Youth Voices

Mobile Speakers’ Corner

Beyond the Caption
Research Objectives

• What are the perspectives of youth concerning their needs and well-being?
  – This question will focus on key areas such as social relationships, housing, health, education, employment, community organizations

• How do youth understand “turf issues” in their community?
  – How do they understand what community they ‘rep’?
  – Do they have a ‘hood pass’?

• How do youth experience violence in their lives?
Mobile Speakers’ Corner
Mobile Speakers’ Corner: Methods

• A mobile speaker’s corner was set up at two shopping malls (Yorkgate and Jane-Finch) on two days during the summer.
• Fifty youth (aged 14 to 29) participated.
• Participants were given tape recorders and taped their answers to one of three questions:
  1. What are the perspectives of youth concerning their needs and well-being?
  2. How do youth understand “turf issues” in their community?
  3. How do youth experience violence in their lives?
• Each question contained sub-questions that mirrored emerging issues in Photo Voice.
Emerging Themes: Violence

**Violence as Identified in the Community**

**Category:**

- **Physical**
  - **Sources:** Domestic, bullying, gun, addiction, alcohol, Youth-on-youth violence
  - **Impact:** Stereotyping, Powerlessness, Power struggles, Neglect, etc.
  - **Addressing:** Supporting each other, focus on things in common, Cooperation in families and community, Reducing gun violence, Talking with parents, More opportunities for young people, Community involvement and participation, Lack of violence, Role of police, Accessing community supports/resources, Refuting negative image from media, Understanding limitations of violence, Transforming our society, Ending violence, Having alternatives, Acknowledging the problem

- **Psychological/Emotional**
  - **Sources:** Domestic, bullying, gun, Emotional abuse due to financial instability.
  - **Impact:** Emotional impact/turmoil, Sense of loss, Observing others dealing with violence
  - **Addressing:** Talking about issues, Helping others, Supporting others, Appropriate/additional community supports

- **Cultural/Race/Ethnicity**
  - **Sources:** Discrimination due to place of origin or country where from, skin colour, language speak
  - **Impact:** Negative perception of people in area by others, Pose danger to children, Lack of responsibility
  - **Addressing:** Cohesiveness in community, Supporting each other, focus on things in common, cooperation in families and community,
Emerging Themes: Turf Issues

**Emerging Themes: Turf Issues**

**Turfs issues In the Community**

**Category:**

**Meaning of Turf**

**Turf:** Dividing the community, Sense of belonging, Community, Gang you belong to, Where in the community you live, Who you hang out with

**Need to belong to a gang:** Sensationalizing of gang by media, Access to money, drugs, women, friendship

**Making gangs unattractive:** Having your life together, Resources, Keeping youth programs open, More funding, coming together
Emerging Themes: Well-being

Well-Being In the Community

Category:

Physical

- Physical: Having housing, access to education, health and employment, community organizations, sense of security

Emotional

- Emotional: being involved in community organizing, social relationships with friends, family, significant others, and recreational gatherings, sense of security, knowing yourself

Addressing well-being:
- Community: Education, Upgrading area, Parent education, Re-building structures, Getting/Involving kids in programs, Needs motivation/sense of direction, Social programs, having positive role models, Outreaching to youths, Life-skills/life lessons, Awareness - Consequences for actions
- HOME: Motivation/foundation from home, Education, Relationships, Parental involvement, Interactions
Photo-voice Projects
• *Photo-Voice Projects* with four cohorts of youth.
  – Participants will be asked to take pictures representing issues that are important in their lives and attach a narrative to the photos developed through critical analysis in focus groups and individual interviews.

**Completed:**

• *Two Photo-Voice* with 11 participants (aged 16-21) in each project
What is Photo-Voice?

• Photo-voice is a process by which people can identify, represent, and enhance their community through a specific photographic technique.

• As a practice based in the production of knowledge, photo-voice has three main goals:
  – To enable people to record and reflect their community's strengths and concerns
  – To promote critical dialogue and knowledge about important issues through large and small group discussion of photographs
  – To reach policymakers.

Methods

• Each photo-voice project was framed by a question:
  – *Well being*: What are the perspectives of youth concerning their needs and well-being?
  – *Violence*: How do youth experience Violence in their lives?

• Participants were asked to take pictures representing issues that are important in their lives and attach a narrative to the photos developed through critical analysis in focus group sessions.
Methods

• Each participant took part in five focus groups and one in-depth interview over a 3 week period:
  – FG1: Ethics, technical skills training, distribution of cameras
  – FG2: Exploration of research question
  – Individual Interviews: Youth choose and attach narratives to their photos
  – FG3: Youth share their photos with the group
  – FG4: Youth discuss emerging findings from the photos
  – FG5: Youth decide on an action strategy for the findings.
Methods

- **Recruitment:** Youth interns gave information sessions and placed recruitment materials at over 20 sites where youth are present.
- **Screening:**
- **Honoraria:** Participants were given $100 and were allowed to keep the camera if they completed all 5 focus groups and the individual interview.
Beyond the Caption
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• What is it?
• When did it start?
• Objectives & priorities
Violence and Well-Being: In Word and Pictures
These three words represent the strengths of the Jane and Finch community. They are written in stone where we can’t erase them. These words tell the future generation how we should live. Think about the future of Jane and Finch. Will it be a better community?
The tree is half dead and half alive. It symbolizes the positives and negatives in life. This goes for anything you have ever done. Many people stereotype Jane and Finch as a negative area, but Jane and Finch has a lot of positive things going for the people in the area.
People often think that they can’t make it anywhere else but this community. The high number of criminal activities and violent things close a lot of doors, so we lose out on a lot of opportunities. But that doesn’t mean that it’s impossible, it’s just more of a challenge. You have to work your way up. They built pyramids brick by brick, from the bottom to the top, and that’s exactly how you have to build your life.
A crime

A poster at Yorkdale Mall. Many youngsters visit the place and are influenced by it. We live in a multicultural society, and different people have different beliefs and cultures. This picture will educate the people that racism is a crime.
A police car on patrol in the Driftwood area. Outside persons may think that something negative is happening and wonder why their presence is needed.
Many talented young men in the community use this sport as a way to keep out of trouble or even get scholarships to colleges. It has helped many people become the accomplished people they are today.
A man is stopped and the vehicle is being searched by the police. However there are about 8 officers which is totally unnecessary, and the wider public looking on may think that it is more than what it actually is. If police spent the time to know people, they would gain their trust from a young age.
When someone throws garbage around, it can harbor harmful diseases and make the environment unpresentable, because if you litter, another person can see you and do the same. It can cause violence because if another person asks you why you litter, it can end up in an argument and get even worse.
They put their mark on their area to say this is mine, don’t enter it. They don’t really own it. Some people care. Others don’t. But it’s just paint. It washes off.
Decoding your skin type could solve racism. If we all had the same colour, we could look beyond that and see that all of us are identical. We are all humans with the same blood running through our veins.
Alcohol can lead to violence. Many drinkers overdose themselves, and they abuse their spouses and family members. This problem exists because of stress, addiction, economic depression, etc.
We as a community are hiding behind the mask. We are not allowing ourselves to believe that we are facing violence, we are denying the fact that there is a problem that needs to be solved. If we continue living as if nothing wrong is going on, by the time our great grand children are born, the world will become chaotic.
Gossip creates violence. I have witnessed it many times. In most cases it is girls who like to gossip. Men tend to solve their problems violently. I think females should confront their problems, not gossip, and I think males should work out their problems without violence.
We can easily break the lone toothpick, while the bundle of toothpicks needs more energy to break. If our community works together as one, we can all bring incredible changes. People from different ethnicities tend to have distant relationships with their neighbours. The community needs to join together and become aware of all the wonderfully diverse people around them.
We can see the actual scene in one side and the scene from the mirror in the other side. The media view of Jane and Finch is that it is a dangerous area and doesn’t have any good to offer. In reality, there are many more positive things than violent cases, but the media doesn’t show them. We have to show our positive side by showcasing our highest achievements.
A chalk outline made by children. Constant news stories, violent movies and cartoons make premature death an idea that is far from foreign. Constant surrounding by actual scenes and ideas of death make it only normal for such concepts to appear in child’s play.
A security camera is just another reminder that “you are not safe.” No matter where you go, a security camera says “you can’t be trusted” and “I’m watching you.” With a very active and controlling police force, feeling safe is the only thing you can feel, unless it’s unease.
His eyes represent a struggle. He’s seen a lot, but cannot speak. He’s mixed of the multiple ethnicities within the community, and they too have all seen things they can’t speak of. The “no snitching” rule makes people feel scared for their lives or for the lives of those they are close to, so they usually just choose to keep everything to themselves.
victory

I look at the community and notice too much dirt on the floor. Worried about my white shoes, I walk the dirty road realizing my shoes may not be white no more. This road is done and there is no more dirt. I look down. My shoes are still white. The things I worry about will never interfere with the path I walk, because I know I’m clean and so is my city. My moment.
Beyond the Caption

• Challenges
• Future directions