KGO Community in Action

2024-2025

A summary of the major themes of action in the Kingston-Galloway/Orton Park (KGO) Community

Food Systems

Youth Engagement

Income Security & Employment

Community

Racial Justice

Anti-Racism

Momentum

Housing Access

Settlement

Environmentalism & Sustainability

VISIONARY
COMMUNITIES

Project partners
East Scarborough Storefront, University of Toronto, Toronto Metropolitan University, and Catalysts' Circle

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VISIONARY
COMMUNITIES

About this document
Why it was created

In 2024, the East Scarborough Storefront partnered with a group of academics to explore how, instead of just taking information from the community for research purposes, they could use their capacities and resources to support community-led action and projects.

It was agreed that typically researchers have little understanding of what is actually happening in the communities they wish to engage. For this reason The Storefront and its sister organization Catalysts' Circle set about helping them to understand the rich array of projects, plans and actions taking place in Kingston Galloway/Orton park (KGO).

The project is called Visionary Communities and it aims to support the priorities of the community, while advancing climate and sustainability goals . The process used to help researchers understand these priorities focuses on who in KGO is rolling up their sleeves to do what, and we call it Momentum Surfacing. This document is a snapshot of what researchers found to be happening in KGO.

VISIONARY
COMMUNITIES

About the context
KGO demographics

Kingston Galloway/Orton Park is one of the most diverse communities in the country and is a place of resilience and creativity.
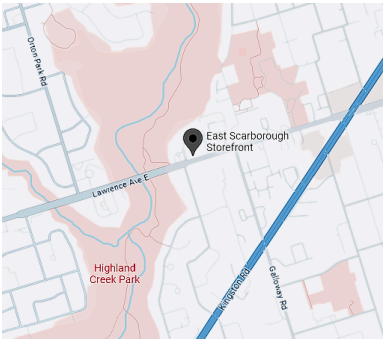
KGO is also a place that has struggled with underinvestment and marginalization. People in the community often have difficulty meeting their everyday needs. It is in this context that people and organizations are rolling up their sleeves to develop and act on locally rooted solutions to strengthen their community.
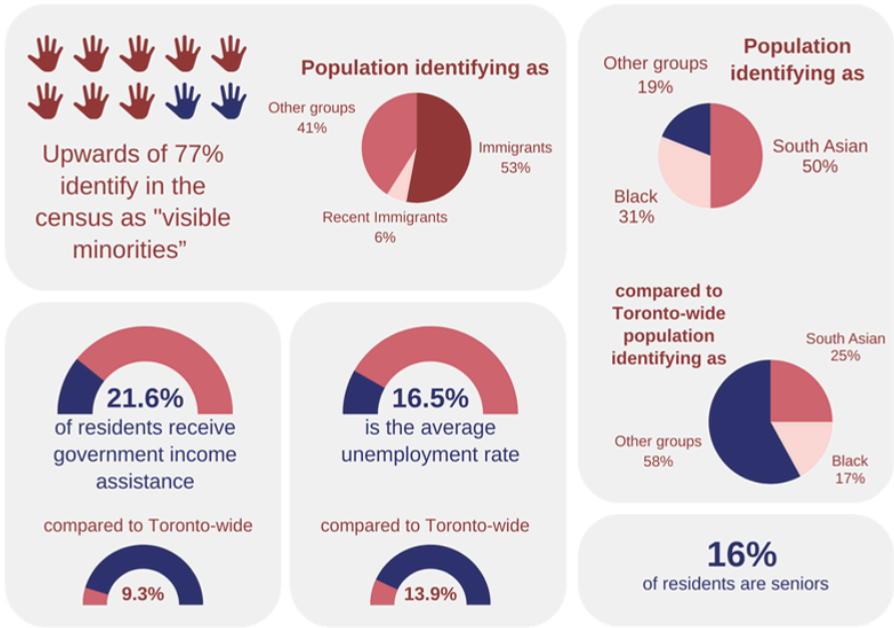

Figure 1. Visualization of key statistics in the KGO community based on 2021 Census Data

# About the approach: How the information was gathered

Community Scan

First the researchers learned what they could from websites, documents and social media posts. Next they connected with the people working on activities in the community to find out what was happening on the ground. The researchers then captured all the information in a detailed spreadsheet.

Developing themes

In order to provide a snapshot of where the momentum was, the researchers organized the information they found into seven thematic areas outlined in this report. The activities within each of these themes were then further analyzed as to whether they were:

Service delivery: formalized programs to help residents with their individual needs, or

Community development: strategies to improve overall community wellbeing (see Appendix A)
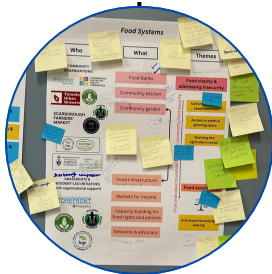
Ground-truthing with community

Despite all their efforts, researchers cannot have the kinds of nuanced understanding of the community that local organizations and grassroots groups have, so the final critical phase of this work was to check in with community members: Did we get this right? What did we miss?

This ground-truthing exercise was done at a Community Speaks: a process that brings community members together over a meal to explore issues and ideas together (see Appendix B for details)

What: Themes findings

In this section, you will find the **top seven themes** where collective action is taking place in the community. The themes will be presented in poster format similar to the visuals presented at the Community Speaks.

Food Systems

Youth Engagement

Housing Access

Themes Findings Overview

Racial Justice

Newcomer Settlement

Environmentalism and Sustainability

Income Security and Employment

Figure 2. Overview of the seven themes of collective action in the KGO community

Anti-Racism and Racial Justice

Many of the organisations and grassroots groups in KGO are taking an anti-racism or racial justice approach to their ongoing work.

Service Delivery

Those focusing on anti-racism do this by using an intersectional lens, mitigating systemic barriers to services and/or providing culturally affirming environments and care. They also focus on awareness raising by building internal capacity to better understand the oppressions that local people have experienced and to enhance their ability to provide services that are trauma informed and meet specific cultural needs.
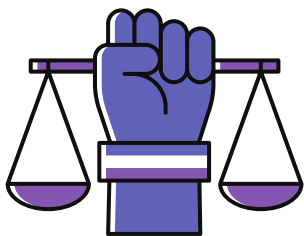
Systems Change

Intentional efforts are made by specific organizations whose purpose focuses on racial justice to provide culturally appropriate services to specific groups of people well represented in KGO, especially to people who identify as Black and Indigenous.

Anti-Racism and Racial Justice

Who?

The Pamoja institute

ANSAAR FOUNDATION - REDUCING POVERTY & EMPOWERING LIVES

bgc
MAAT Youth Innovation & Cultural Centre

Mayabel Movement Int - Empowering Future Leaders

the Community ARTS Guild

EAST SCARBOROUGH STOREFRONT - a project of MakeWay

KGO Adult Literacy Program

SCARBOROUGH CENTRE FOR HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

SCARBOROUGH WOMEN'S CENTRE

All-Stars

Scarborough Community Legal Services

Strides TORONTO

B3: Black-led, Black-serving, Black-focused & Indigenous serving

SCARBOROUGH SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH

bgc
MAAT Youth Innovation & Cultural Centre

TAIBU COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTRE

THE READING PARTNERSHIP

NATIVE CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES OF TORONTO

COMMUNITY CLIMATE RESILIENCE LAB

What?

Anti-Racism

Building organizational capacity for anti-racism

Socio-cultural support services

Social services provided through anti-racist lens

Racial Justice

Social services with racial justice lens

Support for indigenous families and children

Racial Justice & Climate Resilience Framework

Theme

Intersectional approaches

Mitigating systemic barriers

Culturally affirming care & environments

Community-centred climate resilience

Food Systems

Many people and organizations in KGO are concerned about issues surrounding food and are approaching local solutions in a number of ways:

Service Delivery

Service delivery focuses on making sure that individuals and families have access to the food that they need. This mostly takes the form of food charity and focuses mostly on foodbanks and other kinds of direct access programs.

Community Development

Community development efforts focus on issues of food sovereignty and range from tangible on the ground activities like community gardening and local markets, to reimagining food systems and advocacy.

Food Systems

Who?
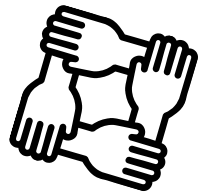
SERVICE DELIVERY

EAST SCARBOROUGH **STOREFRONT** powered by MakeWay

S C SCARBOROUGH CENTRE FOR HEALTHY **H C** COMMUNITIES

Good Neighbors

Community Food Hub

MALVERN FAMILY RESOURCE CENTRE

SEEDS OF HOPE FOUNDATION

bgc

SECOND HARVEST FOOD RESCUE

Toronto Community Housing

Scarborough SDA Church

Heron Park Recreation Centre

West Hill Community Support Program

Pamoja Institute

Redeemed and Relevant Ministries

FEED SCARBOROUGH Scarborough Food Security Initiative

5N2 FOOD FOR ALL

KENNEDY HOUSE Est. 1971

tpl • toronto public library

THE SALVATION ARMY

PATHWAY OF HOPE

CSABSS

Y Greater Toronto

ANSAAR FOUNDATION REDUCING POVERTY & EMPOWERING LIVES

UNIVERSITY

Culinaria Research Centre UNIVERSITY OF **TORONTO** SCARBOROUGH

Feeding City

CCSAI Student supports

SCARBOROUGH FOOD NETWORK

Systems Change

Grassroots Initiatives and Networks

Carribbean Community Connects

EAST SCARBOROUGH **STOREFRONT** powered by MakeWay

STUDENTS 4 STUDENTS

K.G.O

The Food for Good Project

What?

Service Delivery

Food Banks

Hot meal and snack programs

Systems Change

Community garden

Food infrastructure

Markets for income

Policy capacity building

Networks & advocacy

Theme

Food charity & addressing food insecurity

Food sovereignty

Housing Access

Like in other parts of the city and country, KGO has issues related to affordable housing. Local housing efforts fall into two main categories: the provision of affordable housing and tenant advocacy.

Service Delivery

The provision of housing tends to be driven by single organizations and include improvements to the current housing stock as well as building of new co-op/affordable housing. Services are also available to support tenants to navigate services in community housing and prevent eviction in market rental buildings.

Systems Change

Housing advocacy includes organizing around tenant rights and housing policy education.

Housing Access

Who?

COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS

Scarborough Community Legal Services

Toronto Community Housing

Cedarbrook Park Co-operative

Neilson Creek Co-op

CREATE TO

OPTIONS FOR HOMES

bgc East Scarborough

Yemoja Village Affordable Housing Initiative

WIGWAMEN

Gabriel Dumont Non-Profit Homes

Systems Change

GRASSROOTS & RESIDENT-LED INITIATIVES

TCH resident leaders

circle Community LandTrust

ESTU (East Scarborough Tenants Union)

ACORN CANADA

What?

Service Delivery

Housing stabilization for racialized youth

'State of good repair' renovations

Eviction prevention

Tenant support at the Landlord & Tenant Board

Creating and Providing Housing

Construction of new affordable housing

Coops and Social Housing

Systems Change

Tenants' rights organizing

Housing policy education

Theme

Affordable housing

Housing security

Community ownership

Tenants' rights

Newcomer Settlement

The KGO community is making strides in helping newcomers settle into Canada. While most of these efforts fall under formalized programs funded at least in part by Immigration and Refugee Citizenship Canada, gaps in this system are also being filled by grassroots groups and networks at the local level.

Service Delivery

Services to newcomers tend to focus on language attainment, navigation of the legal system and employment.

Community Development

Community development efforts include newcomer specific grassroots groups, wellness chats and community wide networks of organizations and residents seeking to make local settlement systems work better for new KGO residents. Of note is that there is only one formal network of organizations, Toronto East Quadrant Local Immigration Partnership (TEQLIP), dedicated to enhancing the settlement experience for newcomers in Scarborough by fostering collaboration among service providers.

Newcomer Settlement

Who?

bgc — Opportunity Changes Everything — EAST SCARBOROUGH / EST. 1956

CultureLink — r new Canadian life starts here.

PCPI — WORKING TOGETHER FOR PROGRESS

SAFSS — Settlement Assistance & Family Support Services

SCHC — SCARBOROUGH CENTRE FOR HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

acces employment

CSAGSS — Canadian South Asian Growth and Support Services

CCS — Catholic Crosscultural Services

Community Development

EAST SCARBOROUGH STOREFRONT — A project of MakeWay

HEALTHY LIVING through ARTS

Toronto East Quadrant Local Immigration Partnership — Working Together for a Diverse & Inclusive Community

What?

Service Delivery

Language & Literacy

Citizenship and PR preparation

Service navigation

Abuse and gender based violence support

Wellness chats

Employment

Community Development

Service Coordination

Fostering a welcoming community

Theme
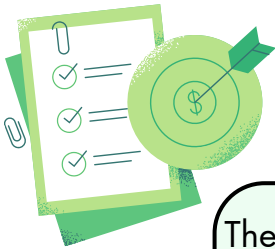
Orientation for newcomers

Health and wellness

Crisis and trauma support

Community connection and responsiveness

Income Security & Employment

There are efforts underway in KGO both to help individuals to access employment and to strengthen local workforce development so that employment opportunities are more easily accessible to local residents.

Service Delivery

The majority of the activity regarding employment in KGO falls in the realm of service delivery and includes resume and interview skill support, upskilling and training.

Community Development

Community development efforts are all about local systems: how organizations work better together, mitigate the competitive nature of employment funding and improve co-ordination with each other and with employers.

Income Security & Employment

Who?

Service Delivery

Scarborough Community Legal Services

East Scarborough STOREFRONT
A project of MakeWay
East Scarborough Works

YWCA ONTARIO

acces

CCS Catholic Crosscultural Services

bgc East Scarborough

PCPI WORKING TOGETHER FOR PROGRESS

JVS TORONTO

CENTENNIAL COLLEGE

Community Development

Scarborough Collaborative Employment Network East (SCENE):

East Scarborough STOREFRONT
A project of MakeWay

Toronto East Quadrant Local Immigration Partnership
Working Together for a Diverse & Inclusive Community

What?

Service Delivery

Employment services

Essential skills (financial, digital literacy) & Training

Job search support

Job Matching

Entrepreneurship Programs

Community Development

Workforce development

Service Coordination

Theme

Targetted demographic support

Economic Inclusion

Place Based Focus

Enhancing collaborations

Environmentalism & Sustainability

While not all environment and sustainability projects listed here are framed as such, there is much going on in KGO that is advantageous for the planet and, therefore, lend themselves to the category of environment and sustainability.
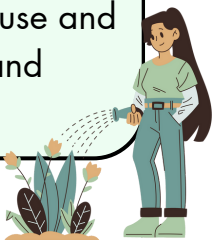
Service Delivery & Community Development

Most activities in this area can be viewed as either service delivery or community development. For example, there are several reuse and repair initiatives which keep appliances and bicycles out of landfill, and at the same time provide a service to individual residents who may seek to repair items as a way to save money.

Similarly gardening and access to greenspace initiatives may seek to support more sustainable living practices, clean up or revitalize land use and at the same time, benefit individual health and wellbeing.

Environmentalism & Sustainability

Who?

GRASSROOTS & RESIDENT-LED INITIATIVES

SCARBOROUGH ENVIRONMENTAL ASSOCIATION

MUSLIM NATURE ADVENTURE

Second Sister vintage clothing

Friends of Cornell Park

Friends of Churchill Heights Park

The Guildwood Butterflyway Project

Seeds of Hope

Highland Creek

TORONTO NATURE STEWARDS

Botany Hill Park

COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS

EAST SCARBOROUGH STOREFRONT
A project of MakeWay

scarborough CYCLES
A PROGRAM OF ACCESS ALLIANCE

Cedar Ridge Community SCARBOROUGH EST.1955

toronto ZOO

SCARBOROUGH ZERO WASTE

UTSC (Highland Creek Project)

NATIVE CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICE OF TORONTO

What?

Bird watching

Repair hubs

Household item repair

Invasive species management

Bicycle repair

Gardening & pollinator-friendly gardens

Guided walks

Community clean-ups

Theme

Access to and use of greenspace

Reuse and repurposing

Place-keeping

Environmental stewardship

Youth make up a significant demographic in KGO and there are lots of efforts underway to make the community a supportive place to grow up.
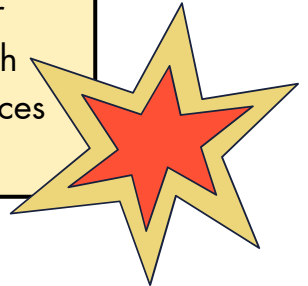

Service Delivery

There are youth specific organizations in KGO that provide youth oriented services such as mental health, education and training.

Community Development

There are also concerted community development efforts designed to ensure that youth have the supports that they need to create by youth, for youth programs and initiatives, including youth leadership training and youth designated spaces and adult allyship.

Youth Engagement and Leadership

Who?

Service Delivery

NATIVE CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES OF TORONTO

TORONTO — Curran Hall Community Rec Centre & Heron Park Community Rec Centre

Strides TORONTO

bgc — MAAT Youth Innovation & Cultural Centre

The Wellspring CENTRE

youth wellness hubs ONTARIO

Shine On — Greater Toronto Y

CCS Catholic Crosscultural Services

JVS TORONTO

tpl: toronto public library

ONTARIO — Seventh-Day Adventist Church

Mayabel Movement Int — Empowering Future Leaders

KENNEDY HOUSE Est. 1871

THE WOUT

tcm — TORONTO CITY MISSION

IMPACT n Communities — Inspirational Meaningful Positive Actions Creating Transformation in Communities

SCHC — SCARBOROUGH CENTRE FOR HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

Community Development

RISE — REACHING INTELLIGENT SOULS EVERYWHERE

GRASSROOTS & RESIDENT-LED INITIATIVES

All-Stars

STUDENTS 4 STUDENTS

TWP — TOWARDS PEACE

MAKERS

bgc — MAAT Youth Innovation & Cultural Centre

A.C.E.Y.

What?

Service Delivery

Dedicated youth spaces

Mental health, emotional well-being supports

Education & Employment supports

Sports, Arts & Recreational programming

Service navigation

Community Development

Leadership opportunities

Violence prevention

Civic engagement

Theme

Creation of 3rd safe spaces

Skill development and supports for successful transition to adulthood

Mentorship

Neighbourhood safety

By youth, for youth

Community Connection

So What?

Cross-thematic Momentum

The previous section illustrated seven themes of momentum in the KGO community. However, these themes are interconnected. This is evident with multiple organizations working within one theme and one project fitting under multiple themes.

Organizational Examples

Boys and Girls Club (bgc)

Food, housing, settlement, income security, anti-racism, youth

SCHC

Food, settlement, anti-racism and youth

Project Examples

PCPI Skills and Technology Program

Newcomers and income

Food For Good

Food, settlement, racial justice and sustainability

This can be useful if you are also thinking of starting an initiative or project: how can you integrate cross-cutting areas and networks relevant to the KGO community?

So What?
Working at Multiple Scales

The analysis of collective action in the community has revealed different areas of intervention, which can be broken down into **three different levels**: service-delivery, networks (formal and informal) and policy-level actions.

Policy and Systems

Networks

Service-delivery

Policy and Systems

There are interventions aimed at changing systems such as advocacy and participatory policy-making.
Example: East Scarborough Tenant's Union supporting tenant's rights through advocacy

Networks

These are organizational networks and informal resident networks which support community resilience across different themes.
Example: Scarborough Collaborative Employment Network East (SCENE)

Service-delivery

These are interventions which fill gaps in the community related to support and essential services for resilience.
Examples: Food Banks, Repair Hubs, Mental Health Support and Jobs Matching Services

Which level does your work fall into? Is there a possibility of working on multiple levels which can enable you to **contribute across** immediate service delivery actions and longer-term systems-level change?

Engage with Us

The Community Scan is an iterative and living document.

[👆 **Click here to access the community scan sheet**]

KGO and Scarborough are sites of inspiration and resilience, and we would love to hear about your work!

Don't see your initiative or organization in the posters?

If we are missing information about your work in the KGO community scan, tell us about your work, projects and organizations by **filling out this:**

[👉 **Google Form**]

For more information, contact **Shane Beharry** at Storefront
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*Interns were supported throughout the process by Storefront Staff. This Project was conducted utilizing the Connected Communities Approach with the **East Scarborough Storefront** as a Community Backbone Organization.*

Appendix A
Community Development/Service Delivery chart

The table below provides an overview of key terms relating to two key ideas for this report: systems change and service delivery work

	Community Development	Service Delivery
Purpose	To strengthen the community or society as a whole	To strengthen an individual's capacity to thrive
Who typically leads	Grassroots groups Collaboratives Networks	Single organizations
Activity types	Mobilizing to fill gaps in the system	Skill improvement workshops
	Aligning services and processes	Connection to opportunities (housing/employment etc)
	Facilitating communication	Emotional, physical or mental health supports
	Building capacity of people/organizations providing services	Support in meeting institutional requirements (immigration/education etc)
	Raising awareness of community issues	
	Advocacy	
	Mapping community assets	
	Creating community wide strategies and plans	

Appendix B
What is a Community Speak

Why

The purpose of a Community Speak is for community members to work together to explore issues and solutions.

Community Speaks are often confused with other forms of gathering, while the event may look remarkably similar, the difference is the purpose. Examples of other similar events with different purposes are:

Town Hall	Purpose: for community members to ask questions of people in positions of formal authority
Focus Group	Purpose: for community members to provide their thoughts to researchers on a given subject
Knowledge exchange	Purpose: for community members and organizations/institutions to learn about each other's realities/perspectives on a given subject

How

Community speaks can take various shapes and forms and ideally are co-designed with residents. The following are some ideas that can be adopted and adapted to your own context.

Participants:

- The number of participants will depend on the venue, budget and your reach in the community. Successful Community Speaks have been held with as few as 20 and as many as 100 participants.
- Community members can be defined any way that makes sense for the topic. You can restrict a Community peak to residents or include businesses/organizations in the community or on the specific project. Either way, participants should have some prior relationship with local community building activities.

Venue:

- Community Speaks should be held in an accessible location.
- One of the key elements of a Community Speak is the idea of breaking bread together, therefore, food is an important element of the event. If your budget allows, a sit down dinner is most desirable, with people sitting at tables of 4-8 people.
- While there isn't a presentation per se at a Community Speak, it is important that the facilitator can be heard. Depending on the size of the venue, you might want to consider a microphone.
- The venue can be anywhere from a church hall to a restaurant. Wherever the venue, it should be set up in such a way that people feel that they are participating in something special.

Appendix B
What is a Community Speak

Format:

Generally, an in person Community Speak is about 2 hours long and takes on the following format:

- People are greeted by staff or volunteers and seated at their tables (an enthusiastic greeting adds to the sense that each person is a valued participant)
- Food is served and people have a chance for informal conversation
- The host facilitator (could be a staff person or a resident) welcomes everyone, while the dishes are cleared away and flip chart paper and markers are distributed
- If Community Speaks are part of a regular cycle of community events, this is a good opportunity to reflect back on the last Community Speak and, ideally, itemize the things in the community that have taken place in relation to the ideas generated.

To adapt to a virtual format, make sure that you keep the original intent in mind:

- Encouraging people to bring their dinner to the event or even sending gift cards so that they can "share" a meal are ways to keep the "breaking bread" part of the event even in a virtual environment
- Breaking into small groups allows for everyone to speak and gives the feel of exploring something together
- Casual conversation is more difficult virtually, so the early part of the meeting should have a good check in question that helps people find common ground can be a good start (e.g. what games you played as a child, a random act of kindness you've seen)

- The facilitator poses the first of three questions:
  - Question #1: what is your experience with the the topic (participants are experts of their own context)
  - Question #2: where do you see potential for community building activities related to the topic (asset based)
  - Question #3: what do you see as your role, the role of local organizations and the role of institutions related to the topic. (personal ownership, collective solutions)
- Report backs: Giving people the opportunity to address the group is an important part of the event. In order to keep it from getting too long, asking for each table to discuss what the one key point they want to share is before their representative addresses the larger group.

Follow up:

Community Speaks can be worthwhile stand alone events, they become more impactful when you facilitate a series with report backs on who has done what since the last one:

- Write up the notes and share them back with the participants
- Identify your role on the topic and share that with the participants
- Send a survey asking participants what their commitment to the topic is
- Identify the policies or initiatives of governments or institutions related to the topic
- Use Community Speaks as a springboard to co-design a project and report back on the progress of that project

The purpose of a Community Speak is for people to explore issues and solutions. As with most community building exercises, people's involvement can be light (attending one event), medium (attending a series of events) or heavy (helping to plan events, following up, co-creating etc). Whatever the topic, whatever the format, honouring people and their contributions to community building should be at the core.

Catalysts' Circle: www.connectedcommunities.ca
or email: agloger@catalystscircle.ca
for more information