

**Afro-Canadian Caribbean Association
of Hamilton & District
Needs Assessment**

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Prepared for:
The Afro-Canadian Caribbean Association
of Hamilton and District Inc.

Funded by:



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1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Afro-Canadian Caribbean Association of Hamilton & District (ACCA) was formed in 1979 and is a charitable not-for-profit organization. It has an office at 423 King Street East in Hamilton and is open on a daily basis.

The creed of ACCA is "Unity, Strength and Progress." Through its members ACCA "strives to provide a vehicle for uniting all African, Canadian and Caribbean people residing in the city of Hamilton." A volunteer Board of directors governs ACCA. The Board's statement cites the following vision and plan for ACCA.

Our Vision

It is ACCA's responsibility to look to the future at all times, and foster community involvement. It is our intent to develop programmes geared towards different sectors of our association, and our community. Special emphasis will be placed on programmes to develop, encourage and interest our youth. They are our promise and hope for the future.

Our Plan

To make our vision a reality, we will establish a Community Centre for the free expression of African, Canadian and Caribbean ideas, through Arts, Literature, Commerce and Science; Social, Cultural and Recreational activities. We invite all interested individuals to join members and friends of the ACCA to help us work toward fostering pride in our ethnicity, heritage, culture and Canada.

Currently ACCA has a paid membership of approximately 200 while another 150 individuals are considered supporters of ACCA.

In the mid 1980's ACCA attempted to get a community centre off the ground on the East Mountain in Hamilton. A lot of interest and support were present during the ground breaking ceremony but the interest eventually broke off because of a lack of financial resources to develop the property. Currently, the Board is considering selling this piece of land to obtain a property and/or building in an area that would not be as expensive to develop.

Some of the main programs that ACCA currently runs out of the office on King Street are:

- Black Senior Women's Program
- March Break Camp
- Police Community Information Sessions
- Quilting Bee
- Sister 2 Sister
- The Spelling Bee of Canada
- Toastmasters Club
- Youth Affairs

ACCA also hosts many events outside of the centre including a New Year's Eve celebration, Caribbean Spring Festival, a Walk-a-thon, Black History Month events and others.

Needs Assessment

In March 2003 the Board of ACCA submitted a proposal to the Hamilton Community Foundation to secure funding for a needs assessment on the community it serves. The goal of the needs assessment was to set community priorities in the area of health, education, employment and community safety. The overarching goal of the work was to consult with the community members that ACCA aims to serve to see if the organization was reaching its goals. As the proposal reported, "The intent of ACCA is to gather information to help our Association to provide better support to the citizens of Hamilton from the African-Canadian-Caribbean communities. We are aware of changes in the diverse community, and that culturally there are differences between our African-Canadian-Caribbean communities, and ACCA wishes to become more sensitive to the needs of this wider, diverse community."

The anticipated outcomes of this research include:

- Project report with community needs clearly identified (short-term)
- Provide an opportunity for diverse African-Canadian-Caribbean citizens to discover their similarities, and celebrate their cultural diversities (short-term)
- Development of specific community projects based on the identified needs expressed by the focus group participants (long-term)
- New, formal partnerships with other African-Canadian-Caribbean groups/people. This includes an increase in ACCA's membership base.

1.1 Census Data for the African and Caribbean Communities in Hamilton

The 2001 Census Data for Canada reports that a total of 3,175 individuals in Hamilton identify the Continent of Africa as their birthplace and the place from which they have immigrated. Statistics Canada does not have a similar category for Caribbean immigrant status and place of birth; instead it is combined with Bermuda. Under that category 3,875 individuals identify as Caribbean and Bermudan in Hamilton. This makes a total of approximately 7,050 people in Hamilton who identify Africa or the Caribbean as their birthplace. The ACCA executive believes these numbers are too low and do not represent the current reality in Hamilton.

If the numbers from the Africa, Caribbean and Bermudan communities are combined, the following numbers represent the ages of the members of the community. Individuals between 25 and 44 years of age make up the majority of the African and Caribbean/Bermudan communities with 2,920 or forty one percent (41%) of the total. The second highest portion of the community by age is made up of those between 45 and 64 with 2,125 or thirty percent (30%). People over 65 years of age make up the smallest part of the community living in Hamilton with 740 individuals or 10% (ten percent) while youth under 24 years of age make up the remaining nineteen percent (19%) of the total.

There are a number of other organizations in Hamilton serving specific members of the Afro-Canadian Caribbean communities. See appendix A for a list of those other organizations as identified in the Community Information Services book 2004.

1.2 Methodology for Community Consultation

The consultation process looked to a series of methods including a survey, focus groups, and key informant interviews. Specific approaches are outlined under each aspect of the consultation below.

Survey

Funded by the Hamilton Community Foundation, the SPRC worked closely with the ACCA Needs Assessment volunteer committee led by Mary Helwig to develop a survey and dissemination plan.

From January 2004 until September 2004, 150 copies of the survey were distributed throughout the community, targeting the members of ACCA as well as members of other organizations that serve a similar demographic. Surveys were distributed at various ACCA events throughout the time period.

Focus Groups

Four focus groups were conducted in the community consultation including those with the Senior Women's group that meets at ACCA, the ACCA Board, ACCA Task Force, and youth from the broader African-Canadian-Caribbean community.

Women from "Facilitating Inclusion", a community development project in which women from underrepresented cultural communities are trained in popular education facilitation, determined the focus group format. Two women of African heritage conducted all four focus groups.

Key Informant Research Interviews

ACCA volunteers and Board determined a number of key stakeholders in the community that would be helpful in the consultation. Responses were obtained by four of them. They were asked questions from four categories. The format was determined by the information gleaned from the survey and the focus groups.

2.0 SURVEY FINDINGS

2.1 ACCA Programs and Events - Satisfaction Level with Events/Programs

The first question attempted to determine the satisfaction rate of respondents with 14 programs or events that ACCA currently coordinates. The scale included "very satisfied", "satisfied", "unsatisfied" and "very unsatisfied". There was also an option for "not attended".

Respondents were asked, "Which of the following ACCA programs or events have you attended? Please rate them according to your satisfaction level."

The following programs or events were listed for rating: Sister 2 Sister, Senior Women's Group, Black History Month, Monday p.m. Task Force, Shades of Women, Annual Walk-a-Thon, Friday night social, Caribbean Spring Festival, Caribbean Night, New Year's Eve, Computer Training, Toastmasters, Spelling Bee of Canada, and Pieces of the Dream. A space was left for "other".

For clarity in reporting, the "satisfied" and "very satisfied" categories have been combined unless the number of people who chose "very satisfied" was significant. Similarly, the "unsatisfied" and "very unsatisfied" were combined unless the number of "very unsatisfied" responses was significant.

Of the 14 people who reported attending Sister 2 Sister, eighty six percent (86%) were satisfied with the program. The satisfaction rate with the Senior Women's Group was very high with 92% of the 13 respondents indicating satisfied.

Twenty-eight (28) people reported attending Black History Month. Of those almost 90% reported being satisfied or very satisfied. The Monday p.m. Task Force had a lower satisfaction rate with only 64% of the 14 respondents being satisfied or very satisfied with it. Three of those respondents or 21% reported being very unsatisfied with the Monday p.m. Task Force.

Of the 7 people who attended Shades of Women, 71% were satisfied or very satisfied. However, two of those respondents or 29% reported being very unsatisfied. Seventy-five percent (75%) of the respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with the Annual Walk-A-Thon.

Twelve people reported attending The Friday Night Social and of those 75% were satisfied or very satisfied. The satisfaction rate with the Caribbean Spring Festival was very high with almost 88% of the 16 respondents indicating satisfied or very satisfied. Similarly, almost 91% of the respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with the Caribbean Night.

The highest rated event or program was New Year's Eve with 100% of the twenty people rating it as satisfactory or very satisfactory. In fact, 70% of the respondents said they were very satisfied.

Computer training was rated by 9 people and less than half, only 44% were satisfied or very satisfied. While 2 people reported being very unsatisfied, an equal number reported being very satisfied.

The response to Toastmasters was very positive with 86% of the 14 people reporting satisfied or very satisfied. Twelve people rated the Spelling Bee of Canada and 75% of them were satisfied or very satisfied with that event.

Finally, while only 4 people rated Pieces of the Dream, each of them reported being satisfied with the event. The use of the "other" category was not significant enough for reporting.

2.1.1 Key Finding

- The majority of the respondents to the survey were satisfied or very satisfied with the events or programs they had attended. The New Year's Eve event and Pieces of the Dream were the most successful in terms of respondents rating with 100% reporting being satisfied or very satisfied. The poorest rated program was Computer Training with less than half of the 14 respondents being satisfied or very satisfied.

2.2 Community Priorities

In this section questions were asked about the current four priority areas as identified by the Board: health, education, employment and community safety. Questions were also included in the survey about priorities for children and youth, education and employment. Respondents were asked to check all that applied.

The first question focused on child and youth priorities and asked, "What are the main issues affecting children and youth in our communities today?"

The categories beside the check boxes included education, racial profiling, gang activity, employment, lack of recreational opportunities and other.

Racial Profiling was seen as the top issue affecting children and youth today with 63% of respondents choosing it. Almost 53% of respondents indicated education as a main issue while close behind at almost 52%, gang activity was seen as an issue affecting children and youth today.

However, when examining the age of the respondents who answered this question, the breakdown is much different.

For those youth aged 15 to 19, gang activity was the most important for them at 64%. Education was the next highest answer for this age group with 36% indicating its importance. Racial Profiling had the lowest response at 36% for the 15 to 19 age group.

With the two older age groups, 35 to 55 and 55 and over, they chose the issues important for youth in the opposite order of the youth themselves.

Other issues put forward were: acceptance of diversity and how to cope, bullying, drugs (2), youth leadership, lack of appropriate facilities in which to hang out, programs to initiate new Canadians, unwed youth, violence and poor self-esteem.

Of the people who answered these questions about youth priorities, over 70% of them were 20 years of age or older.

Assessing the area of seniors in the community, respondents were next asked, "What are the main issues affecting seniors in our communities today?" Housing, access to healthcare, isolation, and poverty were the categories identified with an added space for other suggestions.

The issue indicated most as affecting seniors today was access to healthcare as reported by 73% of the respondents. Almost 55% of those surveyed felt isolation was an important issue faced by seniors. Poverty was reported by 45% of the respondents while 34% indicated housing was an issue for seniors.

Other issues raised were education, loneliness, stress, transportation, lack of information and lack of respect for their hard work.

The next question was asked to determine health priorities in the community that ACCA could address through workshops. Those surveyed were asked, "Are there health issues in our communities that you think ACCA could help address with workshops to improve community health?" Options included screening clinic for blood pressure, exercise classes, nutrition, stress management and other.

Stress management was seen as the top priority with almost 59% of those surveyed indicating the need for a workshop on that topic. Nutrition was a close second with close to 57% of respondents checking it. Twenty-six people or 51% felt that an exercise class was important with 49% indicating the need for a screening clinic for blood pressure.

Other suggestions for workshops included a diabetic clinic (3), a call centre for the elderly (2), meals on wheels, depression, mental health, transportation to services, shut in registry, and HIV.

Looking at the educational priorities of ACCA, the next question was, "Should ACCA focus its attention on any of the following educational program?" Categories for the check boxes included ESL (youth and adult), after school programs, computer training, and other.

The educational program most frequently chosen by respondents was after school programs with nearly 73% indicating their importance. Computer training was seen as important by 49% of those surveyed while only 41% thought ACCA should focus its attention on ESL.

Other suggestions for educational programs were homework (2), mentoring (2), early childhood education, healthy cooking, arts and crafts i.e. quilting bee, link with Diverse Community Achievement, and business development.

Trying to address employment priorities for the community the next question posed, "What employment issues in our communities do you think ACCA could help address?" Choices included youth underemployment, foreign-trained professionals, discrimination and a space for other suggestions.

The majority of respondents felt that youth underemployment could be addressed by ACCA with 52% indicating that response. Close behind was discrimination with 48% of those who answered this question choosing that answer. Finally, only 28% of respondents felt ACCA should address issues faced by foreign-trained professionals.

Three other answers were noted: be involved in trades and apprenticeships, promoting jobs that are marketable and entrepreneurship.

Using a scale, respondents were then asked to indicate the level of safety they felt in their neighbourhood, home and Hamilton. The question asked, "How safe do you feel in your neighbourhood (home, Hamilton) and the scale included very safe, somewhat safe, somewhat unsafe and unsafe.

The overwhelming majority felt safe in all three areas. Ninety percent (90%) of respondents indicated feeling safe in both their neighbourhoods and homes while 82% felt safe in the city of Hamilton.

This next question was asked to get at the number of people who actually have attended meetings or programs at the centre. This would help in understanding the number of people who attend ACCA events and programs but are not clearly connected to the ACCA organizational structure. Respondents were asked, "Our association has an administrative office designed to coordinate the meeting room space. Have you ever attended a meeting or other function at the centre?" A simple yes or no checkbox was included.

Just over half of those surveyed (57%) had ever been to the centre.

Seeking community input on the current priorities of ACCA as identified by the Board, the final question before the demographics section asked, "What do you think the priority of ACCA should be in this community?" Options included education, social, youth, recreation, health, employment, settlement/integration, resource/referral, men, women, seniors, and other.

The majority of those surveyed, almost 73%, reported that youth should be the priority area of ACCA. The second priority identified was education as selected by almost 61% of the respondents. The lowest identified priorities were specific programs for women and men and 25% and 22% respectively. The following chart illustrates each priority area and its ranking.

- Employment - 49%
- Health - 45%
- Recreation - 43%
- Resource/Referral - 41%
- Social - 37%
- Seniors - 36%
- Settlement/Integration - 33%
- Women - 25%
- Men - 22%

2.2.1 Key Findings

- Youth, education, employment and health are identified as the top four priorities of ACCA through this consultation.
- According to survey findings as a whole, the main issue affecting children and youth in the community today as ranked by the respondents was racial profiling followed by gang activity. However, those 15 to 19 year olds (T=12) saw gang activity as the most important issue and racial profiling as least important.
- The issue indicated most as affecting seniors today was access to healthcare and isolation.
- In terms of health priorities for the community, stress management was seen as the top priority nutrition a close second.

- Survey respondents felt that the educational program ACCA should focus on most was after school programs for children and youth.
- With regard to employment issues, the majority of respondents felt that youth underemployment should be addressed by ACCA followed by discrimination.
- The overwhelming majority of respondents felt safe in their neighbourhoods, homes and in the city of Hamilton.

2.3 Demographics of Respondents

With regard to gender, the majority of the respondents to this survey were female at almost 77% while male respondents made up 23% of the total.

The age of the respondents were fairly evenly divided across four ranges. The following section shows the breakdown of respondents by age.

- 22% between 15 and 19 years of age
- 24% between 20 and 34 years of age
- 34% between 35 and 55 years of age
- 20% over 55 years of age

English was the preferred language for 96% of the respondents while 4% (1 respondent) preferred French. No "other" language was selected.

A clear majority of those surveyed have lived in Canada for more than 10 years (77%). The next highest group was those who had been here for between 1 and 5 years (15%). The other 8% were split between being here less than 1 year or between 5 and ten years.

With regard to place of origin, the highest number of respondents to this question, 17 or 35%, were from Jamaica originally. Twenty-two percent (22%) were born in Canada while 10% had their origins in Trinidad and Tobago. Four respondents were from Dominica and two were from Pakistan. The following countries each had one respondent name it as their country of origin.

- Barbados
- Great Britain
- Ghana
- Guyana
- Iraq
- Mexico
- Russia
- Somalia
- St. Vincent
- Sudan

Only 30% of those who completed the survey were members of ACCA, while fourteen respondents in total indicated they belonged to another ethno-cultural group in the city. However, only 8 named the group to which they belonged. Three individuals belonged to the

Dominican Association. The following groups had 1 person each indicate their membership within:

- An African group
- Barbados and Friends
- Iraqi community
- Scottish Rite
- The Somali community

3.0 FOCUS GROUP FINDINGS

Four focus groups were held following the survey data collection. The purpose of the focus groups was to get more information on the issues that were named as most important for particular groups in the community (seniors and youth) by speaking with those groups and with leadership bodies in ACCA.

Two facilitators from Facilitating Inclusion, a community project in which women from underrepresented cultural communities in Hamilton were trained in facilitation skills, took the lead in the focus groups. The women were chosen because of their familiarity with ACCA and the issues being discussed.

3.1 Senior Women's Focus Group

A focus group was held with eight participants from the Senior Women's Group that meets regularly at the ACCA office.

The women were asked to identify ways in which both ACCA and the city of Hamilton could address the issues of seniors' health and isolation, the main issues for seniors as identified in the survey. In response to what ACCA could do about isolation, the women thought arranging "home visits" would be an option. There was also some discussion about the need for a senior centre for black seniors that could be a community and cultural centre. One participant said ACCA should be "more aware of the needs of seniors" and "consider the issues identified" and therefore move ahead on them.

When asked what the city could do about health issues the response was to "recruit more doctors." With regard to affecting the isolation of seniors the city was encouraged to build affordable homes for seniors with some assistance for daily living. Financial options for seniors also arose with the suggestion that the city could "free up on taxes for the elderly." One participant encouraged the city to recognize "what is needed by the black community."

The women were then asked to name specific barriers or concerns that seniors have with regard to health and isolation. Then the women posed solutions to the problem.

In terms of health issues, respondents identified both personal issues and medical system issues. Personal issues identified included the reluctance of some seniors to leave their homes to seek care, the lack of family support nearby, and language barriers in accessing services. The solutions posed to address some of these issues were to increase information and outreach to seniors so they would be better equipped to seek health services. For example, some respondents noted the production of a publication outlining what services are available to this particular population and encouraging seniors to access them.

With regard to the medical system issues, the women identified a lack of familiarity with the system as one issue preventing seniors from getting the healthcare they need. The list also

included lack of resources in the medical community and cultural reluctance in dealing with medical professionals. The solutions posed to these problems go beyond ACCA's current scope and capacity such as increasing access to medical services by getting more family doctors and clinics in the city. As well, one participant noted the need to "hire foreign-trained healthcare providers without prejudice."

3.2 ACCA Task Force Focus Group

The main purpose of the ACCA Task Force is to plan and implement events for the community. The Task force is made up of members of ACCA, and according to one member is the "working arm" of the Association. Task force meetings are held on a weekly basis and chaired by one of the Board members. The meetings provide the members with an opportunity to ask questions and raise concerns they wish to have directed to the Board. Task force meetings also provide a forum for the Board to report back to members on other committee meetings, progress of various programmes or projects, and a wide variety of community events that are promoted on behalf of other local Black Groups who liaise with ACCA.

Five members of the Task force attended the focus group. The Task force was informed of the survey findings that indicated the top four issues of concern to the community as Youth, Education, Employment and Health. The participants were then asked if they agreed with the order of the priorities. After some discussion they were rearranged in the order of Youth, Health, Education and Employment.

The next step of the group was to consider how ACCA should address these priorities. Using a similar format to the senior women's group, the participants were asked to identify the concerns or barriers they associated with the issue and then pose solutions.

With regard to youth issues, four major areas emerged. They were youth underemployment, lack of cultural connections, lack of social and recreational support and racism in the form of racial profiling.

The Task force saw education as the key to addressing each of these areas of concern. For example, one participant recalled career planning workshops as necessary and something in which ACCA used to be involved. Connecting youth to the labour market through apprenticeship and mentoring programs was also suggested.

Education through music and drama was put forth as a way of connecting youth to their culture. This would also assist in the area of increasing social and recreational opportunities. Ensuring that youth have positive role models from family and community to broaden the social context of the youth was seen as an opportunity of connection to culture.

In order to address racial profiling one proposed solution was to "educate school Boards on victimization through stereotyping."

Looking at health issues in the community, the task force identified lifestyle and lack of education about nutritional health choices as two areas of concern. Again, education was seen as the way of addressing these issues.

With regard to the priority area of education, the task force reiterated the lack of positive role models in the community for youth, particularly teachers from visible minority communities. Besides "increasing role models from our own culture" the task force noted the need for homework and after school programs especially those with a mentoring or apprenticeship component.

Under the priority of employment the Task force reiterated its previously named concerns and solutions with regard to youth underemployment including increasing role models and programs that highlight mentoring.

However, here again the issue of racism came up noting the lack of jobs for black youth. The Task force noted the need to lobby the government to implement equal opportunity hiring practices.

3.3 ACCA Board Focus Group

The Board of ACCA is comprised of nine members. The structure includes a president, program coordinator, 1st and 2nd vice-presidents, secretary, treasurer and three directors. The five participants in the focus group were asked to identify barriers, concerns and solutions about each of the four identified priority areas.

The Board reiterated many of the points made by the task force. Under the area of youth the Board cited youth's lack of direction, the need for employment supports and the lack of social and recreational opportunities.

Again the emphasis on education figured prominently in their proposed solutions, suggesting workshops with various topics including communications and "money matters." Increasing social and recreational alternatives and employment supports were also added.

Under education, the Board noted the under-representation of black male role models in the education system. As well, the limited connection between the education system and the African-Canadian-Caribbean community was noted.

The posed solutions included an increase of positive role models for youth, and an initiative to increase the connection between families and the school system so parents would have "a better understanding of the education curriculum." Finally, the Board suggested that the curriculum should better represent the history and culture of the African-Canadian-Caribbean community.

The Board's input on employment noted once again the lack of role models citing, "not enough blacks are employed in the system." Another concern was the lack of education about how the employment system works, noting that some, "don't know what the rules are."

The solutions to these areas of concern highlighted education with a need for employment workshops and supports including apprenticeship programs. The need for lobbying the government on equal opportunity employment was also noted again.

Finally, in the area of health the Board named lifestyle and lack of education about nutrition and health as two of their major concerns in the community. Education was clearly identified seen as the prime method of addressing these issues, "providing special health classes for youth and parents" and "creating awareness of the body human through workshops and seminars."

3.4 Youth Focus Group

Seven youth from the African-Canadian-Caribbean community ranging in age from 13 - 19, met with the facilitators to talk about the top four priorities as named through the ACCA survey. They were asked to name the barriers or concerns associated with the issues and then develop solutions.

With regard to youth issues they identified education, lack of role models, lack of social and recreational opportunities and racism as the four areas of concerns. This corroborates with the findings from the three other focus groups. Their solutions were similar as well with an increase in education, role models, addressing racism and more social and recreational opportunities. For example, "ACCA should have an outreach program where youth can go instead of hanging out in the street."

In addressing the education priority the youth noted that "not enough black history is taught in schools", again confirming the findings in other focus group. They went on to discuss the need for tutoring "geared toward black youth."

Under employment the lack of information, discrimination and lack of employment that provides living wages were named as the three major concerns or barriers. To address these concerns the youth suggested the need for more education about the employment system, networking opportunities, skill building workshops and advocacy.

Health concerns for youth were related to drug use, sexually transmitted diseases and teenage pregnancy. Awareness and education was seen as the most important action to address these concerns. The youth said this education could be done through ACCA and the city.

Finally, the youth had one extra areas of questioning concerning gang activity in the community. This was done to expand on the survey finding that youth aged 15 to 19 found gang activity to be the most important issue that needs addressed. When naming their concerns about gang activity the youth identified a range of factors related to gangs or illegal activity including easy access to drugs, weapons or alcohol. Concerns about acceptance were raised as reasons that youth get involved in gang activity.

One suggested solution to preventing youth from becoming involved in gang activity was to provide more positive role models through interactive workshops. Opening the lines of communication between youth and adults in the community was also identified as part of the solution. Specifically, ideas such as "motivational talks", "someone to talk to", and "an anonymous platform for gang activity talk" were discussed.

3.5 Key Findings

- Seniors identified concerns for both personal and systemic issues in dealing with the healthcare system. Solutions included more education for seniors in the black community about existing services and education for health care providers about issues particular to serving this community.
- Isolation is a major concern for seniors in this community due to a lack of family or friend support. Physical limitations also make it difficult for seniors to get out which adds to their feelings of isolation.
- Education was a recurring theme through each focus group and across all priority areas. Education in different forms of workshops and seminars would assist the community in dealing with health, employment, education and youth priorities.
- The need for positive role models for youth in the community was articulated repeatedly and is seen as a way of assisting youth in struggling with education, employment and gang activity.
- Each group that addressed youth topics noted a lack of social and recreational opportunities for youth.
- The need to address racism and discrimination came across in each focus group when examining the priority areas of health, education, employment and youth.
- The need to connect youth to the local labour market was seen as a primary concern under the employment priority.
- Gang activity is a major concern for youth aged 15 - 19. The youth focus group identified the need for role models and more opportunities for communication about the issues as ways of addressing this area.

4.0 KEY INFORMANT RESEARCH INTERVIEW FINDINGS

4.1 Key Informant Research Interview Results

ACCA volunteers and Board determined a number of key stakeholders in the community that would be helpful in the consultation. Four individuals, including 2 ACCA members and 2 non-members, were interviewed. The participants included: a woman from ACCA's senior women's group, a youth leader in ACCA, a local activist who participates in some of ACCA's events and a local pastor to the black Christian community.

They were asked questions from four categories: ACCA's target population, membership, volunteers, and organizational structure. (See appendix 7.2 for interview format.) The format was determined by the information gleaned from the survey and the focus groups.

The first question was asked in order to hear if the community thinks that the population aims to serve is being reached. Interviewees were first read ACCA's vision: "On ACCA's website they state that their mission is to have a community centre in Hamilton "for the free expression of African, Canadian and Caribbean cultures". It goes on to "invite everyone to join us in working towards fostering pride in our ethnicity, heritage, culture and Canada." They were asked, "Do you think ACCA serves the membership it has set out to serve?"

Generally, interviewees began by commenting on the important work that ACCA does in the community. However, each one indicated the need for ACCA to have a "higher profile" and how it was important to reach out further to attract more members.

One person remarked that ACCA needed to provide much more than social opportunities and went on to say, "we have all kinds of organizations doing social things; we don't need another one." The emphasis of this interviewee was on the need for a community centre in Hamilton for the African-Canadian-Caribbean community. This participant also felt it was important that ACCA served the "purpose of representing the community" when the media called for information.

However, some comments indicated that ACCA needed to reach out more intentionally to attract more members from the newer immigrants from Africa. On the same point there was also recognition that financial and human resources were limited to assist in this outreach.

Having reflected on who the target population is for the ACCA Board, interviewees were then asked, "Does ACCA need to redefine its target population?"

One theme that emerged from the interviews is that the target population may not need redefining but broadening. It was reported that this should be done by meeting the diverse needs of the target population, particularly those who are marginalized in the community such as those who are struggling in the community, in conflict with the law, new immigrants, or those who need affordable housing.

Two participants clearly indicated a need for broadening the in the target population of ACCA. As one respondent said, "ACCA needs to talk more about the underemployment of its youth, and the economic issues of the community. It needs to become a political force."

Another felt the change in direction needed to be toward youth. "We have a large youth population but it's hard to get them out."

Another participant indicated the need for ACCA to change its approach in bringing people together. "ACCA should try to bring them together so all could be under one roof yet maintain their diversity and uniqueness." This was echoed in the answers of others who indicated a need to reach out more clearly to newer immigrants from African countries.

The next question asked, "How do you suggest ACCA could attract more people from this target group to its membership?" One participant identified a need for "listening more to ACCA members." This connects to another interviewee's response that ACCA must meet the needs of the community first and then people will be involved, once their "real needs are met". The importance of involving youth was also a theme that ran through the responses to this question.

The next area of questioning was aimed at understanding how ACCA might get its members to be more involved in volunteering. "Going back to ACCA's vision, it says the following when speaking of community involvement. It is our responsibility to look to the future at all times and foster community involvement. It is our intent to continue to develop programs geared towards different sectors of our community. In order to develop these programs ACCA needs more volunteers. How do you suggest that volunteerism could be increased from the target communities? Are there any existing barriers to volunteering at ACCA that you are aware of?"

Three main themes emerged from this question: volunteer recognition, having a designated volunteer management position and involving youth in more program planning and implementation. For example, one respondent spoke about the importance of a volunteer appreciation event that is free for the volunteers to attend while another said, "you need to bring people together to thank them for their participation and not wait until next year when we're needed again."

In terms of barriers to volunteering the key response related to transportation issues, especially for seniors and youth. "People will volunteer if they can get there."

Another barrier pertained to the need for more communication. One participant said ACCA needed to "be a little higher in their appeal", not just using existing phone lists but using View and other local media to raise their profile. Another suggestion involved the need for ACCA to "go out to churches and other organizations to share with others what ACCA is doing." This outreach was identified by all participants as essential to increasing volunteers.

Finally, interviewees were asked, "Do you think the organization structure supports the strategies you've suggested for increasing membership and community involvement?" The primary theme focused on the need for a designated, paid person in the organization to do volunteer management and/or public relations. On the other hand, participants identified the

lack of resources in the organization to hire such a person but the necessity of finding those resources.

While not directly related to the question, another theme that emerged was leadership and youth involvement in such. This theme ran throughout the interviews. According to one participant this could mean a change to a structure that was "less about bureaucracy and more about community" where there would be room for "wisdom from our elders, resources from those who are working and energy from youth."

Others commented on the difficulty of attracting youth to the organization but felt if they were involved in leadership it would be much easier to involve them.

4.2 Key Findings

- *ACCA* needs to broaden its reach to the community in order to attract more members and volunteers. This would include more specific outreach to youth, newer immigrants from African communities and those who are marginalized in the community.
- Membership would be increased to *ACCA* leadership was listening more to the concrete needs of the community.
- In order to increase volunteers more recognition for the current volunteers would be helpful.
- The organization structure could be enhanced with a designated person for volunteer management and public relations.
- It is important to involve youth more in the leadership of *ACCA*, particularly in areas of decision making and youth programming needs.

5.0 KEY FINDINGS

- The majority of the respondents to the survey were satisfied or very satisfied with the events or programs they had attended. The New Year's Eve event and Pieces of the Dream were the most successful in terms of respondents rating with 100% reporting being satisfied or very satisfied. The poorest rated program was Computer Training with less than half of the 14 respondents being satisfied or very satisfied.
- Youth, education, employment and health are identified as the top four priorities of ACCA through this consultation.
- According to survey findings as a whole, the main issue affecting children and youth in the community today as ranked by the respondents was racial profiling followed by gang activity. However, those 15 to 19 year olds (T=12) saw gang activity as the most important issue and racial profiling as least important.
- The issue indicated most as affecting seniors today was access to healthcare and isolation.
- In terms of health priorities for the community, stress management was seen as the top priority nutrition a close second.
- Survey respondents felt that the educational program ACCA should focus on most was after school programs for children and youth.
- With regard to employment issues, the majority of respondents felt that youth underemployment should be addressed by ACCA followed by discrimination.
- The overwhelming majority of respondents felt safe in their neighbourhoods, homes and in the city of Hamilton.
- ACCA needs to broaden its reach to the community in order to attract more members and volunteers. This would include more specific outreach to youth, newer immigrants from African communities and those who are marginalized in the community.
- Membership would be increased to ACCA if leadership was listening more to the concrete needs of the community.
- In order to increase volunteers more recognition for the current volunteers would be helpful.
- The organizational structure could be enhanced with a designated paid staff person for volunteer management and public relations.
- It is important to involve youth more in the leadership of ACCA, particularly in areas of decision making and youth programming needs.

6.0 RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

The following recommendations come from a synthesis of the findings from the community consultation.

ACCA Organizational Structure

- Youth representatives are needed at the ACCA Board and Task Force level to ensure youth priorities are being addressed from a firsthand point of view. This was identified through all three levels of the community consultation.
- A larger community centre is needed to enhance the programming and events that ACCA currently coordinates. This could help ACCA provide an umbrella organization model in which smaller organizations that serve the same population could access space.

Advocacy

- Advocacy is needed in the community around the issues of racism, access to healthcare, employment, and education. The need to address racism and discrimination came across in each focus group when examining the priority areas of health, education, employment and youth.

Education

- Education was a recurring theme through each focus group and across all priority areas. ACCA may consider accessing resources to increase workshops on health, employment, education and youth issues as identified throughout the consultation.

Health

- ACCA leadership could discuss ways in which the community can be more connected and work better with the existing healthcare system. This would work to ensure better access to health services, particularly for seniors.
- Seniors identified concerns for both personal and systemic issues in dealing with the healthcare system. Solutions included more education for seniors in the black community about existing services and education for health care providers about issues particular to serving this community.

Seniors

- Isolation is an important issue that affects the health and well-being of seniors. ACCA could address this issue through enhanced seniors programs and initiatives with this issue in mind.

Volunteers

- ACCA could increase membership and volunteerism by expanding the scope of its outreach to more marginalized people in the community. This could also be done with the creation of a designated paid staff person for volunteer management and/or public relations. Ensuring

transportation and recognition for volunteers would assist in increasing volunteers to the organization.

Youth

- With regard to youth, a lack of social and recreational opportunities, good role models and underemployment are three areas of concern identified through the consultation. Putting programming resources into these areas would be an option for ACCA that could help address some of these issues.

7.0 APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Afro-Caribbean Association Community Survey

APPENDIX B

Key Informant Interview Format

APPENDIX C

Inventory of Other Local Organizations Serving Similar Communities in Hamilton

APPENDIX A
Afro-Canadian Caribbean Association Community Survey

In partnership with the Social Planning and Research Council of Hamilton, ACCA is conducting a needs assessment of our community. Thank you for giving of your time to complete this survey.

1. Which of the following ACCA programs or events have you attended? Please rate them according to your satisfaction level.
(4=very satisfied; 3=satisfied; 2=unsatisfied; 1=very unsatisfied)

	4	3	2	1	Not Attended
Sister 2 Sister	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Senior Women's Group	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Black History Month	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Monday p.m. Task Force	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Shades of Women	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Annual Walk-a-thon	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Friday night social	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Caribbean Spring Festival	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Caribbean Night	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
New Year's Eve	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Computer training	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Toastmasters	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Spelling Bee of Canada	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pieces of the Dream	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Children/Youth Priorities (check all that apply)

What are the main issues affecting children and youth in our communities today?

- Education Racial profiling Gang activity Employment
 Lack of Recreational Opportunities Other _____

Seniors Priorities (Check all that apply)

What are the main issues affecting seniors in our communities today?

- Housing Access to healthcare Isolation Poverty Other

Health Priorities (Check all that apply)

Are there health issues in our communities that you think ACCA could help address with workshops to improve community health?

- Screening clinic for blood pressure Exercise classes Nutrition
Stress management Other _____

Educational Priorities (Check all that apply)

Should ACCA focus its attention on any of the following educational programs?

- Adult ESL Youth ESL After school programs Computer training
 Other _____

Employment (Check all that apply)

What employment issues in our communities that you think ACCA could help address?

- Youth unemployment Foreign Trained Professionals Discrimination
 Other _____

Community Safety

1. How safe do you feel in your neighbourhood?

- 4 _____ 3 _____ 2 _____ 1 _____
Very safe Somewhat safe Somewhat unsafe Very unsafe

2. How safe do you feel in your home?

- 4 _____ 3 _____ 2 _____ 1 _____
Very safe Somewhat safe Somewhat unsafe Very unsafe

3. How safe do you feel in Hamilton?

- 4 _____ 3 _____ 2 _____ 1 _____
Very safe Somewhat safe Somewhat unsafe Very unsafe

ACCA Administration

Our association has an administrative office designed to coordinate the meeting room space.

Have you ever attended a meeting or other function at the centre? Yes No

What do you think the priority of ACCA should be in this community?

- Education Social Youth Recreation Health Employment
 Settlement/Integration Resource/Referral Men Women
 Seniors Other _____

Demographics

1. Your gender is: Male Female

2. Your preferred language for communication?

- English French Other(s) _____

3. How old are you? 15 -19 20 - 34 35 - 55 55 +

4. You have been in Canada for: < 1 yr 1 ~5 yrs 5 ~10 yrs > 10 yrs

5. What is your highest level of schooling?

- High school diploma College diploma
 Trades/training certificate University Degree Post University

6. Are you currently employed? Yes No
If yes, are you employed in your field of study? Yes No

7. What is your country of origin? _____

9. Are you a member of ACCA? Yes No

10. Are you a member of any other ethno-cultural group in the city? Yes No
If yes, which one(s)? _____

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. Your answers will be very helpful as we plan for the future. Please return the survey to the Afro-Canadian Caribbean Association at 423 King St. E., Hamilton, L8N 1C5. You may fax it to 385-4914. Call Mary Helwig-Hall, at 905-385-0925, for more information.

APPENDIX B
ACCA Key Informant Interview Format

1. On ACCA's website they state that their mission is to have a community centre in Hamilton "for the free expression of African, Canadian and Caribbean cultures". It goes on to "invite everyone to join us in working towards fostering pride in our ethnicity, heritage, culture and Canada."

Do you think ACCA serves the membership it has set out to serve?

Does ACCA need to redefine the target population?

2. You suggest that the target population for ACCA is _____? How do you suggest ACCA could attract more people from this target group to its membership?
3. Going back to ACCA's vision, it says the following when speaking of community involvement. "It is our responsibility to look to the future at all times and foster community involvement. It is our intent to continue to develop programs geared towards different sectors of our community."

In order to develop these programs ACCA needs more volunteers. How do you suggest that volunteerism could be increased from the target communities?

Are there any existing barriers to volunteering at ACCA that you are aware of?

4. Do you think the organizational structure supports the strategies you've suggested for increasing membership and community involvement?

APPENDIX C

Inventory of Other Organizations Serving Similar communities in Hamilton

(From the Community Information Services "Redbook" 2004)

African Caribbean Cultural Potpourri Inc.

- services youth and the needy and encourages scholastic achievement and community service through its annual scholarship awards
- registered as a non-profit organization.

Barbadian Canadian and Friends Hamilton

- the local organization for Barbadians in Hamilton - runs youth and seniors groups

Club Afrique Canada Cultural Association

- social club
- sponsors children for Diverse Community's Day Camp.

Ghanaian Association

- meets three to four times a year to discuss social issues concerning the Ghanaian community
- holds a winter clothing drive for donations of coats and boots for children and families who are new arrivals to Canada from Ghana and surrounding areas
- works with the African Caribbean Cultural Potpourri Inc. for the Taste of Africa food festival.

Hamilton Guyanese Canadian Cultural Association

- runs social activities for Guyanese community in Hamilton

Jamaica Foundation

- assists disaster relief of Jamaican residents by sponsoring charitable programs (e.g. Jamaica Children's Home).

Jamaican Association

- assists Jamaicans with integration into the community
- addresses social issues and work with Jamaican youth to keep them in school

McMaster Afro-Caribbean Association

- a student group striving to define and enhance a culturally conducive atmosphere for the awareness and restoration of their African heritage.

Society of Ebony Women

- a social and business organization of women

Trinidad and Tobago Association of Hamilton

- works to create and foster a spirit of understanding among Trinidad and Tobago Nationals and the people in the City of Hamilton as well as the rest of Canada.
- takes an active interest in cultural, civic, political, educational and social activities that would benefit the people of Trinidad and Tobago residents in Hamilton and the Canadian community as a whole
- currently manages the Hamilton Youth Steel Orchestra

Other Communities that have organizations but are not listed in the Red Book

Chadian

Congolese

Dominican

Kenyan

Rwandan

Somalian

Sudanese