

**Recreation Access for Children and Youth  
of Hamilton's Diverse Communities:  
Opening Doors, Expanding Opportunities**

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The City of Hamilton is becoming increasingly diverse. This increasing diversity necessitates a review of the operation and design of the sectors which seek to serve the public to ensure that all needs are being met.

In response to this message, in September 2005, a working group and steering committee, led by Sport Hamilton (a non-profit organization that seeks to assist with the development of Hamilton sport activities and programs geared to youth), sought to better understand the issues of access to recreation for children and youth from cultural and ethno-racial groups in our community. The Social Planning and Research Council of Hamilton (SPRC) was commissioned to consult the community to further localize and understand the barriers faced by diverse ethno-racial children and youth

### Methods

In order to do this research, the SPRC employed four methods: a literature review, focus groups with parents and youth from diverse ethno-racial communities, key informant interviews with recreation service providers, ethno-racial community members and child and youth advocates and a community consultation.

### Key Themes

Four key themes emerged when consulting the literature and the community.

- People from diverse communities are not getting their children's recreation needs met by mainstream services. They are likely to engage in ad hoc, informal and often tenuous arrangements for fulfilling recreation and sport needs.
- Participants did not articulate a desire for sports that they played in their home countries to be offered.
- Cultural and ethno-racial community groups seek to fund and run their own sport and recreational programming for a variety of reasons.
- Participants from cultural and ethno-racial communities named a number of barriers in accessing sport and recreation programs in Hamilton.

The barriers named by the research participants include cost, lack of knowledge about recreation activities in Hamilton, transportation, feeling burdened by family obligations and meeting basic needs, intimidating registration and stigmatizing subsidy process, lack of connection or belonging, language, lack of emphasis on skill development and other specific barriers.

## Recommendations

1. It is recommended that the City of Hamilton, Culture and Recreation Department consider the findings of this report and strategize ways to develop community-wide protocols that work to be more inclusive of Hamilton's ethno-racially diverse population. The City of Hamilton has a *Parks, Culture and Recreation Master Plan (2002)* which could be informed by this research. The City is going to be engaging in a planning process to update the Master Plan. The Committee should be advocating for consideration of this research in the updating process.
2. It is recommended that the Working Group for the Recreation Access Project keep meeting to encourage and continue system-wide collaborations and planning around including diversity in sport and recreation programs in Hamilton.
3. The Youth Service Agencies Network (YSAN) Grow program was named in nearly all of the focus groups as a critical service for helping connect families to affordable recreation for their children. This program is a model for the critical connection between providing information, providing transportation, coordinating and subsidizing recreation opportunities. A program, modeled after the Grow program, should be developed and expanded in Hamilton to improve recreation access for diverse communities. This expansion could include connections with cultural and ethno-racial organizations.
4. It is recommended that recreation, sport and community clubs develop explicit protocols and do outreach to connect with ethno-racial community groups. Connecting with leaders from communities, cultural organizations and groups, presentations in English as a Second Language classes and information translated into French and the four emerging main language groups in Hamilton (Arabic, Chinese, Urdu and Serbian) are all possible strategies for this work.
5. Enhance the registration and subsidy application process and do an assessment of its accessibility. Revise this process to be friendlier and less stigmatizing for potential applicants. As an example, the East Kiwanis Boys and Girls Club provides universally inexpensive programming in order to reduce the stigma and shame of applying for subsidy.
6. It is recommended that given the growing nature of diversity in Hamilton, all staff from culture, recreation, sport and community centres and clubs in our community incorporate anti-racism training into regular practice. This training should encompass both skill and awareness training (Hodgson, 1996). In addition to training, the human resources department of all recreation services should develop strategies for ensuring that new staff be representative of the community they are seeking to serve.

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

The City of Hamilton is becoming increasingly diverse. This increasing diversity necessitates a review of the operation and design of the sectors which seek to serve the public to ensure that all needs are being met.

Nearly one quarter of Hamilton's population is from immigrant or foreign-born communities (24.7%). A smaller percentage (1.3%) identify in census data as Aboriginal. These populations traditionally find greater barriers to getting needs met, needs including recreation. Unfortunately, specific information is unavailable from recreation service providers about the demographics of the people they serve. Anecdotally, however, key informants suggest that the participation in recreation and sport organizations is not representative of the Hamilton's diverse cultural and ethno-racial population.

In response to this message, in September 2005, a working group and steering committee, led by Sport Hamilton (a non-profit organization that seeks to assist with the development of Hamilton sport activities and programs geared to youth), sought to better understand the issues of access to recreation for children and youth from cultural and ethno-racial groups in our community. The committee recognized that, 'mainstream' recreational programs were being under-utilized by Hamilton's diverse cultural communities. In partnering with the Social Planning and Research Council of Hamilton (SPRC), the committee engaged the community in consultation to further localize and understand the barriers faced by diverse ethno-racial children and youth.

*Please see Appendix A for the List of Advisory and Working Group Members.*

## 2.0 METHODOLOGY

In order to better understand the barriers and needs of children and youth from diverse cultural and ethno-racial communities in Hamilton, the Social Planning and Research Council employed four research methods: a literature review, focus groups with parents and youth, key informant interviews and a community consultation process.

### 2.1 Definitions

**Recreation:** For the purpose of this report recreation has been defined by the Advisory Committee as both:

- a) Free time, choice, enjoyment and social time, organized for a reason;
- b) Voluntary, non-work activity that is organized for the attainment or personal and social benefits including restoration and social cohesion.

This includes sport and arts-based recreation.

**Diverse cultural and ethno-racial communities:** Groups belonging to immigrant and other foreign-born communities, cultural and ethno-racial communities and Aboriginal groups in Hamilton.

### 2.2 Literature Review

In April 2005, the Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants (OCASI) completed an extensive literature review that highlighted the benefits of sport and recreation to newcomer youth, the reasons for insufficient participation of newcomer youth in sport programs and how to engage newcomer youth more effectively. Rather than duplicate this current and local report, the committee decided to use this work as a foundation for exploring issues in Hamilton more closely.

### 2.3 Focus Groups

To identify the needs of local children, we talked to their parents but spoke with youth directly in focus groups. Two facilitators, Sana Kahero and Rosemary Aswani were hired from the St. Joseph's Immigrant Women's Centre, Facilitating Inclusion program. These women developed the focus group plan, in consultation with the SPRC. Both women co-facilitated the focus groups. This was an important and innovative step because it brought an element of diversity to the research process.

In order to gain the perspective of youth and parents, the SPRC accessed 105 parents and youth in 8 different focus groups. The focus group sites were determined because they were already organized in groups.

## **Focus Group Participants**

### **Parents**

1. Muslim women  
The Shabab Centre  
15 female participants
2. Language Instruction for New Canadians program  
St. Joseph's Immigrant Women's Centre  
12 female and male participants
3. Somali Women's Group  
The Urban Core Community Health Centre  
13 female participants
4. Catholic Board of Education - International Languages Program - Swahili  
Parents of students  
5 female and male participants
5. A Mi Salud - Spanish Women's Group  
North Hamilton Community Health Centre  
20 female participants
6. Niwasa Head Start Preschool  
Aboriginal Parent's Group  
13 female and male participants

### **Youth**

7. The Principal's Council  
Sir John A. MacDonald High School  
6 female and male youth
8. SISO Newcomer Youth Program  
21 female and male youth

*See Appendix B for the Focus Group Framework.*

## **2.4 Key Informant Interviews**

Key informants were consulted for two reasons. First, it was clear that sport and recreation services were not keeping specific statistics on participants from ethno-racial communities, therefore, the committee decided to access the expertise of service providers about the dynamics of the neighbourhoods in which they operate in relation to the dynamics of the participants they serve. Second, key informants from different ethno-racial communities were consulted to ensure that a wide range of perspectives were captured.

### **Key Informant Interview Participants**

1. Lake Avenue School
2. Sudanese League of Hamilton
3. Hamilton Regional Indian Centre
4. City of Hamilton - Culture and Recreation Department, Dominic Agostino Riverdale Community Centre
5. City of Hamilton - Culture and Recreation Department, Central Memorial Community Centre
6. City of Hamilton Inclusivity Committee
7. East Kiwanis Boys and Girls Club
8. Community Action Program for Children
9. Centre de Sante Communautaire Hamilton-Niagara

*See Appendix C and D for the Key Informant Interview Guides.*

## **2.5 Community Consultation**

On March 30, 2006 Sport Hamilton and the Social Planning and Research Council co-hosted a community consultation which sought to accomplish two goals: to present the preliminary findings of the research and to have the community comment on the recommendations.

The evening began with a presentation by Sport Hamilton on the history of the project, followed by a presentation by the Social Planning and Research Council on the findings of the research. The presenters answered questions from the audience in a 10 minute, moderated question and answer session.

The participants divided into ten groups. Each focus group had between four and eight participants and was facilitated by an advisory committee member. The groups were asked to answer two questions of each of the six recommendations. Those two questions were: What is your initial response to this recommendation? What needs to happen to move this recommendation forward in our community?

Fifty eight community members participated and came from a variety of sectors including recreation and sport service providers, municipal government, funders, leaders in ethno-racial communities and past focus group participants.

## **2.6 Limitations**

Census data from Statistics Canada identifies a number of distinct and sizeable cultural populations in Hamilton. Their data also notes that there are even more cultures present but whose populations are too small to fully report. The methods chosen for this research reflect our best efforts to study this issue given the time and resource limits of this particular project. As a consequence, this report does not claim to have fully assessed the particular needs and issues of each cultural group in Hamilton. However, it does provides a general overview which indicates several issues which appear to resonate with many members of cultural communities in the city.

The Social Planning and Research Council collected program information from local public and voluntary recreation service providers in order to better understand the recreation opportunities available to the public and particularly to meet the needs of diverse cultural and ethno-racial youth. However, this information was inadequate for the task of profiling the extent to which recreation services were meeting diverse needs. In order to develop a useful, local inventory of services for children and youth from diverse ethno-racial communities, Hamilton needs to develop a local cultural audit framework with indicators identified and defined by local service providers and consumers. Unfortunately at this time, a comprehensive analysis of the recreational opportunities for diverse children and youth is unavailable due to the lack of an appropriate, local framework for analysis.

Initially the committee hoped to access parents through schools, however, it proved difficult to operationalize. Instead, the researcher made connections to community agencies where potential participants were already organized into groups. Additionally, the process was supported by the facilitators from the Facilitating Inclusion project at the St. Joseph's Immigrant Women's Centre.

### 3.0 SNAPSHOT OF HAMILTON'S DIVERSITY

For the purpose of this research, diverse was defined as groups belonging to immigrant and other foreign-born communities, cultural and ethno-racial communities and Aboriginal groups.

Hamilton is becoming increasingly diverse as the third largest Ontario city of destination for immigrants after Toronto and Ottawa<sup>1</sup>. Almost one quarter of Hamilton's population is from immigrant or foreign born communities (24.7%). A smaller percentage (1.3%) identify in census data as Aboriginal<sup>2</sup>. The top ten countries of origin for newcomers to Hamilton include: Yugoslavia, Poland, the United Kingdom, the Philippines, India, Iraq, China, Pakistan, United States and El Salvador. Sixteen percent of recent immigrants in Hamilton are under 16 years old<sup>3</sup>. Additionally, according to Statistics Canada, Hamilton has the fifth largest visible minority population in Ontario.

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<sup>1</sup> Settlement.org

<sup>2</sup> Statistics Canada, 2001

<sup>3</sup> Citizen and Immigration Canada, 2000

## 4.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

In April 2005, the Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants released its report, *OCASI Research on Inclusive Recreation Models for Immigrant and Refugee Youth, Provisional Model*<sup>4</sup>. Hamilton was one of three sites for this research. The OCASI team did a thorough literature review, identifying themes in a wide body of academic and community-based research around the benefits of sports and recreation for youth, the reasons for the lack of participation of newcomer youth and ways to more effectively engage youth.

### 4.1 Benefits of Sport and Recreation

According to the literature reviewed in the OCASI study, the benefits of participation in sport and recreation to youth from diverse communities includes: identification with a peer group, cognitive development, social development, physical development and personal health, emotional development, moral development and community connectedness and economic health.

### 4.2 Insufficient Participation

The study's authors found through the literature search that "a high percentage of marginalized children - those that live in poverty, ethnic minorities, and those who have recently arrived in North America - have no or limited access to sport and recreation". There are several reasons for this, articulated both in terms of challenges facing service providers and challenges facing children and youth. The challenges facing those who provide sport and recreation services include: lack of resources and limited community and participant support. In terms of the challenges facing children and youth, the authors found that they include: socioeconomic status and participatory cost, time constraint and changes in lifestyle, location of activity or community or lack of transportation, disapproval from peers or parents or parents' barriers to participate, unsuitable sport or recreational activities or services and unsuitable organizational structures or services, age and gender of child and racism and discrimination.

### 4.3 Effective Engagement of Youth

The OCASI report also identified characteristics of successful models for including immigrant and refugee youth in recreation initiatives. These characteristics include:

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<sup>4</sup> For a comprehensive literature review of the benefits of sports and recreation for youth, the reasons for the lack of participation of newcomer youth and ways to more effectively engage youth - please see *the OCASI Research on Inclusive Recreation Models for Immigrant Youth - Provisional Model* at [http://www.ocasi.org/downloads/OCASI\\_YOUTH\\_PROJECT\\_2004-2006\\_Provisional\\_Model.doc](http://www.ocasi.org/downloads/OCASI_YOUTH_PROJECT_2004-2006_Provisional_Model.doc)

involving the community and supporting grassroots initiatives, recognizing the desires and needs of potential program participants and clearly delineating program mission and goals.

## **5.0 RESULTS**

The following section describes the findings of the focus groups with parents and youth and the key informant interviews. It is divided into three main sections - findings from youth, findings from parents and findings from key informants. Additionally, the community consultation contributed to the results by affirming the preliminary findings and adding support to the recommendations and potential next steps.

### **5.1 Findings from Youth**

Two focus groups were conducted with youth and both groups were multi-cultural (as opposed to mono-cultural). One focus group occurred at Sir John A. MacDonald High School in the President's Council and one occurred at the SISO Newcomer Youth Program. In total twenty seven (27) youth were consulted.

#### **Sir John A. MacDonald High School**

The student participants at Sir John A. MacDonald High School identified lack of information, lack of transportation and lack of support from parents as the biggest barriers faced by these students. Unique to this group, the students talked about their parents' distrust of recreation programming, wanting their children to focus on school and the lack of information parents have about recreation programming. Themes around cost, transportation and language issues all emerged in this focus group.

In terms of solutions for the barriers named above, reaching out and providing information to youth in a variety of ways - by email, through advertising, presentations in schools, announcements at schools and information packages to parents were articulated by the students. Additionally, the youth discussed the importance of offering an opportunity for parents to learn more about recreation and sport programs by inviting parents to an 'open-house' and offering translation.

#### **SISO Newcomer Youth Program**

For the youth at the SISO Newcomer Youth Program, cost was the biggest barrier to accessing sport and recreation programs. Transportation was a close second. Many of the youth described wanting to engage in a formal, organized soccer program but were unable to access because of cost - many felt that equipment, uniforms and sport association fees were a barrier.

When discussing solutions, the youth suggested getting the message out about recreation and sport opportunities through flyers to schools, posters and billboards, accessible information centres, presentations in schools and to advertise through all media including the internet. Also a number of the youth, male in particular, wanted to encourage soccer tournaments/league with a long term goal of forming a Hamilton city soccer team.

## **5.2 Findings from Parents**

Six focus groups were conducted with parents. A group for Muslim women, a multi-cultural English language instruction class, a group of Somali women, parents of Swahili language instruction students, a group of Spanish speaking women and a group of Aboriginal parents were consulted. In total seventy-eight (78) parents were consulted.

### **Muslim Women at the Shabab Centre**

From this focus group we learned that Muslim women face barriers in accessing sport and recreation programs related mostly to the intersection of their gender and religion. For Muslim women, showing skin is inappropriate when men are around. This means participation in most physical activity and particularly, swimming, is limited. Muslim women expressed a keen interest in having programming specifically and only for young women for their daughters to enjoy.

In terms of solutions, the women at the Shabab Centre described either women's only recreation centre run by the Muslim community or women only times (a day or half day) for women to participate. They also saw a need for better advertising to the Muslim community about available programs. Finally, Muslim women wanted service providers to consult with them about their needs.

### **St. Joseph's Immigrant Women's Centre LINC Participants**

The focus group at St. Joseph's Immigrant Women's Centre (SJIWC) was diverse, both men and women were represented in addition to a number of different nationalities. This was one of the most eager groups to find out information about recreation - many participants were asking the facilitators for advice and information. Lack of information presented as the number one barrier.

The participants from SJIWC said that recreation service providers should offer information to parents through a variety of ways including - a newcomer information package about recreation in Hamilton, free newspapers or flyers in mailboxes and an open

house for newcomers in recreation and sport services. The participants also described the value in connecting recreation programming to schools saying, 'parents establish a special relationship with schools and they trust the teachers'.

### **Somali Women's Group**

The tone was set for the focus group at the very beginning when one participant said, 'it is difficult to comment on issues you know nothing about'. Lack of information, lack of belonging or connectedness and the issues pertaining to Muslim women all impacted on the Somali participants' children lack of access to recreation. When describing the barrier inherent in feeling disconnected from a program or facility, one participant explained, "You don't go to an open door, you go to an open face - it doesn't matter how open the door is if the face is not".

In terms of solutions, the participants said that recreation providers should reach out to the Somali community so that they can learn about recreation opportunities - use community representatives and leaders in the community. Also, in order to help people who don't speak English feel welcome at recreation services, provide interpreters and have pamphlets and information translated into different languages.

### **International Languages Program - Swahili parents group**

For the parents of the Swahili students, cost and family responsibility were the greatest barriers to participation in recreation. Parents talked about the struggle to find time and money to send their children to recreation programs. One parent explained that one barrier was, "the emotional status of parents, always tired and a lot to worry about".

In terms of solutions, the parents of the Swahili language class talked about sponsorship opportunities, free programming and tax credits for expenses for recreation activities.

### **A Mi Salud - Spanish speaking women**

For the Spanish speaking women, lack of money, lack of information and discrimination based on race and language were the biggest barriers to their access of sport and recreation programs for their families. This group of women also felt that the winter was a difficult time to get their children's recreation needs met in less formal ways since playing outside was more difficult to do in the cold weather and snow.

The participants had three main areas where solutions could be developed. In terms of language and communication the women talked about flyers in Spanish, presentations in Spanish and including Spanish speaking staff. For solutions related to transportation,

special buses that take residents to activities, free bus passes and family passes were discussed. To address the barriers around discrimination and language, the participants talked about making the whole City of Hamilton aware of the capabilities of immigrant populations and educating people city-wide about the rights of immigrant people.

### **Niwasa Head Start Preschool**

For Aboriginal parents, cost and transportation proved the biggest barriers to accessing recreation programs for their children. These parents also talked about the complication of having more than one child, that many recreation and sport programs are not set up for families since there is no child care and often programming for different ages doesn't happen at once so some children have to wait while others participate and that the waiting areas are not comfortable for families. Additionally, Aboriginal parents wanted their children to have access to dancing, drumming and crafts as part of the recreation experience.

In terms of solutions, in order to address issues of affordability participants discuss the options of free passes, trial offers, percentage discounts for larger families and discounted memberships to Aboriginal agencies.

## **5.3 Findings from Key Informants**

### **Service Providers**

Three sport and recreation service providers were consulted for this research. They represented both the public and voluntary sectors. The service providers represented divergent perspectives when it came to inclusivity and creating better access for diverse ethno-racial communities.

Providers from the public sector talked about the complexity of being mandated to provide universal access to programming while receiving requests from diverse communities to use space for specific ethno-cultural activities. In the end, if a request is made from a specific group, the activity will be attempted as long as the access to it is universal and it is well used by the public. One service provider from the public sector explained, that there was once an "oriental dance class with white kids in the class". The representative from the voluntary sector described relationships with specific diverse ethno-racial community groups wherein they have been provided space to run their own programming with the intention that that exposure to the facility would build trust and a relationship with the group.

All of the service providers expressed a desire to do more to ensure participation from diverse ethno-racial communities in their programming. Ideas included presentations to parents, cheaper or free programming for children and youth, and two service providers described wanting to modify their pool facilities to better accommodate Muslim women.

### **Representatives from Diverse Ethno-Racial Communities**

Four representatives from diverse ethno-racial communities were engaged in conversation to better understand the needs of their specific communities. All four representatives believed that children and youth from their communities were not getting their recreation needs met due to barriers. Lack of information, language barriers and cost emerged as the reasons for lack of engagement. There was a widely different perspective held about racism and discrimination as part of the system of barriers that limits access for their communities. One key informant felt that racism was no longer an issue for his community while another felt that historical experiences, racism and internalized discrimination were all part of the complex set of systems that excludes her community from accessing recreation programs.

In terms of solutions, marketing programming to children and youth, translating materials into other languages, providing interpreters, using members of the community to help connect people to recreation to build trust and engaging parents better were all named by the participants.

### **Child and Youth Advocates**

Two representatives from organizations that work with children and youth were consulted. Both agreed that the children, youth and families face barriers in accessing sport and recreation programs. According to them, affordability was the greatest barrier to accessing programming. Additionally, subsidy programs are complicated to navigate and under resourced. One of the key informants talked about how crucial it is to engage diverse communities, particularly new Canadians since upon arrival they often face acute poverty, live in areas of high crime rates and have little access to green space. For these reasons, newcomer families may be more reliant on public recreation systems.

Both key informants talked about the critical connections that must be made with schools in order to better engage diverse families. According to one woman consulted, for many immigrant families, "in terms of respect, it goes God and then teachers". Both felt that the trust already developed with schools was a good starting point for recreation service providers. The Settlement Workers in Schools in Hamilton was named as a program that does good work at connecting diverse families with recreation.

## 6.0 ANALYSIS

*People from diverse communities are not getting their children's recreation needs met by mainstream services. They are likely to engage in ad hoc, informal and often tenuous arrangements for fulfilling recreation and sport needs.*

Overwhelmingly, participants agreed that they were not getting their or their children's sport and recreation needs met from mainstream organizations. Cultural and ethno-racial organizations, school, church, temple, mosque, friends and family and personal exercise were named as the most popular ways participants were getting recreational needs met in their families. There was also an articulated desire to engage in mainstream recreational programming but that a number of barriers were precluding participation for children and youth from diverse communities.

While there was an understanding from some recreation service providers, there was a contrasting understanding between focus group participants and recreation centre supervisors in terms of the needs of ethno-racial communities related to recreation. Recreation centre supervisors felt that the reasons for the lack of participation by diverse communities in their programming were twofold. First, ethno-racialized communities did not engage because of different value systems that did not include recreation and, second, they were focused on meeting basic needs and survival. While focus group participants said that they were indeed burdened by the need to meet basic needs and that the experience was particularly acute in the early stages of their settlement in Hamilton, that despite these barriers, they did want to engage in recreation but a number of other barriers prevented them.

*Participants did not articulate a desire for sports that they played in their home countries to be offered.*

The literature suggests that one reason people from ethno-racial communities might not be engaging with mainstream recreation activities is because they do not see their cultural experiences reflected in programming (Yu, 1996, Tirone, 2003). However, in the focus groups this was not necessarily named as a barrier. The two most popular sports that parents and youth identified as wanting access to were basketball and soccer - two sports that are popular in the global community. In fact, many parents explained that they believed recreation and sport was a useful way to help their children integrate into Canadian culture and felt that they wanted their children to be playing more "mainstream" sports. When asked pointedly in each of the focus groups if any of their traditional cultural sports and activities were missing, the vast majority of the participants did not identify any. The exception was with specific examples from Aboriginal parents who felt that traditional Aboriginal dancing and drumming should be offered somewhere and from Muslim women who felt that Arabic movies and Arabic books were missing from libraries for their children.

It is important to note that we did not ask if people would access culturally-specific sporting activities if offered. Additionally, participants in the consultation raised concerns that this had not been interrogated enough. According to the participants there is a lot of interest in various communities to have traditional, cultural sports consultation.

***Cultural and ethno-racial community groups seek to fund and run their own sport and recreational programming for a variety of reasons.***

Part of the impetus for this research was the realization that cultural and ethno-racial community organizations were applying for funding to develop their own sport and recreational programming. A number of key informants identified three closely-connected reasons for this. First, recreation provided a potentially effective way of building community and celebrating cultural uniqueness. Second, leaders in ethno-cultural groups and organizations know best how to meet the recreational needs of their communities. Third, many of the members of their specific ethno-racial communities faced barriers in getting their sport and recreation needs met through mainstream avenues.

***Participants from cultural and ethno-racial communities named a number of barriers in accessing sport and recreation programs in Hamilton.***

In order to make the barriers clear and readable, they have been separated into sections. Despite this formatting, it is critical that these barriers be considered and understood in an interconnected way. It is not enough to work on one barrier without understanding how each other connects and impacts on the rest. These must be understood as a system of barriers that members of ethno-racial communities must navigate. It is also critical to recognize that this system is built on a foundation of pervasive structural and systemic racism. Structural and systemic racism precludes people from equally or equitably accessing important arenas such as education, employment, housing and social services. Though often not deliberate, this exclusion happens through the way systems and organizations are structured, for example, by having all communications in English, not accepting foreign experience and qualifications and requiring landlord references from people who are new to Canada. Statistics which suggest that newcomer Canadians face higher rates of poverty, unemployment and have more difficulty accessing housing demonstrate the impacts of structural racism<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>5</sup> For statistics on the way immigrants, visible minorities and Aboriginal people fare in Hamilton in terms of poverty, please see the SPRC's report on *Incomes and Poverty in Hamilton* at <http://www.sprc.hamilton.on.ca/povertyreport.html>.

In terms of barriers, a number of themes emerged through the research. The following list details the number of times a theme was identified in each of the focus groups.

- Cost - 60
- Lack of knowledge about recreation activities in Hamilton - 45
- Transportation - 41
- Feeling burdened by family obligations and meeting basic needs - 22
- Intimidating registration and stigmatizing - 14
- Lack of connection or belonging - 13
- Language - 10
- Lack of emphasis on skill development - 6
- Other specific barriers - 34

It is important to note that these themes emerged beyond the focus groups, in the key informant interviews and community consultation. The following is an analysis of the barriers as identified through all of the research methods.

### **Cost**

Immigrants, refugees and Aboriginal people traditionally face poverty more acutely than the rest of the Hamilton population. Parents and youth alike in the focus groups identified cost as the most critical barrier in preventing their access to sport and recreation programs. Most people felt that all sport and recreation activities were too expensive for them to afford. Key informant interviews with recreation centre supervisors revealed that with the subsidies that are available, most programs are affordable to nearly everyone. When this point was raised with focus group participants, that subsidies were available, many had no idea that subsidies existed and were interested to hear more about them. According to one focus group participant, "the City seems to keep a code of secrecy on their subsidy process". A key informant who provides service to diverse communities wondered, "why is it the responsibility of families to negotiate the hodgepodge of subsidies and supports?" Others felt intimidated asking about subsidies and therefore, never had.

### **Lack of knowledge about recreation activities in Hamilton**

The second most common response to the barriers faced by focus group participants was a lack of information about available options for sport and recreation in Hamilton. In fact, the focus group coordinator was asked on many occasions to provide information on how to connect with recreation programs for their children. Many parents and youth did not know how to access information about available programs and facilities. Some had indicated that they had received information in the form of program guides and pamphlets but found them confusing and intimidating. A key informant who is part of the Indian community in Hamilton and who has done work coaching and organizing soccer and track and field. He has heard anecdotally from parents that they are not getting their children's recreation needs

met because of language issues which prevent parents from being able to read information about potential programs.

Another issue that some of the participants raised was that they did not know enough about Canadian recreational activities to have an informed opinion about whether or not they would be appropriate or interesting for their children. For example, one participant stated, "I don't have enough information about programs that we are not familiar with. For example, what is ballet and what is skating?"

### **Transportation**

Transportation informed another critical piece of the spectrum of barriers faced by focus group participants. Not being able to afford bus fare, not knowing if recreation and sport programs were on transit lines, not being able to afford extra gas, the difficulty in having to transport many children in one family and the lack of time to take children to programs were all identified as transportation issues. Many participants explained that when they were first new to Canada, many did not know how to navigate the city and about public transit. For families with a number of children, the cost of transporting them by public transit to recreational activities can be burdensome particularly when cost has already been raised as an issue.

### **Feeling burdened by family obligations and meeting basic needs**

For many focus group participants, while they would value recreation for their children, they felt that they were managing many other obligations particularly around child care and working - obligations that prevented them from putting, time, energy and money into getting their children's recreation needs met. Many felt that with help around transportation, subsidized costs and child care at the recreation centre for those children not participating, many of the families consulted could manage and would enjoy helping their children find sport and recreation programs.

### **Intimidating registration and stigmatizing subsidy processes**

Many participants felt that they did not understand how to register their children for programs. After finding out what is available in Hamilton, many participants felt that process of registering was complicated. According to one participant, "The City gives out codes, numbers, computer knowledge, etc. This is intimidating to new users who are not familiar with the system". Some felt that the computer was intimidating; others felt that filling out many forms was a barrier, particularly when language and literacy issues were present.

For the participants who did know that subsidies were available, they felt that having to ask was stigmatizing and would rather not ask than have to suffer, what they perceived, the embarrassment of asking. According to one participant, "the process is intimidating especially to those on welfare and come in looking for subsidized services. The staff talk to them in loud tones for everyone around them to hear. This is embarrassing and they are not likely to return". This message was reiterated again and again in focus groups.

### **Lack of connection or belonging**

One of the most difficult issues for many of the focus group participants to articulate was a sense of a lack of belonging or connectedness to sport and recreation programs in Hamilton. Interestingly, the youth consulted for this research did not identify this issue but parents did. In particular, women from the Shabab Centre (a diverse range of Muslim women) and women from the Somali group at the Urban Core talked about feeling disconnected and like they did not belong. When asked to articulate what this was like, one woman said, "recreation centres do not have a friendly and welcoming atmosphere".

More concretely, women from the A Mi Salud, Spanish women's group connected this lack of belonging or connectedness to discrimination around language barriers and skin colour. According to one woman, "I find that the accent is frowned upon, some people can speak well but are not taken as well because of an accent". Another woman described an experience in which she went to her child's sport practice and "everybody ignored me" - she attributed this to discrimination based on her culture.

Parents from the Aboriginal parents group, while not talking about racism and discrimination explicitly, talked about the feeling belittled and shamed. One father described his experience as, "They belittle you, you don't even feel like asking any more questions. You put your head down, you walk out and it's your kid that loses out". While the Aboriginal parents did not directly attribute this to discrimination, when asked what the solutions would be to alleviate this particular barrier, many participants suggested, "training people to be sensitive to the multicultural people who are coming in".

### **Language**

Language was a critical barrier that precluded many of the focus group participants from accessing recreation programs. Many people that we spoke with were unable to read English, therefore, the traditional method of advertising recreation programs were unavailable to them which is likely why lack of knowledge is the greatest barrier to many of the communities consulted.

A key informant from the French community identified a language issue unique to the French-speaking community. French-speaking people immigrate to Canada with the understanding that it is a bilingual nation with French as an official language. However, many sport and recreation programs in Hamilton do not have French-speaking staff on-site.

### **Lack of emphasis on skill development**

Another issue that was raised, particularly in relation to basketball and soccer, was the lack of emphasis on skill development and training for more professional sport pursuits. Many explained that they thought that their children could play soccer and basketball for fun, but that they had expected upon coming to a country as privileged as Canada, that their children would be able to find training to enhance their skills in sport. According to one participant, "In this country, the first priority is hockey and football - there are not priorities for soccer and basketball which my children would like to play - the Canadian government needs to support these sports more".

Youth identified this as an issue, particularly around soccer. Many youth explained that they would like the City of Hamilton to encourage and subsidize soccer tournaments and a league with the long-term goal of forming a City of Hamilton soccer team.

### **Other specific barriers**

Many of the youth identified a number of barriers unique to the diverse racialized communities they represented. One in particular was the lack of trust many of the youths' parents had for recreation programs. For example, many youth explained that their parents came to Canada in order to be successful and to ensure that their children received a good education. Therefore, the youth explained, that their parents wanted them to be working hard in school rather than getting their recreational needs met. Additionally, youth explained that their parents were distrustful of organizations that they did not know about or understand. Many youth explained that the recreation centre did not have anything that would draw parents in and help them to gain trust - such as open-houses or connections to existing ethno-racial community groups. According to a number of key informants, informant, school is a critical connection for many immigrant parents - it is an institution that they know well and trust.

Interestingly, the committee anticipated that the lack of culturally-specific sport and recreation programs offered might be a barrier to the inclusion of many communities. Through the focus groups, however, most participants identified soccer, basketball and swimming as the recreational activities of interest to them. Many parents felt that participation in recreation programs that were not culturally-specific might help their

children integrate better into Canadian culture. Many wanted their children enrolled in hockey and ice-skating but identified cost as a huge barrier in these particular sports.

Muslim women in particular faced major barriers that prevented them from participating fully in sport and recreation programs. For a warm up question, we asked participants to say their name and identify which sport they liked and a sport that their children liked. Nearly all of the participants cited swimming as their favourite activity. When naming barriers, the Muslim women were clear that they and their female children faced many barriers to recreation connected to their religion. Many Muslim females do not reveal their hair or their body when men are present. Therefore, in order to participate in a swimming program, there would have to be assurances that men were not able to see them or their children. Concessions had been made at City of Hamilton recreation centres but were not well attended and were cancelled. The women explained that they did not know about this. Many women did not know about other swim times open to them in the community. Other women explained that many pools have video cameras for security and that recreation centre administrators could not guarantee that they would not be seen by men through the cameras. Another woman explained that when she was exercising at a local, women's recreation centre, "I was guaranteed that there would be no men - however, there was a man walking through when I was on the treadmill, my head was not covered, I was in short sleeves - when I spoke with the person at the counter they said it did not happen often - I will not go back there and I will not let my female children go either".

Another barrier for Muslim women was around change rooms. Many women did not like the idea of changing in front of others and having their children exposed to nudity in change rooms. Women from the Somali community talked about how difficult it is to split the family up into gender specific washrooms because they are worried about what their children might see.

Finally, many focus group participants and two key informants talked about the difficulty many parents face in getting their children's recreation needs met in the winter. Since many diverse communities face poverty and must get their children's recreation needs met in informal ways (going to parks, playing outside) the cold weather makes that increasingly difficult. Many participants agreed that they did not worry as much about their children's recreation needs in the summer, according to one participant, "in summer they (her children) play in playgrounds, in winter go to school, come home and watch TV".

## 7.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

The following six recommendations were developed in a number of ways. The literature review, qualitative data collected and consultation with the Recreation Access Working Group and Steering Committee and the community at large all contributed to the refining of these recommendations.

The focus group participants identified a number of solutions to the barriers they named. These helped to inform these recommendations. Many of the solutions named were specific and did not fit into these recommendations but are crucial for the community to know. These solutions have been organized, by barrier and are attached in Appendix G. The Recreation Access Project Working Group and Steering Committee both helped with the development of the recommendations.

The recommendations were presented at the consultation on March 30<sup>th</sup> and received widespread support. *Please see Appendix E for the Community Consultation Feedback.*

- 1. It is recommended that the City of Hamilton, Culture and Recreation Department consider the findings of this report and strategize ways to develop community-wide protocols that work to be more inclusive of Hamilton's ethno-racially diverse population. The City of Hamilton has a Parks, Culture and Recreation Master Plan (2002) which could be informed by this research. The City is going to be engaging in a planning process to update the Master Plan. The Committee should be advocating for consideration of this research in the updating process.**
- 2. It is recommended that the Working Group for the Recreation Access Project keep meeting to encourage and continue system-wide collaborations and planning around including diversity in sport and recreation programs in Hamilton.**
- 3. The Youth Service Agencies Network (YSAN) Grow program was named in nearly all of the focus groups as a critical service for helping connect families to affordable recreation for their children. This program is a model for the critical connection between providing information, providing transportation, coordinating and subsidizing recreation opportunities. A program, modeled after the Grow program, should be developed and expanded in Hamilton to improve recreation access for diverse communities. This expansion could include connections with cultural and ethno-racial organizations.**

4. It is recommended that recreation, sport and community clubs develop explicit protocols and do outreach to connect with ethno-racial community groups. Connecting with leaders from communities, cultural organizations and groups, presentations in English as a Second Language classes and information translated into French and the four emerging main language groups in Hamilton (Arabic, Chinese, Urdu and Serbian) are all possible strategies for this work.
5. Enhance the registration and subsidy application process and do an assessment of its accessibility. Revise this process to be friendlier and less stigmatizing for potential applicants. As an example, the East Kiwanis Boys and Girls Club provides universally inexpensive programming in order to reduce the stigma and shame of applying for subsidy.
6. It is recommended that given the growing nature of diversity in Hamilton, all staff from culture, recreation, sport and community centres and clubs in our community incorporate anti-racism training into regular practice. This training should encompass both skill and awareness training (Hodgson, 1996). In addition to training, the human resources department of all recreation services should develop strategies for ensuring that new staff be representative of the community they are seeking to serve.

**Appendix A**  
**List of Advisory Committee and Working Group Members**

## List of Advisory Committee and Working Group Members

### Working Group

- Sport Hamilton
- City of Hamilton
  - Cultural and Recreation Department
  - Access and Equity Department)
- Social Planning and Research Council of Hamilton

The Hamilton Community Foundation played an advisory role on the Working Group.

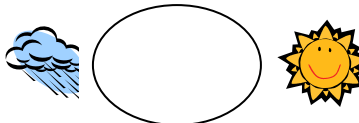
### Steering Committee

- The Young Women's Christian Association of Hamilton (YWCA)
- The Young Men's Christian Association of Hamilton (YMCA)
- The Strengthening Hamilton's Community Initiative
- East Hamilton Kiwanis Boys and Girls Club
- The United Way of Hamilton
- Settlement and Integration Services Organization
- The City of Hamilton Inclusivity Committee


## **Appendix B**

### **Focus Group Framework**

### Focus Group Session Plan

| TIME | OBJECTIVE   | METHOD                         | DESCRIPTION OF PROCESS   | STUFF  | WHO               |
|------|---|--------------------------------|--|--|-------------------|
| 5    | Welcome & Introduction  | Talk                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Welcome everyone to the session and explain why we are here (purpose and expectations)</li> <li>- Call on facilitators</li> </ul>   | - nothing  | (SPRC             |
| 5    | Introduction to Workshop  | Talk                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Facilitator Introductions (<i>if not done so above</i>)</li> <li>- Introduction of evening *agenda</li> <li>- Set-up guidelines/terms of participation</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- agenda on flip chart paper</li> <li>- part guidelines on chart paper</li> <li>- marker</li> </ul>           | Facilitator 1     |
| 10   | Participant introductions   | Getting to know you (in pairs) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ask everyone to turn to the person beside them and introduce themselves by name and identify a name of a sport/recreational activity that is of most interest to you /your family. Example: my name is ... and I/my kids play/are interested in soccer. (2 min.)</li> <li>• Ask each person to in turn, introduce their partner and what they learned about them to the larger group (8 min)</li> </ul> | - nothing  | Facilitator 1 & 2 |
| 20   | Activity 1  | Political Weather Report       | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) How do your children get their recreation needs met (<i>sunny</i>)</li> <li>(2) What is making it hard to get your children's recreation needs met (<i>cloudy</i>)</li> </ol>   |    |                   |
| 10   | Gather information on what is working and what is not /missing in | Political Weather Report       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explain that in this activity, we are going to share information on how this group has/is managing to organize sport/recreational activities for their children (<i>strengths, what is working</i>), - introduce (a) at this point; and also to identify what is making it difficult for this group to participate in recreation activities</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Political Weather Report Chart with +ve and -ve sides</li> <li>- Sticky notes</li> <li>- Markers</li> </ul> | Facilitator 1     |

|  |  |   |  |   |                  |
|--|--|---|--|---|------------------|
|  |  | terms of reaction activity for children | <p><i>(challenges, what is missing)</i> introduce (b) at this point . <i>Briefly explain the PWR using the prepared example. Imagine you are looking at a weather radar screen with a sunny side and a negative side. The sunny side is the positive side. The cloudy side is the negative side.</i></p> <p><i>(3min)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ask participants to take some time to consider what recreation activities their kids are involved in and those that they are not involved in at this time. Either work alone or in pairs if they wish. Ask that they write down activities on sticky notes, as many as they can, one idea per sticky note. Encourage them to write as this information may be used to improve accessibility to services. When they are done writing they can post on the chart. Stress that there are no wrong answers, all ideas are welcome. Explain that we have 7 minutes to do this.</li> <li>• Museum tour. Invite comments by asking volunteers to discuss what they posted or if they have questions about what has been posted or someone requires a clarification. Prompt for anything missing or would like to add.</li> </ul> <p>Total time 20 min.</p> |   |                  |
|  |  | <b>END OF ACTIVITY 1 - 5 min break</b>  |  |   | Facilitator<br>2 |
|  |  | <b>Activity 2</b>                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Now, we are going to consider the importance of sport and recreation activities for our children by looking at access to mainstream recreation. We will start by</li> </ul>   | <b>- picture of recreation centre on flip chart</b> |                  |

|            |   |  |  |  |                  |
|------------|---|--|--|--|------------------|
|            |   |  |  | considering the following question:<br><b>“What helps you/your child to use reaction centres and/or organized sport associations/clubs?”</b> |                  |
| 20         | To plan for action                            | <b>Collective Action Reaction Centre</b> | <p>Explain CARC. The purpose of this tool is to determine – What actions can:</p> <p>(i) you (individual/family) take to enable you access mainstream <i>recreation (you are holding the roof over your kids rec activities)</i></p> <p>(ii) Your neighbourhood/sports organization/cultural community, etc take to enable you access mainstream recreation (<i>supporting walls/frames</i>)</p> <p>(iii) Larger community of Hamilton take to enable you access mainstream recreation services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ask participants to look at the needs identified during Activity 1</li> <li>• Ask participants to write down what they can do to gain access. You can do this individually or in 2s or 3s. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ remember to write one issue per sticky note</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Take turns to discuss these if time allows. You can pass if you do not wish to discuss</li> <li>• Post the remaining ideas and have a museum tour</li> </ul> |   |                  |
| EVALUATION |   |  |  |  |                  |
| 5          | To evaluate workshop, what worked, what needs | <b>Line Scale</b>                        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Explain to participants that on a scale of 1-5 rate the workshop</li> <li>- One end of the room to indicate good, the opposite end needs improvement and the middle fair.</li> </ul>  |  | Facilitator<br>2 |

|  |          |                            |      |  |  |  |
|--|----------|----------------------------|------|--|--|--|
|  |          | improvement                |      |  |  |  |
|  | <b>3</b> | Next steps and adjournment | SPRC |  |  |  |

**Agenda:**

- Welcome
- Introductions
  - of group
  - agenda
- Activity 1 – **Political Weather Report**
- Break
- Activity 2 – Collective Action Recreation Centre (CARC)
- Evaluation of session
- Next steps/adjournment

Approximate time of session 1 hr 8 min.

## **Appendix C**

### **Key Informant Interview Guide (Community)**

### Key Informant Conversation Guide

- 1) ARE CHILDREN AND YOUTH GETTING THEIR RECREATIONAL NEEDS MET?
- 2) IF YES, HOW? - THEN WE WANT TO ASCERTAIN - IF THEY ARE GETTING THEIR NEEDS MET IN LESS FORMAL WAYS, IS THIS ADEQUATE? IS THIS A RESPONSE TO BARRIERS IN MAINSTREAM, MORE FORMAL SETTINGS?
- 3) IF NOT, WHY NOT? (BARRIERS)
- 4) WHAT COULD HELP PEOPLE AND THEIR CHILDREN ACCESS MAINSTREAM RECREATION? (STRATEGIES)

**Appendix D**  
**Key Informant Interview Guide (Recreation Service Providers)**

**Key Informant Conversation Guide (Rec. Providers)**

1. WHAT IS THE DEMOGRAPHIC AROUND YOUR RECREATION CENTRES LIKE? WHO LIVES IN THIS COMMUNITY?
2. DO YOU HAVE A SENSE OF HOW REPRESENTATIVE OF THE COMMUNITY YOUR PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHIC IS?
3. DOES YOUR RECREATION CENTRE HAVE ANY SPECIFIC POLICIES, PROGRAMS OR AIMS TO INCREASE ACCESS FOR DIVERSE COMMUNITIES?
4. IS THERE ANYTHING YOU WOULD LIKE TO DO TO INCREASE ACCESS FOR DIVERSE COMMUNITIES?

## **Appendix E**

### **Community Consultation Feedback**

## Community Consultation Feedback

In each of the ten focus groups two questions were asked of each of the six recommendations. These questions were: What is your initial response to this recommendation? What needs to happen to move this recommendation forward in our community? The following is a thematic summary of those focus group discussions by recommendation<sup>6</sup>.

### Recommendation #1

*It is recommended that the City of Hamilton, Culture and Recreation Department consider the findings of this report and strategize ways to develop community-wide protocols that work to be more inclusive of Hamilton's ethno-racially diverse population. The City of Hamilton has a Parks, Culture and Recreation Master Plan (2002) which could be informed by this research. The City is going to be engaging in a planning process to update the Master Plan. The Committee should be advocating for consideration of this research in the updating process.*

Overall the focus groups consulted were in agreement with the recommendation to include this research in the Master Plan updating process. Nearly all of the groups were explicit about wanting action to come from the planning process. Additionally, nearly all of the groups expressed an interest in seeing more cultural community groups be part of the planning processes for the City of Hamilton and in particular the review of the Master Plan.

Examples of specific comments include:

- Master plan should be better connected to the community;
- Agencies serving immigrants (Settlement and Integration Service Organization, Citizenship Immigration Canada, Ontario Works, grassroots organizations) be stakeholders;
- Need timeline for implementation.

### Recommendation #2

*It is recommended that the Working Group for the Recreation Access Project keep meeting to encourage and continue system-wide collaborations and planning around including diversity in sport and recreation programs in Hamilton.*

The consultation participants agreed with this recommendation but each group discussed the importance of making the Working Group more diverse, open for consultation and transparent in planning processes. Participants also mentioned allocating funding to the Working Group to make sure it is sustainable and discusses sectors that need to be around

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<sup>6</sup> Please see the *Methods* section for an account of the process of this consultation exercise.

the table (including but not limited to: neighbourhood groups, housing providers, education, private sector).

Examples of specific comments include:

- Make sure there is an open, transparent process for participation;
- What would be the working group's roles and responsibilities?;
- Increase diversity of working group, add youth and special needs to the group.

### Recommendation #3

*The Youth Service Agencies Network (YSAN) Grow program was named in nearly all of the focus groups as a critical service for helping connect families to affordable recreation for their children. This program is a model for the critical connection between providing information, providing transportation, coordinating and subsidizing recreation opportunities. A program, modeled after the Grow program, should be developed and expanded in Hamilton to improve recreation access for diverse communities. This expansion could include connections with cultural and ethno-racial organizations.*

The participants agreed with the need for a coordination body to help with subsidies, transportation and connecting families to recreation. Most of the feedback from the groups described bolstering the YSAN Grow program rather than replicating it. Many participants felt that the current Grow program is stretched to its limits with funding and recognized that a long waiting list exists for the program.

Examples of specific comments include:

- Why recreate (YSAN Grow program)?
- Expand (YSAN Grow) if possible, currently waiting list, need sustainable funding;
- Needs coordination with other groups, information sharing, networking, cooperative coordination.

### Recommendation #4

*It is recommended that recreation, sport and community clubs develop explicit protocols and do outreach to connect with ethno-racial community groups. Connecting with leaders from communities, cultural organizations and groups, presentations in English as a Second Language classes and information translated into French and the four emerging main language groups in Hamilton (Arabic, Chinese, Urdu and Serbian) are all possible strategies for this work.*

All of the groups agreed with this recommendation. Many felt that it was important that recreation services work on getting to know the communities in which they operate. According to the participants, strategies for this process could include outreach,

translating information into various languages and to have recreation services connect with organizations that serve diverse ethno-racial communities.

Examples of specific comments include:

- Culture and Recreation outreach to schools, hospitals, community groups, libraries, churches, mosques, places of worship, high rise buildings, new immigrant communities;
- English only advertising is problematic;
- Go to the communities.

#### Recommendation #5

*Enhance the registration and subsidy application process and do an assessment of its accessibility. Revise this process to be friendlier and less stigmatizing for potential applicants. As an example, the East Kiwanis Boys and Girls Club provides universally inexpensive programming in order to reduce the stigma and shame of applying for subsidy.*

Nearly everyone agreed that the process for applying for subsidies needed to be changed to be more accessible. Some of the groups discussed the need for free programming across the community, particularly for children. Additionally, many of the groups felt that the registration process for many programs needed simplification and workers to better communicate the process with the public.

Examples of specific comments include:

- Subsidy: Less info, less process, respectful;
- Programming should be free. Every child should have access to sport and recreation without cost;
- Registration - clarify/simplify/communicate.

#### Recommendation #6

*It is recommended that given the growing nature of diversity in Hamilton, all staff from culture, recreation, sport and community centres and clubs in our community incorporate anti-racism training into regular practice. This training should encompass both skill and awareness training (Hodgson, 1996). In addition to training, the human resources department of all recreation services should develop strategies for ensuring that new staff be representative of the community they are seeking to serve.*

While the groups were not asked to prioritize the recommendations, many groups selected recommendation number six as most crucial. Many felt that building the sensitivity of the workforce in the realm of recreation through training and workshops was important.

Others felt that building a diverse workforce that reflected the diversity of the community was critical.

Examples of specific comments include:

- One of the main recommendations;
- Need to see people of similar culture;
- How do we change the mindset of the workforce - parallel is sexual harassment.

**APPENDIX F**  
**Models from Other Communities**

## Models From Other Communities

### OCASI Provisional Model

#### Hamilton, ON

The OCASI Research on Inclusive Recreation Models for Immigrant and Refugee Youth: Provisional Model completed a comprehensive literature review and engaged youth and service providers. OCASI developed a provisional model to be tested in the three research sites, one of which was Hamilton. This model incorporated the following salient aspects:

- Educating youth and parents from diverse communities about the benefit of recreation;
- Engaging youth and parents to learn more about the barriers facing them and creative solutions;
- Involvement of youth and parents in all planning and decision-making;
- Engaging youth in leadership roles;
- Involving settlement staff;
- Partnering with many organizations across the community;
- Appropriate staff training around cultural sensitivity;
- Emphasis on outreach using potentially new and innovative strategies (i.e. local ethnic press);
- Checking in to make sure no youth is excluded because of cultural norms;
- Considering gender.

The Settlement Integration Services Ontario was the Hamilton test site. Reporting back on the success of this model is expected shortly.

For more information please see

[http://www.ocasi.org/downloads/OCASI\\_YOUTH\\_PROJECT\\_2004-2006\\_Provisional\\_Model.doc](http://www.ocasi.org/downloads/OCASI_YOUTH_PROJECT_2004-2006_Provisional_Model.doc)

### Alberta's Future Leaders Program

#### Alberta

The province of Alberta has developed a program to engage Indigenous youth in particular in sport and recreation programming. The program is built on the understanding the sport and recreation has benefits that exceed physical health and can promote self-esteem, enhance cultural awareness and provide constructive activities for youth.

This program engages youth workers to develop programming for youth living in Alberta's Indigenous communities by implementing summer sport and recreation programs, delivering a touring summer arts camp, providing mentor/leadership components.

In order to do this a holistic model is used wherein community leaders, elders, youth, school, RCMP, corporate sponsor and social service agencies are involved in the programming.

Successes include establishing full-time Recreation/Youth Development positions in thirteen Indigenous communities.

For more information please see

<http://www.cd.gov.ab.ca/asrpwf/programs/sports/abfuture/index.asp>.

The Immigrant Buddy Pairing Program (The Buddy Program)  
Vancouver, BC

The goal of the Buddy Program is to connect immigrant youth with peers who can help build positive social networks and develop English language skills. Young people volunteer to be hosts and are trained in such topics as Cultural Sensitivity, Ways to Combat Racism and Language Barrier Issues. Youth are connected with local community centres and are encouraged to engage their newcomer 'buddies' with recreation programming. The program is run from the Riley Park Community Association.

For more information please see <http://integration-net.cic.gc.ca/english/region/cbc/2003-03.htm>.

Community Access and Equity - Get Your Move On  
Toronto, ON

The City of Toronto uses its Community Access and Equity Department to better understand and meet the needs of diverse communities in that City in terms of recreation. Since 1992 the Multicultural Accessibility Program to assist Parks, Forestry and Recreation has been successful in training staff and launching initiatives to include diverse communities. The new "Get Your Move on" campaign (started in 2004), the goal of which is to increase participation from diverse ethno-racial communities, includes:

- Communication campaign that includes translation, interpretation and cultural correctness;
- All media be reviewed by a representative and diverse community focus group;
- Value of the participation of this standing focus to be acknowledged with honourariums;
- Campaign to work in partnership with non-mainstream media to reach diverse communities.

For more information please see <http://www.toronto.ca/getyourmoveon/index.htm>.

**Appendix G**  
**Focus Group Participants Solutions**

## Participants' Solutions by Barrier

*Most of the solutions articulated by the participants related to the more practical barriers around lack of knowledge, cost and transportation issues.*

### Lack of knowledge

- Make information available on Cable 14
- Do school presentations as to what is being offered in terms of programming at city recreation centres
- Recreation centres should invite newcomers for orientation/welcome or just talk
- Information packages for parents, letters to students and parents (through the schools)
- Better dissemination of information, for example, through their community representatives
- Provide interpreters and have some pamphlets translated
- Provide lists of available programs and how to access them

### Cost

- Offer percentage discounts for bigger families
- Free programming or subsidies
- Get sponsorships
- Offer uniform subsidies
- Provide discounted memberships to Aboriginal agencies to distribute to clients with bus tickets/passes. They have trust with the clients and can help them fill out forms, etc.

### Transportation

- Give children of all ages free transportation
- Have most programs at schools
- Give bus tickets
- Volunteer drivers
- Helping in having different location for the recreation centres to have one close to where we live and to be more convenient