Building Intercultural Neighbourhoods Metropolis Conference

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Neighbourhoods in Northwest Toronto

- Isolated and under-resourced suburban neighbourhoods
- High numbers of newcomers and diverse ethno-cultural communities
- Increasing poverty in many of the neighbourhoods (United Way's Poverty by Postal Code and Vertical Poverty)

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NYCH's Main Site

Who We Are

- ‘NYCH’ is a multi-service, neighbourhood centre
- Opened in 1990
- 100+ staff serving over 60 locations in 2011
- Services provided in over 30 languages
- Variety of community development initiatives and programs supporting integration of newcomers

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Newcomer Connection Story

Initiated in 2001

Newcomer Connection Story

- Example of a program that helped to develop an intercultural neighbourhood
- Began as a peer leader project to reach out to isolated newcomer women and has expanded over the years
- Brought together women to learn together, develop leadership and address neighbourhood issues

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Newcomer Connection Story

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Newcomer Connection Story

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Impact on Neighbourhoods

- Previously isolated women and families were connected (3,360 in 1st 3 years)
- Neighbourhood leadership supported and enhanced
- Culture of neighbours assisting each other
- Greater understanding of neighbourhood action
- Stronger relationships between cultural groups
- Increase in employment and marketability

Impact on NYCH

- Became a central way of working
- Major change in programs and services
- Development of new leadership programs
- Further development of CD focus
- Many leaders hired by NYCH

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Action for Neighbourhood Change (ANC)

Action for Neighbourhood Change (ANC)

- Launched in late 2006 in Lotherton priority neighbourhood
- Partnership between NYCH and United Way Toronto
- Community development initiative to involve residents in revitalizing their neighbourhoods

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Action for Neighbourhood Change (ANC)

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Building an Intercultural Neighbourhood through ANC

- Mobilization of the neighbourhood
- Development of neighbourhood vision and action plan
- Opportunities for residents to work together to address short and long term issues
- Opportunities to learn together and learn about each other

Impact on Neighbourhood Residents

- Changes in relationships between residents
- Greater understanding, ability and confidence to address issues
- Many more opportunities for cultural exchange, understanding and connections

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Impact on Neighbourhood

- Variety of leaders developed and leadership taken
- Concrete improvements to neighbourhood
- View of neighbourhood changed
- More involvement of service providers and city departments in neighbourhood

Challenges in Building an Intercultural Neighbourhood

- Amount of time required
- Many community residents focused on survival issues
- Space and infrastructure needs
- Funding focused on service delivery
- Wide variety of mobilization and outreach tools
- Paid animators vs. volunteers

Some Conditions to Grow an Intercultural Neighbourhood

- Support and development of leadership
- Opportunities to connect and engage in a variety of ways
- Many opportunities to learn together
- Strong commitment and practice in diversity
- Support of local organization(s)

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Hui's Story

Hui's Story

- Began involvement in Lotherton ANC
- Participated in Newcomer Connection program
- Became community leader and then NYCH staff
- Changed her view of her neighbourhood and of herself

Hui's Story- in her own words