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Community Arts Programming as a Factor in Newcomer Youth Inclusion: The Toronto Situation

Adriann Moss
Ryerson University

1. Introduction:

Set within the Canadian context of the lack of research and policy initiatives directed towards newcomer youth, this research paper will demonstrate the value of one approach to newcomer youth settlement programming – namely that of community arts programming. It has been stated that Canada has been very slow in responding to current newcomer youth issues and settlement needs (Beiser, Ogilvie, Rummens, Armstrong, and Oxman-Martinez, 2005). Highlighting the hypocritical nature of the Canadian government's lack of response to this cohort, Beiser et al. (2005) state that: "Rarely has so much return been expected from so little investment" (p. 21), alluding to the lack of attention and funding for newcomer youth, while paradoxically expecting them to be equal and contributing members of Canadian society. Focusing on this lack of program provision and the lack of adequate research on newcomer youth, this study concerns itself with the use of community arts programs as a positive tool and method in promoting newcomer youth engagement and social inclusion.

As more newcomer youth are living in lower-income communities with little access to appropriate and alternative spaces to challenge and engage in the creative process, this research paper will add to the more recent literature acknowledging this need, particularly in Toronto. According to Kilbride and Anisef (2001), successful integration involves personal, social, and economic factors which can lead newcomer youth to "…a healthy and productive life [preventing] newcomer youth from accepting social exclusion as members of a marginalized group…" (p. 20). What happens when newcomer youth are left with little access and opportunity to engage in personal, social and economic outlets? If newcomer youth are meant to be future, active members within Canadian society, they must first be afforded the time and space to investigate who they are and where they fit into the Canadian context.

Drawing from various sources of academic, government and service sector literature, a well-rounded and dynamic approach will be taken in order to explore these issues. Expanding upon the existing literature and studies concerned with newcomer youth settlement needs, themes of social, structural and spatial exclusion will set the context for discussion (Sections 2 and 3). Programs on both the international, national and provincial level will be examined along with the current situation of community arts programming in Canada, Ontario, and Toronto. Relating these emerging issues of youth exclusion to the literature on the use of arts methods and programming sets up the context for the primary research. Using, both interview and focus group approaches, key questions will explore such topics as: Is youth disengagement evident in Toronto? What is the evidence for this in relation to arts programming? What are the contributing factors? Why are arts programs effective in newcomer engagement? The Laidlaw Foundation was used as a focus for highlighting funding issues and Beatz To Da Streetz, an urban arts program, as a focus group to examine newcomer youth participant views.

It must be stated that there are many more compounding issues involved in this discussion of newcomer youth settlement and integration. The intersection of factors such as race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, and immigration status must all be accounted for in order to provide adequate and needs-based services for newcomer youth. Further, and more specific, research must be conducted in order to adequately represent those needs, yet for this research paper, the focus and the goal is to provide a case for one suggested method of settlement service provision, namely that of community arts-based programming.

2. The Context: Youth Exclusion.

2.1 Social Exclusion:

Social exclusion is a "…process that serves to impede healthy participation in society's social, economic, political, and cultural institutions" (Byrne, 1999 as cited in Kilbride and Anisef, 2001, p. 21). Canada's demographics and the demographics of its immigrant communities would suggest that newcomer children and youth would be particularly subject to social exclusion. In Canada, in 2001, 1.5 million immigrant children and youth, ages five to 19, made up 25 percent of the population of school aged persons. Since 2007 Canada has planned to increase its intake of newcomers from regions in Asia and Africa, increasing the number of visible minority newcomers and, needless to say, increasing the number of newcomer youth (Roderick, Janzen, Ochocka, and Jenkins, 2007). Furthermore, the Statistics Canada 2002 report, stated that 10.5 percent of the population consisted of second generation children and youth who were raised in families where neither English or French were the languages spoken at home (Roderick et al., 2007). With these increasing numbers, together with the increasing diversity of newcomer youth arriving and growing up within the Canadian context, it would seem strange that this cohort has been neglected both in terms of research and therefore with adequate settlement service provisions. A review of current literature on this topic does point to a significant lack of attention to this issue.

Recently, literature concerned with the issues faced by newcomer youth (Beiser et al., 2005; Fix and Sivak, 2007; Kilbride, 2000; Ngo and Schleifer, 2005; Rajiva, 2005) testify to this growing need for further research. In particular these authors stress that attention should be paid to the strategies which these youth use to "…negotiate belonging in their extremely complex spaces of existence" (Rajiva, 2005, p. 28). According to Ngo and Schleifer (2005), the neglect of

the Canadian government to adequately address the often complex nature of newcomer youth settlement and integration needs ignores the linguistic, psychosocial and acculturative challenges they face. These challenges, together with issues of youth identity formation and economic barriers, can lead to the social exclusion and disengagement.

Related to this lack of government attention and research focused on newcomer youth is the institutional exclusion from adequate services. A key concept which Kilbride and Anisef (2001) point out in their recommendations is that information should be taken from their "*own voices*" – that is from the youth themselves. They regard this as the key to meeting the needs, and for implementing appropriate services reflective of newcomer youth issues (Kilbride and Anisef, 2001). A 2000 report from the Centre for Research & Education in Human Services focused on the services offered to youth in the Kitchener/Waterloo region of Ontario. Data collected from focus groups and interviews with newcomer youth in the region concluded that the services provided to immigrant youth were either family-oriented, through school, or by indirect involvement through recreational centres and activities. There were no specific centres for newcomer immigrant and refugee youth and the relative influence of the broader community in creating 'space' for youth engagement was considered to be "scarce" (CREHS, 2000, p. 26). This report highlights the often assumed notion that newcomer youth will fit into one of the available traditional or formal program models, such as those provided for newcomer adults or in ESL programs for children in school. Described as a phase of "integration limbo" (CERIS, p. 2), where youth are neither young enough nor old enough for specific programs, it has been stated that "…strategies to help youth need to start from where youth naturally look to for support (both formal and informal) and then build on and enhance these [models]" (CREHS, 2000, p. 2).

To determine the particular needs of this youth group research was conducted by six credible Canadian organizations including: the Joint Centre of Excellence for Research on Immigration and Settlement in Toronto (CERIS), the Family Service Association of Toronto (FSA), the Centre for Research and Education in Health Services in Kitchener/Waterloo (CREHS), the Council of Agencies Serving South Asians (CASSA), working as a partner agency to the South Asian Women's Centre (SAWC), Pinecrest-Queensway Health and Community Services in Ottawa/Carleton (PQCHS) and the Coalition of Visible Minority Women (CVMW). The main areas of concern identified from their studies included; (i) identity development and conflicts between home and peer group, (ii) language, (iii) lack of recognition for prior learning experiences and (iv) the distinct experiences for male and female youth.

Focusing on Ontario, a key piece of research identifying the challenges to settlement and integration for newcomer youth (Kilbride and Anisef, 2001), reported on these same issues within the context of the absence of social and cultural capital for newcomer youth upon their arrival in Canada. Newcomer youth involved in the study reported on this lack of social and cultural capital, highlighting the challenges faced by language barriers, the racism often encountered and the discrimination found within school and institutional settings. As well as the experience of a loss of social and cultural familiarity was the lack of awareness of the available social support services, or of the lack thereof (p. ii). The migration experience not only removes an individual from their established networks of families and friends, but also from their familiar culture and environment. This leads to challenging adjustments on both the cognitive and emotional levels (Ngo and Schleifer, 2005; CREHS, 2000). Not only do newcomer youth face the general challenges common to most adolescent development, but they also face distinct challenges associated with their newcomer status, language proficiency, and cultural identity

formation. This, according to the CERIS report on best practices for newcomer youth, is even

more challenging for racialized groups (p. 1). This lack of attention to research on immigrant and

refugee youth in general has resulted in an absence of adequate social support services for the

particular needs of newcomer youth, support which is essential to promote engagement and

social inclusion.

2.2 Where? The Politics of '*Space*':

Not only is there an evident lack of government attention dedicated to newcomer youth

but, more acutely, there is an absence of support for those municipalities where the majority of

newcomer youth reside. There is a growing disjuncture between the increase in responsibility for

which municipalities have been assigned and the related increase in number of newcomers and

the lack of resources available to them (Kilbride, 2000, p. ii).

The politics of *space* is a major concern and a theme that is becoming more evident and

prominent within the literature. Fix and Sivak (2007) briefly touch upon this concern, stating

that there in an increase in "racialized and spatialized poverty in Ontario" (p. 146), supporting

their point with data taken from a major provincial study *Poverty by Postal Code* undertaken by

the United Way of Greater Toronto.. The racialization of poverty is clearly evident within the

major urban centres of Canada where the majority of immigrants and refugees live (Omidvar and

Richmond, 2003). In Toronto, in particular, it is a fact that racialized immigrants and refugees

are more likely to live in neighbourhoods with high poverty rates (Galabuzi, 2001). According to

Galabuzi (2001), this increasing racialization of space is related to growing social inequalities in

terms of access to adequate social services (p. 7) which are clearly linked to the lack of available

recreational and arts programming for youth. Within their "integration limbo", "…marginalized

youth in Ontario find themselves economically and socially isolated in their neighbourhoods, cut off from broader society" (Fix and Sivak, 2007, p. 148).

A factor related to this is that "30 percent of all immigrant children live in families whose total income falls below the official poverty line" (Kilbride and Anisef, 2001, p. 24). Consequently, there is an evident and growing disconnect between those who can afford to be engaged and those who cannot. Galabuzi suggests that to some poverty has been equated with a sense of "voicelessness" (p. 76) and disempowerment. Shahsiah (2005) explores the increase in non-white newcomer youth and the corresponding federal cutbacks in social services and how this ultimately affects racialized newcomer youth in their identity formation and social inclusion. Immigrant children and youth have the lowest rates of participation in community activities and programs, which Ngo and Schleifer (2005) suggest is due to the lack of culturally and youth specific programs, socioeconomic status in relation to high participation fees and a general lack of awareness of the available resources (p. 32). This idea is explored further in Abada's (2007) work where she uses a quantitative study, specific to Toronto, to touch upon issues within minority communities and neighbourhoods to illustrate how social inclusion/exclusion is affected by the lack of resources, general low-income and overall lack of social capital. Abada relates the relationship of spatial exclusion to youth mental health, emphasizing the effect this has on notions of social inclusion and civic and community engagement. Without the appropriate funding and infrastructure restructuring needed to provide youth with meaningful spaces and services to engage newcomer youth, it has been suggested that this can lead to a "subculture of defeat and marginalization" (Ngo and Schleifer, 2005, p. 33), isolating newcomer youth even further to the margins of society.

2.3 Space, Place and Youth Development:

Corresponding to the issue of spatial exclusion is the relationship this has to youth identity and development. The formation of youth identity, and the corresponding factors of mental health, psycho-social behaviour and one's socio-economic place, is a crucial factor contributing to youth dis/engagement. The 'quality' of the neighbourhood in which youth reside is a term which stands out in the literature reviewed. The *New Canadian Children and Youth Study* (Beiser et al., 2005), a longitudinal study targeting specifically immigrant and refugee children and youth, highlighted that the connection of the 'quality' of neighbourhood does in fact affect children's and youths overall health and well-being (p. 23). One of the concerns brought up in *Do places Matter?* (Boyle and Lipman, 2002) is the predominance of single/lone parent families in these areas. Although it must not be assumed that all single/lone parent families have low socio-economic status, they do, however, suggest that at a policy level, there is a need to address this issue as a potential concern and increase the interaction between education and community programs in order to improve the psycho-social outcomes related to youth.

Not only does one's physical place affect notions of inclusion and engagement, but so too does an individuals' confusion between "difference" and "belonging". Winter (2003) draws from Erikson's (1968) theory of identity development, and suggests that "…identity development is a process that involves both individual and social aspects" (p. 10), which can be directly placed into the discussion of the relationship of 'place' to youth identity formation and thus, social inclusion. Having a space within society where youth have the opportunity to explore and engage with relevant concerns, can lead to positive social identity development. This situation is clearly stated in the following quotation:

> Adolescents cannot survive as free-standing entities, but need
> to identify with transcendent ideas that provides the self with

enduring sources of meaning. We [the authors] propose, therefore,
that community services offers opportunities for this crucial self-society
linkage in identity construction.
(Youniss, McLellan, and Mazer 2001, as cited in Winter, 2003, p. 11)

The Family Service Association of Toronto's study entitled *Factors Affecting the Settlement and Adaptation Process of Canadian Adolescent Newcomers* (2000) discusses this issue, using individual conversations with youth where concerns were brought up about "how to be an immigrant adolescent?" and "what does being an immigrant youth mean?" (FSAT, 2000, p. 18). This same issue is explored further, from a different angle, in Berry's research entitled *Fitting In: A Place for Immigrant Teens in Canadian Society* (Berry, 2006), where he measures the level of psychological adaptation of immigrant youth in relation to their Canadian identity. Berry suggests that those who identified positively with an ethnic profile showed positive psychological adaptation but poor socio-cultural adaptation and those identifying with a national profile had poor psychological adaptation in general.

Does a strong ethnic identity help one's engagement within society? And if so, what resources are available for those youth who are struggling with these issues? Effective and relevant youth programs which highlight the multidimensionality of the newcomer youth experience are needed and must take into account diverse family and cultural values. Although "best practices" for newcomer youth programs were widely recommended in the literature there were no specific suggestions as to how this might be delivered and with what kind of model. One proposed "best practice" model would be arts-based programs where youth are provided a space in which they can artistically engage in issues concerning identity formation and development, social inclusion and empowerment.

3. The Context: Arts Programming.

3.1 Why the Arts?

Normally one does not think of using the arts as a method to overcome newcomer youth exclusion, however, according to Goss (2000), "…the arts represent perhaps the most underutilized forum for rebuilding community in America" (p. 33). When considering the multiple challenges newcomer youth face, language and identity being the foremost acknowledged, engaging in artistic methods can be a valuable method of working through the limitations of language and social insecurity. Huss and Cwikel (2005) argue that empowerment and communication can be achieved through artistic means of expression due to the multiple ways of expressing various epistemologies.

There is a growing body of research published on the positive effects of community arts programs and which touch on the many diverse areas of psycho-social well-being, mental health, civic engagement and identity formation discussed above. The value of these arts programs is increasingly recognized as an effective tool to improve newcomer youth engagement and feelings of social inclusion. A key article, with particular reference to the Canadian context, is a piece of research entitled *The Effect of a Structured Arts Program on the Psychosocial functioning of Youth From Low-Income Communities: Findings from a Canadian Longitudinal Study* (Wright, John, Ellenbogen, Offord, Duku and Rowe, 2006). Assessing community-based organizations with regard to their successful recruitment and retention rates, it was demonstrated that these arts programs were successful in both raising artistic and social skills as well as in the reduction in emotional and behavioural problems. Their overall conclusion was that youth, particularly from low-income communities, benefited from these structured arts programs. Similarly an article from the Applied Research Branch for Strategic Policy of Human Resources

and Development Canada (HRDC) reported on the value of arts programs in their work *Sports,*

The Arts and Community Programs: Rates and Correlates of Participation (Offord, Lipman and

Duku, 1998). The main focus throughout this work was on the lack of structured programs and

related problems of access, particularly in low-income areas. The authors concluded that

programs should be targeted to reach those with particularly low participation rates- members of

marginalized communities. They emphasize the need for more data from intervention studies to

indicate the effectiveness of participation in the sports, arts and community programs on raising

the life quality and improving the life chances of children. This concern was brought up by

Wright et al. (2006) who reflected on the literature which has detailed and positive, albeit

anecdotal, outcomes of the effects of arts programs on youth development. Although they are not

suggesting the opposite, they do raise the fact that there is an important gap in the evaluation of

programs that could then lead to future funding and more government attention. Furthermore,

studies are needed to determine not only what the barriers are but also the distance and

disconnect between access and the related socio-economic demographics. Essentially, these

programs and services are not reaching those communities who need engagement and inclusion.

3.2 'Space' for the Arts:

Again, the concept of *space* comes up in several pieces of literature, this time referring to

the positive space for engagement provided through arts programs. Barndt (1997) suggests that

marginalized groups and newcomer communities often identify with community arts because

they allow them to have a "…space for articulating their own perspectives on the social

conditions of their lives" (p. 355). Davis (1993) relates this idea of a *safe space* for engagement

in his article *Safe Havens: Portraits of Educational Effectiveness in Community Art Centers that*

Focus on Education in Economically Deprived Communities. A survey of 113 community art centres across the United States found that arts centres provided safe spaces for individuals to enhance their skills and reinforce social networks. Desai and Chalmers (2007) take a critical look at art as a means to produce social and political change, looking particularly at the American school curriculum. In *Notes for a Dialogue on Art Education in Critical Times,* the authors discuss the effective tool of engaging youth with the arts to understand and critique the political and societal issues with which youth are engaged. They (the youth) should not merely be passive receptors but should be engaged in issues of race, religion, gender and ethnic tensions. Walcott (2006), an activist and researcher who sits as the Canada Research Chair of the Social Justice and Cultural Studies at the University of Toronto, eagerly attests to this notion of *space* and cultural outlets by stating that "...we need programs that will allow young people to engage with and make sense of the ways in which they can contribute to the culture of their communities and beyond…providing spaces where they can offer a critique of the culture and society…" (Walcott, 2006, as cited in Fix and Sivak, 2007, p. 148).

3.3 Current Research:

There are an increasing number of studies highlighting the diverse psycho-social outcomes resulting from the beneficial effects of arts programs on youth engagement. Although not specifically addressing immigrant and refugee communities, there have been a considerable number of studies and pilot projects coming out of the United States which target lower-income urban communities. In their work *Involvement in the Arts and Human Development,* Catterall, Champleau, and Iwanaga (1999) initiated a 10-year longitudinal study for the U.S Department of Education. The authors measured the level of positive psycho-social development in relation to

the active participation in arts programs. Their findings demonstrated that those students who

had high levels of art participation resulted in them generally out-performing other students in

areas of social engagement, interest in school, and in them having better attitudes to both the

community and society. James Catterall is again referenced in an extensive literature review

entitled *Arts Integration, Frameworks, Research and Practice: A Literature Review* (2002) along

with another significant piece of research by Weitz (1996) entitled *Coming Up Taller: Arts and*

Humanities Programs for Children and Youth at Risk. This latter study was an extensive survey

of several participatory arts projects across the United States, which again found evidence of the

capacity of such participatory arts projects to engage socially-excluded youth.

In the United Kingdom, Hughes reviewed a number of arts programs in his article *Doing*

the Arts Justice: A Review of Recent Literature, Practice and Theory (Hughes, 2005). This study

was funded by the Unit for the Arts and the Offenders Centre for Applied Theatre Research in

London. This is an interesting piece of research as it highlights the positive outcome and

effectiveness in areas of conflict resolution, tolerance and individual responsibility and integrity.

Again, the idea of having a separate *space* for youth is encouraged when Hughes (2005) states

that they:

> … offer a non-traditional, non-institutional, social
> and emotional environment; a non-judgemental and
> un-authoritarian model of engagement; and an opportunity
> to participate in a creative process that involves both
> structure and freedom. (p. 11)

This study brought together key players in the arts and criminal justice sector, who worked

together in organizing youth arts projects. Funded and commissioned by the Art Council of

England, the Department of Culture, and the Research into Arts and Criminal Justice Think Tank

(REACTT), this report was clear in its aim to provide an account of the current evidence and theory for the arts in the criminal justice sector to inform both practitioners and policy makers. Furthermore, Hughes (2005) states:

> Findings from a youth arts project using street arts and club culture to engage young people in participating in activities within their local areas (which was based on young people's self-reports) showed many young people valued opportunities for involvement, a chance to develop music-related skills, a break in routine and building relationships with other young people. (p. 33)

The leading Canadian study to provide clear evidence within this area of study, identifying positive outcomes of cultural/arts programs, is the National Arts and Youth Demonstration Project (NAYDP) which was conducted by the McGill University School of Social Work. This three year longitudinal study, which began in 2001, looked at the impact of community-based arts programs for youth, from five multi-cultural, low income communities within the major urban centres of Canada. Specifically, the target populations were youth from lower-income and culturally diverse neighbourhoods where there was a significant lack of art and recreational facilities and programs available. The results indicated that when barriers (access and sustainability and affordability of programs) are removed, improvement in areas of social, technical and interpersonal skills was recognized. Also identified in their study were improvements in reduction of drug/alcohol use, emotional issues and improvement in academic outcomes (NAYDP Report, 2004). A related study from the Institute of Urban Studies at the University of Winnipeg, *The Arts and Community Development in Winnipeg* (Kuly, Stewart and Dudley, 2005) also report on civic engagement and arts programs acting as a bridge between issues of ethnicity and class. In Toronto, the Grassroots Youth Collaborative (GYC) has done active research and engaged with youth, reporting that a majority of youth (12 to 30 years of age)

agree with the effectiveness of arts programs in enhancing interpersonal skills, self esteem and social inclusion (Fix and Sivak, 2007).

An interesting project undertaken by Lui (2005), entitled *Redefining Canadian: A Participatory Filmmaking, Action Research Project with Immigrant and Refugee Youth*, used filmmaking as an artistic form of expression as an aid and tool for immigrant and refugee youth to explore their identities and issues of being "different". She indicates the use of this space for cross-cultural learning and participatory learning for youth where there is a lack of understanding and misrepresentation of minority youth, most notably in the media. Through her participatory research, she highlights the need for arts programs as a valued form of social research and as an integration tool for immigrant and refugee youth. The interaction with immigrant and refugee youth within her study is echoed in Perkins, Borden and Villaruel's (2007) *Participation in Structured Youth Programs.* This is an interesting study which examines the cultural and contextual factors which are part of the decision of underrepresented youth to either join or to disregard participation in youth programs. This is the first piece of research found throughout this literature review that focused on the question of "why do youth participate?" and "what are the factors involved in this decision?" These factors are important when considering the engagement of youth in the community, and particularly in commenting on the fact that most ethnic minority youth from particular low-income communities are not accessing these programs. One of the interesting recommendations for further study was to ask youth if having youth workers from the same ethnic background was considered in their decision making process (Perkins, et al., 2007, p. 17).

3.4 The Arts: Scientific, Sociological and Psychological Factors:

To give credibility to the area of music and arts programs as tools for youth engagement, it is important to look at the scientific and sociological aspects highlighting their importance and value. There is an extensive amount of literature on music and art therapy, such as Wigram, Saperston and West's book entitled *The Art and Science of Music Therapy: A handbook* (Wigram et al., 1995). This is a science-based approach, touching upon the therapeutic role of music and the value it plays as a form of therapy. It takes a broad look at music therapy and its positive effect on people, touching upon the medical, psychological and therapy related fields. Elligan (2004), an American clinical psychologist, created a program based on the method of using Rap and spoken word as a means of therapeutic communication. His book *Rap Therapy: A Practical Guide for Communicating with Youth and Young Adults through Rap Music* is a simplified and basic book but useful in demonstrating the effective use of this method of promoting positive behavioral change.

Sullivan and Willingham (2002) base their research in *Creativity and Music Education* around the effective use of music within the classroom. They discuss the process of creativity within music education but they point out that, since the 1990's, cut backs and educational reform in Canada have denied further research into the relationship between music instruction and academic achievement since music is now on the margins of the school curriculum (Sullivan and Willingham, 2002, p. xvii). School programs do not engage all students and there is a need for a space for creativity. They state that "…the creative process connects what they are doing in the classroom [or community centre] to real life outside…" (Sullivan and Willingham, 2002, p. 102).

Langhey (2006) in his book *Music and Youth Culture* and Rupa Huq (2006) in her work *Beyond Subculture: Pop, Youth and Identity in a Postcolonial World*, both take a theoretical and sociological perspective about the engagement and relationship of youth and music. They both point out the need not to trivialize the role of music in the lives and identity formation of youth but to value its role as an outlet. They both consider the fact that most youth are lumped together and not given the diverse attention and research that is required. Interestingly, Langhey looks at how music is localized and how it interacts with the everyday life situations of youth, involving issues of race and exclusion. This, he argues, gives form and value to these issues, therefore giving context to youth's experience of everyday life (Langhey, 2006, p. 3).

3.5 International and Canadian Examples:

Fix and Sivak's (2007) review article again provides key examples of arts program initiatives, both internationally and at the national level. Briefly they discuss the initiative by the Venezuelan government in using arts programs as a tool for youth engagement stemming from positive research results. The Fundacion del Estado para el Sistema Nacional de las Orquestas Juveniles e Infantiles de Venezuela ("El Sistema") is described as a publicly funded music program that engages 250,000 urban, lower class youths. In Scotland, the Scottish Arts Council is setting up a similar project based on the positive outcomes and responses from the Venezuelan project. Similarly in England, with the aid of the Arts Council of England, a similar initiative has been undertaken due to the growing concerns with the social disengagement of newcomer youth (Fix and Sivak, 2007, p. 149). Fix and Savak highlight the method of incorporating various sectors, from the cultural, educational and criminal justice sectors along with local artists and organizations.

At the national level, Canada, and Ontario in particular, lack any coordinated efforts to engage in such policy level related projects. Although there have been efforts in the past to tap into the creativity of these marginalized youth, there is yet to be a federally funded initiative implemented even though, as far back as 1998, as noted in the introduction to this section, one federal government ministry HRDC (now HRSDC) published a paper on the value of arts programming (Offord, Lipman and Duku, 1998).

3.6 Summary: Current Canadian Perspectives:

This literature review has shown that, certainly in Canada, there is a lack of youth oriented programming and services targeted towards newcomer youth, particularly those youth from marginalized and lower-income communities. Through various studies and research conducted, community arts programs have been shown to have positive impacts on these youth and their communities. But there is a particular lack in the availability of these arts programs in Canada and in Ontario in particular. Lack of government funding and previous cut-backs within the social services sector have created barriers to arts programs through poor community infrastructure and a clear lack of attention and research. Sherri Torjman (2004) in her research *Culture and Recreation: Links to Wellbeing* from the Caledon Institute of Social Policy discusses comprehensive community initiatives – a new methodology from the local level in response to lack of government involvement (Torjman, 2004). The idea of sustainable development with the engagement of various sectors through community action and culture and recreational programs is something, she suggests, that will lead to future civic and community engagement, creating a long term and lasting effect.

4. <u>Theoretical Frameworks.</u>

Several theoretical frameworks are used to situate and to guide the argument for positive newcomer youth engagement through participation in community arts programs. By incorporating and combining the theories of *social inclusion*, *social capital* and *critical social youth empowerment*, the results obtained in this research paper can be placed in a broader framework to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the issues.

4.1 Social Inclusion:

Social inclusion initially became a prominent concept and consideration in policy formation in Europe during the 1980's as a response to social exclusion. This theory developed in reaction to the increasing social divide stemming from labour market changes and the resulting lack of adequate resources and social services provided to those in need and who were excluded (Laidlaw Foundation, 2003). A key aspect of social inclusion is the removal of structural and institutional barriers, calling for the full and equal participation of citizens, including newcomer immigrants and refugees, in all social, economic, and political spheres (Omidvar and Richmond, 2003). By identifying the barriers which hinder the integration and settlement process, referring specifically within this research paper to newcomer youth, specific services, programs and infrastructural changes can be identified in order to promote social inclusion. At the core, social inclusion addresses the basic notions of "belonging, acceptance and recognition" (Omidvar and Richmond, 2003).

In Canada, currently, the Laidlaw Foundation is an example of a major provincial funding body designed around a social inclusion framework. They emphasize the need to focus on the growing disparities and exclusion of children, youth and families from full access and

participation within Canadian society. The Laidlaw Foundation's definition of social inclusion highlights their commitment and funding mandate to support such programs which include the arts, the environment and the overall well-being of children and youth. Social inclusion is the "… contemporary lens through which to understand social well-being, equality, and citizenship" (Freiler, 2003, p. 1) and within this framework, Freiler (2003) pays particular attention to social inclusion with a youth focus. She highlights five main points of engagement and criteria essential in promoting positive youth inclusion. First, *valued recognition* is essential in addressing the individual differences in development and therefore the need to provide adequate services in reflection of these needs. Secondly, *opportunities for human development* must be created, highlighting the use of recreational programs for promoting growth and development. *Involvement and engagement* addresses the need for youth to be engaged but to also have certain control and input regarding adequate services. And finally, *proximity* and *material well-being,* or resources, are important to allow for equal access and full participation within their community (Freiler, 2003).

Important to this discussion of social inclusion is the emphasis on regarding this framework, not only as a goal but also as a process through which this goal is achieved. It can be seen as a "... proactive, human development approach to social well-being … requir[ing] investment and action to bring about the conditions for inclusion…" (Laidlaw Foundation, 2003, p. viii). An emphasis on human development is also important, particularly in the context of newcomer youth, as there should be equal access to resources which help to promote positive human development. Again, in Freiler's (2003) youth-focused narrative, she extents her discussion to suggest that there needs to be a shift in public policy from a deficits, - or the "causality"- approach, to an assets-based approach directed towards human development rather than one

solely focused on the immediate gaps and barriers that exist. The process of social inclusion

needs to be an on-going process and not just a remedy or band-aid policy which deals with the

results of social exclusion. What is hindering youth engagement? What are the social, systemic

and economic barriers that are excluding newcomer youth and what can be done about this? A

focus on particular newcomer youth development strategies and settlement needs, as explored

through community arts programs for example, can address the often 'one size fits all' approach

which does not effectively recognize the diversity and age appropriateness of program delivery.

4.2 Social Capital:

Extending the need for equal access to resources, as discussed above in social inclusion

theory, a focus on social capital theory highlights the outcomes of having access to resources in

relation to the process of building social networks. Addressing the lack of resources available to

newcomer youth brings forth the theory of social capital, which is most often discussed within

the larger context of 'capital' – economic, human and cultural capital - in discussions concerning

immigration and settlement. Social capital, in this context, refers to Bourdieu's (1986) emphasis

on the resources one has access to as a result of one's social networks (Cheong, Edwards,

Gouldbourne, and Solomos, 2007). Social networks, particularly within the settlement discourse,

play a major role in the integration and social inclusion strategies of newcomers. Yet social

networking or capital does not happen "*tabula rasa*" (Cheong et al., 2007, p. 38). Newcomer

youth do not always begin with a clean slate or equal access to resources, such as arts

programming, in their community. As outlined in the literature review, access to such programs

is intersected with the realities of institutional and social exclusion and marginalization due to

socio-economic status and a lack of appropriate youth oriented infrastructure. Therefore, there is a need to create such starting points upon which youth can build.

Social capital, as a resource, is a "…critical resource for positive social, emotional, and intellectual development" (Winter, 2003, p. 2), particularly for youth. Winter (2003) then draws upon Coleman (1988), who extended Bourdieu's original concept of social capital, breaking it down into three outcomes. According to Coleman's (1988) view, trust is gained, which is fostered through these social networks; valuable information is gained through the social process and; guidance and mentorship that social networks foster can facilitate certain positive actions and outcomes (Winter, 2003). Social capital or networking, as a resource for newcomer youth to gain and to build upon, can increase the social engagement and development processes between youth and peers, youth and mentors, and extended to youth engagement within the wider community. Without the appropriate resources being made available to newcomer youth, a cycle of "cumulative disadvantage" (Winter, 2003, p. 12) can occur, which can lead to further marginalization and exclusion. Having access to resources and valuable spaces for newcomer youth engagement is needed.

4.3 Critical Social Theory of Youth Empowerment:

Combining the specific elements discussed within the theories of social inclusion and social capital above, critical social theory of youth empowerment encapsulates the goals of inclusion with a particular focus and attention to youth inclusion and empowerment. Drawn from a specific piece of research done by Jennings, Parra-Medina, Hilfinger-Messias, and McLoughlin (2006), the basis of critical social theory of youth empowerment is an emphasis on creating socio-political change through youth empowerment, which can be tied directly into the notions

of providing social capital for the social inclusion of newcomer youth. Reflecting the key components expressed by the Laidlaw Foundation's requirements for creating social inclusion, discussed above, critical social theory of youth empowerment also suggests the need for: 1) a safe and welcoming environment for diverse youth, 2) participation and engagement in meaningful forms, 3) equitable power-sharing between adults and youth, 4) critical reflection and participation on inter-personal, social and political processes, and 5) integrated individual and community wide empowerment strategies (Jennings et al., 2006, p. 32).

   Taking elements from the work of Rappaport (1984, 1987) and Zimmerman (2000), Jennings et al., (2006) describe empowerment as being the process of, "… individuals, families, organizations, and communities gaining control and mastery, within the social, economic, and political contexts of their lives, in order to improve equity and quality of life" (Jennings, 2006, p. 32). Empowerment, in the context of newcomer youth, can refer to the agency and the well-being that can be achieved through the spaces provided which encourage both meaningful dialogue and expression. One of the key concepts of this theory is the 'space' in which youth can "…have freedom to be themselves, express their own creativity, voice their opinions in decision-making processes, try out new skills and roles, rise to challenges, and have fun in the process" (Jennings et al., 2006, p. 41).

   These three theoretical bases outlined provide, therefore, a context for youth oriented arts-programs – particularly as they relate to newcomer youth psycho-social development, social inclusion and engagement.

   One common critique of youth programming and policy, highlighted by Freiler (2003), is the need for a shift in focus when considering youth and their healthy development and inclusion into the community. Historically, the focus has been on youth programs functioning as centres of

rehabilitation or more directly "…keeping youth off the streets" (Jennings et al., 2006, p. 32).

However, the 'assets-based' approach, proposed by Freiler (2003), is the focus on programming

from a process of inclusive narratives of healthy development and integration through individual

and full community participation (Jennings et al., 2006). Prior to any social exclusion and

disengagement occurring, spaces for meaningful engagement and self-identity formation need to

be provided. Providing youth with the opportunities to engage in activities "…relevant to their

own lives … [and] that excite and challenge them and 'count as real'" (Jennings, et al., 2006,

p.43) need to be considered in public policy discussions. One medium and suggested program

delivery, through which youth empowerment can occur, is using arts-based methods.

5. Methodology.

5.1 Research design:

In order to gain relevant and up-to-date information on the effectiveness of arts

programming for newcomer youth, a qualitative research design was adopted. This was based

both on interviews and a focus group session. The interview and focus group session allow for a

triangulation approach to be taken. A triangulation approach allows for multiple perspectives to

be investigated first-hand as the primary research (Neuman, 2006, p. 149). In this case it parallels

the multiple perspectives on youth and arts-based programs found throughout the literature.

Semi-structured, open-ended questions were used for both individual interviews and the focus

group. The questions and prompts were not intended to generate specific answers, but to generate

responses around the issues and themes and also to leave room for further discussion. This

helped to facilitate and encourage an open dialogue between the interviewer and the research

participants. Each session was guided by a different set of questions appropriate to the

participants knowledge in order to gain specific information from multiple perspectives, yet, all

were based on the premise of newcomer youth engagement and inclusion. The questions posed for both the interview and focus group are outlined in Appendix B and C. Through a narrative approach (Neuman, 2006, p. 474), emphasis was placed upon providing a space for the voices of the youth to be heard and used as valued data.

Focus groups are not only a "quick and easy" method of gathering information (Smithson, 2008, p. 358), but it also enables the interviewer to observe the social relations and group dynamics. These observations can also be added into the analysis. Focus groups consist of a more "…natural setting, allow[ing] people to express opinions and ideas freely…" and are particularly useful to encourage "…open expression among members of marginalized social groups…" (Neuman, 2006, p. 412). There is also a creative element which focus group interaction can produce for the participants themselves. Experiences of reflection and self realization can occur while providing a "…space for participants to discover new things" (Smithson, 2008 p. 362). The results given below (Section 6) were transcribed from the audio-recording.

5.2 A Toronto Case Study:

Non-random and purposive sampling (Neuman, 2006, p. 220) was used. Time constraints and availability of participants limited the primary research to a small number but it did allow time for in-depth discussion with the participants. The main participants in this research study were the Laidlaw Foundation and Beatz To Da Streetz.

<u>Laidlaw Foundation:</u>

Due to the desire to achieve a triangulation approach, (Neuman, 2006, p. 149) the Laidlaw Foundation was contacted because of their position as a major funding body for programs encouraging full participation of children, youth and families in their communities. Using a framework of social inclusion, previously discussed (refer to section 4.1), the Foundation also has a particular interest in funding programs with an arts-based focus. Acknowledging that there is little, meaningful, support offered to youth well-being, the Foundation supports:

> …positive youth development through inclusive youth engagement in the arts, environment and in community… recognize[ing] that all young people need the unconditional support of significant adults in their lives and need multiple opportunities to locate an individual talent and the resources necessary to develop that talent. (Laidlaw Foundation)

This allowed for a top-down perspective on how major funding bodies view arts programming as it is related to positive newcomer youth engagement.

Contact was made via e-mail and an interview with the Executive Director, Nathan Gilbert and the Manager of Communications and former Arts Program Manager, Denis Lefebvre, was arranged. The interview was held and audio-recorded in the boardroom at the Foundation office. Initially, a single interview was requested but at the time of the scheduled interview, a second participant joined in the process creating a mini-focus group/interview session which generated valuable information. Consent forms were signed prior to the beginning of the interview and confidentiality of names was not requested or required.

<u>Beatz To Da Streetz:</u>

In order to gain insight from both a program or community leader and also newcomer youth who have experienced the effects of art-programming, specific community-based organizations

and community centres, located in predominantly lower-income neighbourhoods in Toronto, were contacted via email. Those contacted were currently and actively engaged in providing accessible and structured arts programming, targeting youth. The intent to interview the program leader was to achieve their perspective – as an intermediary- on the effectiveness of arts-based programs on participating youth.

Beatz To Da Streetz is a non-profit arts program that:

> …aims to empower homeless and underserved youth ages16-24 through urban arts to reach their full potential and become agents of positive social change …[and] leverages the powerful connection between young people and music to promote opportunities for increasing self-esteem, development of creative expression, building life skills, opening opportunities for professional mentorship, education and income generation for homeless and underserved youth. (Beatz To Da Streetz)

Contact was made via e-email and phone and arrangements were made to set up a focus group. With the help of the program coordinator, a focus group with four participating youth from the program was arranged. The program coordinator himself also joined in the focus group session which was initially not in the proposed plan, however, I do believe his participation added an excitement and relaxed nature to the group atmosphere. Priority and encouragement was always given to the youth participants before responding himself. Consent forms were signed and the intent of the focus group was discussed prior to beginning the session. Also, a profile sheet was filled out by each participant, answering closed-ended question regarding information of age, language and country of origin (see Appendix A). This was filled out prior to any discussion in order to provide more time to generate discussion. Due to the signed confidentiality agreement, participants will from now one be referred to B1, B2, respectfully.

The following chart illustrates in more detail the profile of each focus group participant:

Participant:	Gender:	Age:	Year of Immigration:	Languages Spoken:	Languages Spoken at Home:	Languages Spoken with Peers:	Joined Program in:	Benefited from Program?
B1	Female	22 years	1986 from Lebanon	English, French, Arabic	Arabic, English	English	February, 2008.	Y
B2	Female	20 years	Born in Canada (2nd generation Jamaican)	English	English	English	Winter 2006.	Y
B3	Male	23 years	2007 from Uganda	English, Swahili, Luo, some Arabic	English	English, Ebonics	2007.	Y
B4	Male	20 years	1993 from Somalia	Somali, English	English	English	2006.	Y
PC5 (program coordinator)	Male	26 years	1998 from St.Lucia	English, Creole	English	English	Winter 2005.	Y

Due to the limited number of participants, conclusions should not be made about the experiences of all newcomer youth, yet this small sample does represent a group of youth currently participating in a community arts program, with a gender balance and a diversity of ethnic backgrounds.

6. Results: Interview and Focus Group Findings.

The interview and focus group responses have been organized below according to the themes and issues that emerged from the interview and focus group questions and prompts. These responses reflect the theoretical frameworks of social inclusion, social capital, and empowerment, as established in section 4. This gives a more coherent look at the narratives and is also reflective of emerging issues. Individual responses often overlap the three underlying theoretical themes therefore the responses below are presented under a number of sub-themes which often reflect the interconnections of the theoretical base.

6.1 The Laidlaw Foundation: Responses.

Social Inclusion/Exclusion: Who and Why?

When asked to consider the idea of social exclusion and disengagement as it relates to

newcomer youth, L1 quickly jumped in order to clarify the statement presented. In doing so, L1

acknowledged that the process of exclusion and disengagement is compounded by many factors

and should not be generalized. Uneasy with the statement, L1 responded:

> *"I don't, by the way, necessarily agree with that statement... I think*
> *that there are ... issues of race, ethnicity, socio-economic status and...I*
> *think that's too bold of a statement. I mean there are kids who come as*
> *newcomers who come with...are part of families who are socio-*
> *economically advantaged ...have family history of university*
> *graduates and whatever... it's too bold of a statement to throw out...I*
> *mean, there are a lot of middle class newcomers who are doing quite*
> *well and I think identify with the majority culture or find that they have*
> *space for their own ethno-specific communities and their own cultural*
> *centres...so..."* (L1).

By interjecting with the suggestion that this comment reflects more the experience of

marginalized or low-income communities, L2 responded with a more general overview of what

coming as a newcomer to Canada can entail. L2 points out the fact that a lot of attention of

newcomer parents is on finding sustenance and therefore when funding such programs:

> *"...we found with community arts practice with newcomers is that the*
> *social-economic thing where they couldn't participate because they*
> *were looking for jobs and having to pull together the resources to live*
> *here, which is probably more expensive than where they came from,*
> *limits your ability again to become "wide-eyed" and kind of in a*
> *discovery mode..."* (L2).

Participation can be hindered by socio-economic status and therefore the opportunity for youth to

be engaged can be more difficult, particularly for newcomer families in lower-income situations.

Also, an important aspect to consider when thinking about participation rates of newcomer

youth, are the intersections of culture and gender. L1 made reference to a female Korean

playwright in Canada who had struggled to exercise her creativity due to her family's cultural norms of gender roles. The arts can be confined to specific gender roles and guided by cultural notions of what is 'acceptable' for males and females. Therefore, perceived disengagement and exclusion has to be viewed within a specific context.

> " ...I think that when newcomers do come, they come with their own
> traditions of engagement which pre-date those of the host country, and
> that has an influence on their approach and their enthusiasm and
> levels of engagement... "(L1).

Overall, a key aspect of social exclusion and the promotion of social inclusion had to do with the removal of structured and institutional barriers. Specifically, alluding to government cut-backs and shifts in the public school system, opportunities for those who do not fit into the mainstream are lacking access points for opportunity:

> "Well I mean that I think that there's a major concern... if these
> opportunities have been stripped out of the public school system than
> there are those who have resources, opportunities, parents that can
> make the time and can access a wide range of artistic opportunities
> and training and then there are those kids and young people who tend
> to be in more marginalized situations who have to find the very few
> access points... that they might be received through scholarships and
> whatever but, by and large, as a normative, ...there are boundaries
> and too many young people are excluded...... particularly racialized,
> poor kids"...(L1).

Expanding on the reality of cut-backs and policy shifts, L1 suggests that the impact of devaluing the arts, as a form of "experiential" learning, ignores the individual differences in development and learning styles, as outlined in sectioned 4.1. L1 states:

> " ... there have been significant cuts, some have been restored but not
> all and I think that arts literacy while it is suppose to be part of a
> curriculum outcome is unachievable given the resources...both the
> financial and human...training teachers and whatever. I think that the
> arts create, among other things, experiential form of learning ...sort of
> different strokes for different folks...that the dilution or the weakening
> of the resource is a real loss of broader human development
> strategies" (L1).

<u>Assets-based Focus:</u>

When asked if community arts programs could play an effective role in the settlement needs of newcomer youth, the respondents engaged in a dialogue concerning the overall developmental framework of the government. Within L1's narrative, the focus on assets-based approaches to youth development and inclusive strategies was brought forth, with the use of arts being a method promoting youth assets and engagement. L1 stated:

> *"… in this province and in this country ,we have a developmental framework, or an understanding of an appropriate development of how children develop from a pre-natal stage to school-readiness stage, and we don't seem to have, or have been able to identify a comparable, longitudinal approach to positive youth development… there are major investments in public education which we discussed was missing, but the rest of what the government responds to when it comes to youth is about locking them up, it's about a treatment of what the normative society decides what is "abnormal" behavior or "negative" behavior or "unacceptable behavior and that the dysfunction lies within the individuals and so we've got to "treat it", … and so we don't have any sort of clear developmental framework and so what we do is emphasize the morbidity, the mortality, the deficits and NOT the asset side of youth and youth development and youth potential and that arts are an important strategy in loosening up some of that, and of young people being able to identify, make relationships with mentors, mentoring and with colleagues and students in different ways where assessment and judgment is different and can be different. So those are important human skill sets that experiential forms of learning offer young people and we don't necessarily ensure that these are in place for them …"* (L1).

L2 extended upon the role that the arts can have on newcomer experiences, by stating that:

> *" …the role of the arts often is to reflect society unto itself, and so that if you are a newcomer and you don't have that opportunity, it's harder for you to kind of get a sense of what you have just come into if you don't get that experience…"* (L2).

<u>Social Capital: A Resource for Engagement.</u>

The opportunities and the access to resources for newcomer youth were highlighted in several instances as a key component to engagement and thus, social inclusion. Not only does social capital emphasize the need for access to resources but also the need to network and how this can impact one's view of being included. L2 described this by stating

> " *We all know that as we get older, the ability to network will serve us well later on in life…and because newcomers kind of end up being ghettoized and do not have those opportunities to cross those boundaries, that to you and I might seem tiny, but to others is like a huge chasm…*"(L2).

Here, L2 made reference to an experience he had while visiting youth from the Rexdale area that had no idea that there was a lake to the south of the city and a general lack of knowledge of the major cultural institutions in Toronto. Stating that he had initially assumed that this had to do with affordability or lack of parental involvement, yet what surfaced was general a sense of not belonging. The youth involved stated that they "weren't invited" and that "they didn't feel like part of the fabric of this city" (L2).

<u>Social Networks: Trust, Guidance and Mentorship.</u>

The role of networks, made through relationships and social development in programs such as community arts, was highlighted as being an important aspect of youth development. L1 frames his comments around the theories of Bronfenbrener. He states:

> "… *a theoretical or conceptual framework with a more comprehensive youth development approach or policy structure strategy, we've adopted from Bronfenbrenner, who is a developmental psychologist, who suggests that all young people need significant adults in their lives, to be unconditionally crazy about them and they need multiple opportunities to locate a talent. So that's where…these experiential forms of education, which could be in the arts, in camping, in fashion,*

it could be in all sorts of things, its not limited, but it [the framework]
tends to be focused more on experiential learning…" (L1).

L1 discusses the importance for youth to have valuable and positive peer relationships, mentors

and adults around them to help develop positive psycho-social outcomes. L1 goes on to stress the

importance of having access to resources, such as the creative arts, in order to discover their

assets and also help in identity development. L1 responds:

> "*…young people need the resources, to go deeper, so that once they*
> *identify what their calling is or what they think might be of*
> *interest…BUT they also have to be given the space to fail and pick*
> *themselves up and try something else…and we don't see enough of*
> *that. … it [becomes] that much more inaccessible"* (L1).

Individual and Community-wide Empowerment: Space for Creativity.

When asked simply if expressive and creative processes are valuable tools in the identity

formation and empowerment process of newcomer youth, the responses were positive from both

participants stating, *"… the answer is yes!"* (L1), and giving two examples of successful

community arts programs. L2 agrees and said:

> "*…absolutely, and again we have concrete examples of that. We've*
> *funded organizations like Cahoots Theatre that engaged newcomers in*
> *the Parkdale area over the last couple of years. It started as a pilot*
> *project and we couldn't drop it because of the interest of the young*
> *people themselves… so that's evident in the fact that is needs to*
> *continue…"*(L2).

L1 adds that Jumblies Theatre (also a community theatre program) has:

> "*…a strong community arts tradition, gauging generally new Canadians and*
> *immigrants … in an intergenerational type of community arts undertaking…*" (L1).

Identity Formation:

As part of viewing arts programming for the promotion of positive identity formation for

newcomer youth, the respondents again took a holistic view of the governments focus on deficits

and the lack of inclusive forms of program models. L1 suggests that:

> " *...identity formation is part of positive adolescent growth and that's*
> *a discovery and it doesn't follow a straight line and isn't something*
> *that someone tells you are or who to be... part of the problem is that*
> *we are stuck in a medical model that measures disease and infirmity*
> *and not wellness ...most of the metrics and measurements are all based*
> *on diagnosing a deficit and disability, rather than measures for the*
> *assets. We would prefer that more kids are driven pro-socially, rather*
> *than anti-socially. There are measures for the anti-social yet there are*
> *no measures for the pro-social ... we're lacking integrated and*
> *inclusive models* "(L1).

In terms of generating new program models and of the government/funding sector placing value

on arts programs, L2 refers to the lack of evaluation and constructive criticism which the

community arts sector could benefit from. L2 says that:

> " *…within the community arts sector, there has been a bit of a split*
> *between those people who see process as being way more important*
> *than product...You need to look at the value sets that are attached to*
> *them...so for instance in the community arts practice, there has been*
> *very little criticism around it...thoughtful criticism, that I think that the*
> *sector could benefit from... reflection on the outcomes and the*
> *impact…*" (L2).

6.2 Beatz To Da Streetz: Responses

Social Inclusion/Exclusion: Challenges Faced by Newcomer Youth**.**

To begin this focus group session, the group was asked to reflect upon the ideas of

settlement and inclusion and what the potential challenges to newcomer youth might be. B1

responded by saying that:

> *"It depends on the person's character…a lot…if they adjust quickly or not and how well they adapt to the people they surround themselves with when they first come to a country…settlement means getting established and settled, comfortable with your environment…"* (B1).

B4 suggested that it *"…would be frightening coming to a new country… with new people…it's a shock…"* (B4) and continued on to emphasize the fact that one also loses family, the comfort of family, and familiarity. After allowing the youth to reflect on this topic, PC5 responded by adding in his own personal experience of arriving as a newcomer youth. PC5 recalled that:

> *"…some of the challenges was not knowing the system of how things work and stuff like that because when I came here I went to high school and then had the opportunity to go to post-secondary school but I didn't really understand the in's and out's of the responsibility of taking out a student loan, for example, and what that meant you know. I felt like I was at a disadvantage because you take these things for granted. Then a couple years down the road you can't get this because of this, this, this and that…you know [because] of your credit score and all of that and having to pay back your student loan and…I was new, you know, and I didn't know all of these things…Yeah, getting use to the whole system of how things work here in the West. Financial stuff…yeah financial is big…"* (PC5).

This financial frustration, although a common experience for many young adults in Canada, was echoed by B1 who suggested that these concerns can often:

> *"…side-track you…"* and that *"…they don't have that other countries…it's a big cultural shock coming over here, that financial stuff…"* (B1).

Reflecting more broadly on the topic of social inclusion and the related challenges to settlement, B3 pointed out the challenges of cultural differences and diverse perceptions of what settlement is. B3 highlighted three main challenges he thought were key to understanding ideas of settlement when saying:

> *"…what I see is cultural differences when you come from a certain place… of how things work, because the struggle is different, that's what I say. When you come from, they say a "third world country", the way you perceive struggle is different and then when you come here the way people perceive struggle is different so, personally, I take it to the level of economics, empowerment and education …When you come here a lot of people kind of get lost in the culture*

that is here and a lot of people forget about what the reason of applying here was and whatever it is that you wanted to do and that effects you economically, your empowerment and your education…" (B3).

<u>'Space': Resource for Human Development; Valued Recognition; Involvement and Engagement</u>**.**

Linking the challenges of settlement and social inclusion for youth to the notion of having a space, a program, or more broadly the notion of social capital, the participants reflected upon diverse ideas of what their "space" meant to them. For PC5, the space at Beatz To Da Streetz meant an opportunity to engage himself in a different form of learning. He goes on to explain how this opportunity allowed him to get out of his period of "limbo":

> *"When I came to BeatzToDa Streetz I was frustrated, I just dropped out of school, I hated my program…and I was trying to go back to school. But, because of all of the stuff I was speaking about before [financial barriers] I couldn't just go back to school. I definitely didn't have the money to go back to school, so I was just kind of stuck having to do stupid jobs … So I was looking for an opportunity to get to that next level in my life again, you know, that wasn't necessarily through school… So I was like "how the hell do I get back into learning and growing"? And then Beatz To Da Streetz came along and then there was this program where I could go along and do my music with a bunch of other people and musicians, that was the big thing for me, that there was a bunch of other musicians in this spot that I could collaborate with and a place to go to just chill out and write. Then eventually when it started to turn into work here and there, that was huge for me, then able to get odd jobs and then full-time jobs at Beatz To Da Streetz. I was like "this is crazy!"…it definitely put me back on the path to learning and growing and able to go to another level"* (PC5).

B3 added to the discussion that the space gave him a sense of security and shared space used by other youth with a common goal. B3 stated that:

> *"Personally, this space, first of all is like a security, in a way that you feel protected cause most of the time, you got a lot people using this space to advance in whatever their doing. So it's like a shield, like when you're facing your enemy, you got a shield right here because when they start shooting at you, there is always a protection… you got these places with not only the music but it's also like expanding people lives in different aspects. The music is all part of something that we all love, like a food we all eat but after eating*

the food you need to do something else, so that's exactly what it's like here for me, it's like a security, it's like the shield" (B3).

At this point, the group paused and began to laugh because they were all intrigued by what and how B3 articulated his thoughts. The group agreed on the sense of security the space offered. B4 added:

> *"...definitely...I feel comfortable here... and for me, I love music, so this is a place where I can just go all out and like...it's like a family and we welcome other people into our family and the musicians are awesome and ... it's wonderful...it's amazing!"* (B4).

Social Networks: Trust, Guidance and Mentorship

Within the notion of having a meaningful, physical space, was also the ability to gain social capital through building of social networks. This was utilized by the youth who stated:

> *"...it's helped me [the program]....when I was at school I was struggling, I didn't know what I was doing and this was good because... [referred to PC5] was there to help me and talk to me about it and help me to make choices... And the friendships you make in the program help you to discover and find yourself..."* (B2).

The social networks gained from the program included the trust, guidance and mentorship that were suggested in the discussion of social capital theory in section 4. Encouragement from peers and mentors was suggested to promote, not only individual development and validation, but also community development, explained here by B3 and agreed by the whole group.

> *"When I got older it was having someone else tell you, "yeah, you can do this", the love and support and having something you can do. I mean anybody can be a writer but having people supporting you, you can do it better. We are all in here [the program]...like we are 5 strong soldiers and in a team where there is maybe10 soldiers and 5 strong soldiers always step up to the front and do whatever they have to do, then even the weak ones will feel strong ..."* (B3).

B3 expanded upon his idea, suggesting that through the building of social networks and the

gaining trust, empowerment is attained. Who one chooses to associate with has a lot do to with

individual empowerment, and therefore, having a safe and creative space is key in allowing this

process to occur. B3 continues by saying:

> *"…you got a lot of young people on the streets and what I'm saying is that power affects you according to who you are hanging out with. When you're at Beatz To Da Streetz, when we are all here, we are powerful…I feel comfortable here. When you're here it's a like a security, you can talk, you can do whatever you want…"* (B3).

Youth Identity Development:

When asked to reflect upon the idea of identity and what that meant to them individually,

PC5 initiated the discussion by setting up a broad view of individuality, stereotypes and identity.

PC5 said:

> *"Well for me identity is…….if you had to describe yourself, who would you say that you are. To me that's identity. It's funny because I try to observe a lot here and I don't think many people can do that, I don't think many people can sit there and say 'I'm this, this, this and this', because we have all of these sort of walls where we try to be politically correct and try not to offend anyone and we all try to have the same ideas which is some bull shit because that is just not how the world is or whatever right. So for example of someone says 'I'm Christian' all of a sudden there is a thousand ideas in your brain about what that means so they would rather just not say it. So I think that identity is being able to sit and be honest about who you are and what you believe"* (PC5).

The group agreed with PC5's reflection and was then asked to consider the notion of hybrid-

identity and if that resonated with any of them. To describe the idea of hybrid-identity, the

researcher made reference to K'Naan, who is a Somali-Canadian hip-hop recording artist who

arrived as a young refugee and grew up in a lower-income community in Toronto. Through his

lyrics, K'Naan touches upon many issues of belonging, dual-identities and loyalties.

"I think to answer that question... it's something I realized when growing up. When I grew up I moved around a lot, to the UK, back to Africa, then to the US and then back to Africa and Europe, and I realize that when I listen to K'Naan, when you talk about identity, he's trying to say that when people use words to describe "struggle" [for example], that K'Naan would say one thing, that is not only Somali, but that for someone else who would listen to his song "Struggling, Everyday Struggling", and whoever is in that place is going to be like 'yeah, that's what I'm going through, that's my culture'... the hybrid has become like what we are facing in society, that's the culture right there even in the music... I came to Canada and connected with a lot of different people, even my own people, but we connect because we are all going through the same struggle, we are all trying to strive...we are all just like walking on the journey" (B3).

B3's reflections on cross-cultural differences and on common struggles that cross boundaries described more of these dual challenges. Extending from this, B1 reflected more on individual hybrid-identity issues as they relate to ideas of transnationlism and loyalties to "home". B1 states:

"Yeah, you know coming from a different country almost motivates you to do more because you see that they don't have what you have here, so when you come here and have all of this stuff you jump right on it right? Sometimes it's like you want to be a role model to the rest of the people in your country...and like speak for your country...if you're from Colombia and now you're some kind of artist here then all of a sudden Colombia just got some...some shine. So a lot of the time you feel like you're representing your country, your people so..." (B1).

Expanding upon B1's comments and relating it specifically to the artistic/creative process, the researcher suggested that maybe through the creative process, one can work at negotiating one's identity. This idea was picked-up upon by PC5 who referred to the recent hip-hop recording done by participant B4 who engaged with ideas of race and place within his recording. PC5 goes on to discuss this in relation to his own experience of struggling and reclaiming the idea of race within his own context. He said:

*"...in the world we live in there exists many other worlds based on who you identify yourself with and there is power in all of those worlds, so ____(referred to B4) has this new album called 'N*****' and that now*

*represents a world, a cultural world that you're now in. That's what that word now represents. So I'm able to sit in my neighbourhood and watch the thugs and the gangsters that I'm chilling with and see that they have there own culture, their own rules, their own loyalties, their own people who are disloyal, there's love there, there's hate there, there's everything there ...like a subculture. So for me to say 'Yo, that's my n***** right there', someone else looking from the outside would be thinking, 'wow, that's offensive' or whatever but for him (B4) and I, it's something completely different. So it's like trying to understand those subcultures ... it's about reclaiming identity, and I think music is huge, huge for young people to reclaim their identity..."*
(PC5).

Here, PC5 describes how through the space and the process of creating his music, issues of

identity and racialization were negotiated and reclaimed. The space for newcomer youth to be

able to critically reflect their current context was seen as important to their individual

development.

Space for 'Voice' and Creativity:

When asked more specifically about the importance of having a space to be creative, B1

responded with her ideas, saying that: "*...space is very important...it's really important*" (B1).

She went on to say:

"*...music kind of gives you options to pick what you want because there are so many different options and it's for everybody...*" (B1).

When asked if hip-hop allowed her that room to express herself in meaningful ways, she replied:

"*...that would definitely be a 'yes'. Because it's hip-hop and you can be lyrical...so you can expressive yourself...I mean you can express yourself instrumentally but lyrically...it's an important part...*" (B1).

B1 went on to describe the ideas and motivation behind her creativity and writing. Encouraged

by PC5 to discuss one of the song titles she wrote, B1 added:

"*Well, 'Don't Reach' is about ... don't look to others to help you because sometimes it has to start with yourself. Look to yourself first...start with yourself and look on your strengths and go from there. You don't always have*

to focus on the negative things you have, just the positive … yeah, I speak about a lot of life experiences that are bothering me and that are bothering other people too, so I know that they will relate to what I'm relating to. I try to put that into my music…" (B1).

B1 went on to describe how her strict cultural up-bringing hindered her ability to have a 'voice', stating that:

> *"…a lot of the times I just wanted to speak but I could never speak or say anything without people putting me down or pointing a finger at me. So I like to say what I want to say and rap lets me do that and there is more acceptance of it here than there is back home. So I can express myself that way … I can say more when I'm MC-ing…"* (B1).

The Creative Process:

When asked if the creative process, through art or music, felt like a natural and constructive process, PC5 encouraged the group to respond to this because he felt that everyone would have a unique and interesting answer. The responses identified cultural, personal and social aspects of the creative process. B1 suggested that it was a natural process for her and B4 identified his cultural heritage as an aspect, by saying:

> *"Well…I think K'Naan said that Somalia used to be called 'The Land of Poets' and that speaks for itself. That's why I connect to poetry…"* (B4).

B3 also identified the cultural traditions of his past, describing his link to creativity in a strong narrative, saying:

> *"Well thinking of creativity, I think it breaks down into different aspects. When I think back to when I was a kid, just hanging around all of the African elders in the African community, they would just keep you contained listening to stories from off the top of their head, like, he's [the elder] never went to school but you could write a book with all of the stories that he tells and make meanings out of them. They would tell you everything or describe everything and you would wonder, and then when you would go and practically put in into works, it would turn out true. So that was my initial stages of being inquisitive. Also being in this society and being in pain and hurt, like I didn't grow up with a family, I grew up around older people and sometimes I wanted*

to say something and then I would run to someone older than me and they would tell me things. I really got more creative when my grandpa passed away because I was in solitude so the only thing was I would read and write something and all of my ideas. I grew up talking to my pets 'cause I didn't have no one to tell that to. Also being creative, sometimes the most important thing is support, someone to believe that you can do it. So when I grew up, and why I'm so drawn to the ghetto and hanging out in that culture where some people might call "thugs", but those are the people that I got acquainted with in a way because when they saw something that you're doing they would tell you 'Yo, you can't do this' or 'You're good at this, you'll succeed in this', and that builds creativity - just having people that support you in the community. That's why rap music is so strong because the people that are behind this are not 'legit', their money is not 'legitimized', it's not like the government where they want to put money in to get something out ..."(B3).

B3 suggested that identifying with others in a similar sub-culture engaged him and pushed his creativity. Similarly, PC5 described his process of engaging with music as more of a gradual, social process of integration into his new environment. Music was described as being a socially inclusive process. He explained his experience:

"When I came to Canada, I was at high school and I just got here. I didn't really have any friends or whatever. Right? So, I was like 'Oh man, how am I going to get to know some people around here?' and I would always passed by the music room and there was this guy always playing reggae in the music room, so I was like 'Reggae, I know that!'. So I would always go down to the music room and chill and actually just down there with him, he inspired me to want to do music, but I was like 'I can't sing for beans!', so what am I going to do. So I started writing lyrics and stuff and kept it going and I started get better and more people would come to the music room and listen to us rap and him singing reggae and then we would perform at the school assemblies and stuff. so after awhile we were like 'yeah, we are going to this thing and keep it going'. So that's' how I really got into music and stuff. I guess out of necessity..." (PC5).

Government Support:

After engaging in more discussion about the individual experiences of creativity and the creative process, the discussion was directed towards the issue of the lack of government funding for newcomer youth and youth-oriented settlement services. When asked directly if the

government should be funding more programs like Beatz To Da Streetz, the responses were a

little hesitant. PC5 described his hesitancy of too much government control and less freedom for

the programs. He suggested that usually private organizations and philanthropists are better able

to fund these programs because they share the same vision of positive youth development

outcomes and goals. B2 described an experience she had participating in a different youth arts

program in Toronto. She described how the process of engagement and creativity of the program

was completely overlooked by the visiting government official.

PC5 made an important comment about program evaluation, stating that:

> *"The fact of the matter is that the government funding these programs will never have any idea of how much impact their few dollars they give to an organization like this, will have on people's lives. There is no way to measure that…a program like ours is starting to look more to philanthropists and businesses in order for us to start funding our own stuff…we are years away from that happening but we've started…"* (PC5).

When asked if there were any final comments regarding newcomer youth and the lack of

services and space provided for them in Canada, B3 humbly suggested that:

 "My encouragement to anybody who just came to the country is: make a living from what you get, and you make a life from what you give" (B3).

6.3 Discussion.

The observations generated from the interview and focus group sessions highlighted

many of the ideas and issues outlined in both the literature review and in the discussion of the

underlying theoretical frameworks. From the perspective of a major, non-governmental, funding

body – the Laidlaw Foundation - was the conclusion that participation by newcomer youth is

hindered by socio-economic status and therefore the opportunity for youth engagement can be

more difficult, particularly for newcomer families in lower-income situations. Overall, a key

aspect of social exclusion and the promotion of social inclusion had to do with the removal of structural and institutional barriers where opportunities and access to resources for youth engagement can be difficult, or non-existent. This ultimately highlighted the mandate of the Laidlaw Foundations' actions in funding projects and programs in under-served communities. What was noted, however, was that perceived disengagement and exclusion has to be viewed within a specific socio-cultural context – intersected with issues of gender, age, culture and socio-economic status.

Specifically, when alluding to government cut-backs and shifts in the public school system, the participants described that opportunities for those who do not fit into the mainstream are lacking access points for diverse opportunities of learning. The devaluing of the arts, within policy formation, was said to negatively impact youth by not allowing them to have opportunities of "experiential" forms of learning. This was said to take away from the valued recognition of individual differences in development, social and learning styles. What was discussed and brought up at several different points throughout the interview was the importance of focusing on assets-based approaches to youth development and inclusive program strategies. The use of arts-based programming was suggested as being positive method for promoting youth assets and engagement.

The lack of government attention and funding for youth oriented arts programs was approached with disappointment from the Laidlaw Foundation. More attention and funding were highlighted as a vital policy initiative, yet, the focus must be re-directed from a rehabilitation approach to the promotion of youth assets. The focus group participants approached the issue of government funding with caution, due to the fear of losing program control and the dilution of

program resources. Perhaps in part due to past experience, the preference was for funding from non-government sources.

Generated from the discussion on the need to promote and provide opportunities and access for youth, were the fundamental relationships garnered from such program opportunities. Within the focus group discussion, this was a key aspect highlighted throughout the responses. Social networks gained from participating in a community arts program like Beatz To Da Streetz, included the building of trust, guidance and mentorship. Social networking was also raised in the context of promoting not only individual development and validation, but also community development.

Having a space to go to, in which youth could engage in creative processes, not only gave them the physical space and a "*sense of security*" but also a space to engage with other youth who share a common goal of creative dialogue. Using urban arts and hip-hop as their preferred creative method gave them a meaningful and a youth-appropriate method through which they could critically explore themselves and society artistically. Interestingly, when asked about the creative process itself, it was described that through the process of creating and writing music, issues of identity, racialization and belonging were raised, negotiated and thus reclaimed. The safe space provided for these newcomer youth allowed them to critically reflect on their past and current socio-political contexts and also their individual identity formation and development. Engaging newcomer youth in the creative arts process can allow for the "…reinvention of their subjective identities – their sense of self" (Sarkar and Allen, 2007, p. 89) and ultimately full participation within the wider Canadian context.

7. Summary and Conclusions:

This research paper has focused on the apparent lack of newcomer, youth-based arts programming in Canada. However, as an approach to youth-oriented settlement programming for newcomers, this approach can be shown to have both a sound theoretical base and to have models, found elsewhere, where this focus has been shown to have positive results.

Highlighted within the existing literature on this topic (Sections 2 and 3) are issues of social, structural and spatial exclusion. Corresponding to this, inevitably, are the lack of appropriate services and programming targeted towards this growing newcomer youth cohort. Issues of identity formation and notions of belonging are also compounded with socio-economic status, gender and language barriers. It is a fact that a higher percentage of racialized, newcomer families live in lower-income neighbourhoods. Ultimately, the processes of social inclusion are further compounded by the lack of a necessary infrastructure, attention and service delivery. Opportunities for youth engagement, particularly with arts programs, are left to those who can afford the fees and associated costs or to those living in close proximity to the limited resources.

The existing literature on this topic clearly demonstrates the valued use of this approach as a tool in promoting individual and community-wide processes of inclusion. Even when focusing on one set of arts programming, in this case urban arts and hip-hop, the sociological and psychological factors of its impact on youth are found to be very positive and relate to the more general, social/theoretical aspects of social inclusion, social capital and critical social theory of youth empowerment. Its value is illustrated by reference to programs, mainly government-sponsored, in other countries where youth development strategies have more focus. What is the corresponding situation in Canada and why are Canadian opportunities for newcomer youth apparently lacking?

To investigate the Canadian situation primary research was conducted in Toronto. Using the Laidlaw Foundation as an example of a major, non-government funding body with a commitment to arts programming and Beatz To Da Streetz, a community arts program initiative using urban arts to engage underserved youth, many of the underlying difficulties relating to the situation in Toronto, and in Canada generally, can be demonstrated. Interviews with Laidlaw executives (Section 6.1) highlighted many difficulties arising from the lack of government funding and the lack of formal educational structures within the public school system that could significantly broaden the impact of the resources that foundations such as Laidlaw are able to provide. The focus group method gained insights from the youth themselves, demonstrating that, not only does the opportunity of arts engagement provide a safe and meaningful space allowing for individual identity development, negotiation and socio-political reflections, but also it allows them to gain and build on positive social networks.

Beatz To Da Streetz, as an example of a positive community arts program for newcomer youth, and its links to private foundation support such as the Laidlaw Foundation, exposes both the impact these programs can have and their sustainability. However, such a limited range of this type of programming, overall, although producing highly positive results, needs the on-going, institutionalized support and recognition, of all levels of government, none of which currently or specifically target this type of programming. The case study discussed here arose from a fortunate coalescing of initiatives from within one community centre successfully seeking and obtaining the necessary funding from various private organizations, with minor funding from the government. None of the federal government ministries, which could have input to support this type of initiative (Citizenship and Immigration, Human Resources and Skills Development, and Canadian Heritage) have specific programs. Although, in the past couple of years the

provincial government has received funds transferred from Ottawa for immigrant support, none

of this was targeted to this type of community arts programming. And whereas the City of

Toronto does fund many culturally-focused programs there are not many directed into this area.

Likewise, the public school system , which had arts programming and many social development

supports stripped from its budgets a decade ago, finds it difficult to restore or input new funding

for programs such as those discussed here.

Yet, the stated suspicion of government involvement derived from the focus group, must

be taken into account. Creating a forum through which newcomer youth can address their

particular needs is essential when considering potential settlement programming. A shift in

policy formation must be considered in order to include the voices of newcomer youth and also

from the grassroots organizations who advocate for them. Although there is the evident need for

further research on newcomer youth in Canada, there is a greater need to incorporate the

experiences and first-hand knowledge of these youth as valuable sources of policy related and

program development information. In doing so, valuable input into the allocation of government

spending for appropriate newcomer youth services could be provided. Do they only require

language training and academic settlement services? Or, do they also require the resources and

opportunities to explore their individual development needs through experiential and creative

methods?

Although the lack of government support was highlighted throughout this paper, the

emphasis was on exploring an alternative and youth-appropriate settlement service model,

strengthened by the voices of the youth themselves. However, until resources are provided, on a

sustainable and reliable basis, and until up-to-date research is conducted on *and with* newcomer

youth, the very evident positive value of arts programming for newcomer youth will fail to play the positive role that it has the potential to play.

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Appendix A: Participant Profile Sheet:

The purpose of collecting this information is to allow the researcher (Adriann Moss) to get a sense of the background information of the participating newcomer youth. This will allow for more discussion time during the focus group session.

Please circle the answers which apply to you and fill in the blanks:

Date: _____

1) I am: male / female.

2) I am _____ years old.

3) I immigrated to Canada in _____ (please list year) from _____.

4) I speak _____ (Please list the languages you speak).

5) I speak mostly _____ at home.

6) I speak mostly _____ with my friends and peers.

7) When did you join this program? _____ (please list year or month)

8) Do you think you have benefited from participating in this expressive arts program?

Yes / No

Appendix B: Interview Questions Outline/Guide for Funding Sector

Note: These questions provide a general overview of what the subjects will be asked during the interview. More specific questions will be asked as they explain their experiences and thoughts for clarification purposes.

1. Considering the provincial cut-backs effecting arts programming in schools and the wider community, how do you think, if you do, that this has effected youth?

        a. Considering the fact that the majority of immigrant and refugee youth reside in marginalized/low-income communities, how do you think this has, if so, effected their social inclusion into the community?
        b. Does it play a role? Why and how?
        c. How/Why do you think these spaces can provide positive engagement for marginalized youth?

2. Do you think expressive/creative processes are valuable tools in the identity formation process for immigrant and refugee youth? Why or why not?

3. How do you, and the sector you work in, value or not value community arts programs for youth? Immigrant and refugee youth in particular?

        a. Do you feel that there is a need for more community arts programs in high immigrant and refugee youth populated communities? And why?

4. Considering the growing disengagement between newcomer youth and Canadian society, do you feel there should be more importance placed upon providing adequate and effective spaces for youth to engage creatively?

        a. How could this be implemented at the policy level?

5. Would it be adequate/fair to say that community arts programs play an effective role in the settlement needs of newcomer youth?

        a. Seen as youth-oriented settlement services?
        b. What do you think are particular newcomer youth settlement needs?

Appendix C: Interview Questions Outline/Guide for Community/Program Leader

Note: These questions provide a general overview of what the subjects will be asked during the interview. More specific questions will be asked as they explain their experiences and thoughts for clarification purposes.

1. Why do you think creating a space for immigrant and refugee youth to be creative is necessary?

2. Do you think immigrant and refugee youth have complex issues to deal with? Why and what do you think these are?

  a. Do you think expressive arts programs are effective in exploring these issues?
  b. Do you think it plays a role in psycho-social development and engagement? Why?

3. Do you think these programs assume the particular role of settlement services for newcomer youth? Why? What do you think these settlement needs are?

4. From your experience, what kind of individual development, if any, have you seen within the creative process? Explain.

5. Do you think from the experience of participating in a community arts program, the youth will engage in further positive engagement within the wider community*?* If so, why?

6. What do you feel are the benefits and challenges to running these programs?

Appendix D: Focus Group Interview Guide.

Note: These questions provide a general overview of what the subjects will be asked during the interview. More specific questions will be asked as they explain their experiences and thoughts for clarification purposes.

1. What does a being an immigrant or refugee youth mean to you? Explain.
   a. What are some of the challenges, if any?
   b. Do you feel included in your community or maybe "in-between"? Explain.
   c. What does *settlement* mean to you? And do you feel *settled*?

2. What does this space (the community centre, arts-program) mean to you?

3. Do you feel free to explore certain issues that you are confronted with everyday in here? Why?
   a. What are some of those issues?

   b. Does the expressive/artistic process encourage you to explore those issues? Why or why not?

4. What do you consider to be *identity*? Explain.

   a. What does hybrid-identity mean to you? Do you feel encouraged to explore this idea in here? Why?

   b. Do you mix your own/ or your parents native artistic styles with new one? Why or why not?

5. Does creating art and music feel like a natural and constructive process to you? Why or why not?

6. Do you think you, as an individual, have benefited from participating in this community arts program? Why? Is it engaging?

   a. What are some of the words to describe your individual growth in this process?

   b. Has it helped you to explore ideas and communicate with other people? How?

7. Do you think newcomer immigrant and refugee youth should all have the chance to participate in a program like this? Why?