon the economic and social health of the neighbourhood. The actions required include developing a collaborative neighbourhood governance framework that is resident-led in combination with comprehensive, system-wide support.
 - Neighbourhoods are strengthened by enhancing residents' access, participation, connectedness and decision-making in community activities and networks, human /social services supports, education and learning opportunities. To this end, there needs to be a systems approach to improve communities of interest.

What are others doing to support improving the wellbeing of individuals and communities?

- The Government of Ontario values the planning and delivering of integrated programs that improve the health of Ontarians. The Healthy Communities Fund has been created by the Government to fund organizations that take a holistic and integrated approach to improving health and wellness at the community level.
- The Ontario Minister of Health and Long-Term Care's Advisory Group on Mental Health and Addictions released a discussion paper on July 13, 2009. "Every Door is the Right Door" outlines a new approach for the provincial government. It emphasizes the need for all sectors of society – including primary health care, schools, community organizations and the police – to have the capacity to recognize the signs and symptoms of mental illnesses and addictions and be able to respond appropriately.
- The York Region Sustainability Strategy, Towards a Sustainable Region 2007 Report, states that “the Region strives to improve the quality of life and health of our residents...” The Region recognizes that the health of a community is based on social factors defined as the determinants of health. These include for example, social support networks, education and literacy, personal health practices and coping skills, and social environments.
- York Region District School Board is working towards increased engagement with community partners to address family and neighbourhood needs, e.g. activities in Performance Plus Elementary Schools (those in neighbourhoods where socio-economic factors present challenges to individual student achievement and success) may include family, students, York Region Police, and community social service agencies.

What is UWYR doing to support improvement in wellbeing of individuals and communities?

Improving the wellbeing of individuals is a priority of UWYR. Over the past four funding periods UWYR has successfully funded programs that help individuals improve their self-esteem, life and coping skills, as well as increase their access to support services and engagement in age-appropriate activities and life tasks.

In 2009-2010, UWYR invested 28% of its funding in 27 programs across York Region that improved individual and community wellbeing.⁶

⁶ ...addressing OUR STRENGTHS, United Way of York Region, 2009

Moving forward, what will UWYR’s community investment priority framework look like in order to improve the wellbeing of individuals and communities?

UWYR will support initiatives that improve the wellbeing of individuals and communities to enhance overall quality of life.

Identified focus areas

UWYR will direct resources to the following focus areas, i.e. those that help individuals and families strengthen:

- Mental health, coping and life skills
- Access to services and social supports
- Civic engagement / community involvement

Priority populations

Considering the above focus areas, the priority populations to be addressed are those that self-identify, or are identified by an agency, as being from one or more of the following groups:

- Low Income
- Newcomer (0-10 years in Canada)
- Those with physical, mental, and/or developmental disability

Expected outcomes

UWYR will direct resources to programs and activities that demonstrate success in helping individuals to build their capacity with the following expected and measured outcomes:

1. Strengthened attributes associated with positive mental health such as sense of mastery, self-esteem, reduced depression.
2. Increased access to required services and supports.
3. Increased sense of connectedness to community and networks.
4. Increased civic engagement /community involvement.

Appendices

**Appendix 1:
United Way of York Region (“UWYR”) Community Investment Priorities, 2011-2016**

Approved by UWYR Board of Directors October 19, 2009

	Youth	Economic Independence	Wellbeing
Purpose	Helping youth grow-up strong: healthy, caring and responsible	Enabling individuals and families to achieve economic independence	Improving the wellbeing of individuals and communities to enhance overall quality of life
Identified Focus Areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mental health • Substance abuse/addictions • Social exclusion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employment • Housing • Food security 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mental health, coping and life skills • Access to services and social supports • Civic engagement / community involvement
Expected Outcomes	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increased self esteem, sense of purpose, and optimism. 2. Increased positive/healthy behaviours, and constructive use of time. 3. Increased sense of belonging, connectedness and social support network. 4. Increased motivation to do well at school and to be engaged in learning. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increased literacy and job skills training. 2. Increased capacity and success in obtaining meaningful employment. 3. Increased capacity and success in accessing and maintaining stable housing. 4. Increased food security. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Strengthened attributes associated with positive mental health such as sense of mastery, self-esteem, reduced depression. 2. Increased access to required services and supports 3. Increased sense of connectedness to community and networks 4. Increased civic engagement / community involvement.
Priority Populations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low income • Newcomer (0-10 years in Canada) • Youth in lone parent family 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Newcomer (0-10 years in Canada) • Marginalized worker & marginalized unemployed, i.e. those with disabilities and aging workers • Female lone-parent 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low Income • Newcomer (0-10 years in Canada) • Those with physical, mental, and/or developmental disability
Key Research Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asset Building Model: 40 Developmental Assets – ages 12-18 -the building blocks of healthy youth development. Search Institute, Minneapolis, MN. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social Determinants of Health: the economic and social conditions that influence the health of individuals, communities and jurisdictions as a whole. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indicators of Mental Health, • Social Determinants of Health • The Canadian Index of Wellbeing

**Appendix 2:
Highlights of Findings
York Region Community Survey
March 2009**

This document highlights the findings from the York Region Community Survey conducted by The Nielsen Company for United Way of York Region.

Overview of Survey

Survey Purpose: To identify the critical social issues in York Region and to explore residents' opinions on charities, United Way of York Region and donating.

Methodology

An online survey was sent to members of The Nielsen Company e-Panel who are York Region residents. The sample for the survey is comprised of 305 completions from respondents living throughout the nine municipalities of York Region.

Key Findings

Donating to charities

- Following the Cancer Society, respondents are likely to give the largest donation to United Way, the Heart and Stroke Foundation and Sick Kids.
- When donating to a charity, respondents are looking for a reputable organization that represents issues that they care strongly about.
- It is important to donors that they know how the money will be used and to feel that their donation would make a difference.

Impressions of United Way of York Region

- Aside from being perceived as having an excellent reputation, United Way of York Region has some opportunities to improve perceptions on characteristics that are important to donors:
 - represents issues that you care strongly about
 - discloses how donations are spent
- Aside from United Way of York Region's community involvement, i.e. awareness that "your donation stays to work in your community", residents are generally uniformed about its operations and services.
- Residents would be motivated to donate to United Way of York Region if they can direct their donation to a particular area of community service that they feel strongly about, and if they know the agencies are using the funds wisely.

Critical Social Issues for York Region Residents

- The top five most critical social issues of concern identified by residents are **youth, employment, families, affordable housing and homelessness**, and **poverty**. Population growth placed 6th.
- When asked to identify the **single most important** critical issue, residents identified **youth, employment, and population growth**. Population growth edges ahead of affordable housing and homelessness, families, and poverty as the single most important issue.

Donating to address critical social issues

- When asked to imagine that they have dollars to donate to address critical social issues in York Region, residents agree that a sizable portion of funds should be allotted to support programs and services that address issues and needs associated with: **youth and employment**.
- Even though respondents are concerned about population growth in the Region, committing funds to this issue is not a priority. In addition to their top priorities of youth and employment, residents would assign funds to support programs that address poverty, domestic violence and abuse, affordable housing and homelessness, families, and seniors.

Conclusion

Key findings from this survey will assist in developing the question outline for the next stage of research: community dialogue focus groups.

**Appendix 3:
Highlights of Findings
Focus Groups
April 2009**

This document highlights the findings from the focus groups.

Overview of Focus Groups

The purpose of the focus groups was to explore the critical social issues of youth, and employment that York Region residents identified in a community survey conducted on behalf of United Way of York Region (“UWYR”) by The Nielsen Company. The findings from the focus groups are to help design the next stage of research: community issue panels.

Methodology

Six focus groups were held in various locations in York Region. The participants in four of the six groups were selected based on their affiliation with certain organizations and represented a broad range of views. Two of the focus groups were exclusively donors to UWYR.

The six groups were moderated by a professional facilitator who followed the same question outline for each group. The questions focussed on obtaining opinions on the critical issues associated with youth, and the social issues associated with employment. In addition, participants were asked to identify programs and services that would address these areas of concern.

Key Findings

Participants’ Thoughts on the Most Critical Issues Associated with Youth

- The top areas of concern across all 6 focus groups were youth **mental health, addictions/drink & drugs**, and **engaging youth** (general lack of focus/belonging, accessible social and recreation programs).
- The impact of unemployment, poverty, “working poverty”, affordable housing and long commute times has significant impact on the stress of the family environment and youth.
- Participants encouraged a focus on **prevention**, including investing in younger youth (grades 6-8).
- There is a need for more early identification and early intervention for at risk youth, especially regarding mental health and drug awareness information and prevention.
- Using a holistic family approach and creating services that are easy to find and navigate were frequently mentioned.

Participants' Thoughts on the Most Critical Issues Associated with Employment and Income Capacity

- The top areas of concern across all groups were “**working poverty**”, **gaining and retaining meaningful employment**, and **life skills and job skills training**.
- York Region is considered a hard place to live and work for those in low paying jobs. Many people are “stuck” in marginal jobs.
- Families are living together under one roof to make ends meet. Youth are sometimes required to work to supplement family income. The issues of employment were discussed for all residents; however these employment and income capacity issues are especially predominant for **newcomers and immigrants**.
- **Youth employment** opportunities and access to job experience was also noted by participants across all focus groups.

Determinants Associated With Employment

- The key determinants associated with employment were **poverty** and **affordable housing**. There is a strong need to address the issues that allow people to be employed and lead a fulfilling life, i.e. job and skills training, getting to work easily, literacy, living close to work and not having to pay high rent.
- Key barriers to enabling and retaining employment were identified as **daycare, elder care, transportation** and **access to local jobs**.
- There was concern that many newcomers, immigrants are lacking the job-related **literacy and life skills** levels required to access and retain employment. In addition, many newcomers face barriers in getting **recognition of their qualifications**.

Conclusion

Key findings from the focus groups will assist in developing the agenda and focus of the next stage of research: community issue panels.

Appendix 4: Issue Panels Report June 2009

This document highlights the findings from the Issue Panels that were conducted on June 3 and 10, 2009: Youth – Growing Up Strong and Achieving Independence and Stability.

Each of the Issue Panels was attended by approximately 60 participants including members of the United Way of York Region (“UWYR”) Community Engagement and Research Committee. The Chair of this Committee served as the MC/Host of the Issue Panels, and members of the Committee assisted with the facilitation of the sessions in collaboration with UWYR staff.

Background

Purpose of Issue Panels

The Issue Panels were designed to bring together a broader group of stakeholders who have a vested interest in the focus areas identified, i.e. youth, and employment.

At each of the Panels, participants were asked to share their ideas:

- Identify best practices – the programs demonstrating success
- Brainstorm neighbourhood support models
- Consider social innovation - explore new, creative program design and delivery

Overview of Issue Panels

The Issues Panels included a ½ day event that included a panel of experts presenting on a select area of focus, followed by roundtable discussions with a question outline serving as a guide.

Feedback was gathered from each table and discussed in the broader group with a lead facilitator managing the process.

The information gathered from each Issue Panel event was intended to assist UWYR to more clearly define funding priority areas.

Participants

Broad range of participants in the Panels included service providers, academics, social service planners, health, government representatives, funders, educators and police.

The Expert Panels included those recognized as leaders in the area of focus.

Summary of Findings Issue Panel Roundtable Discussions

Overall findings from both Issue Panels:

Youth – Growing Up Strong and Achieving Independence and Stability

- Essential to establish connections through collaboration and integrating services
- Critical need for open, accessible space for community engagement and service provision
- Develop opportunities for intergenerational work and recreation
- Explore faith based organizations as centre for community connections
- Inclusion of clients/”users” in ongoing dialogue
- Need to work at micro, mezzo and macro levels: program, community and policy for major changes and significant impact
- Start with local – work with what is there

A Look at Each Issue Panel

I. Youth – Growing Up Strong

The participants were introduced to the Asset Building model* programs and endeavours are supported that help youth grow up strong.

**40 Developmental Assets* – the building blocks of healthy development that help young people grow up healthy, caring, and responsible: Search Institute, Minneapolis, MN

- In a roundtable setting participants were asked to consider the following topics and prepare notes to share with the group.

Effective Program models

LionsQuest Program – matching of a community issue, action, and learning,

e.g. environmental clean-up or planting of trees by youth – matched with an educational experience.

York Region study on Youth Assets – Measuring Tool

Measurable outcomes of success of 40 Assets, e.g. Pathways measures building of youth assets in program

Roundtable Reports

a) The creation of a neighbourhood, school and community support model.

Define:

- 1) the elements that are essential for making the collaboration successful, and
- 2) perceived and existing barriers to success.

Neighbourhood, school and community support model

Essential Elements

Community planning and building assets: infrastructure support is required to develop the school hub concept

Create a forum for networking and integrating strategies to address youth

Value: socializing with youth, learning from youth, respecting youth

Youth ages defined/needs of transitional ages identified

Need for social programming planning

Barriers

Avoid repetition of services – determine how to bring services together

Need inventory/directory of all social services/providers

No infrastructure or funding to support overall social programming

Community Needs vs School Needs: skill set for school leaders to be identified

Data not in central location

Inability to share the community information with residents

b) Best Practices in Current Service Delivery

Insight to current best practice programs: What should we be doing more of based on the success of current program and service delivery?

Best practices

Engage youth at all stages

Enhanced community involvement: wide range of stakeholders/collaborators

Hub model / collaborative of community service providers

Strong structure within organizations: provides foundation for clients and staff

Commitment to ongoing staff training/common language/common practice training

Effective Program Evaluation

c) Social Innovation

New creative programs for youth that exemplify the usage of the **40 Developmental Assets** - the building blocks of healthy development that help youth grow up healthy, caring and responsible.

Social Innovation

Engage youth in planning and implementation

Usage of 40 Developmental Assets

Look beyond schools as hubs, e.g. faith based locations, malls etc

Small and local projects – work with what is there

Intergenerational programming

II. Achieving Independence and Stability

The participants were introduced to the social determinants of health and were asked to consider the programs and endeavours that build community supports and citizen involvement as a means to help individuals achieve independence and stability.

Supports may include:

- job readiness and employment programs
- building coping skills
- obtaining housing security

In a roundtable setting participants were asked to consider the following topics and prepare notes to share with the group.

Roundtable Reports

Overall themes from Discussions:

Connections / Connectedness, Space and Engagement

a) The creation of a collaborative neighbourhood / community support model that helps to improve the quality of life for residents.

A model that assists with one of the following:

- developing family coping skills, strengthening the family
- improving access to social supports, human services and programs
- improving housing security

Defining:

- 1) the elements that are essential for making the collaboration successful
- 2) perceived and existing barriers to success

Neighbourhood / community support model

Essential Elements

Neighbourhood based programs

Participation is inclusive, intergenerational, community-based

Engage participants from existing community, peer-led

Collaboration/connection of social service partners

Neighbourhood presence of community services: offered in hubs/schools/online services

Accessible open space

Systemic change, creative thinking

Barriers

Funding

Space

Stigma with receiving services

Transportation/access to services

b) Best Practices in Current Service Delivery

Current best practice programs that help strengthen individuals and families to be independent and stable (e.g. what we should be doing more of based on the success of current program and service delivery).

Best practices

Develop connectedness among community leaders including faith based and newcomers/immigrants

Usage of safe and welcoming community locations

Ongoing evaluation

Effective relationship building

Start small and build

Examples of best practice programs:

HOST- connect to local families

Settlement workers in schools

Welcome Centre

Best Practices Cont'd
Families and Schools Together Program
Mentoring/Youth Mentoring
Mosaic Interfaith – Out of the Cold Program

c) Consider social innovation

New, creative programs that exemplify the usage of community supports and citizen involvement. The area of focus identified (e.g. program will address needs of seniors, job seekers, lone parent families etc.)

Social Innovation

Develop “experienced workers” program
Create peer mentoring opportunities based on skills
Engage employers, create incentive for employers
Create networks: employment and community and social policy
Develop community into advocates of social policy change
Engage the community in identifying problems and developing solutions
Engage municipal councils/community leaders
Schools as community hub/pilot project
Use diversity of communities as expertise for program planning

**Appendix 5:
United Way of York Region (“UWYR”)
Supporting Research Document
June 2009**

In January 2009, UWYR began a series of community engagement and research activities to assist in identifying critical social needs in York Region in order to inform the process for determining UWYR funding priorities for 2011-2016 and the strategic planning process.

This internal UWYR document highlights the findings from a portion of the complementary research work that includes:

I. York Region Information

- General Demographics
- Diversity of Residents
- Employment and Income
- Housing and Shelter Costs
- Growth Management

II. Research associated with potential new funding priority areas

I. York Region Information

1. General Demographics
2. Diversity of Residents
3. Employment and Income
4. Housing and Shelter Costs
5. Growth Management

1. General Demographics

Based on Statistics Canada, Census 2006

York Region's Population Census 1996-2006

Year	Population
1996	592,445
2001	729,254
2006	892,712

York Region estimated population March 2009 = 1,016,960

Source: York Region Planning Department

Between 2001 and 2006 York Region:

- Population grew by 22% to 892,712 (as of May, 2006)
- Had the highest growth rate for all age groups in Ontario
- Immigrant population accounts for about 60% of the growth between 2001 and 2006

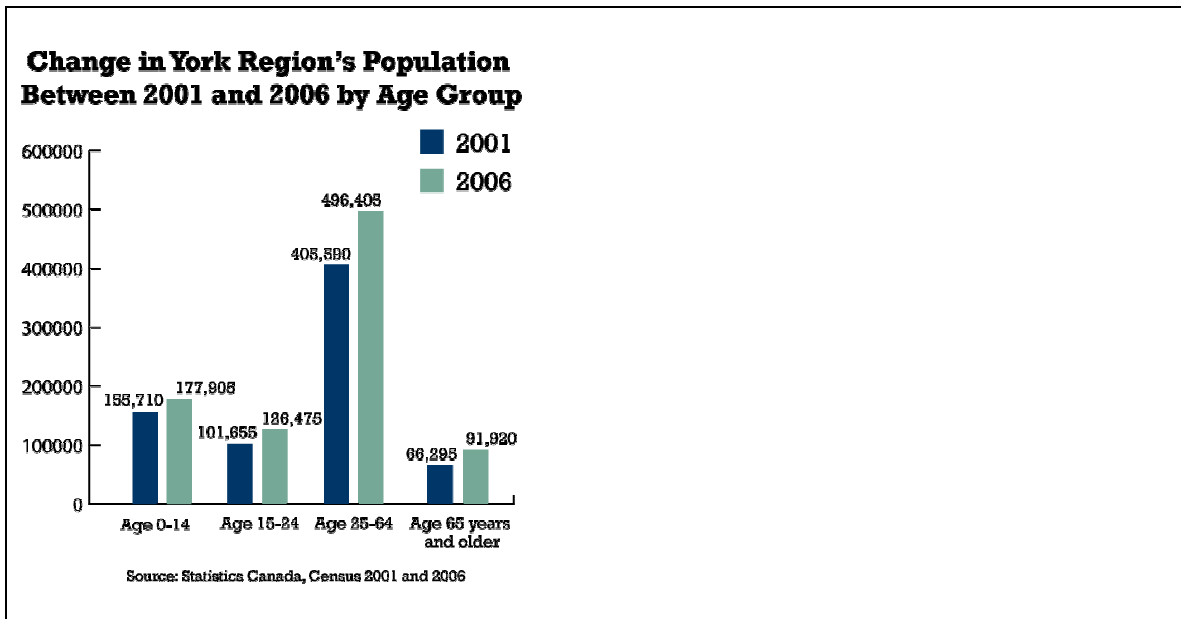
Population Distribution (%) By Municipality

Markham	29%
Vaughan	27
Richmond Hill	18
Newmarket	8
Aurora	5
Georgina	5
Whitchurch-Stouffville	3
East Gwillimbury	3
King	2

Characteristics of York Region Residents

Gender and Age Groups

The gender split for York Region residents, 2006 is 51% female and 49% male. Median age of York Region residents is 37.5



Children and Youth

Number of children between 0-14 years increased by 14%. This is much higher than the growth experienced in the rest of Ontario in this age group.

According to Statistics Canada 2006 Census there are 126,475 youth (aged 15-24) living in York Region – accounting for 14% of the total population.

Youth 15-24 years increased by 24%. In 2006, most youth, even older youth, lived in family households.

Seniors

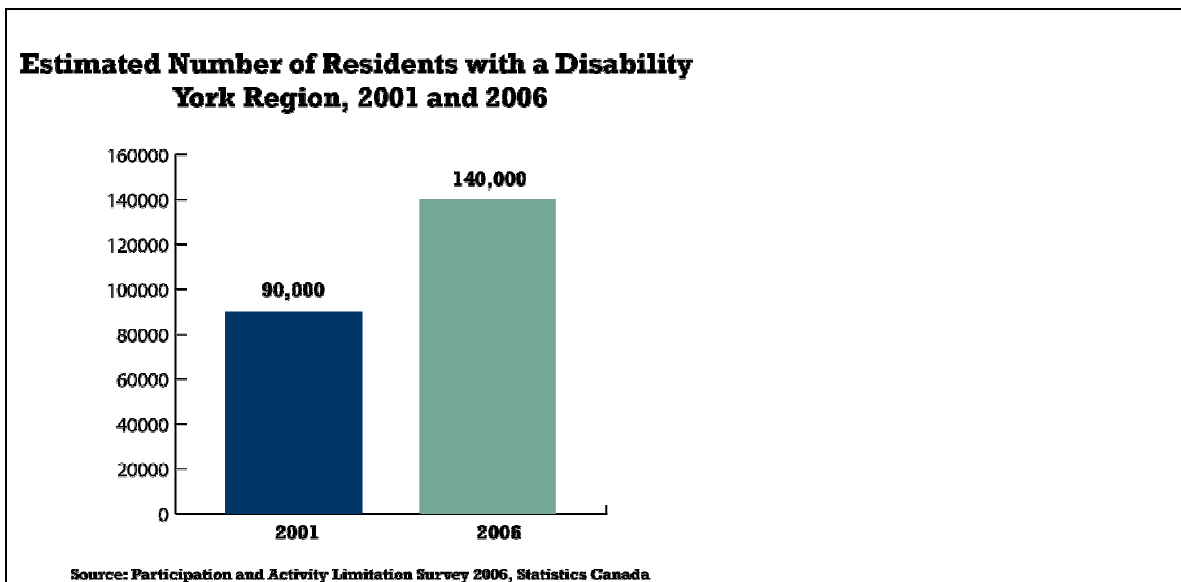
1 in 10 residents in York Region are seniors, compared to 1 in 7 Canadians in this age group.

There are 91,920 seniors (those aged 65 and older) living in York Region – representing 10% of the Region’s population. This is a lower percentage than Ontario and Canada (about 14% each).

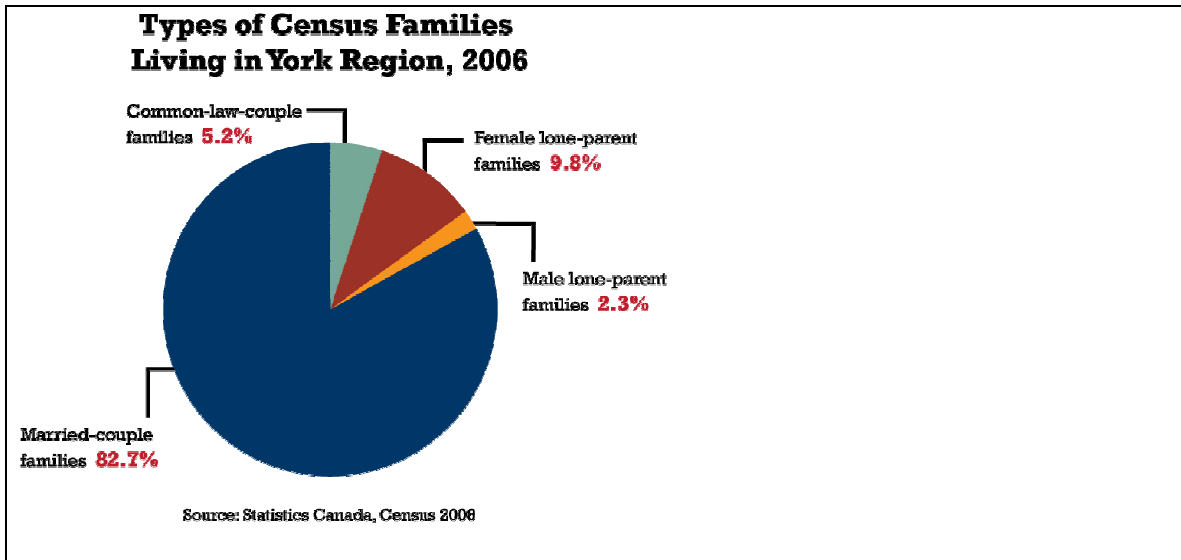
However, among urban municipalities, York Region has one of the fastest growing senior populations.

Those with Disabilities

The number of people with disabilities increased by an estimated 49,700 (55%).
(Definition for disabilities: difficulties with daily activities and the reduction in the amount or kind of activities due to physical or mental conditions or health problems.)



Families



From 2001 to 2006 – Number of families increased by 23%

83% of families are married couples and majority have children – highest proportion in Canada. In comparison, 46% of Canadian couples are married with children.

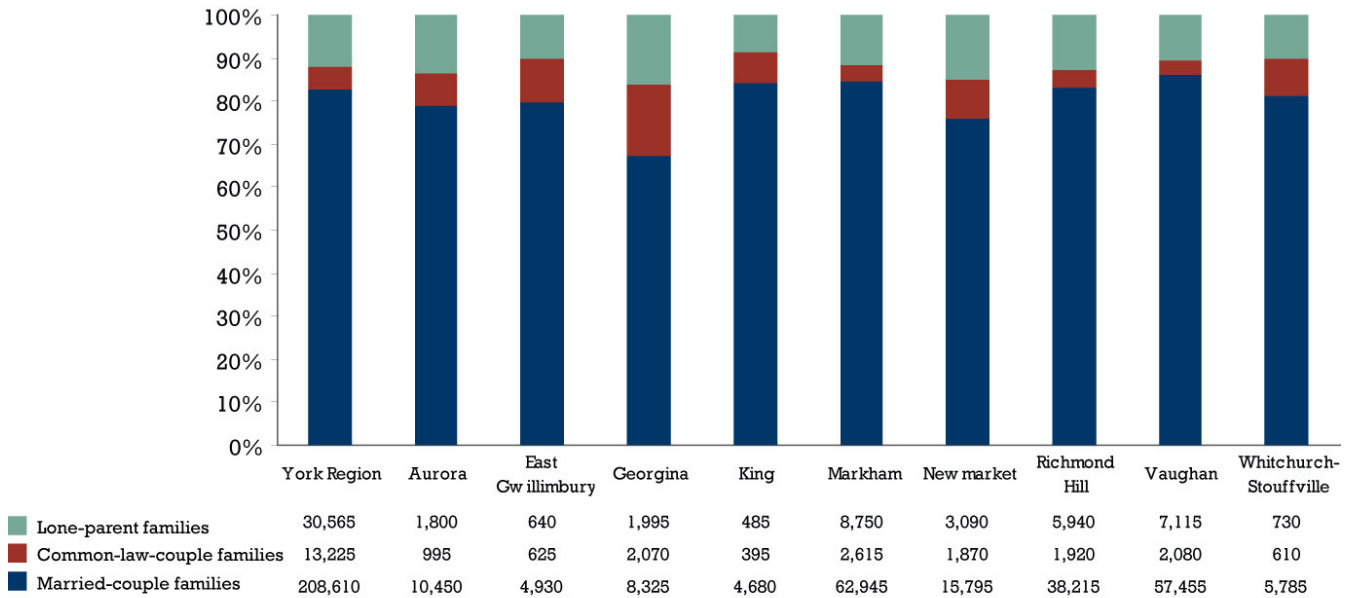
Vaughan, Markham and Richmond Hill rank 2nd, 3rd, and 4th in Canada for the highest proportion of married couples with children.

Number of lone parent families grew by 37%

12% of children live in lone parent families.

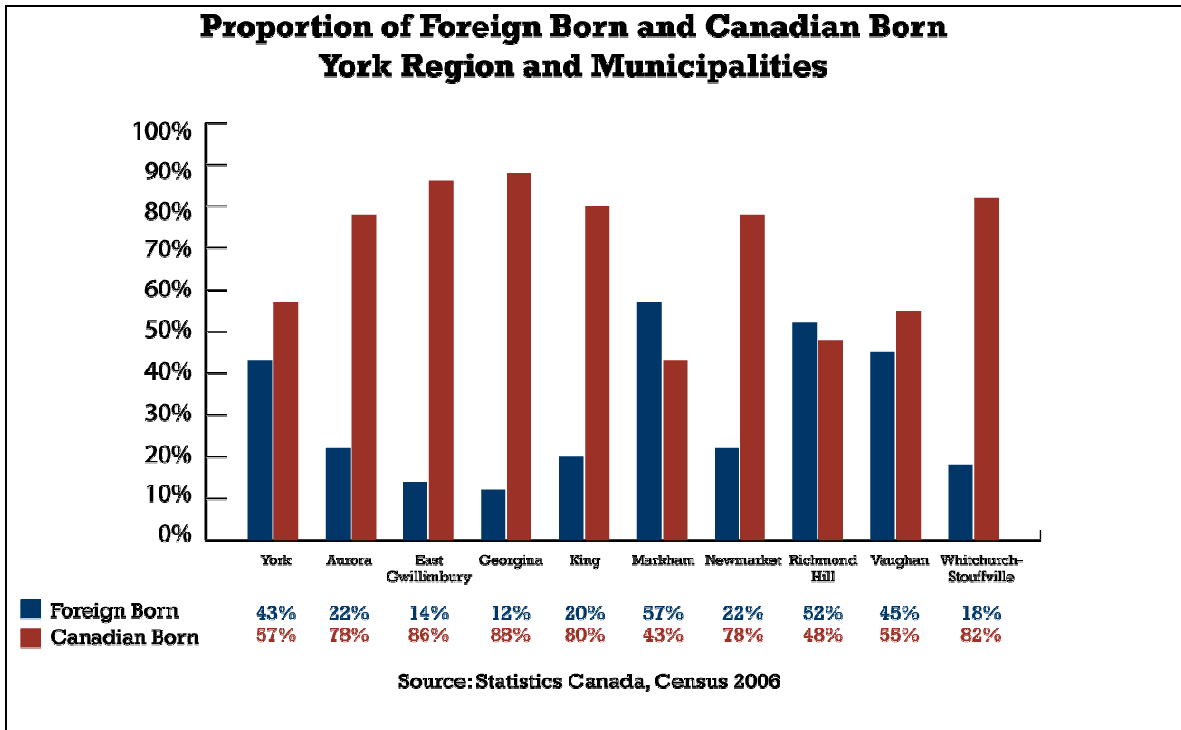
Diversification among Nine Municipalities
Family Types

**Number of Census Families by Family Types,
York Region and Local Municipalities**



Source: Statistics Canada, Census 2006

2. Diversity of Residents



From 2001 – 2006 Immigration and language trends

The number of recent immigrants in Newmarket almost doubled.

Aurora had the highest growth rate for all immigrants.

57% of Markham's residents are foreign born – the 2nd highest proportion in Canada.

The municipalities with a significant number of residents with no knowledge of English or French are: Markham, Vaughan and Richmond Hill.

Ethnic Origins in 2006, JUST THE FACTS ABOUT YOUR COMMUNITY, York Region Source: Statistics Canada, Census 2001 and 2006

616,150 York Region residents identified themselves as having one ethnic origin. The top 5 ethnic groups were:

- Chinese
- Italian
- East Indian
- Canadian
- English

Ethnic Diversity

In 2006, there were 204 ethnic groups across York Region. The extent of ethnic diversity varied in each of the nine municipalities.

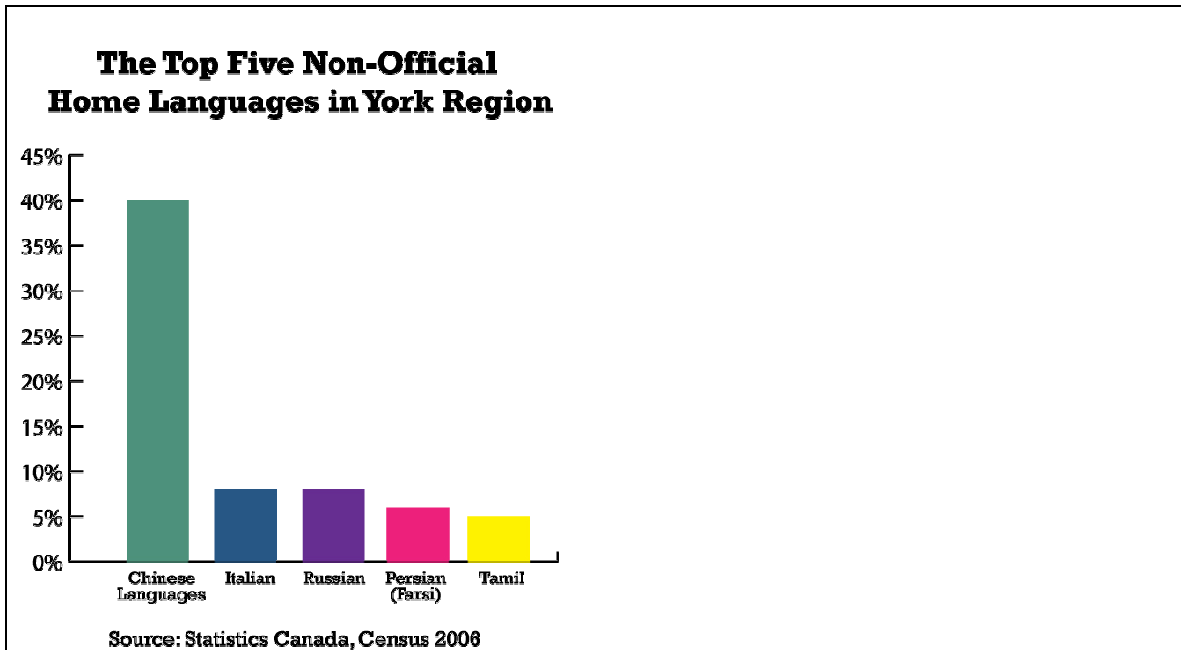
Between 2001 and 2006, the number of visible minorities in York Region increased by 53%.

Two out of five York Region residents were visible minorities.

Home Languages in 2006

In 2006, **72% of York Region residents spoke English most commonly at home.**

The number of York Region residents who spoke a non-official language at home increased by 48%, from 160,285 in 2001 to 236,435 in 2006.



3. Employment and Income

Source: JUST THE FACTS ABOUT YOUR COMMUNITY, Diversity of Residents Living in York Region: Employment and Income, Statistics Canada, Census 2001 and 2006

Employment Trends in 2006

As of 2006, York Region's labour force was 500,060, making it the third-largest labour force in Ontario. The labour force grew by 22% since 2001 – highest of all Census Divisions in Ontario.

Of those residents who worked, 78% worked full-time and 22% part-time.

Almost 60% must commute to work.

The top industries in which York region residents worked were:

Business services (21%)

Manufacturing industries (13%)

Retail trade (12%)

Location of Workers in 2006:

50% of York Region's employed labour force worked within the Region

40% worked outside York Region

10% either worked outside of Canada or had no fixed work address

In 2006, York Region's **unemployment rate was 5.4%**. At the time, this was the second lowest unemployment rate in the Greater Toronto area.

Between 2001 and 2006, **unemployment rates increased** in all nine municipalities in York Region. Markham and Newmarket had the highest increases.

Information from: *Trends Opportunities Priorities (TOP) Report, April 2009, York South Simcoe Training and Adjustment Board*

In 2008, the York Region population grew by 28,300, retaining its position as Canada's sixth largest municipality. The Region's communities will become more compact and achieve average minimum densities of 50 people and jobs per hectare. There will be four urban growth centres/Regional Centres located in Markham, Vaughan, Richmond Hill and Newmarket which planned to achieve a target of 200 people and jobs per hectare.

The Region's "highly-skilled, educated and young workforce continues to attract new and innovative enterprises which contributes to the area's low unemployment rate of 5.7% (Dec. 08). The Ontario average is 8.7%".

Summary of trends and issues

Skilled Trade Shortages

Lack of information to identify shortages
Short term downturn as companies right-size

Persons with Disabilities

Lack of knowledge in business-impacts hiring and corporate culture

Rural/Urban Disparities-Farming

Lack of awareness of careers
Youth need to be introduced to agricultural sectors

Higher Education and Skills Required

Lack of awareness of alternative education equivalencies
Employees do not realize the benefits of essential skills and life-long learning
Higher education requirements prevent lower educated workers to advance

New Immigrants

Global experience brought to Canada by new immigrants is not recognized
Language skills and cultural differences are still a barrier

Aging Workforce

Population is aging and York Region has a high growth rate
Unemployed older workers face economic and psychological barriers to achieve re-employment

Healthcare Professional Shortage

Due to increased population and expansion of all 3 regional hospitals

Median Family Income

Median family income in York Region is \$89,099 – fifth highest in Canada, however this is a decrease of approximately \$2,422 since 2001.

Low Income Trends in York Region

York Region has seen an increase in *high income* households, but at the same time, the low income population in York Region is increasing. In 2006, about 13%, or 112,501 residents lived in low income households – 55% more than in 2001.

In 2006, 10% of the York Region population were seniors. 12% of seniors live on low incomes.

Children (under 18 years old) Living in Low Income Households

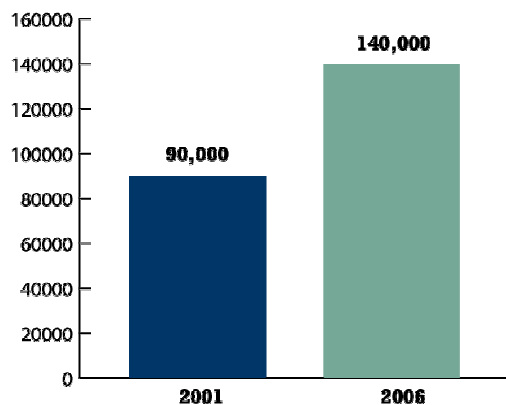
In 2006, almost 15% or 32,500 of York Region's children under the age of 18 lived in low income households.

With the exception of one municipality, the number of children living in low income households increased at a faster rate than the change in the overall child population between 2001 and 2006.

Particular groups tend to be at a higher risk for living in low income households. These groups include:

- People with disabilities
- Female lone-parents
- Recent immigrants
- Aboriginals
- People living alone

**Estimated Number of Residents with a Disability
York Region, 2001 and 2006**



Source: Participation and Activity Limitation Survey 2006, Statistics Canada

4. Housing and Shelter Costs

Source: JUST THE FACTS ABOUT YOUR COMMUNITY, Housing and Shelter Costs in York Region, Statistics Canada, Census 2001 and 2006

Housing Stock

In 2006, single detached homes made up a smaller proportion of the total dwellings in York region at 68%, compared to 75% in 2001.

The remaining housing stock was comprised of semi-detached units (6%), row house units (10%) and apartment units (16%).

Owning a home in York Region

In 2006, 88% of the total dwellings in York region were owned – up slightly from 86% in 2001.

Renting in York Region

The rental market is still getting tighter in York region and low income households may have fewer options for housing.

In York Region, the median monthly payment for a rental dwelling was \$957. In comparison, the median monthly payment for Ontario was \$801.

Affordability of owning and renting

In 2006, **27% of owned residences** in York Region spent 30% or more of their household income on housing costs compared to Ontario at 21%.

In 2006, **48% of the tenant-occupied residences** spent 30% or more of their household income on housing costs. This was the highest proportion in the GTA.

Between 2001 and 2006, the percentage of low income residents increased by 55% and the demand for affordable housing options continued to rise.

York Region ranks as one of the most costly places in Canada to own or rent an apartment.

Social Housing

In 2008, there were 6,028 social housing units operated or administered by the Region and over 5,838 households were on the waiting list for a unit. From January to December 2008, the waiting list increased by 5% (301 households).

Emergency Housing

In 2008, York Region had 75 permanent Emergency Shelter beds for families and individuals. It had 51 emergency beds for women who are victims of violence.

- Research funded by Homelessness Partnering Strategy, HRSDC, CIC and York University with support from CERIS – The Ontario Metropolis Centre and the York Region Alliance to End Homelessness: *At Risk in the Suburbs? Immigrants' Housing Needs and Challenges in York Region*. Issues under study include affordable housing for immigrants: conclusions include housing challenges in suburbs largely due to immigrants' low incomes exacerbated by shortage of affordable housing, lack of services in suburbs and household size. More pronounced for women, seniors and certain classes of immigrants.

5. Growth Management – The Regional Municipality of York

Source: York Region Sustainability Strategy: Towards a Sustainable Region 2007

- York Region is proactively planning for 1.5 million residents by 2031 – representing significant growth.
- In the Region’s document entitled *York Region Sustainability Strategy: Towards a Sustainable Region 2007*, it is acknowledged that given the “dynamic pace of growth, The Regional Municipality of York will continue to address important issues such as creating and retaining a diversity of employment, protecting and restoring our natural heritage system and providing supportive infrastructure and adequate human services”.

York Region Population Forecast Model (40% Scenario)					
Total Population for 2006 and 2031 by Local Municipality					
	Total Population 2006	Total Population 2031	Population Growth 2006-31	2006-31 Share of Growth (%)	2006-31 Avg. Annual Increase (%)
Aurora	49,200	70,800	21,600	4%	1.5%
East Gwillimbury	22,500	75,500	53,000	9%	5.0%
Georgina	45,700	68,700	23,000	4%	1.7%
King	20,400	30,100	9,700	2%	1.6%
Markham	273,900	444,100	170,200	30%	2.0%
Newmarket	78,300	96,100	17,800	3%	0.8%
Richmond Hill	174,000	229,900	55,900	10%	1.1%
Vaughan	244,800	433,100	188,300	33%	2.3%
Whitchurch-Stouffville	26,200	56,700	30,500	5%	3.2%
York Region	935,000	1,505,000	570,000	100%	1.9%

Region of York, Planning for Tomorrow, 2008

- The *Sustainability Strategy* “provides a model for municipal decision-making that integrates the values of sustainable natural environment, healthy communities and economic vitality”.
- *Towards a Sustainable Region* will assist York Region in being adaptive and resilient to changing environmental, economic and social trends.

York Region Healthy Communities

- York Region recognizes that the health of a community is based on the following social factors defined as the determinants of health:

Determinants of Health		
Income and social status endowment	Social environments	Biology and genetic
Social support network	Physical environments	Health services
Education and literacy	Personal health practices and coping skills	Gender equity
Employment/working conditions	Health child development	Culture

Source: Count me in! Ontario Prevention Clearinghouse, 2006

- The Region recognizes the connection between human services, economic vitality and quality of life. It has identified a series of actions that will help to create self-sustaining and healthy communities.

York Region Healthy Communities Actions include, but are not limited to:

Quality of Life and Human Services

Continue to support human services planning by advocating for adequate funding for human services infrastructure for a growing population and to **foster civic engagement in building healthy communities.**

Continue to finalize and implement the Region's Human Service Strategy to ensure that services match our rapid population growth and that the needs of **children, young people, seniors, new Canadians and low income individuals are met.**

Design new communities in the Region's Whitebelt¹ which considers the social determinants of health to help the community and individual realize their full potential with respect to health, social equity, culture, environment, economic vitality and sense of place.

¹ Whitebelt is a planning term defining a geographic area for building use.

Housing issues

- New residential development be compact in nature and incorporate a mix and range of housing options.
- Update the Region's Housing Supply Strategy and the Affordable Housing Strategy.
- Work with the private sector and public agencies to provide a broad array of housing choices for all income groups.
- Work with the Province and Area Municipalities to promote secondary housing suites across all York Region to contribute to housing choice and affordability.

Source: York Region Creating Strong Caring Safe Communities, Vision 2026

Trends

Certain trends will influence services required by residents in the future. The Region can use its understanding of trends to respond effectively to changing needs with high-quality services and programs.

By 2026, York Region will be home to nearly 1.3 million people.

This will be an increase of approximately 500,000 people over 2001, an annual growth rate of 2.1 %.

York Region's population will be increasingly older.

By 2026 there will be more than three times as many people over 50 living in York as there are today.

There will be an increased number of people in low income categories.

In 1986, 44% of families in York Region were considered high income, 42% middle income and 14% low income. By 1996, the proportion of low income residents had increased to 19% and the middle income group had dropped to 37% of the total population, with the high income category unchanged.

York Region will be home to an increasing number of vulnerable residents.

Providing adequate and appropriate services to people who can be considered vulnerable, particularly seniors, children and those who are homeless, will continue to pose challenges as their numbers grow.

Household forms will continue to change.

York Region will have a wider variety of household types due to an increase in non-family household types such as single people living alone.

York Region's multi-ethnic population will continue to diversify.

Immigration policies have increased Canada's ethnic diversity, bringing large multicultural communities to York. More ethnic origins are represented now in the York Region population than ever before.

The employment growth rate will remain slightly ahead of the population growth.

In 1991, York Region had 248,000 jobs, a total that rose to 390,000 jobs by 2001. Forecasts are that by 2026, York will have 696,000 jobs.

Job growth will be experienced in diverse sectors.

The mix of employment will continue to change as the traditionally common occupations in manufacturing, construction, warehousing and transportation are replaced by new jobs in business services and the office sector.

Technology will be increasingly significant in York Region, as elsewhere.

Rapid changes in technology will transform communications, service delivery methods and how people will live and work in the future.

Citizens will continue to expect more and better services at the same or less cost.

Since 1993, York Region has assumed responsibility for new services, including Ontario Works, social housing, child care, transit and emergency medical services.

More York Region residents will participate in their communities.

York Region residents are more involved in their communities than ever before, as interested parents, volunteers and informed taxpayers. This involvement and these high levels of participation contribute to our overall high-quality of community life in York.

Governments will continue to identify new ways to show taxpayers that they are responsive and effective.

York Region is a large corporation as well as a community. Its government developed sophisticated multi-year planning processes to manage its complex range of programs and services. Continuing to provide strong leadership will require visionary thinking and innovative planning. Performance monitoring and continual improvement will be standard functions of the Region's operations.

Transit issues

Shape urban form that is transit-supportive, mixed use and efficient.

Ensure residents and employees have barrier-free, accessible and affordable transportation.

Access and Place Issues

Create new communities that prioritize mobility and access so that everyone is entitled to reasonable access to all places, goods and services in the Region.

This includes people with physical disabilities, low incomes and the elderly.

II. Research Associated with Potential New Funding Priority Areas

The following section includes references to various research sources that support the potential new funding areas for UWYR:

Helping Youth Grow Up Strong

Enabling Individuals and Families to Achieve Economic Independence

Improving the Wellbeing of Individuals and Communities

Helping Youth Grow Up Strong



40 Developmental Assets® for Adolescents (ages 12-18)

Search Institute® has identified the following building blocks of healthy development—known as Developmental Assets®—that help young people grow up healthy, caring, and responsible.



External Assets	Support	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Family support—Family life provides high levels of love and support. 2. Positive family communication—Young person and her or his parent(s) communicate positively, and young person is willing to seek advice and counsel from parents. 3. Other adult relationships—Young person receives support from three or more nonparent adults. 4. Caring neighborhood—Young person experiences caring neighbors. 5. Caring school climate—School provides a caring, encouraging environment. 6. Parent involvement in schooling—Parent(s) are actively involved in helping young person succeed in school. 	
	Empowerment	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. Community values youth—Young person perceives that adults in the community value youth. 8. Youth as resources—Young people are given useful roles in the community. 9. Service to others—Young person serves in the community one hour or more per week. 10. Safety—Young person feels safe at home, school, and in the neighborhood. 	
	Boundaries & Expectations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 11. Family boundaries—Family has clear rules and consequences and monitors the young person's whereabouts. 12. School boundaries—School provides clear rules and consequences. 13. Neighborhood boundaries—Neighbors take responsibility for monitoring young people's behavior. 14. Adult role models—Parent(s) and other adults model positive, responsible behavior. 15. Positive peer influence—Young person's best friends model responsible behavior. 16. High expectations—Both parent(s) and teachers encourage the young person to do well. 	
	Constructive Use of Time	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 17. Creative activities—Young person spends three or more hours per week in lessons or practice in music, theater, or other arts. 18. Youth programs—Young person spends three or more hours per week in sports, clubs, or organizations at school and/or in the community. 19. Religious community—Young person spends one or more hours per week in activities in a religious institution. 20. Time at home—Young person is out with friends "with nothing special to do" two or fewer nights per week. 	
	Internal Assets	Commitment to Learning	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 21. Achievement Motivation—Young person is motivated to do well in school. 22. School Engagement—Young person is actively engaged in learning. 23. Homework—Young person reports doing at least one hour of homework every school day. 24. Bonding to school—Young person cares about her or his school. 25. Reading for Pleasure—Young person reads for pleasure three or more hours per week.
		Positive Values	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 26. Caring—Young person places high value on helping other people. 27. Equality and social justice—Young person places high value on promoting equality and reducing hunger and poverty. 28. Integrity—Young person acts on convictions and stands up for her or his beliefs. 29. Honesty—Young person "tells the truth even when it is not easy." 30. Responsibility—Young person accepts and takes personal responsibility. 31. Restraint—Young person believes it is important not to be sexually active or to use alcohol or other drugs.
		Social Competencies	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 32. Planning and decision making—Young person knows how to plan ahead and make choices. 33. Interpersonal Competence—Young person has empathy, sensitivity, and friendship skills. 34. Cultural Competence—Young person has knowledge of and comfort with people of different cultural/racial/ethnic backgrounds. 35. Resistance skills—Young person can resist negative peer pressure and dangerous situations. 36. Peaceful conflict resolution—Young person seeks to resolve conflict nonviolently.
		Positive Identity	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 37. Personal power—Young person feels he or she has control over "things that happen to me." 38. Self-esteem—Young person reports having a high self-esteem. 39. Sense of purpose—Young person reports that "my life has a purpose." 40. Positive view of personal future—Young person is optimistic about her or his personal future.

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- Research supports the usage of the **Asset Building model*** that helps youth grow up strong. This model is broadly recognized within the United States and Canada as an effective tool for program planning and implementation.

**40 Developmental Assets – the building blocks of healthy development that help young people grow up healthy, caring, and responsible: Search Institute, Minneapolis, MN. Promoted by the Waterloo, Ontario based organization Thrive! The Canadian Centre for Positive Youth Development – a partner of the Search Institute.*

- The importance of youth engagement is supported by research. *Source: “The Cost of Excluding Ontario's Youth From Play, A Call to Action!, Dr. Mark Totten, Youth Services Bureau of Ottawa, in collaboration with Playworks Partnership.*

“Helping youth find the means to feel better and engage more fully in society costs no more at minimum and can result in substantial savings. Savings can be achieved because increasing the competencies and opportunities for engagement results in savings in other sectors. Physical activity has been referenced as resulting in fewer nervous system problems, less medication usage, lower anxiety, reduced reliance on subsidized child care, less counselling and reduced usage of food banks. It is estimated that \$1 invested in physical activity can save \$3 in health care costs. Taxpayers will be better off – for each dollar spent on quality programs, more than a dollar’s worth of benefits are generated. Investments in the voluntary recreation sector can achieve substantial savings to the publicly funded health, social and corrections systems while at the same time improving the quality of people’s lives.”

“Huge savings in corrections can be made with a modest reinvestment in programs for youth who are at highest risk of engaging in criminal behaviour.”

United Ways of Ontario, have launched a coordinated effort entitled: **“Supporting the Call for a Youth Provincial Framework”**, as recommended in the Roots of Violence Report, authored by former cabinet minister Alvin Curling and former Ontario Chief Justice Roy McMurtry.

It is recognized that there needs to be better coordination of programs, services and investments aimed at improving the lives of young people. The call to action is for the Province of Ontario to take the lead in developing a strategy for meeting the basic human and developmental needs of young people.

By working with a broad group of stakeholders to establish a shared vision for youth outcomes, and by building on existing programs and successful initiatives it is felt the needs of young people will be better met.

A youth policy framework starts with a vision of the outcomes that are desirable for youth. Factors necessary for positive youth development include:

- Sets guidelines for policy and program decision-making.
- Develop evidence-based system of services and supports.

Source: Roots of Violence Report, Executive Summary, Former cabinet minister Dr. Alvin Curling and former Ontario Chief Justice Roy McMurtry

Understanding the Roots

“What then are the immediate **risk factors — the ones that create that state of desperation and put a youth in the immediate path of violence?** While no set of factors can explain all violence, we are persuaded that youth are most likely to be at immediate risk of involvement in serious violence if they:

- Have a deep sense of alienation and low self-esteem.
- Have little empathy for others and suffer from impulsivity.
- Believe that they are oppressed, held down, unfairly treated and neither belong to nor have a stake in the broader society.
- Believe that they have no way to be heard through other channels.
- Have no sense of hope.”

Advice on Specific Initiatives to Address the Roots -

“The Province must address the level of poverty in Ontario, its concentrations and the many invidious circumstances that accompany it. In addition to reducing the level of poverty, this should include promoting economic integration by ensuring that there is affordable, good quality housing in many different neighbourhoods and by substantially improving and diversifying the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods so that people do not leave as soon as their economic circumstances permit. Among other initiatives we outline, it should also include ensuring that high-quality services, recreational and arts facilities, parks and schools are available to those who are the most disadvantaged, and that neighbourhoods are safe. Overall, where people live should not itself produce the immediate risk factors for their being involved in violence. (Volume 1, pages 229–238)”.

- Research supports the high rate of return on investment in early years programs

With Our Best Future in Mind: Implementing Early Learning in Ontario

Summary of the Report to the Premier by the Special Advisor on Early Learning

Charles E. Pascal

In partnership with parents, full-day learning will provide Ontario children with high-quality programs that help lay the foundation for a healthy and productive life.

In November 2007, the Premier asked Dr. Charles Pascal to recommend the best way to implement full-day learning for 4- and 5-year-olds. This document provides the highlights of his advice. The full report, *With Our Best Future in Mind*, is available at www.ontario.ca/earlylearning.

Our Best Future

The most successful and innovative societies of the future will also be the best educated. Ontario is well on its way – our students are doing better in reading, writing, and math and graduating from secondary school in higher numbers. But we have more work to do when it comes to early learning.

More than one in four children who enter Grade 1 are significantly behind their peers. Many never close the gap and go on to be disruptive in school, fail to graduate, and are unable to fully participate in and contribute to society. Ontario cannot adequately address the challenges of the new millennium while leaving a quarter of children behind. We need to start earlier and do a better job of supporting children's learning.

Ontario has many good early childhood services, but they are disconnected, too often failing the best interests of children, frustrating families and educators, and wasting resources. We must make smarter decisions about how we design, manage, and fund early childhood programs if we are to achieve the educational, economic, and social goals made possible through quality early learning.

Establishing a strong foundation in the early years, and building on it, is the single-most powerful key to Ontario's social and economic future.

Our best future is one where all our children are:

Healthy and secure;

Emotionally and socially competent;

Eager, confident, and successful learners;

Respectful of the diversity of their peers.

Enabling Individuals and Families to Achieve Economic Independence

Social determinants of health

Source: *Social Determinants of Health and Public Policy*, presentation at the United Way of York Region Panel: *Achieving Independence and Stability*, June 10, 2009, Dr. Dennis Raphael, School of Health Policy and Management York University.

All conceivable evils are heaped upon the poor... They are given damp dwellings, cellar dens that are not waterproof from below or garrets that leak from above... They are supplied bad, tattered, or rotten clothing, adulterated and indigestible food. They are exposed to the most exciting changes of mental condition, the most violent vibrations between hope and fear... They are deprived of all enjoyments except sexual indulgence and drunkenness and are worked every day to the point of complete exhaustion of their mental and physical energies...



Friedrich Engels, 1820-1895. *The Condition of the Working Class in England.*

- Social determinants of health include for example, education, employment and working conditions, food security, health services, housing, income and income distribution, social inclusion/exclusion, social safety net and unemployment. These are recognized markers for determining a person's health and wellbeing.
- Programs and initiatives that build community supports and citizen involvement are valued as a means to help individuals and families to be more successful and achieve economic independence.

Research: *On Community Quality of Life*

Raphael, D., Renwick, R., Brown, I., Steinmetz, B., Sehdev, H., Phillips, S., Jan. 2001. *Making the links between community structure and individual wellbeing: community quality of life in Riverdale, Toronto, Canada.*

“Being healthy involves more than avoiding being ill. Being healthy is being able **to cope with life**. We are interested in community and neighbourhood factors which affect health. These may involve how people within a community interact or the **opportunities for employment and recreation**. For many, an important factor may be the **services which are available**.”

Source: Social Determinants of Health and Public Policy, presentation at the United Way of York Region Panel: Achieving Independence and Stability, June 10, 2009, Dr. Dennis Raphael, School of Health Policy and Management York University.

Public Policy Determinants I

- early life – adequate income either inside or outside of the working force, availability of quality childcare and early education, support services
- education – support for literacy initiatives, public spending, tuition policy
- employment and working conditions – training and retraining programs (active labour policy), support for collective bargaining, increasing worker input into workplaces
- food security – developing adequate income and poverty-reduction policies, promoting health food policy, providing affordable housing
- health services – managing resources effectively, providing comprehensive accessible, responsive and timely care

Public Policy Determinants II

- housing – providing adequate income and affordable housing, reasonable rental controls and housing supplements, providing social housing for those in need
- income and income distribution – fair taxation policy, adequate minimum wages, social assistance and social assistance levels that support health
- social exclusion – developing and enforcing anti-discrimination laws, providing ESL and job training, approving foreign credentials, supporting a variety of other health determinants
- social safety net – providing supports comparable to those provided in other developed nations
- unemployment – active labour policy, providing adequate replacement benefits, enforcing labour legislation and workplace regulations

- Research funded by Homelessness Partnering Strategy, HRSDC, CIC and York University with support from CERIS – The Ontario Metropolis Centre and the York Region Alliance to End Homelessness: *At Risk in the Suburbs? Immigrants' Housing Needs and Challenges in York Region*. Issues under study include affordable housing for immigrants: conclusions include housing challenges in suburbs largely due to immigrants' low incomes exacerbated by shortage of affordable housing, lack of services in suburbs and household size. More pronounced for women, seniors and certain classes of immigrants.

Hunger in the Midst of Prosperity

The Need for Food Banks in York Region: 2008

Source: York Region Food Network

In 2006, we reported that, although York Region continued to grow and prosper, there were also growing concerns about food bank use in the Region.

While the socio-economic status of Region residents continued to improve, food bank utilization continued to grow. We witnessed that over the past decade socio-economic status of food bank clients also improved but that the costs of shelter in the Region continued to pose a barrier to food access. While food bank utilization has not increased as forecast, troubling trends in the Region and food bank clientele continue.

Improving the Wellbeing of Individuals and Communities

The Institute of Wellbeing, affiliated with the University of Waterloo with its advisory board chaired by The Honourable Roy J. Romanow, launched its first report on June 10, 2009. The report found that health status is strongly determined by income and education. It also found that the bulk of those who are poor come from five specific groups – lone parents, unattached individuals aged 45-64, recent immigrants, persons with work-limiting disabilities and Aboriginal people living off-reserve. **It is these individuals that need a “hand up” in order to improve their wellbeing.**

The Canadian Index of Wellbeing

The Canadian Index of Wellbeing (CIW) is the signature product of the Institute of Wellbeing. The CIW is a new way of measuring wellbeing that goes beyond narrow economic measures like GDP. It will provide unique insights into the quality of life of Canadians – overall, and in specific areas that matter: our standard of living, our health, the quality of our environment, our education and skill levels, the way we use our time, the vitality of our communities, our participation in the democratic process, and the state of our arts, culture and recreation. In short, the CIW is the only national index that measures wellbeing in Canada across a wide spectrum of domains.

Community vitality is measurable. **The Canadian Index of Wellbeing** provides data on eight areas² which reflect health, social and economic measures. This includes an area of measure entitled Community Vitality which evaluates Canadians' opinions on a variety of indicators, e.g. degree of belonging to community, participation in group activities, volunteering, caring for others. United Way of Canada –Centraide Canada is a selected spokesperson in support of this initiative. The Index will report on trends and changes in areas that are vital to Canadians' quality of life.

² A new approach to measuring how Canadians' lives are getting better – or worse in areas that matter: health, standard of living, quality of the environment, time use, education and skills, community vitality, civic engagement, and arts and culture.

Source: York Region Vision 2026

Vision 2026 has established fifteen principles, eight goals and uses over eighty indicators to compile its results from information the Region already collects such as the Region's Key Performance Indicators and mandatory provincial reporting indicators. It has compiled performance indicator data for four years.

In addition, York Region has established base line data on recent immigrants, a profile of the social and economic circumstances of residents living on low incomes in York Region and baseline data on children.

The Region also publishes twice annually a number of key economic indicators and development statistics, such as population growth, migration data, employment and labour market conditions, residential and commercial property market information and recent development trends.

The Federation of **Canadian Municipalities produces the Quality of Life Reporting System (QOLRS)** which is a database developed to measure, monitor, compare and report on the quality of life in Canadian urban municipalities. There are 20 participating municipalities, including York Region, from seven provinces. These municipalities are a mix of large urban centres, suburban communities, and small and medium-sized communities. As York Region Councillor Brenda Hogg, Chair, Quality of Life Technical Team notes, "The Quality of Life Reporting System provides us with another tool to monitor how well we are doing so we can continue to **respond to the needs of our changing communities and maintain our high quality of life.**"

Source: Quality of Life in York Region, document produced by the York Region Community Services and Housing Department, Policy and Program Support Services Division, www.york.ca/.../Quality+of+Life+Web.pdf - 2009- 08-09 - [Text Version](#)

"Considering how York Region compares to the other municipalities participating in QOLRS, "we face **challenges with respect to income gap, housing diversity, social housing availability, rental vacancy rate/affordability**, voter participation, volunteerism, and use of public transit."

Report: **Action for Neighbourhood Change, Orienteering Over New Ground: A Neighbourhood Theory of Change**, June 2006, Cheryl Gorman, published by The Caledon Institute of Social Policy, Ottawa. This report concludes that strengthening neighbourhoods is important for a variety of reasons that include investing directly in neighbourhoods can have a **positive impact upon the economic and social health of the neighbourhood**. The actions required include developing a collaborative neighbourhood governance that is resident-led in combination with comprehensive, system-wide support.

Markham and Vaughan are the two most highly populated areas in the Region with significant growth. Research findings indicate that in each of these areas there are **neighbourhoods that face risk factors** that may affect the quality of life for residents, e.g. housing costs have increased disproportionately to residents' income; skilled immigrants and newcomers unable to find meaningful employment.

Neighbourhoods are strengthened by enhancing residents' access, participation, connectedness and decision-making in community activities and networks, human /social services supports, education and learning opportunities. To this end, there needs to be a systems approach to improve neighbourhoods.

The health of our neighbourhoods and the wellbeing of individuals and families impact the overall quality of life for residents.

Mental Health

Source: Public Health Agency of Canada, www.phac-aspc.gc.ca

- Conceptually, mental health is treated as a set of affective/relational and cognitive attributes that permit an individual to carry out valued functions with *reserve capacity or resilience* and thus to cope effectively with challenges to both mental and physical functioning.

Happiness and work satisfaction are examples of such desirable states, as are self-esteem, mastery and a sense of coherence. Although some consider these latter attributes as determinants of mental health, they are considered here as positive indicators of mental health status since they contribute to reserve capacity and coping ability.

Indicators of mental health and determinants:

- sense of coherence or wellbeing
- self-esteem
- sense of mastery
- happiness and interest in life
- depression
- distress
- cognitive impairment

In relation to the proposed funding priority area of improving the wellbeing of individuals, focus will be on initiatives that recognize the above indicators of mental health.

Mental Health and Addiction Statistics

Source: Canadian Mental Health and Addictions, Toronto, Ontario

Prevalence and Incidence

- 1 in 5 Canadians will experience a mental illness in their lifetime. The remaining 4 will have a friend, family member or colleague who will.
- Mental illness affects thinking, mood or behaviour and can be associated with distress and/or impairment of functioning, with symptoms that vary from mild to severe.
- 1 in 10 Canadians 15 years of age and over report symptoms consistent with alcohol or illicit drug dependence.
- 3.8% of adults in Ontario are classified as having moderate or severe gambling problems.
- About 20% of people with a mental disorder have a co-occurring substance use problem.
- Schizophrenia affects 1%, major depression impacts 8% and anxiety disorder 12% of people.

Who is Affected

- 70% of mental health problems and illnesses have their onset during childhood or adolescence. Young people age 15-24 are more likely to report mental illness and/or substance use disorders than other age groups.
- Overall, men were 2.6 times more likely than women to meet the criteria for substance dependence. 25% of male drinkers are high-risk drinkers compared to 9% of female drinkers.
- Women were 1.5 times more likely to meet the criteria for a mood or anxiety disorder than men.
- Canadians in the lowest income group were 3-4 times more likely than those in the highest income group to report fair to poor mental health.

Populations particularly challenged by mental health illness

Source: Canadian Mental Health Association, Ontario

Mental illness affects everyone, directly or indirectly, but some groups face particular challenges:

Aboriginal People/First Nations

Many mental health problems of Aboriginals arise from a long history of colonization, residential school trauma, discrimination and oppression, and losses of land, language and livelihood.

Children and Youth

Many people recognize the importance of a healthy childhood, but few understand the critical part played by mental and emotional problems and how important and harmful they can be for children and youth throughout the growing years.

Immigrants and Refugees

Although mental illnesses have similar symptoms across cultures, their manifestations and how people describe and interpret symptoms vary with ethnicity and culture.

Women

Women have unique experiences of mental illness. Women have depression more often than men, for example, and are depressed in different ways. Mothers with mental illness face particular challenges. Find out more about these and other issues, as well as information about finding and choosing treatment for mental health problems.

Seniors

Many seniors lead fulfilling lives without significant physical or cognitive changes. But for others, the challenges that come with aging can be debilitating.

Priority Areas of Other Metro I and II United Ways

As can be seen from a review of other United Ways, the three recommended focus areas of Helping Youth Grow Up Strong, Enabling Individuals and Families to Achieve Economic Independence, and Improving the Wellbeing of Individuals and Communities are aligned with other United Ways' priority areas.

The United Way Canada Movement and United Ways of Ontario are focused on addressing youth issues, poverty reduction, and community / neighbourhood capacity building work.

Priority Areas of Other Metro I and II United Ways

Winnipeg

- Helping children and youth achieve their potential
- Promoting financial stability and independence
- Improving personal well being and neighbourhood health

Calgary

- Growing up great
- Moving out of poverty
- Building strong neighbourhoods

Toronto

- Building strong neighbourhoods
- Creating opportunities for youth
- Helping newcomers fulfill their potential

Lower Mainland

- 0-6
- 6-12
- Seniors
- Strong communities

Edmonton

- Strong families and healthy children/youth
- Self reliant individuals and supportive communities
- Public education and advocacy

Ottawa

- Children and youth
- Immigrants and newcomers
- Seniors
- People with disabilities
- Individuals and families in need
- Agencies

Priority Areas of Other Metro I and II United Ways cont'd

Peel

- Strengthening families and children
- Helping abused women and children
- Reducing hunger, homelessness and poverty
- Supporting seniors to live healthy lives
- Helping newcomers and immigrants settle

In April 2010, a new community investment strategy will be implemented by Peel that focuses on supporting services, programs and initiatives that build:

- Resilient people
- Strong families
- Vibrant communities