

TAKE CHARGE MAKE CHANGE!



**A Youth- Led
Report
By Ellen Curtis & the Leading Ladies
2013**

Partners:

Leading Ladies:

This Needs Assessment was conducted by Leading Ladies, a young women's group (ages 15 – 18) at Scadding Court Community Centre (SCCC). Leading Ladies works to promote positive change in the neighbourhood and to empower young women economically. At weekly meetings, workshops and field trips focused on leadership and life skills, we are looking at how we can support young women to find employment and increase their access to economic opportunities. Leading Ladies provides a safe and inclusive space for young women to learn, grow and discover their best selves while being involved in their community and making a difference.

Scadding Court Community Centre:

SCCC started Leading Ladies in March 2013 and is a multi-service agency founded in 1978. Located in the heart of downtown west Toronto at the corner of Dundas and Bathurst streets, SCCC offers a wide range of programs, services and opportunities for people of all ages and from all walks of life. SCCC aims to support individuals and families, strengthen communities and build a better Toronto. For more information on SCCC, visit www.scaddingcourt.org.

Urban Planning students at University of Toronto:

Thank you Jessica Schmidt and Sarah Hubbs for your help sorting and analyzing the data retrieved from the surveys.

Status of Women Canada:

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Executive Summary

This report presents the results of a youth-led community-based Needs Assessment conducted by Leading Ladies at Scadding Court Community Centre between June and November 2013. It examines, the needs and barriers young women in the Alexandra Park, and Bathurst and Dundas area face in accessing economic opportunities and achieving their future aspirations. The report presents and analyzes data collected from surveys and a focus group, which explore barriers to economic inclusion.

It also proposes a set of recommendations that Leading Ladies drew out of those findings. It is important to note that this area is a neighbourhood in transition, with numerous developments including the revitalization of the Atkinson Co-operative Housing Complex (formerly social housing). The recommendations take these future developments into account in order to build a stronger future for local young women within this shifting context.

Youth Survey and Focus Group:

Ten young women from the Alexandra Park and Bathurst and Dundas Street West area developed the youth survey and focus group questions. The young women wanted to identify the needs and barriers young women face in being successful economically. In order to do so, they engaged 99 young women and one transgender youth to complete a survey and 12 young women to participate in a focus group. There were a series of questions about demographics, neighbourhood participation, education, income, employment, skills, employment services, career and educational aspirations, gender and money management. The recommendations that emerged from this research can be found on the following page.

Moving forward, Leading Ladies will work towards addressing some of the barriers identified in their research and use these recommendations as a guide for strengthening the economic opportunities for local young women.

Report Recommendations:

1. Create activities and programs that foster collaborative work between agencies and community members to both increase services and increase opportunities for participants to access multiple agencies. As an example, there should be welcoming committees in community centres and programs to make new members feel at home.
2. Community Centres should focus on creating sports and fitness activities that are accessible to young women along with arts programming and other life skills programming.
3. Work with young women to create activities and programs that they see are beneficial, worth their time and fun. This will increase young women's access to mentors, networks and resources that will support their growth and development.
4. Community agencies should track the participation of new youth who have not previously accessed services or attended programs and create new strategies to outreach to harder to reach young women.
5. Create opportunities for young women in high school to learn more about post-secondary opportunities especially apprenticeships. This could be done through spending time in post-secondary institutions, creating opportunities for post-secondary students and high school students to connect and share information, or providing youth with information about how educational paths directly connect to careers. Additionally, schools could increase awareness about dual courses, gap programs and non-traditional educational opportunities.
6. Advocate at organizational, funder and policy levels to provide youth with stipends, honorariums and wages for community leadership roles, training programs, internships etc.
7. Youth service providers and employment agencies should utilize social media and online videos as a way to increase their presence and to communicate effectively with youth.
8. Community service providers should collaborate to make sure that youth have access to and benefit from the funds available through the new youth jobs strategy in Ontario.
9. Support young women to access loans, grants, mentors and programs that can support them to plan and implement their business ideas. Connect young women from the community to the Market 707 vendors and various resources listed in the toolkit.
10. Create a resources network and career days so young women can access mentors and networks in their choose profession.
11. Create accessible information for youth to learn how to manage money, save and plan for their future goals effectively. Share more information and knowledge with youth and their families about managing and repaying loans, taxes and investments.
12. Provide skill-building opportunities related to how to manage your personal finances or budget on a low or fixed income.

The Context of this Report:

Why Alexandra Park?

SCCC is located adjacent to the Atkinson Co-operative Housing development, (formerly social housing), which is in the middle of a revitalization process. In 2008, the Community Social Planning Council of Toronto conducted a research study to find out what the residents thought about revitalization (Sidhu, 2008). The report indicated that residents were quite satisfied with their neighbourhood: "It's convenient downtown location, easy access to a variety of programs and services, cultural diversity and friendly atmosphere are factors that make this neighbourhood a good place to live... (Sidhu, 2008)." However residents indicated that there were long-standing repair issues in their housing and wanted improvements to their surroundings, including green space and additional programs for youth and children (Sidhu, 2008). As a result, Toronto Community Housing, the Atkinson Co-op and the City of Toronto have partnered to revitalize Alexandra Park, which will be complete in the next 12 – 15 years.

In addition to the large economic investment that revitalization will bring, there has been considerable development in recent years. Literature reveals strong links between gentrification and displacement of low-income populations. The result in Alexandra Park has been increasing polarization between the residents living in the city-owned affordable housing, and the wealthy families moving into this increasingly trendy area. Beyond this exodus of lower-middle class families from the community, gentrification impacts those residents who have been left behind. In particular, it pushes out the affordable shops and services, and engenders a perception among the long-time, low-income residents that the new amenities are "not for them". Without efforts to build bridges between the cohabitating communities, research shows that resentment begins to form (Doucet, 2009).

Furthermore, gentrification has been proven to have demonstrably negative impacts on social cohesion and social supports. As the neighbourhood changes, its strong identity and social cohesion weakens. As a result of the social and economic transformation taking place, networks that had been in place, which are so important for accessing employment and supports, often shrink or disappear, resulting in increased isolation and fewer opportunities to support success (Doucet, 2009). At SCCC, we are committed to minimizing the impacts of gentrification and supporting residents to access economic opportunities that benefit their family and the larger community.

Women in Alexandra Park

While few studies focus on gender roles and barriers young women face in Toronto or the Alexandra Park neighbourhood specifically, some important information can be extracted from local census and statistical information. It is clear, according to the 2006 census tract

statistics that young women in the Alexandra Park community are in need of additional supports. The median household income in this census tract is \$26,420, considerably less than half the median income for the Toronto Census Metropolitan Area (CMA) at \$64,128 (2006 Census). This particularly impacts children and youth, 60% of whom are considered low-income, compared to 23% of persons under 18 years old in the Toronto CMA. Female lone parents struggle more than most families; female lone parent families make up 33% of total households in Alexandra Park, compared to only 14% for the Toronto CMA (2006 Census).

Studies have also demonstrated that income polarization is increasing in Toronto as a whole as the middle class shrinks and the ladder between income levels becomes more difficult to climb. This is particularly true for minorities and immigrants, which disproportionately impacts families in Alexandra Park where 90% of the population are 1st or 2nd generation immigrants and 82% are a visible minority, compared to 43% for the Toronto CMA (Hulchanski, 2007; 2006 Census).

Gender in Canada

National research highlights some of the barriers that young women are facing and how those challenges often differ from those of young men. Women and young women have different roles and expectations within society and families. Many women continue to play a more significant role as the care-giver of children and relatives and do more of the domestic work than men. “Women spend more time than men in caring for their children. In 2010, women spent an average of 50.1 hours per week on unpaid child care, more than double that (24.4) spent by men” (Laschever, 2007). According to the Women in Canada at a Glance report, “in 2008, women earned on average 83 cents to every dollar earned by men” (Status of Women Canada, 2012). Additionally, women are much less likely to occupy managerial or executive positions. “Just 4% of CEO’s in Canada’s top 500 companies are women” (Girls Action Foundation, 2011). And 2 out of every 3 minimum wage positions are occupied by women (Status of Women Canada, 2012). Though the economic success and empowerment of women in Canada has dramatically improved over recent decades, there is still a long way to go.

Looking Forward

In 2011, Toronto Community Housing released a brochure articulating its guiding principles of revitalization. One of these guiding principles states “Opportunity: Revitalization should work towards improving economic opportunities for residents, as well as learning, recreation and social opportunities for all, especially children, youth and seniors” (Alexandra Park Revitalization Update Building a Great Neighbourhood Together, 2011). As this neighbourhood develops, it is important to enable young women —especially low-income young women— to connect, participate and shape their community. This report looks at the needs of young women and low-income young women, and how can we support them to access and benefit from the economic redevelopment of their community.

Research Findings:

We asked 100 young women in the Bathurst and Dundas Street West area in Toronto and enclosed in this report is what they told us.

What: A survey and focus group designed for and by young women, supported and facilitated by SCCC staff.

Who: We approached youth at SCCC, Alexandra Park Community Centre, Sanderson Library, in the community, at school, our friends and knocked on doors in Alexandra Park and Atkinson Co-operative Housing.

How: Online and in person

When: September –October 2013

Why: To find out how young women can support other young women to access and expand their economic and educational opportunities. We wanted to know what the needs of young women are and the barriers to their economic success.

Who Took Part

The following is a breakdown of who took part in our youth survey.

Age: We surveyed 99 young women and 1 transgendered person. Respondents ranged in age from 12-28 years old with the majority being 15-18 years old.

Ethnicity: Young women who participated in the survey were from 30 different self-identified racial or ethnic identities and backgrounds. Please note that youth self-identified their background so some youth identified as being from *Africa* while other youth identified as being from *Somalia*. These were counted as distinct groupings. Table 1 represents how youth self-identified their ethnicity.

Neighbourhood Diversity

We were not surprised by the level of diversity in the neighbourhood and the respondents. While we do not know from the survey the immigration breakdown, we do know from census and anecdotal information that our neighbourhood is home to many newcomers. The survey did reveal that 80% of the respondents completed all of their education in Canada. From this data we can infer that up to 80% of the young women surveyed are either second generation Canadian or came to Canada before the age of 5.

Table 1

Ethnicity	% of youth
Asian	17%
African	10%
Canadian/Caucasian	9%
Chinese	7%
Somali	7%
Afghanistan	5%
Black	5%
Jamaican	4%
Portuguese	4%
Caribbean/West	3%
Filipino	3%
Latin	3%
Multi-racial	3%
Pakistani	3%
Bangladeshi	2%
Indian	2%
Korean	2%
Albanian	1%
Arab	1%
European	1%
Greek	1%
Maltese	1%
Native	1%
Other	1%
Persian	1%
Polish	1%
Trinidad	1%
Vietnamese	1%

Neighbourhood Participation

According to the research, involvement in one's community and neighbourhood contribute to youth being empowered and connected to resources that may increase their access to opportunities that benefit their employability, self-esteem and networks (Ontario Ministry of Children and Youth Services, 2013). According to the survey results, 43% of the young women surveyed stated they do not often participate in their neighbourhood, 40% said they participate sometimes and 17% participate often.

Similarly, 36% of the young women surveyed felt they *did not* have access to the community services they needed and wanted while 64% felt they *did* have access to the services they needed and wanted.

Interestingly, of the youth who said they do not often participate in their community and do not have access to community resources 39% (or 14 youth) did not state what programs or services they would like to see or have access to. Young women and the community would likely benefit from additional conversations that explore and brainstorm ideas about activities, programs and services that will meet their needs. Overall 32% of youth did not provide examples of programs and services they would like to see in their community.

According to Leading Ladies participants, this is not surprising. Leading Ladies thinks that often programs in the neighbourhood do not target young women and many of the young women feel unwelcome in activities that claimed to be open to everyone. Youth stated that the same people attend events and programs all the time. They feel that cliques make them feel unwelcome. They also identified that there is a lack of collaboration between agencies and community centres further perpetuating certain groups of people feeling welcome in one space and not in another. Young women also stated that they do not feel welcome in certain community spaces because there is a lack of professionalism on the part of the staff and community members.

Recommendation: Create activities and programs that foster collaborative work between agencies and community members to both increase services and increase opportunities for participants to access multiple agencies. As an example, there should also be welcoming committees in community centres and programs to make new members feel at home.

The most common program or service young women asked for was access to physical activity, fitness, sport and self-defense. Other common services and programs were art and leisure activities (dance, cooking, mural painting etc.), general youth programs or girls programs and employment services. In the focus group, the young women identified a need for the following programs and services:

- Access to food handlers certification
- Time management workshops
- Hands on work experience and access to co-op or work experience programs
- Self-defense
- Interview and resume workshops
- Afterschool homework help
- Scholarship workshops
- University application workshops
- Savings/money management/budgeting workshops
- Training on being independent
- Self-esteem workshops
- Language classes

Recommendation: Community Centres should focus on creating sports and fitness activities that are accessible to young women along with arts programming and other life skills programming.

In addition to this, young women in the focus group stated that the following would make them feel comfortable accessing programs or services:

- Advertisements
- Encouragement (a push)
- One-on-one support
- Familiar location (ex. library or a community centre)
- Time of day (Friday evenings and weekends)
- Familiarity with the people
- Doing outreach to them at school
- Having access to a support system
- Ongoing programs, not one-time workshops

Building trusting relationships with young women is an important part of young women feeling supported and growing up to be mentally, emotionally and physically healthy and making positive life choices (Foundation, 2013). Almost half (45%) of the young women we surveyed stated they did not have organizations or people they knew who could help them solve community problems, challenges or issues. In comparison, in 2008 a larger poll of youth and adults from Alexandra Park were asked the same question and 39% said they did not have people or organization they could go to for help to solve problems in the community. This data may suggest that, more so than the larger population, some young women feel unsupported and disconnected from role models, authority figures, teachers, youth workers and community members. That being said, still more than half (55%) do have access to people or organizations that can support them in solving problems and

issues. It is important that new strategies be used to outreach to harder to reach youth. It would be worthwhile for community agencies to track the participation of new youth who have not previously accessed services or attended programs.

Recommendations:

- **Work with young women to create activities and programs that they see are beneficial, worth their time and fun. This will increase young women's access to mentors, networks and resources that will support their growth and development.**
- **Community agencies should track the participation of new youth who have not previously accessed services or attended programs and create new strategies to outreach to harder to reach young women.**

Examining Education

So often in society and in the media we hear that education is the key to success. All but one of the young women provided information about the level of education she had completed and that breakdown of respondents is as follows:

- 15% reported having completed some post-secondary education. This makes sense given that 28% of the young women surveyed were between the ages 19-28 years of age.
- 16% reported having completed grade 12, which is in line with the ages of the young women surveyed, as 17% of the young women were 18 years old.
- 14% reported completing primary school, which is in line with the number of students, aged 12-15 (13%).

For the most part it appears that the young women surveyed were on track with their education given their age. In fact, all the young women aged 19-28 have completed the prerequisite level of education for the education they hoped to achieve.

In terms of educational aspirations, the respondents indicated the following:

- 68% would like to achieve post-secondary education.
- Of those who want to achieve a post-secondary degree, 17% would like to achieve a masters/PhD.
- 7% would like to complete an apprenticeship.

The low-level of interest in apprenticeships is particularly interesting given the gender dynamics that are often associated with trade occupations. "Women are under-represented among enrollees in all apprenticeship training programs except the food service trades. Despite greater numbers of women in apprenticeship programs, many drop out and do not earn their certificate. In 2007, despite representing 3.0% of enrollments in the electrical,

electronic and related trades, only 1.5% of all graduates from these programs were women” (Status of Women Canada, 2012). Much more can be done in the Bathurst and Dundas area to support young women to learn about apprenticeship programs and opportunities.

This information reinforces research and statistics that show that young women are doing well in school and succeeding in education (Girls Action Foundation et al., 2013). This is an asset that local young women have. According to the Stepping Up Report “When young people have a strong education, they have an increased chance of getting a better job, succeeding in the workplace, and becoming a community leader (2013).” Further research should be done to find out how young women, community members and mentors could support young women to achieve and maximize the impact of their education in order to achieve their career goals.

Leading Ladies think that for the most part young women lack access to information about all the possibilities and opportunities available to them. They find themselves overwhelmed and confused by a lot of the information that is provided about educational and career options.

Recommendation: Create opportunities for young women in high school to learn more about post- secondary opportunities especially apprenticeships. This could be done through spending time in post-secondary institutions, creating opportunities for post-secondary students and high school students to connect and share information, or providing youth with information about how educational paths directly connect to careers. Additionally, schools could increase awareness about dual courses, gap programs and non-traditional educational opportunities.

Skills, Employment and Income

Table 2

Main sources of Income	% Youth
Parents	74%
Job	35%
Did not answer	11%
Other family members/friends	8%
OW/gov't benefit	4%
No income	1%
OSAP	1%

“Young people rely on their parents, extended family and caregivers to provide safe places to live and healthy food to eat. As youth age they begin to enter the workforce, they begin to be able to provide for themselves, but still count on family support (Ontario Ministry of

Children and Youth Services, 2013).” There are many youth and young women who do not have these kinds of supports or whose families are not able to provide them with money and income for the things they need and want. The pressure for these young women to find work and earn and income is much greater.

Table 3

Currently working	% Youth
Total of No	59%
-No	4%
-No and not able	7%
-No and not looking for work	16%
-No and I’m looking for work	32%
Total of Yes	39%
-Yes, full time	1%
-Yes and its related to my career	3%
-Yes, working part-time	28%
-Yes, seasonal work	3%
-Yes, and looking for additional	4%
No response	2%

39% of survey respondents in the neighbourhood are involved in the labour force. This number is significantly lower than the provincial average, which indicates that 60% of Ontario youth are involved in the labour force (Ontario Ministry of Children and Youth Services, 2013). It is important to note, though, that the provincial report featured a sample size with larger number of older youth, which might account for some of the difference. “Studies have shown that having a job contributes to a young person’s sense of identity, connectedness and wellbeing. Employment is also an opportunity to connect with others and develop the skills needed to contribute to society (Ontario Government, 2013).”

The majority of youth surveyed are not working in a career connected to their chosen career path. Leading Ladies felt that for the most part it was not possible for high school students and youth to have jobs connected to their career while in school. Further research could look at what opportunities youth can access while in school that can connect them to their future career aspirations. In addition, further research could examine how many youth access volunteer or internship opportunities in their chosen fields and whether or not this is beneficial to their career advancement and or success.

Barriers to Working or Employment:

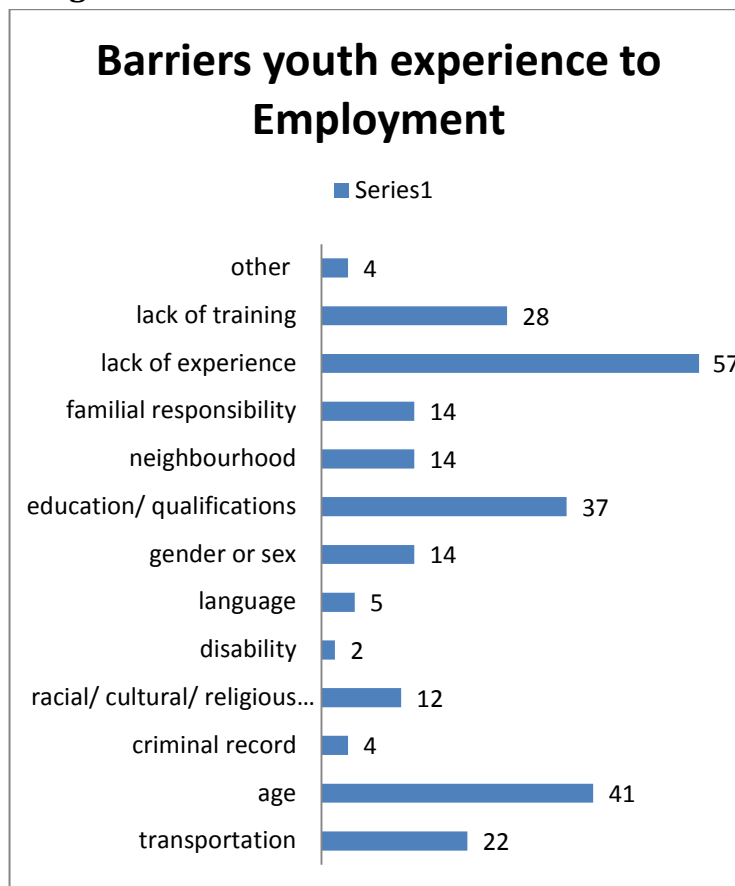
Youth in particular face many barriers to employment. “According to Employment Ontario 46% of their clients are youth. In 2012, Ontario’s youth unemployment rate was 16.9% well above the national average of 14.3%” (Ontario Ministry of Children and Youth Services,

2013). It is important to examine what barriers young people and especially young women face in accessing and obtaining gainful employment.

Only 7% of young women stated that they were not able to work. The reasons listed were children, maternity leave and age. According to a recent Report Card issued by the Toronto Women’s City Alliance in June 2010, “Access to affordable, high quality child care is critical to Toronto families, and disproportionately affects women who have lower income and bear the major responsibility for child rearing. While just over 114,000 children, age 12 and under, live in low income families in Toronto, available funding provides for only 24,000 child care fee subsidies and more than 17,800 children are on the waiting list for subsidies” (Toronto Women's City Alliance, 2010).

Though only a small percentage of the young women, we surveyed may be impacted by the lack of affordable childcare it is likely that this may limit their educational, employment and career prospects in the next few years of their lives. It is also likely that had we surveyed a larger number of older youth in their 20’s there would have been a larger number that were impacted by the lack of affordable childcare. Additionally, the young women identified numerous barriers to employment, as outlined in the following figure.

Figure 1



The above figure clearly illustrates that a significant number of youth find that lack of experience, age, and their education and qualifications are barriers to finding employment. The options presented in the survey did not offer a comprehensive list of all of the possible barriers. In hindsight, the lack of affordable childcare should have been listed as an option. However the results are very helpful for identifying the largest opportunities for improvement. The question is how we can support young people to break through these barriers and access gainful employment. As an example, the lack of experience is the largest perceived barrier for young people. However, it seems that young people are required to complete volunteer work and unpaid internships to access the experience required for employment. Many youth from low-income communities and families lack the support, networks, resources and time to access these opportunities.

Recommendations: Advocate at organizational, funder and policy level to provide youth with stipends, honorariums and wages for community leadership roles, training programs, internships etc.

From the focus group, we learned more about the barriers young women face to accessing employment. We learned that working late and safety was a large concern for young women. They feel unsafe in certain areas of the city and their neighbourhood. Young women in the focus group were concerned about sexual harassment, violence, and being around people who may be intoxicated or high. They also expressed a concern for their safety about being on the city transit system at night.

Many also stated that transportation was a barrier because public transit takes too long, they feel unsafe, and it is expensive. The Toronto Women's City Alliance's Report Card states, "...women outnumber men in their regular use of public transit getting to and from work. According to the 2006 Census, public transit is the regular mode of transportation for 28% of women with paid employment to get to and from work, compared with 17% of men." The report card states that at least part of the problem is the high cost of transit (Toronto Women's City Alliance, 2010). In response to this, the Toronto Transit Commission (TTC) for the past 20 years has also been running the 'Request Stop' service which allows women who are travelling at night to exit the bus from an unscheduled stop (Toronto Transit Commission, 2013).

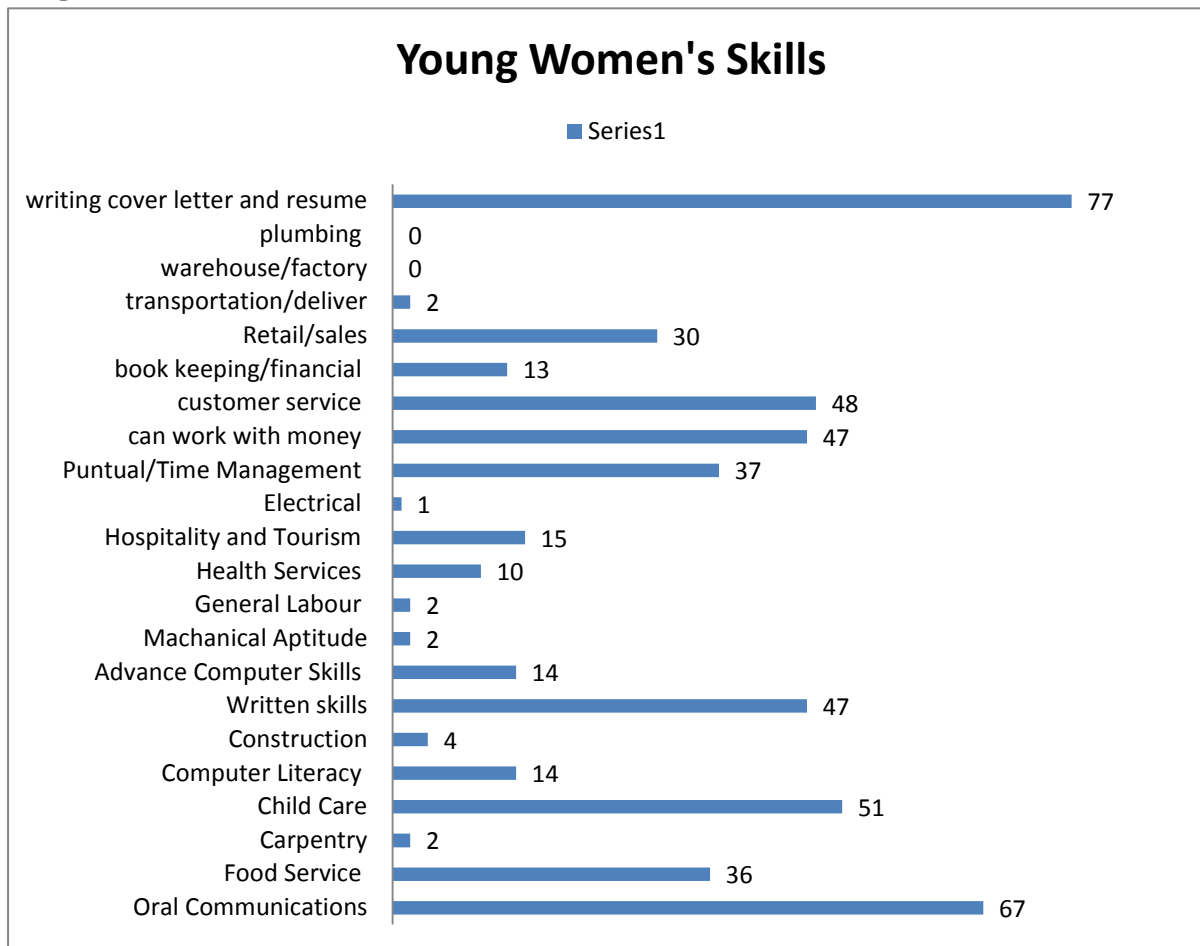
The young women in the focus groups identified additional barriers to employment including:

- Discrimination based on religion, race and sex. In particular, one of the young women stated that women wearing a Niqāb or a Hijab are not desirable to many employers, that at certain stores "you don't fit the look" if you have a Hijab.
- Childcare costs
- Familial responsibilities at home that did not leave enough time to work.

Young Women's Skills:

Understanding the existing assets that young women have will help Leading Ladies work with young women to build on those strengths. The following outlines self-identified skills of the respondents.

Figure 2



Young women most frequently describe themselves as skilled in the following areas: writing resumes and cover letters, oral communication skills, child care, customer service, written skills and money management. Many of these skills are related to the gender roles and expectations that society often places on women. Comparably there were only two young women who identified any skills in the area of general labour, factory skills, transportation etc.

Employment Services

Employment services exist within the local community, so whether or not these are being used and how helpful they are is important for understanding what additional supports are needed to improve employment outcomes. For this reason, a number of questions were asked about employment services in the survey. For a list of local employment resources, see

Appendix A.

Figure 3

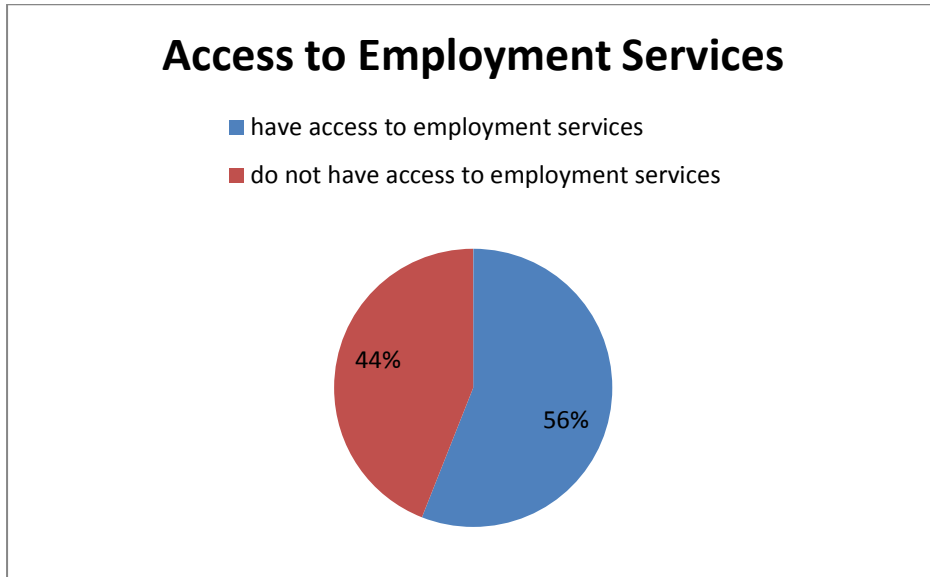
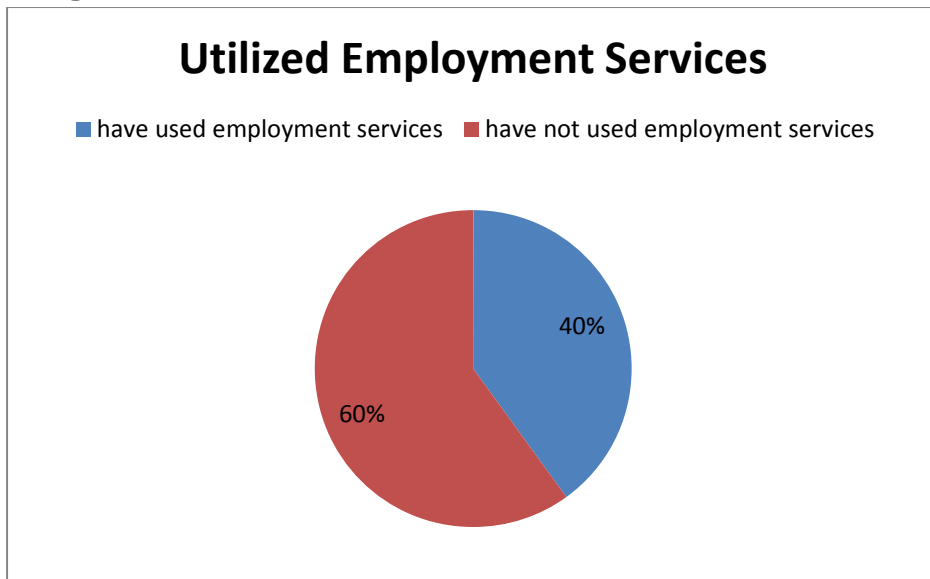


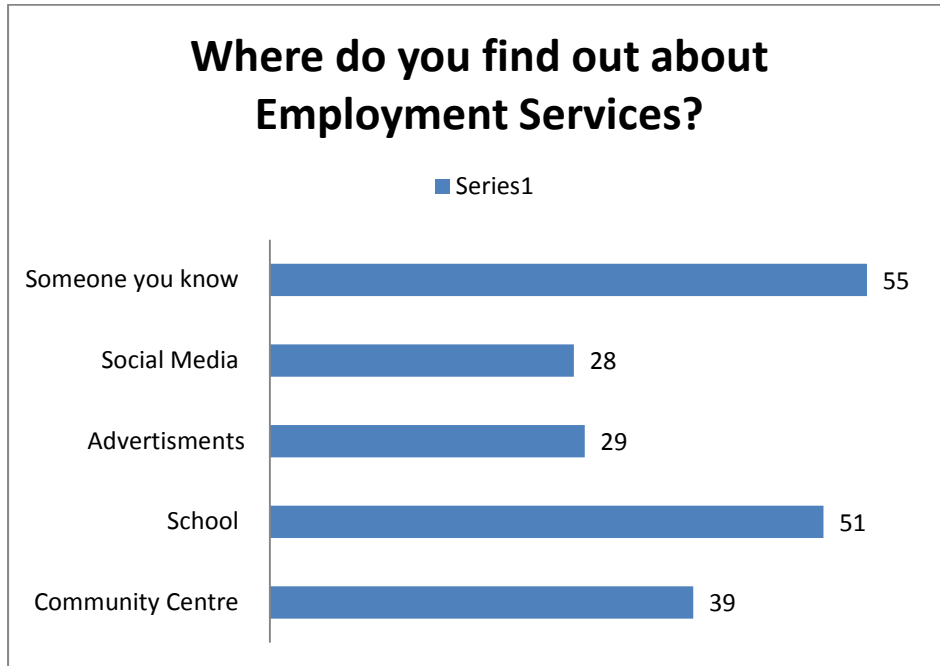
Figure 4



Notably, of the 51% of youth who reported looking for a job, 39% of those youth say they *do not* have access to employment services while 61% of those youth perceived they *do* have access to employment services. There are many reasons why young women may have difficulty accessing services. It is likely that some young women are not aware of the services in their community.

Furthermore, of the 51% of youth looking for a job, 47% said they *do not* use employment services and 53% said they *do* use employment services.

Figure 5



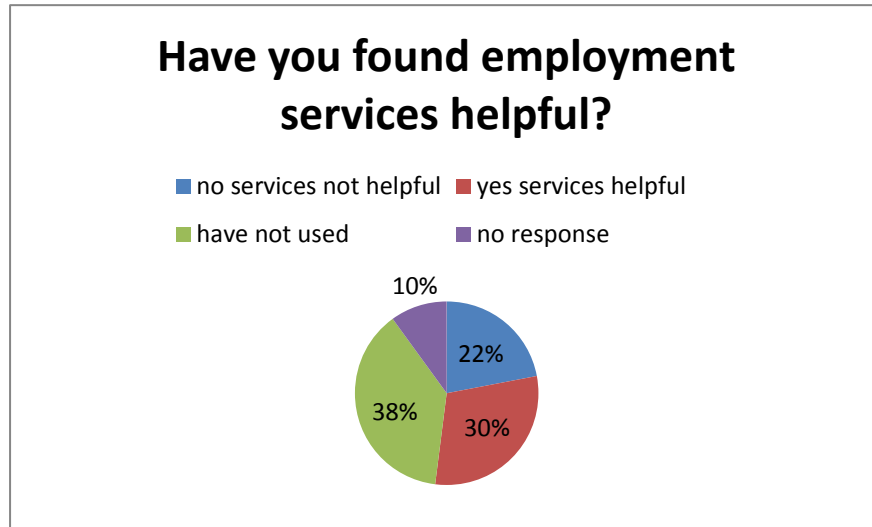
Where youth learn about employment resources is an important fact that we can share with employment service providers in the area. Employment services could ask youth to share information with their friends and ensure that they post and circulate information in schools and community centre. “Canadian youth aged 18 to 24, spend more time and visit more pages on social networking sites than any other group. And children and youth up to age 24 account for one third of all videos watched online.” Youth and employment services should look at developing resources and outreach materials that young people can access through online videos and social networking.

Recently the Provincial government released a strategy “Make an Impact Youth Jobs Strategy.” In this strategy statement, the government has promised to roll out three important work funds that will support youth to access work experience and skills development opportunities. These three funds total \$150 million dollars dedicated to supporting youth to get jobs (Ontario Government, 2013). It is important that SCCC, other community partners and especially employment service providers work together to make sure that youth access and benefit from these opportunities.

Recommendations:

- **Youth service providers and employment agencies should utilize social media and online videos as a way to increase their presence and communicate effectively with youth.**
- **Community service providers should collaborate to make sure that youth have access to and benefit from the funds available through the new youth jobs strategy in Ontario.**

Figure 6

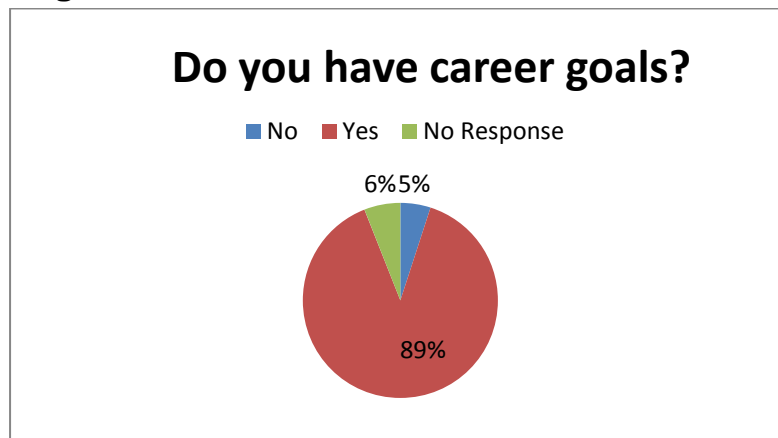


The above chart demonstrates a mixed response when asked whether employment services were helpful. Further research should be done to find out what makes employment services helpful or not helpful to youth. It does demonstrate, though, that gaps still exist even for those youth who reach the service provider. Leading Ladies posit that this might result from youth and employment agencies having difference expectations. Youth often expect employment services to provide jobs. On the other hand employment services often focus on skills building and information referral to support youth, however further research is needed to verify this hypothesis.

Future Aspirations and Career Goals

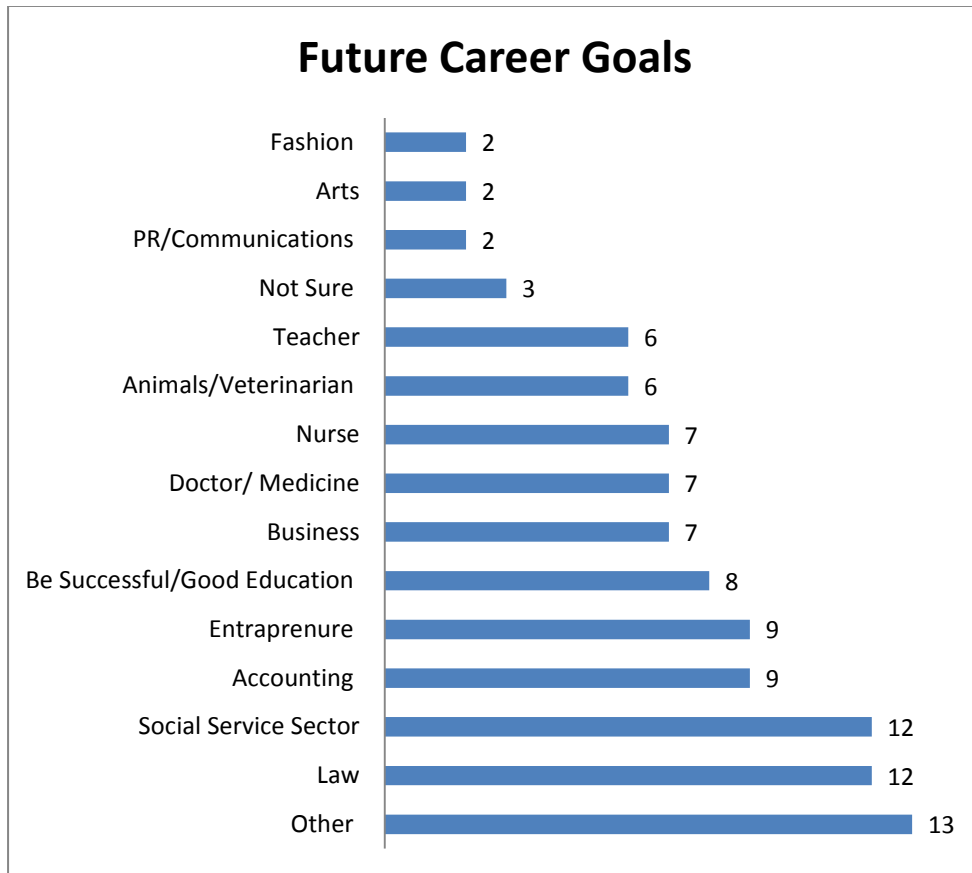
We were curious about what the future aspirations and career goals of young women in the Alexandra Park Community. The large majority of young women have career goals and about half of the youth surveyed know someone in their career of interest.

Figure 7



As displayed in the below graph, the young women surveyed aspire to diverse careers. The most popular careers paths were law and the social service sector. Notably, business and being an entrepreneur were stated more than being a teacher or a nurse. “As recently as 2001, 98% of child care workers, 82% of elementary school teachers, 91% of nurses, 99% of secretaries and 70% of social workers in the United States were women. In the same year in the United States, 87.5% of the corporate officers of the 500 largest companies, 90% of all engineers, 98% of all construction workers and 70% of all financial managers were men” (Babcock and Laschever, 2007).

Figure 8



Note: The careers listed only once were placed in the “Other” category and itemized below

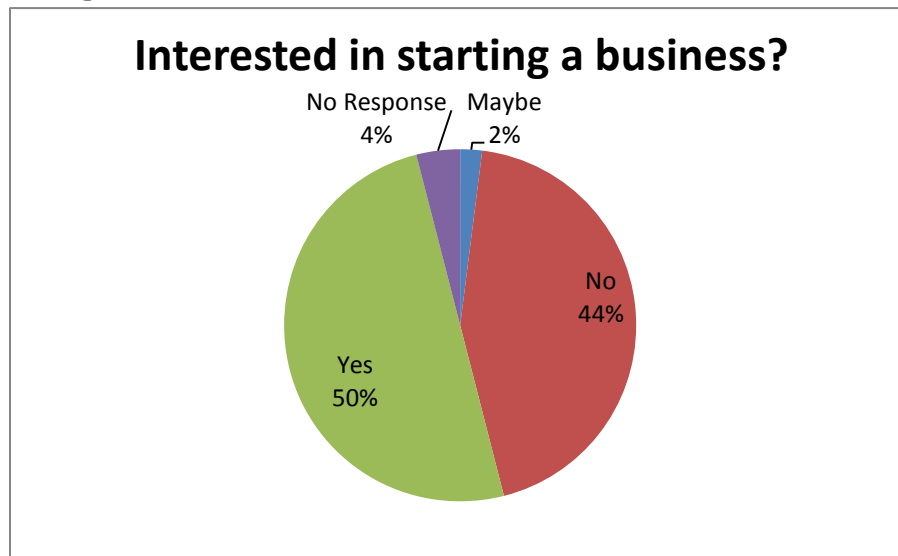
Table 4 “Other” Identified Careers:

- Computer programmer
- Editor
- Engineer
- Environment
- Forensic
- Hair styling
- Hospitality
- Museum/cultural sector work
- Pharmacist
- PhD
- Psychologist
- Restaurant
- Science
- Speech pathologist/ audiologist

- Midwife

- Swimming instructor

Figure 9



Furthermore, 50% of young women surveyed were interested in starting their own business. Specifically there were young women interested in starting a skate shop, tattoo parlour and bakery. When starting your own business was discussed in the focus group many of the young women thought that it was too risky. Though they were interested in doing it, they did not think they would follow that career path. Leading Ladies similarly thought that young women did not have the supports they needed to be successful in business. This feedback can provide more of context for why only 9% of young women stated that they aspired to be entrepreneurs and 7% aspire to be successful in business. According to the ministry's report "...entrepreneurship presents an important and growing opportunity for the economic security of youth" (Ontario Ministry of Children and Youth Services, 2013). The question remains how can we decrease the real and perceived risk that young women in the Bathurst and Dundas area face in starting their own businesses?

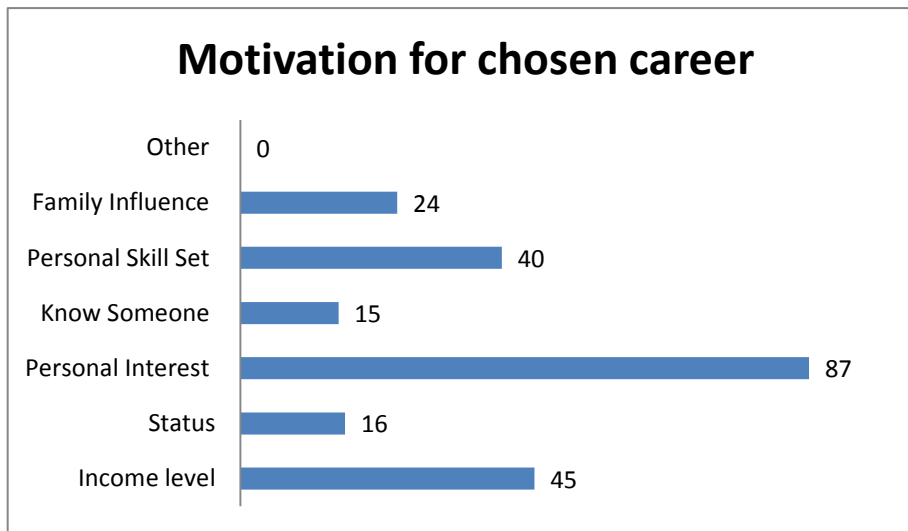
This perception that starting a business is too risky for women is reinforced through socialization, the media, society and statistical evidence, which all show that men are more likely to be successful in business. For instance, according to the Girls Today report, "just 4% of CEO's in Canada top 500 companies are women; 96% are men" (2011). Researchers Babcock and Sara Laschever reinforce this saying that, "At work the different jobs men and women typically perform perpetuate traditional ideas about gender roles" (2007).

SCCC is in a unique position to support community members to start successful businesses. In 2011 SCCC launched Market 707 a unique street food and retail market. This space brings together local entrepreneurs serving up more than 10 types of delicious international street food, along with unique goods and services to create an urban food and shopping environment unlike any other. SCCC has also developed a toolkit to support vendors and entrepreneurs.

The toolkit has a comprehensive list of resources to support new business owners (Scadding Court Community Centre, 2013)

Recommendation: Support young women to access loans, grants, mentors and programs that can support them to plan and implement their business ideas. Connect young women from the community to the Market 707 vendors and various resources listed in the toolkit.

Figure 10

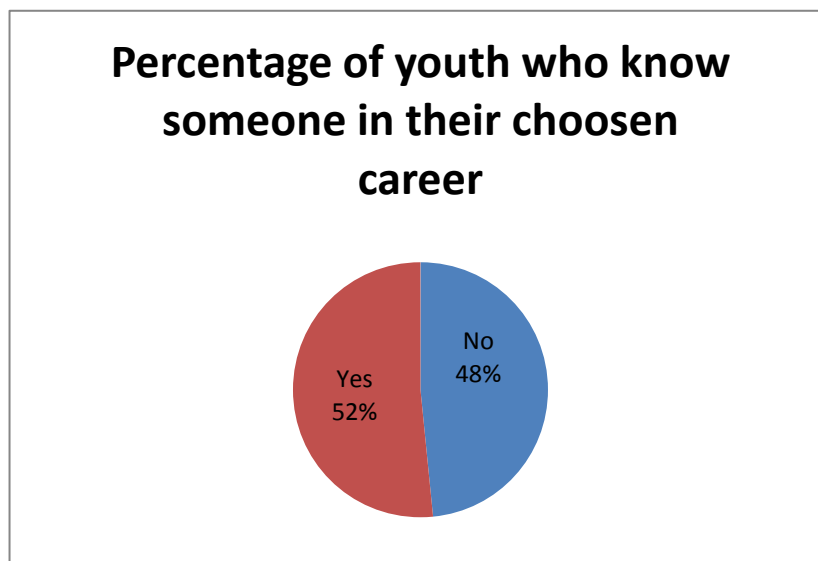


Most of the young women surveyed stated that the reason they choose their career was personal interest. Literature also reinforces that personal skill, income level and family influence also have a considerably influence over career choices. “Parents and guardians have a primary influence on young people’s attitudes towards school, learning, and future success (Ontario Ministry of Children and Youth Services, 2013).” Though we often look at supporting young women themselves it is also important to look at how we can better support the parents and guardians of youth.

Mentorship and achieving career goals

Of the youth surveyed 52% said they knew someone in their chosen careers and 48% said they did not know anyone in their chosen career. “Mentors can help build skills and increase a young person’s self- efficacy, build morals and positive values, set attainable goals and provide direction in achieving their goals” (Ontario Ministry of Children and Youth Services, 2013). Though about half of the young women know someone in their profession it is not clear whether these people provide mentorship and support these young women. We recognize that many youth have amazing mentors and guardians in their lives and benefit greatly from those relationships. Research also states that all youth benefit from mentoring relationships with people who are not their parents. Supporting and facilitating formal and informal mentorships is an important part of supporting the economic success and empowerment of young women.

Figure 11



In the focus group when we asked the young women whether they had the support they needed to achieve their career goals the majority of the youth thought they did. Put another way, the majority of youth believe they will be successful in reaching their career goals. That being said the youth did identify what type of support they lack or wish they had. Below is a list:

- Family – “my family doesn’t approve or understand (my career aspirations)” – Youth
- Financial support
- Someone who has experience in the career you choose and has been through the same situation (grew up in my circumstances)
- Government support and connections to jobs
- Role models
- Networking opportunities

Recommendation: Create a resources network and career days so young women can access mentors and networks in their choose profession.

Gender and Economic Inclusion

Interestingly, when asked in the survey whether youth thought women and men had equal access to jobs, only 31% said no. This response was quite different in the focus group where 66% of the youth thought they did not have equal access to jobs as their male peers. Below listed are the reasons why they thought this was the case:

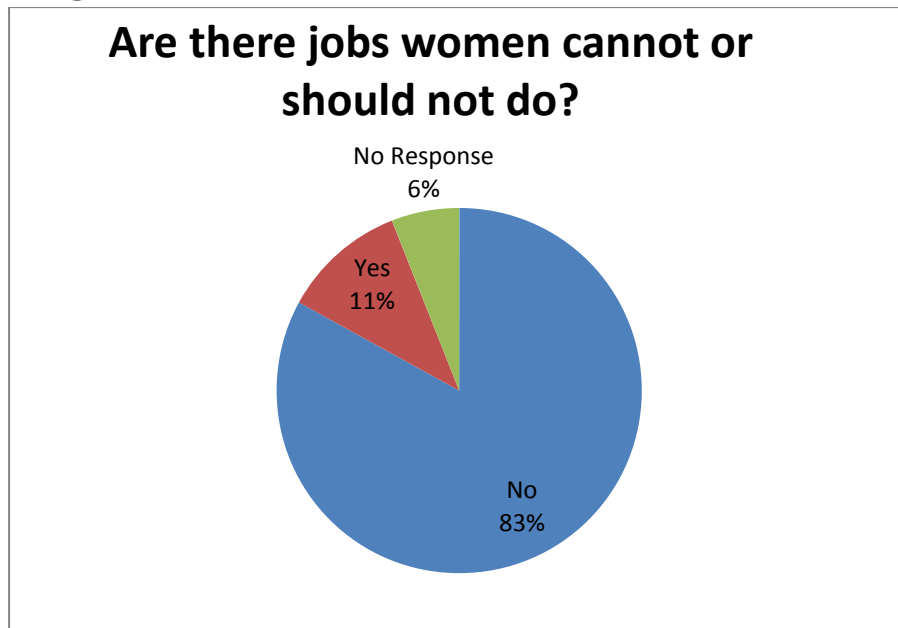
- Men are more confident
- Women don’t take risks
- Women don’t fight for what they want
- Sensitivity and being emotional is a barrier for women

- Body and physical strength, or stereotypes about physical strength
- Sexism is an issue (society thinks that men are more capable than women)
- It depends on influences and environment you grow up in (media, neighbourhood, types of mentalities and expectations)
- Gender roles

“There is more acceptance now a-days that women do things that men do, but it is still unusual for men to do things or choose careers that women do.” – Youth

In the survey, the young women were asked, “Do you think there are jobs women cannot or should not do?” It was encouraging to see that 83% of respondents answered “no” to this question. Of the women who responded to this question with a yes, 5% stated that women should not do general labour positions. One young woman stated that women should not work in male dominated professions because it may be dangerous. One young woman stated that women should not work as cab drivers and another stated that women should not work in the sex trade industry.

Figure 12



Asking and Negotiating

According to Babcock and Laschever a major factor that can influence women’s career, education level, salary level, and economic success is the ability to ask for and negotiate what you want (2007). The book ‘Women Don’t Ask’ is a thorough and comprehensive look at how women have been socialized to often accept what they are given and not ask for more. These authors, “found women recounting story after story of not realizing what could be changed by asking (2007).” For example, “They found that men negotiated starting salaries that were 4.3 percent higher than their first offer they received while women negotiated increases that were only 2.7 percent higher than their first offers” (2007). This seemingly small percentage

difference adds up over a career and can equate into a significant difference in earnings.

We were curious about the young women in Alexandra Park and their tendencies to ask and negotiate given that it could considerably influence their economic futures. In the focus group we asked the youth “Are you comfortable asking for things you want? Or do you accept what you get?” The young women overall answered that they thought that they would ask for what they wanted. However, they recognized that they would feel more comfortable doing this in certain situations. For instance, they all felt comfortable negotiating and asking for what they wanted at home and with their friends. 83% of them said they would feel comfortable at school and 25% said they would feel comfortable at work. One youth said, “Most of us would speak up if we earned or deserved what we wanted”. For the most part, they felt comfortable asking people they knew for things and less comfortable asking people they did not know. They also all said that they regret it when they do not ask, wondering if it would of made a difference. The responses were very similar when asked about negotiating after not getting what they wanted in the first place. It is important to note, however, that studies show that women are less likely to recognize when something is negotiable. As a result, self-identifying negotiation skills might be skewed. Schools, community centres, role models, mentors should have more conversations with young women about asking and negotiating and emphasize the difference it can make in life and economic success.

Money Management

Financial management is critical to long-term economic success. Recent legislation in Ontario has implemented financial literacy training to the Ontario curriculum, but many of the young women surveyed would have been too old to benefit from any or the majority of that new curriculum. However, overall a large proportion of the youth surveyed stated that they felt they know how to budget their money and recognized the importance of saving money. In the focus group, the young women stated that they wanted to learn more about money management, budgeting and saving.

Figure 13

Do you know how to budget your money?

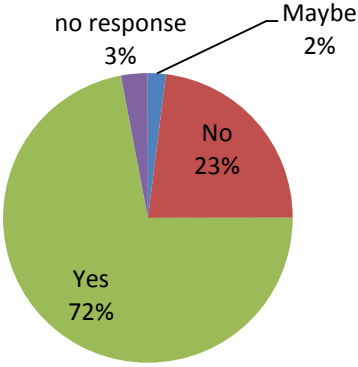
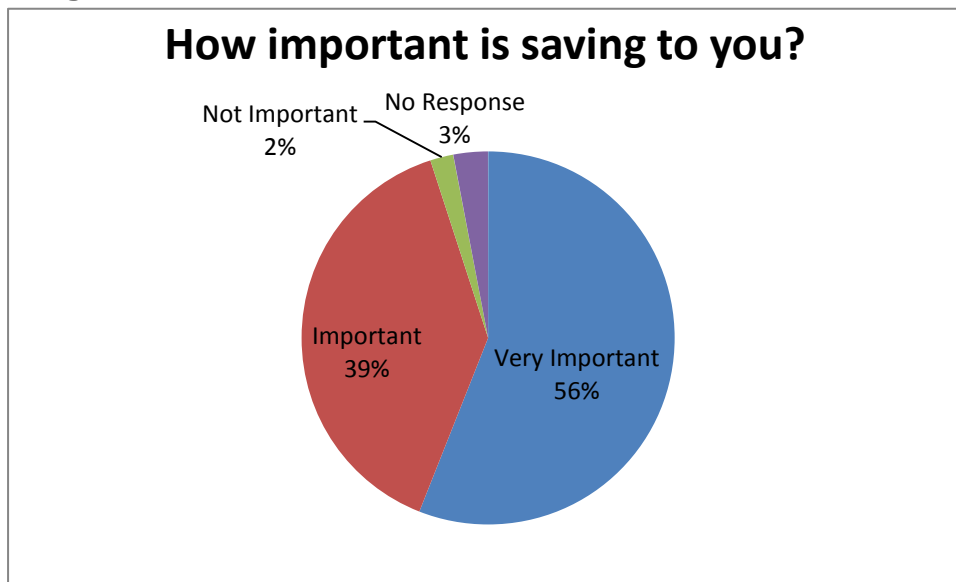
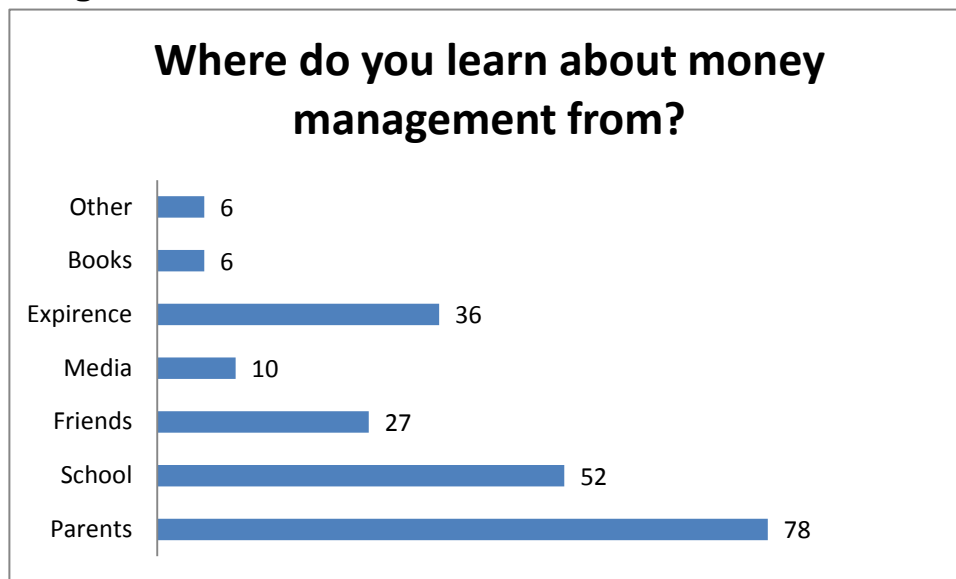


Figure 14



It would be beneficial to conduct further research to find out on average how much money youth save on a weekly or monthly basis, as well as what services and goods they purchased with their savings.

Figure 15



Those young women who selected “Other” stated that they learned about money management from financial classes at the community centre, that they taught themselves or they learned about it from the Internet, television and from co-worker/boss.

Leading Ladies thought that the information provided in the survey was accurate. Overall they thought that their income and the income of their peers was so small that knowing

how to manage money was not very relevant to them. Young women feel caught in the bind of wanting to work more and make more money but not wanting the time commitment to impact their school success and study time.

Given that 78% of youth learn about money management from their parents it would be beneficial to provide trainings and information to parents regarding money management, savings, taxes and other financial instruments.

Recommendation:

- **Create accessible information for youth to learn how to manage money, save and plan for their future goals effectively.**
- **Share more information and knowledge with youth and their families about managing and repaying loans, taxes and other financial instruments.**
- **Provide skill-building opportunities related to how to manage low or fixed incomes.**

Conclusion:

It is clear from this report that the Bathurst and Dundas area is a vibrant and dynamic community with many assets as well as some persistent gaps with respect to the economic resilience and opportunities of the local young women. Young women in this community face barriers to neighbourhood participation, programs and services, and employment. This neighbourhood is also rich with diversity and strong young women who demonstrate critical thinking and leadership. Many of these young women from the focus groups and survey demonstrate personal investment in their community, their families, education and careers. They are committed to accomplishing their career goals and living happy and productive lives.

As we move forward with this project, we continue to look to learn how this community can become more economically inclusive and what initiatives and projects we can create to support, engage, empower and train young women to develop their capacity, increase their income and their trajectory of economic success.

Next Steps:

Over the remainder of this two-year funded project, SCCC and the Leading Ladies will begin to take this information and use it to create strategies for sustainable change and improvement to the opportunities for young women. In order to do so, the following activities will be undertaken.

- Recruit new youth to participate in the planning and implementation of a youth led project addressing the many needs and recommendations articulated in this report.
- Work with young women to plan and implement a career day and information sessions about scholarships and bursaries
- Work with youth and the resource network to develop opportunities for youth and mentors to collaborate and learn from each other ongoing
- Network and meet with employment partners in the community. Learn more about their role in the implementation of the New Youth Job Strategy in Ontario.
- Continue to build relationships with Toronto Community Housing and facilitate young women to learn about and participate in the revitalization process.
- Start planning initiatives that can support youth to access summer employment. Many employers begin hiring in January and February.

If you have any questions regarding this report or wish to work with us on this initiative, please contact Ellen Curtis, the Leading Ladies project lead, at 416-392-0335 or ellen@scaddingcourt.org.

APPENDIX A: Local Employment Resources:

Access Employment Centre:

Specializes in supporting newcomers, young professionals, foreign-trained professionals and single mothers in receipt of Ontario Works.

Location: 489 College Street, Suite 100

Phone Number: (416) 921-1800

Website: <http://www.accessemployment.com>

Job Posting website Link: <http://accessemployment.com/index.pho/job-seekers-toronto-gta/job-postings>

St. Stephen's Employment Centre:

Location: 1415 Bathurst St Toronto, Ontario M5R 3H8

Phone Number: (416) 531-4631

Website: <http://www.sscto.ca>

Job Posting Website Link: <http://www.jobhouse.ca/jobboards/>

Toronto Employment and Social Services (TESS)

Location: 55 John St Toronto, ON, M5V 3C6

Phone Number: (416) 338-2749

Website: http://www.toronto.ca/socialservices/office_listing.htm#MetroHall

Job Posting Website Link:

<http://www.brainhunter.com/frontoffice/entreSeekerHomeAction.do?sitecode+pl551>

YMCA

Location: 7 Vanauley St. Toronto, ON M5T 2V9

Phone Number: (416) 603-6366

Website: <http://www.ymcagta.org/en/index.html>

Job Posting Website Link: <https://www.yworksgta.org/>

Youth Employment Services (YES)

YES specializes in supporting youth to access employment supports and jobs. Location: 555 Richmond St. West Toronto, ON M5V 3B1

Phone Number: (416) 504-5516

Website: <http://www.yes.on.ca/>

Job Posting Website Link: <http://www.yes.on/jobboard/>

APPENDIX B: Youth
Survey

**TAKE CHARGE
MAKE
CHANGE!**



About This Survey

This survey is being conducted by Leading Ladies a young women's group at Scadding Court Community Centre aged 15 –

18. Leading Ladies works to promote positive change in the neighbourhood and to empower young women economically. At weekly meetings, workshops and field trips focused on leadership and life skills we are looking at how we can support young women to get jobs and increase their access to economic opportunities. Leading Ladies provides a safe and inclusive space for young women to learn, grow and discover their best self while being involved in their community and making a difference.

The survey will ask basic questions about you (ex. age, employment etc). It will ask questions about your education, extracurricular activities, employment, income and services you have used. The information you share with us will help Leading Ladies to better understand the community and the barriers that affect young women's access to economic opportunities and jobs. We will use the information you provide to create a project to empower and support young women.

Confidentiality:

The information you share with us is confidential. The identity of everyone who answers the survey questions will remain 'anonymous' –in other words –be kept secret. Please do not write your name on the survey. The results of the surveys will be shared with the community in a report with statistics. There are no right or wrong answers, completing the survey is voluntary, and you can skip questions that you do not want to answer. Please answer questions as thoughtfully and honestly as possible.

Further Participation and Compensation:

Survey participants have an opportunity to participate in a focus group. Participants in the focus groups will be given \$20.00 for an hour of their time. Each survey has a tear away section at the bottom of the last page. If you wish to be contacted and asked to participate in a focus group, please fill out the final section.

The Survey

1. What is your Postal Code? _____
2. How old are you? _____
3. What ethnicity/race do you identify with (ex Indian, African, etc.)? _____
4. How often do you participate in activities in your neighbourhood (ex. Community events, sports, volunteer)?
 - Often
 - Sometimes
 - Not often

5. Do you have access to the community services and programs you need and want in your neighbourhood?

- Yes
- No

6. What community services and programs do you want?

7. Are there people or organizations you can go to for help in your neighbourhood, or to solve community problems, challenges or issues?

- Yes
- No

8. What are your 2 main sources of money (parents, spouse, job, etc.)?

9. What is the highest level of education you have completed?

- Primary
- High School
 - Grade 9-11
 - Grade 12/GED
- Apprenticeship
- Post- Secondary
 - Certificate
 - Diploma
 - Degree
- Masters/ PhD

10. What level of education would you like to achieve?

- Primary
- High School
 - Grade 9-11
 - Grade 12/GED
- Apprenticeship
- Post- Secondary
 - Certificate
 - Diploma
 - Degree
- Masters/ PhD

11. Was any of your education obtained outside of Canada?

- Yes, what level (ex. Primary, High School, University, etc.) _____
- No

12. Are you currently

working?

- Yes, I'm working...
 - Part-Time
 - Full Time
 - Seasonal/Temporary
 - Looking for additional work
 - And it is related to my career aspirations
- No, I'm...
 - Not looking for work
 - Looking for work
 - Not able to work, why? _____

13. What barriers do you face finding employment? Check all that apply.

- Inadequate Transportation
- Age
- Criminal record
- Racial/Cultural /Religious identity
- Disability
- Language
- Gender or sex
- Education/Qualifications
- Neighbourhood
- Familial Responsibility
- Lack of experience
- Lack of training
- Other (please specify): _____

14. How much time do you spend looking for a job per week? _____

15. Do you have access to employment services?

- Yes
- No

16. Have you ever used any employment services? If yes, then please list below.

- Yes
 - Resume writing skills
 - Interview Skills
 - Job Searching Skills
 - Networking

- St. Stephen's
- Youth Employment Services
- Access Employment Services
- Other: _____

No

17. Have the employment services you have used been helpful?

- Have not used employment services
- Yes
- No, why or why not? _____

18. Where do you find out about employment services?

- Community centre
- School
- Advertisements
- Social media
- Someone you know
- Other: _____

19. Indicate your current skills? (Check all that apply)

- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Oral communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Mechanical Aptitude | <input type="checkbox"/> Customer Service |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Food Service | <input type="checkbox"/> General Labour | <input type="checkbox"/> Bookkeeping/
Financial |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Carpentry | <input type="checkbox"/> Health Services | <input type="checkbox"/> Retail/Sales |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Child Care | <input type="checkbox"/> Hospitality and
Tourism | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation/
Delivery |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Computer Literacy | <input type="checkbox"/> Electrical | <input type="checkbox"/> Warehouse/
Factories |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Construction | <input type="checkbox"/> Punctual/ Time
Management | <input type="checkbox"/> Plumbing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Written Skills | <input type="checkbox"/> Can work with Money | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Advanced Computer
Skills | | |

20. Do you have experience in writing a resume and cover letter?

- Yes
- No

21. Are you interested in starting your own business?

- Yes
- No

22. Do you know how to budget your money?

- Yes
- No

23. How important is saving to you?

- Very Important
- Important
- Not important

24. Where do you learn about money management from?

- Parents
- School
- Friends
- Media
- Experience
- Books
- Other _____

25. Do you have career goals?

- Yes
- No

26. What type of career do you want in the future? _____

27. Do you know someone in the career you want to get into?

- Yes
- No

28. Why do you want to get into your chosen career? (Check all that apply)

- Income Level
- Status
- Personal Interest
- You know someone in that career
- Personal Skills Set
- Family Influence
- Other _____

29. Do you think there are jobs that women cannot or should not do?

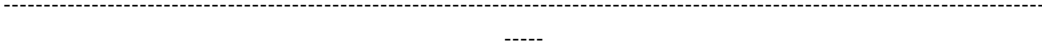
- Yes, please provide examples _____
- No

30. Do you think you have equal access to jobs as your male peers?

- Yes
- No, please explain _____

Comments:

THANK YOU FOR YOUR
CONTRIBUTION!!!



Please tear off this section and complete if you would like to be contacted to participate in a focus group.

Name: _____

Telephone Number: _____

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