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Inner-City Voices Community-Based Solutions

State of the Inner City Report: 2006

CANADIAN CENTRE FOR POLICY ALTERNATIVES - MANITOBA



About the cover:

Holding Hands, detail, acrylic on canvas, 72 x 36"
by Rhian Brynjolson

Defying Gravity

There is an enormous emotional weight that children and their families bring with them through the doors of our inner-city elementary school. They feel the gravity of poverty, abuse, addiction and violence in their homes and community.

Have you seen Ben Shahn's painting, *Liberation*? In it the children swing precariously from a playground pole, surrounded by the rubble of a recent war. How can they play in the midst of ruin? Will they fall? And how can we watch without stepping into the picture to help?

Defying gravity, the children swing, balance, skip and play on and I play on canvas, sorting through the rubble for bits of hope and small victories, wishing for the collective will of a war on poverty; wishing that the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of the Child, written in 1959, could oneday be fulfilled. In the 'mean' meantime we offer breakfast programs and tape to fix broken shoes; such meager aid and such small condolences.

Rhian Brynjolson 2006

About the Artist:

Rhian Brynjolson is a teacher of art and integrated curriculum at Wellington Elementary School in Winnipeg. She is also a children's book illustrator, an author and a visual artist. Her work is currently on display at Graffiti Gallery, Oseredok and at the "Art From the Heart" event at Magnus Eliason Recreation Centre.

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Acknowledgements

This is the second State of the Inner City Report. In 2005, we released a two-part report that focused on three inner-city neighbourhoods (Lord Selkirk Park, Spence, and Centennial neighbourhoods) and public policy issues including housing, employment and education. This year's report focuses on development in two inner-city neighbourhoods: West Broadway and North Point Douglas. In addition, we have focused on three issues that were identified as a priority by our community partners. First, we examine the issue of safety and security in Winnipeg's inner city, with a focus on three inner-city neighbourhoods: Centennial, Spence and William Whyte. This was an issue identified as a priority for those interviewed for the 2005 report. Also included this year is a report on the progress made with members of Community Led Organizations United Together (CLOUT), in the development of a methodology to measure outcomes of participation in community-based organizations. It is our hope that we can continue this work and report on our findings in 2007. Finally, we include a report based on interviews with inner-city refugee women that identifies the challenges they face, initiatives that have emerged from within the community to address those challenges, and recommendations for potential policy change.

The Neighbourhoods sections of the report were written by Jim Silver, in collaboration with Claudette Michell and Cortney Sinclair. *Inner-City Refugee Women: Lessons for Public Policy* was written by Shauna MacKinnon and Sara Stephens with Zeitun Salah. *Bridging The Community-Police Divide: Safety and Security in Winnipeg's Inner City* was written by Elizabeth Comack and Jim Silver, with Jessica Antony, Cassandra Costa, Florence Gray, Claudette Michell, Gosia Parada and Sue Thiebaut. *Measuring Progress in the Inner-City: Are Community-Based Organizations Having an Impact?* was written by Shauna MacKinnon with

Bronwyn Dobchuk-Land, Rebecca Macleod and members of CLOUT. Margaret Haworth-Brockman and Shauna MacKinnon wrote the introduction. Margaret Haworth-Brockman edited the report.

Under the leadership of the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, the project was a collaborative effort guided by a steering committee as well as many community-based organizations. We are very grateful for the wisdom that they bring to this project. They include: Andrews Street Family Centre, Community Education Development Association (CEDA), Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre, Native Women's Transition Centre, North End Women's Centre, Ndiniwemaaganag Endaawad, North End Community Renewal Corporation, Prairie Women's Health Centre of Excellence, Rossbrook House, Social Planning Council of Winnipeg, Somali Canadian Family and Youth Association (SCFYA), Spence Neighbourhood Association, the University of Manitoba Inner City Social Work Program, West Broadway Development Corporation, Wolseley Family Place, and the Women's Health Clinic. We are also thankful to the individuals in government and non-government organizations who agreed to be interviewed and to those who reviewed and commented on the various drafts. Thanks also to Doug Smith for his comments and support throughout this project. Thank you as well to the Immigrant Women's Counselling/Nor'west Community Health Centre and Knox United Church, for providing us with space and contacts for our focus groups with refugee women.

For their financial support for various components of this project, we are grateful to the Law for the Future Fund, Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation, United Way of Winnipeg, the University of Winnipeg, Status of Women Canada and the Winnipeg Partnership Agreement.

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Introduction

What is the “state” or the condition of the inner city in Winnipeg in 2006? How do we measure the conditions, the strengths and the challenges? What do we use as our yard stick and to what are we making our comparisons? How will we know if progress is being made? Do we rely solely on the reports of others? Media accounts? Or do we go to the people who live and work there to ask what counts, what is most important to them?

In 2005 we began to look at the state of the inner city through a community-led project guided by the expertise and knowledge of people who live and work in the inner city. In *The Promise of Investment in Community Led Renewal: State of the Inner City 2005*, we concluded that there are no easy solutions to the challenges that continue to exist in the inner city. We learned that community-based solutions work best when people in the community are involved, when they participate in deciding upon what is to be done and when their community-based organizations (CBOs) are provided with sustained core financial support. We saw that these important ingredients can result in slow and steady improvement for neighbourhoods. In *Inner-City Voices – Community-Based Solutions: State Of the Inner City 2006*, we continued with this project to look deeper into issues identified by our community partners. Our findings reflect a similar theme to that in 2005. Communities that have adequately funded community-based organizations working daily to address the multitude of physical and

social challenges in their neighbourhoods, are making slow but steady progress.

Another theme emerged over the past year that is troublesome, yet solvable. We found that there is a disconnect between what people say they need, and the way that the systems that they encounter everyday respond to those needs. There is a level of frustration reflected in each of the sections of this report that is articulated through the voices of the community people that we spoke with. They want more of a say in how systems respond to their communities. They want to be heard. They want more control over the decisions that affect their lives. They want an action strategy that starts from the community. In other words, they want government systems to be more democratic.

Decolonization researcher Linda Tuhiwai Smith (127) notes that: “Community action approaches assume that people know and can reflect on their own lives, have questions and priorities of their own, have skills and sensitivities which can enhance (or undermine) community-based projects”. We have seen that the CBOs that are most effective are those with meaningful community involvement. Policy makers can learn from this. As is demonstrated in this report, individuals most affected by government policy and programs have insight into how those policies and programs might be improved. Governments should take advantage of those insights in improving their delivery of services.

In this second *State of the Inner City Report*, we

continue to measure and report on the factors that are most important to the people who live and work in the inner city. They are the people whose lives revolve around the inner city and therefore any discussion of the state of their community must begin with them. Central to this project is the belief that community members are most knowledgeable about the dynamics of their communities and have significant insight into what they need. The pages that follow include the voices of the many individuals that we interviewed and worked with over the past year. They kindly and often passionately shared with us their hopes and dreams, their joys and sorrows, their frustrations and anger. We report our findings of the strengths and the progress, as well as the problems and challenges that continue to persist.

As with the *2005 Report* we start by describing *Two Neighbourhoods*. West Broadway, with its attractive setting on the edge of downtown, is revitalizing. Agencies such as Crossways in Common and West Broadway Community Renewal Corporation and Wolseley Family Place, have community-led programs tailored by and for the people who need their services. West Broadway's strengths are attractive for housing revitalization too, which as we will see is preventing further decline, but may lead to greater exclusion of those same people that make it such a vital neighbourhood. North Point Douglas is also making progress, gathering strength through community-based organizations such as SISTARS and Norquay Community Centre. As one of the oldest neighbourhoods in Winnipeg the elderly buildings and homes are at risk of complete deterioration. Improving housing though, may also bring the threat of displacing the vital community of people who currently call the neighbourhood home. Our examination of these two interesting inner-city neighbourhoods reveals some of the contradictions involved in the process of neighbourhood revitalization.

Closer to Winnipeg's downtown, in and around

Central Park, a different kind of change is taking place. New immigrants and refugees arrive from all over the world, and many of the new inner-city residents are from African countries. In *Lessons for Public Policy*, the women describe the horrors of their journeys here and how settling in Winnipeg continues to be difficult as they adjust to a new language and culture, and try to negotiate and navigate public policy to get the renewed start they need. They provide creative ideas for systemic change that can help with making it possible for all of Winnipeg to benefit from their arrival.

Safety, a fundamental right for us all, is a critical concern for a great many people who live and work in Winnipeg's inner city. *Bridging the Community-Police Divide* explores the role the Winnipeg Police Service plays in making inner-city neighbourhoods safer for citizens. The seemingly unmanageable divide between the police officers who work there and the inner-city residents who need to feel safe can be bridged, we think, by their common goals of wanting greater involvement together through community policing.

Finally we worked with the women of CLOUT (Community Led Organizations United Together) to develop new ways for *Measuring Progress* in inner-city life. The women involved are frustrated with the indicators and measures currently used by governments and funding agencies because they do not get at the nuances and complexities of inner-city life. By creating more finely-tuned indicators of what true progress is, beyond numbers and statistics, we can learn more about the comprehensive factors that make for progress, such as opportunities to share and inform each other as the inner city grows.

Reference

Tuhiwai Smith, Linda (1999). *Decolonizing Methodologies, Research and Indigenous Peoples*. Zed Books and University of Otago Press.

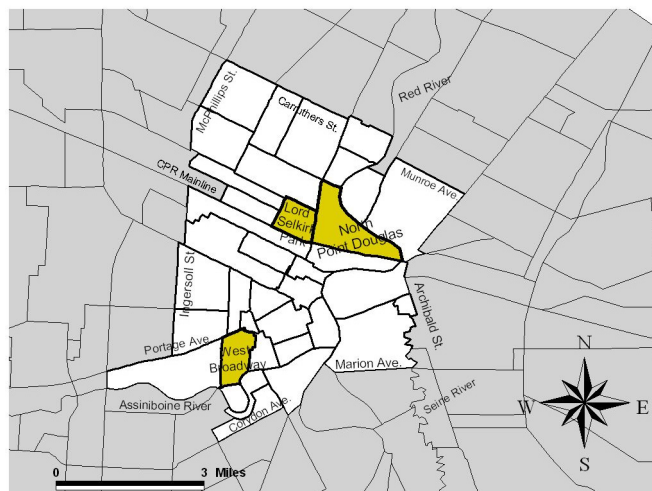
A Portrait of Two Neighbourhoods

West Broadway and North Point Douglas

Last year, in the *State of the Inner City Report 2005*, we described three Winnipeg inner-city neighbourhoods—Spence, Centennial and Lord Selkirk Park. We found that Spence was beginning to turn itself around and overcoming its poverty-related difficulties, largely as a result of the good work being done by a number of community-based organizations, especially the Spence Neighbourhood Association (SNA). SNA is a neighbourhood-based community development corporation that receives core funding from the provincial government’s Neighbourhoods Alive! program and others. Spence, we argued, exemplified how, in neighbourhoods where strong, community-based and community-controlled organizations emerge, and where these community-based organizations are adequately funded (particularly with core funding), positive change can occur. In Centennial, we found that a similar process was just getting nicely underway. The Centennial Neighbourhood Project, with core funding from the Winnipeg Foundation and Neighbourhoods Alive!, was in the early stages of mobilizing neighbourhood residents and instilling there a new sense of hope.

For Lord Selkirk Park in Winnipeg’s North End, generally considered to be one of Winnipeg’s most difficult neighbourhoods, progress was slower and residents were less engaged, but the North End Community Renewal Corporation was starting to put together what it hoped would be a ten-year comprehensive community initiative to improve conditions.

We are pleased to be able to report that progress has been made over the past year in each of these neighbourhoods, although many problems—particularly drug- and gang-related violence—remain. In Spence, the SNA continues



Location of Lord Selkirk Park, North Point Douglas, and West Broadway.

to work effectively; the Inner-City Aboriginal Neighbourhoods (I-CAN) is strong and recently completed its neighbourhood development plan; the Ellice Café and Ellice Theatre are now up and running and have become important assets in the neighbourhood; and the University of Winnipeg has developed a number of initiatives that engage the community.¹ In Centennial, another five community teacher interns from the neighbourhood have begun their training; negotiations with the Winnipeg Police Service have led to the posting of two community foot patrol officers; Kinew Housing is about to begin a significant urban Aboriginal rent-subsidized housing initiative, the first in Canada in thirteen years; and two additional, large housing-related initiatives, each to hire local employees, will soon be announced. In Lord Selkirk Park, the neighbourhood having the most difficulty at the time of last year's report, there has also been important change. The Lord Selkirk Park Resource Centre opened in January, 2006, in one of the units in the Development, and tenants are using the Resource Centre in growing numbers—91, 191, and 320 in January, February and March, 2006. The two staff at the Resource Centre are working to build relationships with community members, and numerous initiatives are under-

way, including an exciting plan to have an Adult Learning Centre right in the Development, with associated childcare facilities and a wide range of community-delivered supports.

So in all these inner-city neighbourhoods we can see the kind of slow but steady progress that can be made if residents are engaged and if core funding is provided. There are still problems and sustained, adequate funding is needed for a significant turnaround to be made in the inner city, but there is discernible movement in the right direction. In this second annual *State of the Inner City Report*, we take a closer look at two more inner-city neighbourhoods, West Broadway and North Point Douglas.

¹These include: the opening in November, 2005, of the Wii Chiiwaakanak Learning Centre, on Ellice Avenue, which works closely with the local community to develop and run learning, mentoring and other programming for inner-city children, youth and families; two free summer camps—a Traditional Arts Camp and a Sports Camp—for inner-city children; and a weekly basketball clinic run by Wesmen players for Spence neighbourhood children and youth.

West Broadway

Bounded on the southern edge of Winnipeg's inner city, between Portage Avenue and the Assiniboine River on the north and south, and by Maryland and Balmoral Streets on the west and east, West Broadway is a neighbourhood of contradictions. Loved by many as a place to live, it is nevertheless beset by poverty and related problems. West Broadway is also a neighbourhood experiencing rapid change, and it is not at all clear where that change will lead, and what the neighbourhood's future character will be.

West Broadway's History

At the beginning of the twentieth century West Broadway was home to many of Winnipeg's elite, who built large and beautiful homes and apartment buildings in the area. Like many inner-city neighbourhoods, however, West Broadway suffered following the Second World War. Well-to-do families left for the suburbs, and were replaced by those of lower

income. In the years that followed the neighbourhood experienced declines in population and socio-economic levels, a deterioration of the housing stock, and a shift from home ownership to rental.

The population of West Broadway was 6745 in 1971; it declined sharply during the 1970s,

Table 1. West Broadway population demographics, 2001

		Percent of population
Total Population	5045	
Self-identified Aboriginal	1380	27.4%
Recent Immigrant	200	4.0%
Visible Minority	735	14.6%
Total families	735	
Lone parent families	315	42.9% of all families
Female lone parent families	255	80.9% of all lone parent families
Median household income	\$16,085	
Incidence of low income		64.5% of households
Child poverty rate		73% (N.B. Children in poverty live with adults who also experience poverty)

Source: Census 2001.

rebounded between 1981 and 1986, and then dropped to 5045 in 2001 (City of Winnipeg and Statistics Canada, 2001). By the mid- to late-1990s, average household incomes were about one-third of average Winnipeg household incomes; more than three-quarters of West Broadway households had incomes below the Statistics Canada Low-Income Cut-Off; almost one-third of West Broadway residents were unemployed; and nearly two-thirds of households were in core housing need¹ (City of Winnipeg and Census Canada, 1996) (Table 1). In 2001 70% of the neighbourhood's housing was more than 40 years old, 43% of dwellings in West Broadway needed repair and 94% of dwellings in West Broadway were rental units, including large numbers of rooming houses (Census Canada, 2001).

Deteriorating housing was abandoned, becoming vulnerable to arson. Indeed, by the 1990s, arson and crime led the *Winnipeg Free Press* to dub West Broadway “murders’ half-acre.” After a 1992 safety audit, a *Free Press* headline proclaimed: “80% of West Broadway residents afraid to go out after dark.” The contrast to the West Broadway of the early twentieth century is a striking example of inner-city decline.

Method

We interviewed 15 people who live and/or work in West Broadway. Interviews were conducted by Cortney Sinclair, a young Aboriginal woman who lives in West Broadway and has just completed the first year of the Red River College two-year diploma in community development. Those interviewed included Aboriginal (6) and non-Aboriginal (9) people, those who work with community-based organizations in the neighbourhood (9) and those who do not (6), and both women (5) and men (10). Each interview followed

¹ Core housing need is defined as spending 30% or more of household income on shelter.

the same pattern: Cortney asked respondents about the extent and form of their involvement in the neighbourhood, and then asked them: what they considered the major problems and major strengths of the neighbourhood to be; what neighbourhood revitalization strategies they think are working well and what are not; and what they think should be and could be done to improve the lives of people living in the neighbourhood. Interviews lasted from 45 minutes to an hour, and each was tape-recorded. The University of Winnipeg Senate Ethics Committee approved the interview format and the project as a whole. Our analysis of West Broadway is based on these interviews, as well as on a recent research paper published by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives-Manitoba (Silver, 2006).

Quantitative data were gathered by a number of means. We reviewed Statistics Canada data from the 1996 and 2001 Census including rent rates, income, education and employment by neighbourhood. In 2006 Jennifer Logan, a University of Winnipeg student, conducted a five-year review of *Winnipeg Renters Guide* for 2001 to 2005 inclusive. Thirdly, we examined data from the provincial Residential Tenancies Branch (RTB) to determine whether there were more requests for exemptions from the rent control guidelines on the grounds of renovation expenses in West Broadway, than compared with other inner-city neighbourhoods. Manitoba's rent control guidelines can be circumvented by landlords—that is, landlords can increase rents by more than the rent control guidelines—if they have made substantial expenditures on renovations to a rental building.

What Did Those We Interviewed Say About West Broadway?

Most of those interviewed love the neighbourhood. They said things like: “I love West Broadway...everything about the neighbourhood is great”; “Every block has its own character, I

think it's a fantastic place to be"; and "If I walk in this neighbourhood it's vibrant, there's so much diversity, it's lively." The downtown location of West Broadway is one of its attractive features. "Being able to go somewhere in 10 minutes and not needing a car, that is the great part. You can walk everywhere in West Broadway. You're five minutes from everything."

There is a strong sense of community in the neighbourhood. Said one: "I find the sense of community here very impressive." Another added: "We have events here, and it's amazing how people turn out." Others interviewed said: there are "A lot of community members that care"; "It's almost family-like in many ways"; "There's a lot of good people in this area"; and "Everybody tries to help each other." People identify themselves as residents of West Broadway, and have a sense of being a part of a distinct neighbourhood. Many have a sense of having struggled as a community to improve their neighbourhood. One person identified a major strength of West Broadway as being the community members themselves, "who just keep fighting back, trying to take back control of their neighbourhood. I mean I've seen that over the last 10 years."

During these 10 years many strong community organizations have developed, making an important contribution to the improvement of the neighbourhood. Among those mentioned by the 15 people interviewed are Crossways-in-Common, Art City, Wolseley Family Place, Nine Circles Health Centre, Clinic, West Broadway Development Corporation, West Broadway Neighbourhood Housing Resource Centre, the Odd Jobs for Kids program, the Tenant Landlord Cooperation program, Resource Assistance for Youth, Mulvey School, and Little Red Spirit, the Aboriginal Head Start program.

Some of the Aboriginal residents who were interviewed also mentioned the growth in recent years in Aboriginal-specific activities in West Broadway. This is probably the result of the establishment of

the West Broadway Aboriginal Residents Group some five years ago. Now there is a popular, annual Aboriginal Seniors Dinner in the neighbourhood, organized by the Aboriginal Residents Group. The Group has organized pow wows, Aboriginal education forums, a trip to the annual Big Bear gathering at Stony Mountain, and participation in the Riel Commemoration. One person interviewed told us that the result of such activities has been that, whereas five years ago Aboriginal people felt ignored and excluded, many now feel much more a part of the neighbourhood.

Perhaps the most visible change in West Broadway has been the considerable housing renovation that has taken place in recent years. The view that, as one person put it, "housing has improved dramatically in recent years, which was really bad at one point", was expressed by many. The role of the West Broadway Development Corporation (WBDC) was criticized by some of those interviewed for focusing too much on housing, but was lauded by others: "I think the neighbourhood's improved a lot because of the West Broadway Development Corporation."

The contradiction is that, despite so much that is constructive and is seen to be favourable, many problems remain. Average incomes in the neighbourhood are very low, poverty rates are high (see Table 1), as many West Broadway residents are unable to work and depend on social assistance. The appallingly low levels of both wages for those who are employed, and of social assistance rates, were mentioned by many of those interviewed. "Why are we not paying living wages?" said one person. "This is nuts, one of the richest countries in the world." Another, referring to the large numbers of West Broadway residents who have disabilities or challenges that make it impossible for them to work in a regular work setting, said that social assistance rates are "too low, and it's unjust I think, it's really unfair." Another said that the amount people get on social assistance "is just horrible."

At the same time rents in the neighbourhood—and approximately 95% of West Broadway residents are tenants—have risen significantly in recent years. Many people are being forced out of the neighbourhood by rising rents, and food banks and soup kitchens are busy because so many people in the neighbourhood have to cut into their food budget to pay the rent. “People are now dipping more and more into their living allowance to bolster up the shelter allowance portion of their welfare money, and that’s why they have to use food banks more and they have to use our emergency food pantry more.” Another person added: “People who are given welfare rates for housing cannot find housing in that area [West Broadway], within that rate, and so therefore what they end up doing is taking that meal allowance and other things to add in order to get a semi-decent place.” This observation made by several people is consistent with the fact that food bank use in Manitoba increased by more than 18% from 2000 to 2005 (Winnipeg Harvest, Hunger Count 2005). Others said that they could not find affordable housing:

I’ve been looking for months and months and I can’t find any affordable available house.

There’s numerous people that I know of that have lost their housing...because the land values and real estate values have increased dramatically.

You have people on fixed income or low income...they now have to leave because the prices have gone beyond them because the fixed income did not move, it stood right there.

People who would like to move *within* the neighbourhood cannot, either. Said one father:

I can’t move. I want to move. My family’s too big. I’ve got six children...I can’t get out of the place I’m living in. And the place I’m living in there’s a slum landlord that owns the place, and he doesn’t do any renovations or repairs or anything. I want to get out of that place. My kids they don’t like the place at all. My daughters are afraid even to go to the washrooms at night.

As elsewhere, gang activity and related violence is also a common problem in West Broadway. When the Indian Posse and the Deuce moved out of the area a few years ago, they were replaced by a new gang, the “B-Siders.” Said one participant: “Drugs are involved, violence is involved, weapons are involved.” Many people are afraid to go out after dark, many seniors are fearful of venturing outside, and some children feel terrorized. “The gang intimidation factor is still a problem for a lot of the kids, a lot of the kids are pretty terrified... about that kind of stuff.”

Some of the participants expressed concerns about the role of the police in dealing with residents of West Broadway, and particularly Aboriginal residents. Some of those interviewed said that they were pleased with the recent police crackdown; others worried that it is accompanied by a form of racial profiling. One person interviewed expressed it this way:

The relationship between the population and the police force is something that needs to work better. There is a lot of tension on both sides. There are those residents who would like the police force to be more visible. I hear many stories about the inherent racism within our system. I think that systemically white guys like me still have a better opportunity in the neighbourhood... less possibility that I’m going to be stopped and accused of a crime. Almost weekly I hear of someone who’s been accused of some-

thing that they haven't done, very probably because they aren't white like me.

Another added: "I've noticed them [police] be a little bit aggressive in certain situations." On the other hand, there are "quite a few guns" in the neighbourhood, and thus reason for police to be concerned.

We can summarize these findings by saying that the situation in West Broadway is contradictory. Many people love living there, and refer in almost glowing terms to the lively character of the neighbourhood, the strong sense of community, the ease of moving around without the need for a car, and the many very strong and effective community organizations that have helped stabilize the neighbourhood. At the same time, many of those interviewed expressed concerns about the low wages and social assistance rates and rapidly rising rents, and the real human problems that these cause, and about the persistence of gang- and drug-related activity, and the security concerns and police-related problems that this causes.

Gentrification in West Broadway

Even in decline, much remained attractive about West Broadway, sufficiently so that in recent years there has been a move to gentrification. By gentrification we mean a process by which higher-income people move into a neighbourhood, driving up housing prices and rents and pushing out or 'displacing' lower-income people.

West Broadway's location makes it a prime candidate for gentrification. It is a short walk from downtown and the beautiful provincial Legislature and grounds; it is adjacent to Wolseley—one of the city's few non-suburban, middle-class neighbourhoods—and Armstrong's Point—a small, semi-gated enclave of stately homes nestled in a curve in the Assiniboine River; and is just across the river from Osborne Village, one of Winnipeg's trendy neighbourhoods, with small boutiques and coffee shops. West Broadway is, for the most part, surrounded by more up-scale

neighbourhoods, is a short walk from the city's downtown, and is well-served by public transit. Further, the neighbourhood is beautifully tree-lined, potentially charming, and thus attractive.

In addition, West Broadway boasts a number of large, older houses, which are suitable for renovation. Some, for example those on Balmoral Street south of Broadway on the neighbourhood's eastern edge, are especially large and attractive. Rooming houses in the neighbourhood are suitable for conversion to single-detached housing units for middle-class homeowners. Finally, despite these attractive features, houses in West Broadway over the past several years could be purchased at prices that, while rising, were and are relatively low. House prices in the neighbourhood have compared favourably with neighbouring Wolseley. In 2001, the average values of houses were as follows: Winnipeg, \$100,525; Wolseley, \$87,728; West Broadway, \$62,729 (City of Winnipeg, Neighbourhood Profiles, 2001). In short, the character and beauty, and the inexpensive housing in West Broadway, fit the profile of a neighbourhood ideal for gentrification.

Gentrification is in fact underway in West Broadway and it appears that two concurrent processes kick-started the process. First, the neighbourhood residents began renovating housing and revitalizing the neighbourhood. In the mid-1990s the Lions Club and Westminster Housing Society invested in renovations, while the West Broadway Neighbourhood Housing Resource Centre started the Tenant Landlord Cooperation program, which sought to improve the quality of rental accommodations in the neighbourhood. These were followed by the establishment in 1997 of the West Broadway Development Corporation (WBDC), which took on the role of coordinating a more comprehensive community revitalization effort. The work of the WBDC initially focused on changing peoples' perceptions of West Broadway. Improving the image of the area—it was known as 'Murders' Half-Acre', for example, or 'gangside'

instead of Langside—was seen as a crucial step in establishing an environment in which reinvestment could begin. The work of the WBDC has included (in addition to renovating housing for resale) such programs as the West Broadway Education and Employment Centre, which offers computer training and serves as a drop-in job resource centre, and the Good Food Club, which operates as a sweat-equity food distribution program that provides participants with free produce from a farm outside Winnipeg. WBDC also sponsors environmentally friendly activities such as composting, community gardening, and the conversion of vacant lots into community gardens and parks. The community gardens play an important role in community-building, as these comments by an elderly neighbourhood resident suggest:

I passed out over a hundred tomato plants this spring. We share. Also helping a neighbour out with plants they may want in their yard, it brings people in the community closer together....just in growth of spirit itself, you make good friendships, you share ideas, there is just so many good things about it. It helps the community to become strong.

What is significant about these activities in West Broadway is, first, that the process of neighbourhood revitalization owes its beginnings to the work of the residents themselves. It is a process that involves not just building houses, but also building community, by promoting community involvement.

Second, shortly after the community began to organize, all three levels of government initiated new programs for funding inner-city neighbourhood revitalization and housing improvements. The City of Winnipeg, under then-Mayor Glen Murray, introduced the Winnipeg Housing Policy, which has provided funding for community coordination of housing renewal, and commits the City to aligning its various authorities

and activities with the goals of neighbourhood revitalization and improved quality of life in housing conditions. The provincial government introduced the Neighbourhoods Alive! program, which since 2000 has invested significant amounts in five low-income Winnipeg neighbourhoods, including West Broadway. And in 2000 the Winnipeg Housing and Homelessness Initiative was introduced—a ‘single-window’ housing initiative through which governments’ housing money flowed into neighbourhoods like West Broadway, intended to be consistent with the needs of the neighbourhood. Community-based organizations have appreciated the way these governments have worked with the local community to promote neighbourhood revitalization and housing renewal, providing the crucial public funds without which community-led inner-city housing renovation projects are simply not possible.

This concurrence of community and government (i.e. public, non-profit) involvement in revitalizing the housing stock in West Broadway is what sparked the private investment that followed. One developer told us that his firm bought, for itself and for other clients, eight apartment buildings in West Broadway from early 2002 to early 2005. Before then financial institutions “had ‘red-lined’ this district as ‘don’t lend’.” The red-lining policy was lifted, and almost every apartment block in West Broadway has been purchased by a new owner in recent years: “I would confidently say they [the prices of apartment blocks] have doubled in the last three years” (developer). Developers are very clear and emphatic in stating that it was the *public* investment in housing and neighbourhood renewal that was the catalyst for the revitalization process in West Broadway, creating the conditions that led some developers to think that they could make money by investing in the neighbourhood.

In short, West Broadway is in the midst of a process of revitalization and gentrification not only because of its location close to downtown

and the presence in the neighbourhood of houses suitable for renovation—although these are essential preconditions for the process—but also because two additional conditions were met: the community itself became active and organized and governments were prepared to invest public money in support of the community’s goals. Private investment followed.

The results have been both favourable and not. Housing has improved considerably. But prices and rents have risen dramatically, and some low-income residents are being pushed out of the neighbourhood. This is gentrification.

Higher Rents and New Residents

Rents indeed appear to be rising faster in West Broadway than in other inner-city neighbourhoods. Census Canada data for 1996 and 2001 report an increase in average gross rent from \$382 to \$493 in the neighbourhood, an increase of almost 30%. This is well above the inner-city average increase from \$463 to \$490 (about 6%), and the city-wide average increase

from \$508 to \$541 (also about 6%). Compare this with nearby inner-city neighbourhoods: between 1996 and 2001, average gross rents *decreased* from \$581 to \$518 in Colony, and from \$438 to \$345 in Spence. Thus rents in the 1996-2001 period were going up in West Broadway at the same time that they were declining in other, adjacent, inner-city neighbourhoods. A more detailed analysis found that in the five-year period from 2001 to 2005 inclusive, rents for bachelors suites grew by \$87 per month, or 27.4%; rents for one-bedroom apartments grew by \$104 per month, or 29.1%; and rents for two-bedroom apartments, more suitable for families with children, grew by \$218 per month, or 50.9% (Logan 2006).

We hypothesized that, if a process of gentrification were underway in West Broadway, it would be reflected in higher numbers of applications to the Rental Tenancies Branch for permission to exceed the rent control guidelines. This appears to be happening. We examined data from the provincial Residential Tenancies Branch to determine whether there were more requests for exemptions

Table 2. Above-Guideline Rent Increases, by Neighbourhood, 1999 to 2005

Neighbourhood	# applications	# buildings	# units	Total capital	Average rent increase approved
Centennial	0	0	0	\$0	0%
Dufferin	1	1	1	0	7.5
Lord Selkirk Park	3	3	118	21,611	17.2
Spence	13	10	189	210,514	9.6
Wolseley	7	2	101	146,508	5.0
West Broadway	40	27	513	1,234,879	10.3

Source: Province of Manitoba, Residential Tenancies Branch

from the rent control guidelines on the grounds of renovation expenses in West Broadway, than in comparison inner-city neighbourhoods. Manitoba's rent control guidelines can be circumvented by landlords—that is, landlords can increase rents by more than the rent control guidelines—if they have made substantial expenditures on renovations to a rental building. The principle is that landlords should be able to recoup investments made to their rental buildings with higher rents; if they cannot charge higher rents, they will be deterred from investing in improvements to rental buildings. Table 2 shows that the number of applications, the related number of buildings and units, and the total capital involved in renovations approved for above-guideline rent increases are all *far* higher in West Broadway than in adjacent and other inner-city neighbourhoods.

The costs of houses have also increased. Housing prices doubled between 1999 and 2004, from an average sale price of \$23,651 to \$45,688 (Winnipeg Real Estate Board).

The number of West Broadway residents with a university degree has grown in recent years, while the number of residents with a university degree in comparable inner-city neighbourhoods has declined. And the incomes of those who own a home in West Broadway increased by more than 12% from 1990 to 2000, while the average household income of renters *decreased* by almost 7%. By comparison, for the inner city as a whole, the average household income of homeowners declined by 0.7%.² This suggests that higher-income, better-educated people are moving into West Broadway at a rate much higher than is the case in other inner-city neighbourhoods. However, these data also suggest that the process of gentrification is incom-

plete; while some higher-income individuals are moving into the neighbourhood, there are still high rates of poverty and other indicators of marginalization.

As early as 2004, people attending a West Broadway *Neighbourhood Housing Forum* raised the concern that low-income residents were being forced out of West Broadway (Author's notes, October 14, 2004). The Housing Coordinator at Young United Church in West Broadway told the Housing Forum that what he hears about most in the community is concerns about rising rents. The *Young United Church 2004 Annual Report* (p. 18) observes that many single people on social assistance “are able to afford only rooming houses and these have been disappearing from West Broadway area.” A person who works daily with low-income renters in West Broadway confirms that rooming houses have been disappearing fast and that most of those that are left are “pretty disgusting”, and that rents have been rising rapidly so that people on social assistance are either being pushed out of the neighbourhood or forced to use their food allowance to cover rising rents. The *West Broadway Development Corporation Annual Report 2003* notes that the WBDC “will be focusing our efforts on developing more low-income housing in order to retain residents who are displaced by increasing rents”, and adds that “the most important change for residents of West Broadway in 2003 has been loss of affordable rental housing units for low-income families and individuals.” The WBDC pamphlet inviting residents to the October 14, 2004 Housing Forum said that: “Over the past year there has been a mass displacement of the population of West Broadway.”

A developer added that the scandalously low levels of social assistance rates in Winnipeg—a single person, for example, gets a monthly housing allowance of \$271—promotes displacement because the costs of properly renovating

² Data were extracted from Custom Census Data, 1991 and 2001 Census of Canada, obtained from the Social Planning Council of Winnipeg. Calculations performed by D.W. Lezubski.

a building cannot be recouped at rents that are this low. The very low levels of social assistance rates are therefore adding significantly to West Broadway's displacement problem. Tenants are being displaced by rising rents; but they are also being displaced by declining relative social assistance rates. The value of social assistance rates for single employable recipients in Manitoba declined by 54.3% in real terms between 1989 and 2003 (National Council of Welfare, 2004, Table 4-1).

We conclude then that a process of gentrification is underway in West Broadway. It is contradictory, bringing both benefits and problems. The benefits—improved housing stock, and a rejuvenated neighbourhood with a community development corporation able to provide employment and training opportunities and a host of community-building initiatives—are significant. But equally significant problems remain. Gangs continue to be active; many residents still fear for their safety after dark; and several people observed that there is a shortage of sports and recreational facilities for youth—a problem common to Winnipeg's inner city. The housing stock of the neighbourhood has improved, but not enough has been done to meet the housing needs of the lowest-income members of the neighbourhood. It is they who have paid the price for the neighbourhood's improvement—a typical feature of gentrification. What they need is safe and secure low-income rental housing. The market, however, has long since stopped investing to meet this need—not only in Winnipeg but across the country. However, as one community resident put it: "Subjectively, when I walk down Broadway or Sherbrook or shop at Pals or Food Fare, this does not *feel* like a gentrifying neighbourhood." West Broadway is still a neighbourhood with many inner-city characteristics, and the final outcome is yet to be determined.

The Importance of Low-Income Rental Housing for West Broadway's Future

Tom Kent has recently called affordable housing "the greatest of urban deficiencies" (Kent, 2002). Private developers have not invested in low-income rental units for many years because the profits that can be earned are too low (Carter and Polevychk, 2004). For example, rental housing was 27% of all new housing constructed in Ontario from 1989 to 1993; it was 2% of new housing built in Ontario in 1998 (Layton, 2000, p. 79). And since 1993 the federal government has effectively abandoned the production of social housing, with the result that there are now long waiting lists in most cities for social housing (Carter, 2000; Hulchanski, 2002). This is certainly the case in Winnipeg, as seen in the *State of the Inner City Report, Part One, 2005* (CCPA-Mb, 2005). Canada now has "the smallest social housing sector of any major Western nation" other than the USA (Hulchanski, 2002; Hulchanski and Shapcott, 2004). The result is that in Canada, the "ultimate housing problem" is the shortage of low-income rental housing (Hulchanski, 2002). As a recent study by the Toronto-Dominion Bank noted: "the overall supply of rental housing in Canada has stagnated in recent years, and has actually been receding at the lower end of the rent range—the segment of the market where lower-income individuals with affordability problems are concentrated" (Drummond et al, 2003). The gentrification of West Broadway is eliminating large numbers of low-income rental housing units, thus making worse what is already the "ultimate housing problem."

A significant solution for neighbourhoods facing gentrification and related displacement of low-income renters is the acquisition of property by the community, so that it can be used to meet the needs of those who might otherwise be displaced. David Hulchanski, one of Canada's leading housing authorities, argues that: "The only

way to produce low-rent housing for people in serious need and to keep the rents on those units low is to subsidize construction and protect this public investment by keeping the housing off the market, that is, in non-profit and non-equity co-op forms of ownership” (Hulchanski, 2002). In other words, low-income housing needs to be de-commodified—made into something other than a commodity, something that is not bought and sold in the marketplace for a profit, but is constructed to meet human needs and kept off the market.

It is not clear that this will happen. While public investment has sparked the revitalization of West Broadway, this is not an era that favours public, non-market solutions, however necessary they may be for the creation of healthy, mixed-income neighbourhoods. Efforts to build public housing that is removed from the market are likely to be resisted by powerful interests, as would the much-needed increases in social assistance rates that would keep more low-income people in the neighbourhood. Nevertheless, it is possible for governments to take housing out of the market, to de-commodify the housing and property markets so as to make housing available to lower-income residents who would otherwise be displaced, and it is equally possible for governments to improve social assistance rates.

We conclude that the process of gentrification underway in West Broadway is still incomplete and in flux. If we attempt to predict the next ten years, at least three broad outcomes seem to be possible.

First, continued and further gentrification in West Broadway, to the benefit of new, higher-income residents, is a possibility. The result would be continued displacement of lower-income residents, and a lost opportunity to create an attractive, mixed-income neighbourhood that could be a model for inner-city revitalization. Opposition to such an outcome was expressed by some of those interviewed. One woman said that she

is: “Concerned about the rapid change that is occurring in the neighbourhood, the gentrification. It is definitely going to change the flavour, the character, of the neighbourhood.” She added:

The community really needs to mobilize, to work together to ensure that affordable housing does exist...and that people aren't being displaced.

A second possibility is that the opportunity to create such a mixed-income neighbourhood could be seized by the community and by supportive governments, by means of public investment directed at the provision of non-market housing for low-income residents, together with increases to social assistance rates. While possible, it is by no means certain. The continued involvement of the three levels of government—and particularly the necessary shift in their focus to the provision of non-market forms of low-income housing—cannot necessarily be relied upon, particularly given the housing policy advanced during the January, 2006 election campaign by the minority federal Conservative government.

This leaves a third possibility, which is the reversion of West Broadway to its pre-mid-1990s condition of decline and decay. The very real gains made so far in the neighbourhood are fragile, and can—in the absence of strong community-based organizations and committed government support—unravel.

It seems clear that, whatever happens, “West Broadway will have a new face”, as one resident put it. What that new face will be remains unclear. It is our opinion that there is much work yet to be done in West Broadway, and the neighbourhood continues very much to be ‘contested space.’

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North Point Douglas

North Point Douglas is located between Main Street and the Red River, from the CPR tracks north to Redwood Avenue. It is a relatively small and self-contained neighbourhood with about 1000 homes. It is a low-income neighbourhood with inner-city characteristics (Table 1), but it is a neighbourhood that is changing rapidly. Indeed, as will be described below, there are many in North Point Douglas who are beginning to express concerns about gentrification. In this and other ways, North Point Douglas is somewhat similar to West Broadway.

There is a core of very strong and active residents in North Point Douglas, who are working hard for the improvement of the

neighbourhood. If one were trying to identify the major strengths in the neighbourhood, this

Table I. North Point Douglas population demographics, 2001.

		Percent of population
Total Population	2255	
Self-identified Aboriginal	885	39.2%
Recent Immigrant	30	1.3%
Visible Minority	310	13.7%
Total families	500	
Lone parent families	235	47.0% of all families
Female lone parent families	155	65.9% of all lone parent families
Median household annual income	\$21,673	
Incidence of low income		52.9% of households
Child poverty rate		52.9% (N.B. Children in poverty live with adults who also experience poverty)

Source: Census 2001.

would be the first. The residents have played a role in establishing a host of community-based organizations (CBOs) that are effective in promoting community development in North Point Douglas, and these CBOs are a genuine strength of this interesting North End neighbourhood.

Community-Based Organizations

In Winnipeg's inner city there is a wealth of home-grown community-based organizations that are highly innovative and effective. North Point Douglas is no exception. For example, the North Point Douglas Women's Centre, a drop-in centre, is very active. In May, 2006, some 540 people came through its doors. The Centre makes a telephone, washer and dryer, computers and photocopy services available to the community, and it provides advocacy around a host of issues—safety, employment, childcare and social assistance, for example. It offers a safe space in the community for women to meet and talk and take advantage of counseling services. One program is called *Peace Begins @ Home* (which was started at the North End Women's Centre), which helps parents identify when their children are being pulled into gangs. One woman interviewed expressed the view that:

(T)he Women's Centre here is pretty amazing. I mean, the Women's Centre started as a women's committee who picketed this place when it was still a store because it was selling sniff to the kids and making outrageous profit by breaking up packs of pampers and packs of cigarettes and selling them one or two at a time. They managed to come together and figure out how to make this place into a Women's Centre and clearly this is making a difference to women in this community.

As is the case in so many other Winnipeg inner-city neighbourhoods, women most often are the community leaders in North

Point Douglas, and the Women's Centre is one important expression of their efforts. So too is Sisters Initiating Steps Towards a Renewed Society Community Economic Development Co-Operative (SISTARS), about which we will comment later.

There is also the North Point Douglas Residents Committee; the Norquay Community Centre with a variety of associated programs for children and youth; the Norquay School; the community newsletter, *The Point*; housing initiatives including the North End Housing Project and the North End Community Renewal Corporation (NECRC). About the latter, for example, one resident said:

I think an organization like the NECRC is a real asset. They don't work only in Point Douglas [NECRC works in 13 North End neighbourhoods] but they look after the more 'big picture', they help us when we need to speak to City Hall about issues that give our communities a much stronger voice because we are not just speaking as a small little community.

The NECRC has done a lot of work around housing, including a current attempt to establish a Tenant-Landlord Cooperation (TLC) program in North Point Douglas and William Whyte neighbourhoods, and if successful there, in other North End neighbourhoods as well. The TLC is modeled on the successful program in West Broadway, so good ideas are spreading throughout the inner city, with one community learning from another.

The result of all of this activity—the CBOS, the volunteers—is a neighbourhood that is vibrant and is changing. One young couple who have recently moved into the community and become active told us that:

When friends ask us if they should live here we tell them that there is a lot of good and

there is some bad. I love the quietness of this community. There is a real feel of community. There are social problems but there is a hopeful attitude....People that live here know that there is something special about the neighbourhood.

There are still problems, most of which are typical of inner-city neighbourhoods. And while there is a good deal of public money going into North Point Douglas, particularly from the provincial government, it is not enough. One person expressed this succinctly: "There are some really good organizations in this community and that's where I feel the strength is, but it is by no means enough. It's better than nothing." This is typical of what is happening in so many Winnipeg inner-city neighbourhoods: some important achievements driven from the ground up, with some public support, but not yet enough to really turn things around. We will comment later on this matter. First, a closer look at some of the problems in North Point Douglas.

Poverty

It is important not to forget that at the root of many inner-city problems is a crushing poverty. As one of our respondents put it: "Poverty is the root that has perpetuated a whole bunch of other problems." Poverty is also entwined with other problems:

If a person is low-income or they are poor, they generally have a whole list of problems, from not having a decent education to not having decent housing, to not having any connection to their neighbourhood...[and] not having the self-esteem or the capacity to say 'I deserve a decent life'.

Poverty is complex: it has social, cultural and psychological dimensions. People become trapped, and the supports available to help them get out of poverty are not sufficient. "The whole response of Winnipeg and Manitoba to poverty issues [and]

welfare rates are absolutely disgusting, and so it's not a system that is oriented to helping people out of poverty. It's a system that is oriented towards maintaining people in poverty." People in poverty cope with numerous difficulties and the systems in place to assist them often cause additional barriers, contributing to their deeper poverty. (For similar observations see the sections on indicators and the stories of refugee women in this Report). As one person told us: "I don't think very many people want to be on the social welfare system but there are huge obstacles out there."

The CBOs in the neighbourhood are working hard to solve problems and create opportunities, but as crucial and effective as their efforts are, they are simply not adequately resourced. "The lack of resources is outrageous", one community activist told us, even while acknowledging the value of those resources that *are* being injected into the neighbourhood, especially by the provincial government.

Lack of Resources for Youth

A problem mentioned frequently by those we interviewed is the shortage of activities for young people in North Point Douglas—a problem common to most Winnipeg inner-city neighbourhoods, and mentioned specifically in West Broadway as well. Norquay Community Centre offers a wide range of activities for young people; the North Point Douglas Women's Centre offers some. But it is not enough; parents have far fewer resources to provide opportunities for their children than most suburban parents. As one person told us: "The kids in here are great. They're like any other kids in any other part of the city. The only difference is the kids have an upfield [sic] battle and they have a lot of challenges that a lot of the other kids don't have—Charleswood, St. Vital, stuff like that." In other words, achieving equity or parity would require that there be proportionately *more* recreational and sports activities offered for young people in inner-city

neighbourhoods like North Point Douglas, in order to compensate for the high incidence of poverty and lack of opportunities.

In a neighbourhood like North Point Douglas, the consequences of a lack of things for youth to do may include their recruitment to gangs. One person who works with youth told us that:

If this community centre wasn't here, we would have nothing. I've been in this area for six or seven years and I've seen numerous kids end up in the gang life. I've seen kids who have come through my program that are now charged with murder, assaults, break and entry, busted for selling crack cocaine, these are the options that these kids have, without any kind of recreational programs. Bottom line is that they want money, and through the manipulation process the older gang members in the neighbourhood, they get these kids to do all their crimes for them and they think it's great because it's short-term gain. And long-term pain. So one of the major problems in this area, like I said, is just the lack of things for these kids to do.

Others said the same. "There's nothing for kids to do so they tend to go vandalize or fight or deal drugs", and "These kids are like any other kids and there are a lot of kids who make it out of this kind of neighbourhood, but I would say 75 to 80% of them don't." Similar observations can be found in the section on policing in inner-city neighbourhoods.

Numerous people told us that "drugs are a major problem." There are certain parts of the neighbourhood—around the edges in particular—where drug houses are located, and their activity attracts traffic from the outside. It also attracts youth with little else to do, and few other sources of money.

We have a lot of crack houses around, especially in this end of [she names the streets]....

There are always young kids out there who are being recruited, not selling but delivering the products, they would get either a bike or a skateboard, whatever it is that they need for transportation...the people who are getting them to deliver these items would give them pagers or cell phones. So our youth are being exploited to the drug scene.

The failure to provide sports and other recreational activities for young people from low-income families in this inner-city neighbourhood is one reason the fast and easy gains of the drug trade and gang life seem attractive. But the costs of this failure to invest in our youth are high, far higher than any short-term savings realized by reducing public expenditures on youth activities. The costs are high for the young people involved—drug addiction, incarceration, damaged families, poverty. Add to this the lost human potential of so many of these young people, and it becomes obvious that there are no savings to society when we fail to invest adequately in low-income, inner-city neighbourhoods.

Fear of Gentrification

Even while North Point Douglas struggles with such problems, many in the neighbourhood are concerned about a different kind of problem—gentrification, and the displacement of lower-income people that is a part of that process. There has been considerable housing activity in the neighbourhood, led by government investment as has been the case in West Broadway. Dilapidated and boarded-up houses have been renovated; in-fill housing has been placed on vacant lots; existing owners have been prompted to spend on their houses. "As the money began to become available in terms of housing grants and things like that, that made a huge difference. It was so encouraging to hear hammers and saws going all around the neighbourhood. It was an incentive to other people to get to work and do what they could to

improve their own places.” The neighbourhood looks better as a result, and housing conditions have improved. Middle-class people are starting to trickle into the neighbourhood, attracted by the housing values, and by the pleasant tree-lined streets and the friendly people committed to the improvement of the neighbourhood.

The result is a situation that is contradictory. As mentioned, poverty-related problems persist. Housing continues to be a problem for many:

...a lot of the people in the Women’s Centre are either looking for housing, struggling in rooming houses which means they don’t have their own kitchens, they don’t have their own bathrooms, which also has safety issues, food disappears from shared kitchens or you keep it at hand and it goes bad and you’re on low income and you don’t have the money to replace the food.

The very negative public image imposed upon North Point Douglas by the media worries and annoys many in the neighbourhood. As one person told us, “I think the image is a real problem, the image that Point Douglas has which is promoted by the media when they report about things. It has a definite slant on when something happens in the North End as opposed to when the same type of thing happens in the suburbs, in how it is reported.”

Yet despite these problems, there is so much that is attractive about the area that some residents are concerned about gentrification. One person we interviewed remarked, “I don’t want to see this community ‘white-painted’ because what often happens when you have innovative development going on, property values go up, housing then becomes unaffordable to the people that those development houses were meant for.”

Increasingly, we were told, the in-fill housing and renovated housing is priced beyond the range of lower-income people. “The in-fill housing is providing houses for people who make \$70,000

to \$80,000....Most people can’t afford it.” And as new people move in, the social dynamics can change. “It’s creating a divide in the community, an ‘us and them’ which is not a good thing”, one resident told us. She added that a “huge divide” is emerging between the “haves and have-nots”, “and the middle-class people don’t want to tolerate those people. I find it quite offensive. It’s a challenge...and it’s not an easy or a comfortable thing.”

Many point out that a greater diversity of housing is needed, and that this may require imaginative housing solutions. North End Housing Project is building an 11 suite, not-for-profit co-operative, expected to open at the end of 2006. Six of the suites will be subsidized, with rents set at 27% of income; the remaining five are for tenants whose incomes do not exceed \$46,379. This is a positive initiative. In the 2005 *State of the Inner City Report* we referred to the ‘pocket housing’ being developed in Centennial and Spence neighbourhoods—new rooming house-style accommodation for single people, that includes self-contained kitchen and bathroom facilities. This, the not-for-profit housing co-operative, and other forms of low-income rental housing, are among the creative housing initiatives needed to enable lower-income people to stay in the neighbourhood as it improves.

The Need for Employment

Also needed are more job opportunities. As one person told us, “I think we could alleviate a lot of the other problems if people had alternative ways of making money to feed families.” As Canada heads into a new era of labour shortages in selected industries and areas (see Loewen et al, 2005), more job opportunities will open. But it is not a matter of simply seizing those opportunities as they arise. As argued earlier, most who are poor suffer not just from a shortage of income, but from complex, inter-related problems. One person interviewed put it this way:

...there is a lot of low self-esteem in the particular area because of being poor and being Aboriginal and sometimes people need more support or help in order to do things because they have just given up on life...there's lots of people who have given up with society...and all the negativity that they suffered in their life and the negativity that they've experienced in this particular area.

SISTARS Community Economic Development Co-op is led by community women in North Point Douglas and is innovative in its approach to the need for jobs. SISTARS has established a childcare centre, temporarily located in a church basement in the area, with 40 spaces for children. They have worked with Red River College to establish, in association with the childcare centre, a community-based early childhood education training program for 25 students. Once they graduate, these students will have the opportunity to work in the childcare centre. SISTARS is in the process of creating a permanent 'hub' on a large piece of land in the area (at Barber House), where they will locate the childcare and educational facilities, and open a neighbourhood coffee house, a service that many in the community feel is needed. One woman described the work done to date on this project by SISTARS:

We identified that there was a need for daycares, and a couple of women began planning instead of complaining. The women decided to do something about it. So we did a survey. They decided to attend school and at the same time provide daycare space for their kids so they could go to school. So after the ladies complete their course, they'll be able to work in the daycare. Priority will be given to residents of North Point Douglas.... Red River [College] has agreed to help by embedding a campus space in the form of a classroom....Our students are just finishing

their first year now and we started with 25 students and we still have 22 so that's a very high ratio. On January 23 [2006] we held a major meeting with funders and members of government and government departments and six of those women stood up in front of all those people and talked about the project and their place in it.

This is a creative response to real community needs, done in classic community economic development fashion and driven primarily by women.

There is also a trades training component attached to the initiative, with 19 women involved. Because the training is located in the area and has childcare attached, the opportunities are being seized. Rather than push low-income people into pre-existing programs, women in the community have designed the program for the people who live there. Rather than people in the community traveling across the city to Red River College, SISTARS has invited Red River College to come to the community. Its success makes clear that however deep and complex their problems may be, low-income inner-city people want to work, and—when appropriate supports are available—will take advantage of opportunities. The new 'hub' being created by SISTARS will be the product of genuine community involvement via a series of well-attended community workshops. One woman told us that:

The amount of community involvement in this program has gone from that initial group of 14 women to over 100 people who have community involvement in the consultations....When that building goes up people in this community can actually say, 'I designed that'.

The design architect reported in *The Point* (May/June, 2006, p.3) that:

We have been overwhelmed by the openness and vision of the people who have come out to the workshops, and turnout has consistently [been] in the range of 30. It has been an amazing commitment in terms of time and personal energy.

The work being done by SISTARS and others in North Point Douglas is a wonderful example of what is possible when initiatives are developed from the ground up, with the needs and interests of the community driving the process, and when governments fund such projects. This kind of community-based work, when adequately supported by governments, is transformative.

So it is that North Point Douglas represents the many contradictions of Winnipeg's inner city: exciting things are happening; side-by-side with deeply-rooted problems; there is some government funding—from the provincial government in particular—to CBOs to enable them to work; yet the level of funding is not sufficient to really fully address the more complex, long-term problems.

Problems with Government Support

We close this analysis of developments in North Point Douglas with a brief discussion of comments made by numerous people about the inadequate representation of their interests at City Hall. One person said: "What is not working well? Our Councillor." Another added:

I think another thing is that we do not have a lot of representation. Like our City Councillor: we try all the time and numerous times over the years to connect with him and invite him to committees or inform him about concerns we have with absolutely no response and that's discouraging. We feel that we have really good support from our MLA and from our MP ... They are supportive, but our City Councillor, he can't even be bothered to return a phone call.

Many people in North Point Douglas are working hard and effectively to re-build their neighbourhood. They are taking responsibility. Others in the neighbourhood have seized the opportunities created by SISTARS and others, and are in the process of turning their lives around; they will then give back to their community with their skills and energies. But the success of such efforts depends upon government supports, and it is a shame when elected representatives like a City Councillor do not take their responsibilities seriously.

Criticisms were also directed at the Mayor. He successfully raised money for several inner-city community-based organizations by means of pledges for his run in the Manitoba Marathon. Organizations selected by the Mayor get some money, the amount dependent upon how charitable people may be. As one person in North Point Douglas put it:

So it tends to be a charity model. We'll run and give Rossbrook [House] and Andrews Street [Family Centre] \$25,000. I'm delighted that Rossbrook and Andrews Street got \$25,000 but I would much rather see us working on strategies that say this city is committed to ending poverty....There should be a concern in city strategy that says poverty is not acceptable in this day and age.

People in inner-city communities are working hard, intelligently and effectively to solve poverty-related problems. They are doing so on a shoestring. They are getting the kind of support they need from some levels of government, albeit not nearly enough. But they are getting virtually no support from the civic level of government. The kind of vision that animates the innovative work being done by SISTARS, for example, is simply absent at City Hall. The local City Councillor, we were told, is simply absent from the North Point Douglas neighbourhood. If we are to support the efforts of inner-city people struggling to

turn their neighbourhoods around, this has to change. Success requires that governments and our elected representatives be supportive of, and directly and fully involved with, neighbourhood efforts to build community-based solutions.

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Inner-City Refugee Women:

Lessons for Public Policy

In 2005, members of the newly formed Winnipeg-based *Somali Canadian Family and Youth Association*, became interested in participating in the State of the Inner City project so that they could share the stories of African refugee women living in the inner city. This paper is a result of the collaborative process that followed. It led to a research model designed to engage inner-city refugee women in a dialogue about their hopes, dreams, accomplishments and the effectiveness of the various policies and programs that they encounter every day.

Manitoba is home to an increasing number of new immigrants, many of whom are African refugees settling in Winnipeg's inner city.¹ In 2005 Manitoba Interfaith Immigration Council welcomed 493 African newcomers to Manitoba (MIIC Annual Report, 2006). There has been a considerable increase in the number of refugees from African countries. In 2005, African refugees represented 62% of the total number of new refugees in Manitoba, compared with 36% in 2001.² Afghanistan and Colombia are also among the top ten countries of origin. There are a variety of reasons that refugees 'choose' the inner city as home. Centrality of location, access to service, and being close to others from their homeland, are often cited by refugees as their reasons. But

many refugees³ stay in the inner city simply because that is where housing is affordable and available, although not always adequate in size or condition.

Adjusting to life in a new community can be stressful for anyone at the best of times. For many

¹ For a more detailed description of the changing face of Manitoba's immigrant and refugee population see the full report titled *Inner -City Refugee Women in Winnipeg: Lessons for Public Policy* at www.policyalternatives.ca

² Statistics Canada census data available to the SIC does not disaggregate refugee from other immigrant groups.

³ Under Canada's Immigration and Refugee Protection Act, individuals apply to come to Canada as either 'Temporary' or 'Permanent' residents. Those seeking permanent resident status apply through one of three channels: Family Class, Economic Class or Refugee Class. Refugees are those individuals who are accepted because they are determined to require protection under international law. They can be government or privately sponsored. (www.gov.mb.ca/labour/immigrate/portal).

refugees the challenge is exacerbated for a variety of reasons. They may have survived horrendous experiences before arriving in Canada and may have left behind families who continue to suffer through war and famine. The combination of relief from having escaped, with the guilt and despair for those left behind continues to haunt refugees long after they arrive. They may arrive in Canada with limited or no familiarity with English and other cultural and religious differences that pose significant challenges. While the poverty refugees face in Canada does not compare to that in their homelands, they continue to struggle for survival here while surrounded by prosperity. They come with high expectations and are not prepared for the challenges settlement presents. In particular, finding work is cited as the most difficult challenge (Wayland, 2006, p. 6). Refugees who arrive with specific skills and education find their credentials are often not recognized, making it impossible for them to be employed in their field of expertise. As a result, they may be left with little choice but to accept low-wage work that does not match their skills. Other refugees have spent years in refugee camps before coming to Canada and have had very little formal education of any kind. For them, the process of settlement can be overwhelming, and their lack of basic education poses seemingly insurmountable challenges.

Women refugees and their children are particularly vulnerable as they struggle to adapt to their new homes. Women are not prepared for the pressures to learn a new language, find work, and care for their children in a society with very different rules. This paper is based on the voices, concerns and interests of refugee women who participated in this research. As well, the policy recommendations were developed in discussion and collaboration with refugee women to find solutions to the problems they face in their everyday lives in Winnipeg.

Inner-City African Women Begin to Speak Out

Discouraged by the barriers that continue to keep them from fully joining Winnipeg life, refugee women are slowly and cautiously beginning to speak out. Many are frustrated with the difficulty they experience as they try to move forward. They come to Canada with hopes and dreams for better lives for their families but find themselves unable to escape poverty. They hesitate to ‘complain’ as they are extremely grateful to have been accepted into Canada and they do not want to jeopardize their good fortune. So they have carried on in silence, giving up on the dreams they had for themselves and hoping life will be better for their children.

Using a Participatory Action Research (PAR) framework, the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives—Manitoba worked with members of the Somali Canadian Family and Youth Association to develop a culturally sensitive interview instrument to collect women’s stories and perspectives. A woman from the Somali community was hired to conduct 15 interviews with Somali women and to help facilitate two focus groups. Responses were analyzed for key themes to identify the concerns and issues facing refugee women, and to gather their suggestions for policy makers and service providers.⁴

The initial plan to interview only Somali women was altered to include refugee women from other countries when some community women became reluctant to participate. Some women attributed their reasons for withdrawing to their husbands not wanting them to be interviewed. In order to proceed with the project, we decided to broaden our scope to include interviews with women from Ethiopia and Sudan. Our project was further broadened when one focus group

⁴ For a full description of the methods and methodology used (including ethics review) see the full report at www.policyalternatives.ca

drew refugee women from Vietnam, Brazil, Afghanistan, Columbia and Ethiopia.⁵ The fifteen women who came to that focus group varied in their cultural backgrounds, the number of years they had lived in Canada, and their age, but they all shared the experience of being refugees and adjusting to life in Canada, and many of their struggles and concerns were the same.

Our project also included interviews with service providers, such as community-based settlement workers and provincial government officials in Employment and Income Assistance, to better understand the Canadian systems and services women encountered.

One Woman's Story

The women interviewed shared their stories about their motivations to come to Canada; their often harrowing journeys here from their home countries, and their experiences after arriving in Canada. Their journeys and experiences are crucial to our understanding of the histories that they bring with them and the challenges they face when they arrive.

To provide context to the pages that follow, we share a vignette of one Somali woman's story of her physical and emotional journey to Canada. In respect for her privacy, we do not reveal her real name.

Hawa bravely told us in detail of her narrow escape from death during the war in Somalia. Her journey from Somalia to Canada is so horrific that it is difficult for Canadians to fully grasp, and yet her experience is not uncommon.

When political unrest in Somalia grew in 1993, Hawa was about 19 years old. There had been internal battles going on for many months, so at first when militant groups began fighting in her

city and she and her family fled, they expected that fighting would subside and they would be able to return home within a few days. However she and her family would never return to their home;

We thought "Okay, this is another one; we'll just go for the day and come back." . . . We never really see this as this is the last time you're going to see your home. So I had like a big sheet . . . I cover myself, and I was wearing a dress, and the only thing I took was . . . a small book.

Families fled from the fighting to a large field outside the city limits.

We stayed there for like—we thought we're going to stay there one day, until two days, three days, becomes seven days—people started starving. Like you've got to eat, you've got to go back to city, it's constantly firing. So it came to the point where they had to start fighting where we were. . . So it came to the day when we had to flee to the city.

I remember everybody just running from everywhere, I was on top of a truck, I don't even know how I ended up on top of a truck, or who's truck was it, whatever it was. With million of people, kids, adults, men, women, people you don't know, it was just crowded like this. And I was with my mom. None of my other family was there, everybody flee wherever, right? So we're trying to flee in the city, you have to understand everybody's trying to get out with their cars at the same time. . . It's jammed. Nothing. . . So the enemies are blowing the vehicles with the people on it, in the road, in the traffic, with their missiles. So you're afraid . . . the fear of dying and heat of the sun. Like seven days we didn't even eat properly, basically. People are vomiting on me, like

⁵The women were referred to us by the Nor'West Co-op Community Health Centre and Immigrant Women's Counselling Services.

the heat, the sun is killing me, there's people stepping on me, I'm stepping on people, it's like—I've never seen anxiety like that in my life; I cannot explain how it was. I almost had like heart attack . . . I could not breathe. I don't know how to explain, but I realize that before I get blown up, I'm going to die in this truck. Just the conditions in the truck, right? I looked at it and I said to my mom 'Listen, I can't be here, I need to get out.' I wanted to get out.

She and her mother got out of the truck and began to walk. They were fortunate enough to know a local dialect, and pretended to be from the rebel tribes. They moved through this tribe's territory on foot, in continual fear of being discovered and killed, or starving to death.

. . . so we traveled with them three months, we slept during the day, I can't even tell you was it three months, was it six months . . . I just thought it was three months, but it was maybe more than that, I don't know . . . So we sleep all day, you stay, rest all day, and then we started walking at night.

They walked twelve hours a night, and for so many days that their clothes were destroyed and they had to make garments from the blanket and leaves from trees.

I eventually came to a city where it was my people and my tribe . . . they're still fighting with the enemies, there's still a fight going on, like you see the corpses on the road, it's just the enemy [so] they don't even bury them, and it's like—and constant attacks from the enemy . . . when we rested, I spoke to my mom, I said, 'I'm leaving and I'm going to go somewhere where I feel safe.' Because the women were being raped—there were 16 people that was traveling with us, that the moment we left, they slaughtered them, with axes and stuff like that, because we were the

same people, related, we know them. The girls that I know they're raped, and men they just cut their heads off, and I was—I should have been one of those people, except the dialect saved me and my mom.

Hawa began to walk to Kenya with a group of people who were going there as traders. She eventually ended up in Nairobi, where she met a Somali man who was twenty years older. She did not love him, but married him when she became pregnant with his child. He was an American citizen and wanted their child to be born in America. Once in the U.S., Hawa applied to come to Canada with hope of finding greater opportunities. However, her arrival in Canada did not mean that her problems and struggles were over:

So, that was my only chance of coming to Canada, and I was very grateful at the time. But it ended up to become more like he bought me. When I realized I had no relatives and I didn't have anybody else after me, there's no other people who's caring about me. He realized my history and my situation, he became possessive. And he thought "Nobody's concerned even if you kill her." Right? So that was where the problem started. And I had to stand up for me, to defend myself and you know, survive.

After being raped by her husband's friends and suffering extreme physical abuse from her husband (nearly killing her while her children watched) Hawa eventually gained the strength to leave. Her journey continues in Winnipeg as she fights to pursue her dreams for a better life for herself and her children.

Hawa's story is tragic but her spirit is an inspiration to women everywhere. What is perhaps most tragic is the fact that her story is not uncommon among refugees. The experiences of women like Hawa are critical for us to hear so that we can better understand the long emotional and physi-

cal journey that many refugees experience. We provide only a snapshot of Hawa's journey as context for the pages that follow and to bring greater understanding for the need for policy and programs that better address the complex needs of the women and their families who have survived the unimaginable before reaching their adopted Canadian homes.

Coming to Canada—Hopes, Dreams and Realities

The refugee women interviewed all had expectations about the kind of lives and opportunities they would have when they arrived in Canada. Virtually all the women we spoke to expected that they would get education and training and 'good jobs'.

I was thinking when I come, when I get there I will study or you know, get a job, my expectations were very high. You know? So, that's what I was thinking. That I was going to do something with my life. Like I was going to be somebody . . . I wanted to have a career. With that, you have to get the education first . . . I am still in that. . . Trying to achieve.

Dreams for obtaining education and jobs were connected with a desire for stability that they did not have in their home countries. One participant elaborated.

I never had a stable life, so one of my plans before I came to Canada was just to have a stable life. I had my own ambitions; one of them was to finish my education, which was quite zigzag when I was moving around. So, when I came to Manitoba, I had my own plan; it was to finish my education, and get a job, and live a normal life.

Although all the women interviewed expressed a desire to become educated, work, and enjoy a

safe and happy life in Canada, few felt that they had achieved this because of the many challenges they faced in a new and unfamiliar country. One woman, whose hope was to become an active member of Canadian society and also contribute to the lives of her family in Africa, said that although she is in Canada now and her children are in school, they live in poverty. She said that she and her children have become a different kind of refugee in Canada: they are physically safe, but are constrained by their poverty and lack of opportunity, living as incompletely as they had in Africa.

For many of women, acceptance, support and encouragement were, and are, lacking. As one service provider noted, "Refugees experience the same barriers that other poor people experience. On top of that they experience the challenges of adjusting to a new culture, racism, language barriers and so on." We will explore these barriers as they emerged in conversations with refugee women.

Learning English and English as a Second Language (ESL) Training

While the women who participated in the study had different levels of English speaking and writing proficiency before they came to Canada, all said that language is a central challenge in adjusting to life in Canada. Even those who had completed English as Second Language Training (ESL)⁶ and had been speaking English for years felt that English was still a hurdle. One woman spoke of her inability to help her children with their homework, because they knew more English than she did. Others spoke of their difficulty getting into education and training programs because

⁶ Increasingly this training is referred to as English as an Additional Language (EAL). The term ESL has been retained in this report because it was the term used by the participants.

of their limited English. Thus further training in English was a common goal, however many women found that existing ESL programs did not address their needs nor accommodate their many responsibilities at home.

With no childcare offered by the ESL programs, many women were simply unable to attend classes, or had to bring their children with them, which affected their ability to focus and concentrate. One woman said that she found it difficult to go to school because when her child was ill, she would have to stay home and miss classes. Another woman said it was too hard for her to try to do both her own schooling and look after her children at the same time. One participant found that places in the ESL class were not guaranteed. She had missed classes to watch her children. She said that her place in class had been filled when she was ready to return.

Women also expressed dissatisfaction with the content of ESL classes. One woman noted that although ESL courses teach participants to listen to and speak English words, they do not teach them how to read and write. She found that this makes learning very difficult for her. Some women have never learned to write in their own mother languages, making writing in English even more difficult. As well, there was no progression in ESL to higher levels for people who have completed the course but wish to continue. One woman said that it is no help for immigrants to keep repeating the same course. Another woman commented that the content of ESL courses was disappointing, because they mostly listened to the teacher speak and had no opportunity to speak themselves. This made her hesitant to speak English because she had no practice in a supportive learning environment.

The teaching style used in many ESL classes was another major concern. One woman noted that since most ESL teachers only speak English, the students cannot understand the teacher, and therefore they have difficulty when they get stuck. In

other cases, classes are conducted by teachers who converse in a second language shared by some, creating greater confusion for other students. For example, one Somali woman talked about being placed in an ESL class where the teacher and all the other students spoke Chinese. The teacher explained words and wrote in Chinese, which made the course even more confusing for the Somali student.

Education, Training and Social Assistance

Other education and training to get jobs was a key issue for virtually all the women we spoke with. Women particularly noted the expense, long waiting lists, and the limited choices that social assistance allows them.

What is stopping me? . . . I'm not being provided with the opportunities that fit my needs....first, I'm a refugee, that's first. That itself is keeping me. And by that I mean—I can't get a job. I can't get a job that will pay me enough to be able to pay for my daycare, and live, and you know? . . . I can't pay for anything. . . The hardship is the welfare. That's the barrier. Because I'm on welfare and I can't, I can't study. I'm on welfare. I have to just do what I'm told and just go look for a job. Which I can't because, what am I looking [for]? What kind of job? . . . I don't qualify for anything.

We were most confused by the stories that women told us about their difficulties getting financial support from Employment and Income Assistance (EIA)⁷ to further their education and

⁷ Employment and Income Assistance is the Manitoba Government program that is more generally referred to as 'social assistance' or 'welfare'.

qualify for decent paying jobs. They told us that EIA would not cover their costs for tuition and books. Living allowances are provided for short-term training only. They told us that they were not encouraged to pursue education and training but rather to get jobs—any jobs. But the reality for these women is that without education or training, the jobs available to them are limited to those paying low wages and often requiring them to work hours not conducive to their lives as parents—often sole parents. For others, finding work without further ESL or other training is impossible.

The women interviewed repeatedly told us of the pressure they received from social assistance workers to find jobs, regardless of wages, work hours and conditions of work. This creates a great deal of stress in many women's lives. For women with childcare and other social responsibilities, working full-time is neither possible nor financially beneficial. As one woman said, it will not benefit her to work full-time, because she will then have to pay for childcare. However, she receives no support from social assistance to attempt to work part-time and attend school part-time while also caring for her children. When she wanted to move on to higher education to get a well-paying job, her social assistance worker told her she could not be covered to go to classes.

Another woman described her difficulty with attempting to study for a health-care program while caring for her two kids. She has been accepted to a program, but she has to pay \$4500, and welfare will not cover her school fees. She wants to take the course to enable her to get off social assistance, but she has no one to help her pay. Another woman who was in a similar situation was also being pressured to get a job before improving her English skills and going to school. She told us that she stood up for herself and her son's future and the worker then changed her mind; she is now allowed to pursue school for two years. She stressed that welfare workers need

to understand that people rely on social assistance for different reasons, and they should not all be dealt with as if their situations were the same. She felt that refugees' special challenges and concerns were not taken into account and workers were often insensitive. She gave the example of being told by a worker to give up her goal of learning more English. "You don't need English for cleaning," she was told.

One woman told us of feeling "trapped and hopeless" on welfare. While she is able to pay her rent with the financial assistance that EIA provides, she can't afford to pay her utilities and therefore uses her food allowance to do so. She is then forced to rely on her neighbours for food. She expressed her frustration and hopelessness that the opportunities for education and employment that she hoped for when coming to Canada will never be realized.

In an effort to better understand what the women described and current policies we met with civil servants from Employment and Income Assistance. We were told that while EIA will provide assistance for clients to participate in training, the policy of EIA is 'work-first'. Clients are assessed to determine their level and suitability for work and they are expected to work if they are able. Upon the discretion of the worker, clients may be provided with basic living allowances while attending training, however the norm is short-term training.⁸

EIA staff advised us that they "are not in the business of supporting people to get careers....if they want to go to university, they can do so just

⁸ EIA policy is dependent upon the category of the client. For example, clients with children under six may be supported through up to two years of training. Others may be supported through training that is much shorter in duration. But the policy appears to be arbitrary and upon the discretion of the worker.

like anyone else....they can get student loans...we are here to transition people to work as quickly as possible.....our policy is 'work-first'".

A few of the women that we interviewed told us that they had qualified for University Access programs⁹ but were told by EIA that they were not eligible for living allowances to participate because the programs were beyond the maximum two-year period allowed. When asked about government policy to support EIA clients qualifying for four-year university Access programs, we were advised that the current policy allows for decisions to be made at the discretion of caseworkers. We were also advised that this policy is under review because it is inconsistent with the two-year limit and 'work first' policy, and therefore the option to enroll in university Access programs will likely be eliminated in the future.

Systemic Attitudes

A common theme in interviews was the treatment women received from social assistance caseworkers. One respondent articulated the effects of this treatment, which others had experienced too.

⁹ See Manitoba government website www.edu.gov.mb.ca/aet/unicoll/access.html for a description of Manitoba Access Programs. These programs are targeted toward Aboriginal people and others with barriers to education. When introduced in the 1980s clients on social assistance who were accepted into the programs were provided with living allowances for the duration of the program. This was phased out in the 1990s under the Filmon government. While the current NDP government has expanded funding for Access programs, they have not reinstated policy to provide living allowances although exceptions are made upon the discretion of EIA case workers.

One thing I find very difficult is the way social workers and the social offices handle people, which is very inhumane, very, very inhumane..... They treat people as if they are stones...They need to open up, understand human problems...People go to Social Assistance in order to—as a last resort, in order to keep what they have ...and encourage this person to find a job in a very appropriate manner. Without hurting his pride. I applied [for] social assistance one time in my whole life, and the experience I had of it still never leaves me. It was so shameful.

One woman said she feels that people on welfare are not supported or encouraged. The workers treat people with disrespect, and there is no trust, even when people are doing everything they can to better their lives and situations. Another woman said that the welfare system treats everyone like criminals. She wished workers could understand that refugees come here with nothing and are just trying to get started in Canada and they need help.

One woman volunteers as an interpreter for other Somali women who cannot speak English and cannot understand their social-assistance workers. In her experience as an interpreter, she told us she has seen many women treated with disrespect, even when misunderstandings arise because of basic miscommunication. She told us that in one case the social-assistance worker yelled at a woman and walked away from her, refusing to talk to her until she had filled out a form of some kind. The interpreter was astonished and did not know how to translate the situation to the woman she was helping.

Women also mentioned that there is a lack of information given to refugees about Canadian systems and services. Thus, they felt that workers were not always honest with refugees about their entitlements. One woman with two young children was only receiving \$600 a month. When she told other women, she realized that she was really

entitled to \$1000 a month. The women wondered how many more women were not receiving their benefits due to a lack of information about their rights from the social-assistance workers.

The problems with the attitudes of social-assistance workers may stem from the structure and policies of the social assistance system as a whole. In interviews with government officials from Employment and Income Assistance, there was a lack of understanding about the cultural, social and economic backgrounds of refugee women, or their needs. The focus of the system on employment, no matter how low paying, unskilled or unattractive, effectively destroys the hopes and dreams of the poor—refugee and non-refugee—by providing only the barest of necessities and withholding support that would allow access to opportunities enjoyed by others. It should also be noted that many of the women interviewed stressed a reluctance to ‘complain’ due to a fear of being denied assistance or being sent ‘home’.

Safety, Gangs and Parenting

We asked women how safe they feel in Canada. As one woman pointed out to us, many refugees would say that they felt safe because their only point of reference was life in their war-torn homelands. She stressed that while some women might say they were safe by the standards of their home countries, they were still living in conditions that most Canadians would consider to be unsafe and unacceptable.

While a couple of women felt perfectly safe living in the inner city, many other women had concerns with living in the area. Living in an area where they do not feel safe leaving their homes or speaking to other people is stressful and isolating. Subsidized housing is often in the inner city. The women have no choice but to live in areas of the city where they often do not feel safe. One woman described her concern as she regularly sees people selling and using drugs in the housing complex where she lives with her children. Another woman

particularly mentioned the exposure to violence and addictions.

I don't like [it] there because in downtown there is very noise, and there is drunk people there, and there's like bad things, and I have children—they, if they saw that things, it's not good.

Prolonged exposure to homes and neighborhoods with high levels of gang and other criminal activity creates special concerns and problems for mothers with young and teenage children. Women noted that their children regularly see and speak to gang members, and that the presence of gangs starts to seem normal to them. These children have a greater risk of being recruited by gangs, due to their low income and proximity to gang activity.

One woman's story is illustrative. Her son was about 10 years old when they arrived in Canada. He was enrolled in school in a class with other people of his age group, although he spoke no English and was illiterate in his own language having been raised in a refugee camp without access to education. His inability to keep up in school, or to relate to people his age due to his horrific experiences in refugee camps left him frustrated, angry and with low self-esteem. He was quickly lured into gang life and is now serving a lengthy prison term. His mother, who speaks very little English, still does not understand what his crimes were or why he has been in jail for so long.

Another woman's son was being harassed at school, and was followed home, where he and his mother were threatened by young people demanding money. Although the woman told the school, the school district and eventually the police, she got no help. When she put in a request to Manitoba Housing to be relocated to an area outside the inner city for her son's safety, she was told it would take at least four years to relocate her. She was frustrated and angry and felt that in four years it would be too late for her and her son.

Responsibility for Family Members in Home Countries

For many of the African women, family responsibilities are a part of a cultural tradition of communalism in which people take care of one another and share resources. One woman explained that parents take care of and sacrifice for children in the hopes that one day the children will support their aging parents. However, on arriving in Canada, newcomers face a society that is focused on individual needs and individual gain and success. For immigrants with children, a generational conflict emerges between the communal and individual lifestyles, and children are often too focused on their own personal goals to support the parents who sacrifice for and support them.

Women described to us the guilt they feel for leaving family and friends behind when they come to Canada. Many women have left family members in refugee camps. Being able to send money or other goods to home countries was a key concern among all the women, nearly all of whom were supporting families back home. The pressure to send money home led many women to accept low-paying jobs, to the detriment of their educational and career goals. As one woman noted, she would like to go to school to train for a job in health care. However, she would have to take out a loan and would be unable to support her family. She therefore feels trapped in her current job.

Families' expectations also present difficulties. Many women's families assumed that they were very well-off in Canada and should be able to send money. One woman noted that it was difficult to make families back home understand that just because they live in Canada, does not mean that they are wealthy. But the relative nature of poverty is difficult for families in Africa to understand when many of them are struggling to survive. As a result, refugee women experience extreme guilt and great

pressure to assist their families back home.

And that's why it's such a struggle, to carry a pain with you every day, knowing the kind of conditions that they live in...

Women who want to sponsor family members find the process is long, often taking several years. When the family member arrives, the sponsor is financially responsible for that person for the first year they live in Canada.

Men and Women's Roles

The women we spoke with also told us how different relationships between men and women are in Canada and the challenges they often face in their relationships with men.

A woman said that her relationship changed drastically when she arrived in Winnipeg two years ago with her husband and children. She started a job right away and then went to school, while her husband also attended school. Their situation was difficult, because in Africa the woman traditionally stays home and takes care of the kids. Her husband refused to help her at home, so she struggled to balance her work, school and family responsibilities. She told her husband that he had to help her, but he was not receptive to changing his role. She feels that African men experience shock at the Canadian lifestyle and how different men's roles are here. Eventually, she and her husband separated.

Another woman was very candid with us about her experiences with the change in relationships between men and women. As a Somali woman and a Muslim, she was married in her late teens to a man twenty years older than her. He was physically and mentally abusive towards her, partly due to ideological beliefs about women's place and worth.

That's what I saw, like the difference in my culture and in men, that we're not important—like we don't count, we don't have a

voice, in their world and ...[we are treated] just like dirt—I can't even express into words sometimes how belittling it is for women.

When she was assaulted by her husband's friends, her husband did not defend her, and instead blamed her for the attack.

So that told me right there, was telling me the fact that I was not important. I was really not important, in their world; I was not important, right? So from then on, I was very angry, I realized like the differences of other Canadian people, how they treat - like men, how they treat me, and how in terms of the Canadian culture, how respected I am as a woman, as an individual, you know, as a person, not like - that I have rights and all that - when I realized that, that was it.

The impacts of her experiences and the differences she saw in Canada finally helped her to break free from her abusive relationship and stand up for herself as a person.

I think what most empowered me, for me, was having a system that was supporting me. For my rights.

It should be noted however, that a new set of economic and social challenges face many women who choose to leave their husbands. As one woman who eventually left her husband said, "I don't have a choice, in my religion. When you're married.... I cannot divorce a man.....I would have divorced him a long time ago." The stigma and the loss of social and financial supports create extreme pressure on many women who choose to 'go it alone'.

Other respondents would not elaborate on the difference in relationships between men and women in Canada, but were quick to smile and nod when asked if there was a difference. An awareness of the cultural and ideological barriers that influence what women can do and achieve

in Canada is therefore essential to understanding refugee women's lives.

Community Involvement

The lack of family networks and resources leads many refugees to recognize the need to join together to support one another and to fight for rights and opportunities. The Sudanese Community has recently purchased a community centre where they can organize their own programs. Organizers at the Sudanese Community Cultural and Resource Centre plan to offer advanced English language training, children's programs and other resources that the Sudanese community has identified a need for. In the spring of 2006, the African community living in the Central Park neighbourhood established a summer market. The market, which was operational every Saturday during the summer months, was a place for people to meet and sell their crafts and other goods. This is contributing to a greater sense of belonging and new ideas of how participants can create their own economic development opportunities.

Somali women are also beginning to organize. They have recently formed a group that they call the Somali Canadian Family and Youth Association. The women gather on a weekly basis where they cook together, practice their English, and participate in activities with their children. One of the founders of the group expressed her feelings about the newly formed organization.

It means to me, hope. Because if we are coming together and talking about our issues and finding ways to have solutions, you know, it makes me feel that we are—we have hope, finally.

Getting together to talk about their issues is critical for refugees as they slowly adapt to their new home. There is a need to talk about the past as well as the present. African refugees who have survived horrific experiences on their journeys often attempt to put it all behind them when they

reach safety. However, many are still struggling with the effects of living in war-torn countries. One Somali woman described the effects of post-traumatic stress:

All of a sudden the post-traumatic stress just hit me ... I'm thinking about the past ... they just keep coming back to me like a movie. All these emotions I've been suppressing for all these years; they just came out in front of me. And then I'm looking at them ... I started crying. I don't cry. I couldn't stop crying for days.

Forming ties with one another and reaching out to mainstream Canadian society is not always easy for the women. Some were hesitant to share in any great detail, possibly due to challenges communicating in English, or out of reluctance or a lack of trust to share the horrors of their journeys with strangers. For many who did share their stories, they did so in the hopes that Canadians would better understand them.

Policy Issues

The stories that we heard through the interviews and focus groups we conducted provided common themes around which we were able to identify broad policy issues.

Refugees come to Canada with deep and complicated issues as a result of their experiences with extreme poverty and violence. Services have not been able to keep up with the demand and the changing need. There is a need for much more intensive long-term supports for new comers to help them through the long process of re-settlement. But services are overloaded and after some initial re-settlement supports, refugees are often left to sort it all out on their own.

There also seems to be a lack of information about programs and services available and how they 'work'. The women interviewed were often unaware of some of the services available to them and/or were given different information depend-

ing on who they spoke with. In part, the information received appeared to depend on caseworkers assigned to clients and what appeared to be arbitrary decisions made by caseworkers. While the policy that caseworkers have some discretion over what supports to provide can sometimes work in favour of clients, it often does not. It also gives clients little options for recourse.

The challenges presented by the women we spoke with lead us to believe that there is a need for greater sensitivity to the experience of refugees. This is particularly the case for EIA staff at both front line and management levels.

We recommend the following.

Better coordination of programs

A. CREATE A MORE HOLISTIC SERVICE DELIVERY MODEL

Governments at all levels need to recognize that refugees do not come with needs that can be responded to through the current 'silos' of various levels of governments and individual departments. Governments must learn ways of responding to refugees in a more holistic fashion and supports provided must be regular, intense and ongoing. The adjustment process is slow. As noted by one community-based service provider, we cannot simply find someone a home, put them on social assistance and let them figure it out from there. We need to help them gain access to training and help them find jobs. The journey for refugees is a long and painful one that does not end when they arrive in Canada. We must be sensitive to this and find better ways to assist them through this important stage of their journey.

ESL programs

A. IMPROVE ACCESS TO ESL BY REDUCING WAIT TIMES FOR COURSES AND PROVIDING FREE CHILDCARE

As many women's childcare responsibilities make it impossible for them to attend courses, this action would enable more women to attend courses, without having to pay additional childcare fees that they cannot afford.

B. TRAIN AND HIRE IMMIGRANT AND REFUGEE TEACHERS WHO SPEAK THE SAME LANGUAGE AS THE STUDENTS

Many women felt that immigrants and refugees should be taught by someone from their country who speaks their language. As one respondent elaborated, “Because they need interpreters in order to understand the English language, they need somebody to translate what is written there, and in my own experience I’ve seen people learn the English language more easily when they are with—when it’s being taught by people of their own.”

This is essential for the students to be able to relate to their teachers and for teachers to have an understanding of the students’ community and concerns. It would create jobs for immigrants and refugees, and ensure that students are learning language skills in a supportive and constructive environment.

C. EVALUATE ESL PROGRAMS AND INCLUDE STUDENT EVALUATIONS

In order to direct and tailor ESL programs, it is vital for the organizations that run the programs to evaluate their success. One woman suggested that assessments should attempt to determine whether students understood what they were taught, whether they followed the course, what they would like to learn more about, whether or not they were able to complete assignments, and whether the program was having the desired results. This kind of follow up would ensure that funds spent on creating ESL programs and implementing them were being used in the most beneficial and appropriate way.

D. CREATE COURSE CONTENT THAT IS PARTICIPATORY, ENGAGING AND GOAL-ORIENTED.

Refugee women wanted the opportunity to learn how to speak, read and write in English. The programs they had been in taught primarily by listening to the teacher speak and repeating words and phrases. If course content engaged the students in conversations, students would learn English more

quickly and easily. As well, ensuring that the course had goals and objectives would enable teachers to evaluate the student’s level of comprehension. More variety in ESL courses would provide options for different types of learners.

Social assistance

A. ENCOURAGE COMPASSION, COMPREHENSION AND UNDERSTANDING FROM SOCIAL-ASSISTANCE WORKERS

The experience of relying on social assistance is stressful and demoralizing, and these effects are exacerbated by insensitive workers. One respondent offered this suggestion.

. . . the first thing is when the person feels that he’s being treated in a very respectful manner; he’s open to embrace any suggestions as to how he can improve his life. You can give him opportunities, tell him where to find opportunities, and he will go, because nobody wants to be in Social Assistance. It’s all about human interaction, how you deal with people. And that is becoming very difficult. Most of the immigrants are new to Canada, they come from Africa, they have their own culture, they find quite very difficult to embrace this new culture, and being treated in a way that doesn’t respect their way or life, or shows them that they are unable to work or they don’t want to work—it’s very shameful.

Counteracting the apathy or detachment of caseworkers could include training on the experiences of refugees and their special needs, cultural sensitivity training, and opportunities for workers to meet with low-income refugees in a more egalitarian and sharing atmosphere. It should be a matter of practice to provide refugee clients with translation services in all meetings with EIA staff.

B. EDUCATE REFUGEES ABOUT THEIR RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Refugee women wanted to be informed of their rights with regard to social assistance. This includes what decisions social assistance caseworkers have discretion over, what clients are entitled to receive, and their responsibilities in order to continue to receive benefits. Positions could be created for refugees as advocates to explain the system to newcomers and ensure that they receive information and understand it. As well, these advocates could act as interpreters, a role that many refugees are currently offering on a voluntary basis. This would create meaningful employment for refugees, and would increase the diversity of the social assistance workforce, encouraging understanding and sensitivity.

C. CHANGE THE CURRENT EMPHASIS ON 'WORK-FIRST' TO ALLOW SOCIAL ASSISTANCE RECIPIENTS TO PURSUE EDUCATION, INCLUDING HIGH SCHOOL EQUIVALENCY.

This would allow refugees and all social assistance recipients to increase their employability and their chance of finding well-paying work... As one woman said, "when you do not have a good job it has a bad impact on your home life, your family...it makes every small problem very big. If they want to have a healthy community, they have to have the basic needs met. Have to have a strong foundation. It connects to family, community and society." This requires far-sightedness on the part of government and a commitment to invest in the most vulnerable, including refugees.

Community organizations

A. INCREASE PROVINCIAL AND FEDERAL GOVERNMENT SUPPORT FOR COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS PROVIDING ESSENTIAL SERVICES TO REFUGEES

Women spoke of the need for many community-based services. Women wanted to have cultural centres where they could bring their children and meet other people who speak their mother language. They would like parenting courses to

teach them how to discipline their children in keeping with Canadian customs. As well, they would like to see more recreational programs and counseling services for youth to help keep them off the street and out of gangs. Centres for refugees would provide opportunities to form friendships and build communities.

B. PROVIDE COUNSELING SERVICES GEARED SPECIFICALLY TOWARD REFUGEES TO HELP THEM DEAL WITH EMOTIONAL TRAUMA

This is one crucial service that can be provided by community organizations, and that refugees desperately need in order to deal with emotional trauma. As Hawa's story (see pages 25-27) illustrates, refugees often experience situations of fear and violence that leave them emotionally traumatized. Once in Canada, refugees may suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder, as well as culture shock, as they adjust to their new roles and responsibilities. Counselors—especially those who come from refugees' countries of origin and understand their language, culture and experiences—can provide sensitive, culturally appropriate counsel. Refugees must be provided with a safe and supportive environment in which to address their past experiences and their future goals.

C. PROVIDE GREATER RESOURCES FOR OUTREACH

While community-based services exist in some communities, communication and promotion of these services is often an issue. Positions should be created for immigrants and refugees to do outreach into these communities. These positions would increase the visibility and use of services by refugees, and would provide refugees with community workers who are familiar with their culture and language. One woman described why this is needed.

These programs—these people cannot speak the language, right? So many times they do not even know what's going on in the community. And the second thing is

that somehow, they do not feel comfortable in participating, or feel trusted to let go. Especially the younger ones, to let go to people they do not know. So they need a different approach to get those kids and a different sensitivity. . . We need people who understand the situation, right? They can understand - you have to understand the parents' skills, you have to understand the kids' needs.

D. SUPPORT IMMIGRANT AND REFUGEE-LED ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Using a community economic development model, in which the community is empowered to design, create and implement programs with social, cultural and economic relevance and responsibility, the refugee community could build its economic base. Women expressed interest in refugee-run community stores and businesses. These would often be based on a social enterprise model and would therefore require government assistance to start up and become financially stable.

Cultural sensitivity from organizations

A. INCREASE EDUCATION AND AWARENESS IN ORGANIZATIONS ABOUT REFUGEE AND IMMIGRANT ISSUES

Women also stressed the need for cultural sensitivity and compassion from organizations and workers who serve immigrant and refugee communities. It is important for workers to understand what it is like to be a refugee, and all the challenges and stresses involved. As well, refugees would often like to be helped and introduced to Canada by someone from the same cultural background and who speaks their language. Immigrant and refugee workers could be trained to work in these organizations. They would have experienced first-hand what it is like to be a newcomer to Canada and would have empathy and compassion for other newcomers.

Housing

A. INCREASE THE NUMBER OF PUBLIC HOUSING UNITS IN SAFE AND CONVENIENT AREAS OF THE CITY

While some of the women interviewed liked living in the inner city, many did not because they felt unsafe there. There should be greater options available for refugee women to choose from. Refugees often do not own vehicles and therefore access to public transportation, close proximity to grocery stores, hospitals, schools and other resources must be considered.

Cultural sensitivity in immigration and income assistance policy

A. INCREASE AWARENESS OF THE FAMILY VALUES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF REFUGEES

Many women felt that the federal and provincial Immigration departments and in particular, Employment and Income Assistance, need a greater understanding of the family responsibilities and values of many refugees. It should be taken into account that refugees who come here have people to support back home. Many refugees' lives in Canada are greatly affected by their obligations to support families in their home countries and social assistance caseworkers should be sensitive to this reality.

B. DECREASE WAIT TIMES FOR SPONSORING FAMILY MEMBERS

Refugee women wanted to be able to bring their families here, for the safety of their family members, but also to create a network of support here in Canada. If families are reunited more quickly in Canada, they can help each other and support each other to get ahead here. One woman offered the example that if her mother were here in Canada, her mother could watch her child during the day. This would enable the woman to attend school and train for a better job. Building family supports could therefore increase the resources available to refugees and decrease their reliance on social assistance.

Education, training and employment

A. DEVELOP BURSARIES AND SCHOLARSHIPS FOR IMMIGRANTS AND REFUGEES

Many refugees are on social assistance and cannot afford to pay for higher education. Current policy in University often excludes immigrants and refugees from applying for scholarships and bursaries. Many women felt that resources should be developed to offer funding and awards specifically to immigrants and refugees. This would enable them to train for well-paying jobs, ensuring that their futures are secure and stable.

B. EDUCATE REFUGEES ABOUT EMPLOYMENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Refugees arrive and are expected to function within a system that is foreign to them. Many of the women we spoke to expressed the desire to learn more about the system, including the roles of employer and employee, how to look for a job, how to save money, and how to bank money. Such an education would enable refugees to make informed decisions about finding and keeping a job, and managing money safely and effectively.

C. INCREASE OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMMIGRANTS AND REFUGEES TO IMPROVE THEIR EMPLOYMENT SKILLS

This is an essential goal that has many diverse components. It includes changes to social assistance policy as discussed above. As well, refugees are often pressured to apply for jobs that do not fit their interests. One woman was being pressured by her social-assistance worker to apply to work in health-care positions, as there are many opportunities in that field. However, the woman was not qualified or interested in working in health care.

We heard this pressure first hand from Employment and Income Assistance representatives. They told us that they analyze newcomers for their “skill set” upon arrival in Canada. However, this means that people are often pushed into low-wage jobs that they may not be interested in and may

not consider to be skilled labour, simply because it is what they have experience doing. Their dreams of expanding or improving their skills are ignored. Individual desires are not taken into account, and they are expected to be satisfied with any job.

D. ENCOURAGE A DIVERSE AND CULTURALLY SENSITIVE WORKFORCE

This includes cultural sensitivity training in workplaces, but also means encouraging the hiring of people from diverse ethno-cultural backgrounds. A woman experienced discrimination in the workforce as a Muslim woman who wears the hijab, the traditional covering over her head. She said that when employers see her wearing the hijab or hear her speaking with an accent, she never gets called back for a job.

These suggestions can create meaningful employment for refugees and help them to realize the goals and dreams they arrived with. While refugees arriving from war-torn countries have a high level of needs, these needs should be met with sensitivity and understanding. Refugees arrive with the determination and initiative to study, work and participate in Canadian society. They have valuable experience, insights, beliefs, values and customs to contribute, and it is essential to remove barriers and help refugees to overcome challenges to making those contributions.

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Bridging the Community-Police Divide

Safety and Security in Winnipeg's Inner City

I guess my belief is that society doesn't offer people equal opportunities, so I would never condone gang activity, but at the same time I would also say, how can it be prevented when you don't live in a society that offers equal opportunities to all people?—*Long-time resident of Spence neighbourhood.*

Introduction

In the *2005 State of the Inner-City Report*, residents of three inner-city Winnipeg neighbourhoods—Spence, Centennial, and Lord Selkirk Park—were interviewed to identify strengths and problems in each community, and initiatives that were and were not working well. We learned that safety and security was their undisputed number one concern. In particular, respondents repeatedly told of their fears regarding the prevalence of drugs, gangs, and violence in their neighbourhoods.

Winnipeg has earned a reputation as a major site of crime and violence in Canada. In 2004 the city ranked first among the nine major metropolitan centres for its rates for homicides, robberies, and motor vehicle thefts, and second for break-ins (Statistics Canada 2005).

Why is this so? In considerable part, it is because there is a strong correlation between inner-city poverty, and crime and violence. A 2004 study done for the Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics

found conclusively that the closer one goes to the socio-economically disadvantaged, geographic centre of Winnipeg, the higher is the incidence of crime (Fitzgerald et al 2004).

How do residents of inner-city communities interpret this reality? How do they define issues of safety and security? And what kind of policing do they deem to be most desirable? We asked these questions of residents, businesspeople, and community development workers in the three inner-city Winnipeg neighbourhoods.

To pursue this issue further, we undertook a new study in three Winnipeg neighbourhoods—Spence, Centennial, and William Whyte¹. We interviewed residents, business people, and community workers to determine: their perceptions of and experiences with safety and security; the role of the police in responding to crime and violence; and respondents' ideas about how to make their community safer. Because a number of people interviewed for the *2005 State of the Inner-City Report* suggested that an important part of the solution was “community policing,” respondents

¹ For the full report of this study, please see *Safety and Security Issues in Winnipeg's Inner-City Communities: Bridging the Community-Police Divide* at www.policyalternatives.ca

for the 2006 study were also questioned about their thoughts on this topic, including how they understood the term, what its implementation would look like, and whether they believed it would offer a solution to safety problems in their community.

The researchers met with active, knowledgeable community leaders in each of the three neighbourhoods to compile a list of study participants. These lists were designed to reflect the diversity of each neighbourhood, and included both residents and businesspeople (see Table 1). Forty-five interviews were conducted in the three communities. Interviews were also conducted

Table 1. Study Participants in Three Neighbourhoods

Sex	Female	60% (27)
	Male	40% (18)
Age*	20—29	14% (6)
	30—39	27% (12)
	40—49	34% (15)
	50—59	18% (8)
	60 and over	7% (3)
Self identified as	Aboriginal	53% (24)
	Non-Aboriginal	47% (21)
Sample Category	Resident	87% (39)
	Business owner	13% (6)
Total Sample		100% (45)

* One respondent did not give an age.

with 17 community workers. Four interviewers (three of whom are Aboriginal and all of whom are now or have in the past been residents in the neighbourhoods) were hired and trained to conduct the interviews. The interviews were digitally recorded and later transcribed for analysis.

We also interviewed seven members of the Winnipeg Police Service (WPS): Police Chief Jack Ewatski; Deputy Police Chief Menno Zacharias; and five officers who currently work in inner-city communities. Our aim was to clarify the WPS strategy for inner-city policing, and to solicit their views on community policing, the deployment of police resources, and issues such as racial profiling. These interviews were also digitally recorded and later transcribed for analysis.

In this section we report on the findings of this study and offer a proposal for bridging what appears to be a significant divide between residents and the police in terms of their perceptions and interpretations of the role of the police in the inner city. We also offer prescriptions for solving problems related to safety and security issues. We consider the potential of a “blended” policing model—centred on community policing, and on the direct involvement of the police in community mobilization—for bridging this divide.

Decades of under-investment in Winnipeg’s inner city, and of largely ignoring the relentless growth of poverty and despair, have created a complex and tangled web of problems whose solution requires much more than policing. But a modified inner-city policing strategy, at the heart of which is community policing and community mobilization, could become a part of a multi-faceted solution.

Centennial Neighbourhood

Three themes emerge from our interviews in Centennial neighbourhood. First, parents with young children fear for their children’s safety, and to a lesser but still significant extent, for their own safety. Second, most people we interviewed

do not like and even fear the police, and many related to us stories about what they consider to be inappropriate police behaviour—directed especially at Aboriginal people. And third, most people told us that they rarely see the police in the neighbourhood, and that they would like to see police regularly, walking the beat, getting to know people (especially children and youth), developing relationships with neighbourhood people and organizations, and improving the level of trust between community and police.

Safety in Centennial

Parents with young children—most of those interviewed in Centennial are responsible for young children—told us there are certain places and times they feel their children's safety is at risk. Many said, for example, that they will not venture out, nor allow their children out, after 8 p.m.; the dangers are seen to be too great. One mother told us: "Me and my kids, we don't go out after eight unless it's necessary. If it is necessary, I feel scared. I'm scared. I'm always looking over my shoulder."

Even during the day, there are dangers. Children being walked to and from school by parents are often exposed to illegal drug dealing and drug use, and to prostitution. Another mother in Centennial said: "Prostitution, that's my big problem, is when you're walking down the street with a child, who knows what they're seeing, and you have to answer questions like, 'Mom, what do they do?' How do you explain things like that to a ten-year-old child?" As well, youngsters are often harassed by other young people who are violent, and several residents told us stories of children and youth beaten up in the neighbourhood.

Several respondents observed that violence is common in the neighbourhood. Most attribute this to the prevalence of the drug trade. We were told that "There's too much drug dealers around here and I don't feel safe at all because there's a lot of shooting and violence," and that "Crack is

just getting to be a huge, huge issue. ... They've got kids as young as 10 or 11 running around on bikes delivering drugs." Primarily young men are engaged in the illegal drug trade, and they may or may not be gang members, but are believed to be by most of those people we interviewed. People fear these young men, so much so that they rarely report their activities to the police for fear of

Gangs in Centennial

I really think it's related to poverty. I think kids get recruited in it because they don't see any other options so it's a way of having money, a way of having some power. They say [it's] a sense of belonging. ... I guess there's a sense of belonging to it, but I think it's money and power, and sometimes just out of fear. They join because they're scared not to be connected.

I've noticed his friends really into gangs and everything and I try not to really let it get to me, because to me they're really just 'wanna-be' kids and they're trying to fit in, but for Andrew [not his real name], my 14 year old, he hangs around at Rossbrook House, which is in the area, so I find that good about the area.

Well, I know there's gangs, drugs, and violence and I wish it would stop but I don't know how you stop it. I mean, as a parent myself, my boy, I know for one he's involved and I can't stop him. ... I could just watch and hope that someday something will wake him up.

retaliation. One woman told us: “Nobody wants to say anything because they’re too scared. Like, I

don’t blame them. I wouldn’t say anything either, because they know where you live, they find out where you live.”

Parents of teens also expressed deep fears that their children would be drawn into illegal and/or gang activity. Some have been successful in pulling their children away from such activity. One mother described her long struggle to extract her daughter from such a life. “Well, my daughter [Name], she was in two gangs, she was with Indian Posse and I tried to get her out of it. But I managed. I never gave up on her. Now she’s doing really good and she’s got two children of her own. She really switched her life around.” Others expressed openly their fears for their teenaged children in the face of the powerful draw gangs have (see sidebar, page 43).

Our interviews reveal to us that many parents and caregivers live in a near-constant state of anxiety about their safety—and especially their children’s safety. A Canadian evacuated from Lebanon in July 2006 is reported to have said upon his arrival in Canada: “It is a very important thing to live in a safe place” (*National Post*, July 22, 2006, p. A13). Many parents in Centennial neighbourhood believe that they do not live in a safe place. Most, however, are poor, and given the cost of housing, have few options. Yet it surely cannot be appropriate that as a society we forget that those in the inner city also deserve that important ‘safe place to live,’

Policing in Centennial

Making matters worse is the lack of confidence in the police expressed by many we interviewed. Many told us that they rarely see the police in the neighbourhood. Others told us of their dislike and even fear of the police, and several described incidents of rough and seemingly inappropriate behaviour by the police (see sidebar).

We are not in a position to determine the veracity of the specific stories that we were told, and it is likely that the incidents described were more

Thoughts About the Police

I think it’s all reactive, almost all, just reacting to crisis, and even then they’re not, there aren’t enough of them to do that well. And I think there is a lot of racism and that, you know. Kids get targeted. ... I couldn’t say they’re doing a good job.

The role played by the police in our neighbourhood is to me not a positive role.

It’s sad when you see a little kid, just four to six years old, and see an officer drive by and the kid saying ‘You pig.’ I mean, a lot of that comes from experience of what they’ve seen happen. Some of these kids in this area have seen things that go on with the police when the police come to their house. I mean, they’re coming to get the bad guy and the bad guy may be their dad or their uncle and they [the police] can’t be respectful of it. If there’s little kids at least do it in a respectful way so they’re not scaring the children. And I think if communication is good maybe people would come forward with information to help stop some of this stuff.

I don’t really get along with them and I don’t think they’re really helpful in some ways because most of them are racist.

complex and nuanced than what was relayed. What is obvious, however, is that there is an “us versus them” perspective between Centennial residents and the police. The police are seen as an alien force, their activities are seen to be detrimental, and the exchange of information and trust between the two sides appears to be minimal.

Yet, there is a seeming paradox here. Despite the negative opinions of the police voiced by the residents, almost all of those we interviewed see the need for—and want—an active police role in their neighbourhood. And most have quite a clear idea of what that role would look like.

Perceptions of Community Policing in Centennial

Respondents told us that they want to see the police regularly, a “cop on the beat” to get to know the neighbourhood and its people, especially the children, and to develop relationships with residents and organizations in Centennial. They believe that if this were to be done, trust would be developed and more information would be made available to police to address the problems of drugs, gangs, and violence. The neighbourhood, they believe, would be safer as a result. In short, Centennial residents support a community-policing model of police work.

One of the community workers we spoke to said that a community police officer had been assigned to work in Centennial for three years, and that his presence made a positive difference; “He did some really good work with us.” However, the officer “was here about a quarter of the time in the end. He was being called out to do other things all the time,” outside of the neighbourhood. We heard this in other neighbourhoods, and from the police themselves. According to this worker, “I don’t think one person can do it here. And especially not if they’re *calling them away all the time.*”

A number of those we interviewed pointed out that the community itself has to take a part of the responsibility for neighbourhood safety

and security. Several spoke positively of the role being played by the Centennial Neighbourhood Project (CNP), and one person informed us that discussions are now underway at the CNP about forming one or more of a Citizens on Patrol Program, a Neighbourhood Watch program, or a Block Parents program. This suggests that the residents of Centennial are not passive victims; they are working to defend their neighbourhood and their families.

It would be naïve to think that residents can do this on their own. They need the support of the police, and they know what they want that support to look like. But they believe that far from being supportive, the police presently are a harmful force in their neighbourhood. Given that “it is a very important thing to live in a safe place,” this is a problem that ought to be rectified.

Spence Neighbourhood

Problems of safety and security, according to most of those we interviewed, are less serious now in Spence than they were several years ago. This may be a function of one or both of two things. The first is the revitalization of the community led by the Spence Neighbourhood Association. The second is Operation Clean Sweep, a Winnipeg Police Service pilot project started in November 2005 that involved the deployment of some 45 police officers—mainly in the West End—to suppress street-level violence and disorder, “including but not limited to gang, drug and prostitution related offences” (WPS Annual Report 2005). Many (but by no means all) of those we interviewed in Spence say that they like Clean Sweep because people causing safety and security problems in Spence are now less visible, and the police are more visible. However, there is a strong suggestion that Clean Sweep is simply “sweeping” various forms of dangerous and illegal activities into other neighbourhoods.

There is also evidence that what people in Spence really want is community policing. Most

of those we interviewed say that they would welcome a greater police presence, but they want it in a form that is consistent with a community-policing model, and some of those we interviewed describe the kind of community policing that they want as an integral part of the revitalization efforts of the Spence Neighbourhood Association. In this version of community policing, the police would work with the people, businesses and community-based organizations in the neighbourhood to remove or reduce the causes of crime.

Safety in Spence

Most of those we spoke with in Spence say that the neighbourhood is safer now than it was a few years ago, and that they personally feel safe in the area. As one man told us:

Oh, I think it's much safer than it was five years ago. ... I've talked to my neighbours, I've talked with my fellow people that I work with all over the place, and everybody has noticed that it's much different now.

There are still problems in Spence though. One long-time resident told us that, "Almost everybody I've talked to that lives in the neighbourhood is concerned about safety." While most people told us they personally feel safe in the neighbourhood, they identified particular groups of people who are still at risk (Aboriginal and new immigrant youth, the elderly, and people involved with the drug and street sex trades were particularly mentioned), and most said that they would not walk around the neighbourhood at night—"Oh definitely after dark, I wouldn't go out alone after dark."

While they are afraid of young people out and about late at night, it is not clear whether these are gang members, or merely groups of young people with nothing to do. Both opinions were expressed. One person, for example, told us that:

These kids hanging outside 7-Eleven with their hats tilted doesn't necessarily mean a gang, but the way people perceive is often

through the media, and this is what they are told is the gang sign or whatever, and so there's a problem. You know, many of these kids, if you get past the tough exterior they're actually pretty good kids.

Yet it cannot be denied that there is gang activity, it is dangerous, and youth are at risk of being drawn in. Aboriginal youth are particularly at risk, as are new immigrants. A recent African refugee, a parent, told us that some new immigrant youth drop out of school due to language problems, or have never attended school because they have come from war-torn countries, and when they look for work "Somebody will ask them [for] Canadian experience. They never went to school, they just came from there to here, and then they're not going to be qualified to get a job. What the easiest way is...participating in gangs." (See also page 31.)

Drugs continue to be a problem, and particularly crack cocaine and crystal methamphetamine. We were told that:

We're seeing more children out on the street working in the sex trade, we're seeing more crimes that aren't planned. You know, they just kick somebody's door in. They just want to get money and get a fix right away. ... Crystal meth and crack became available for free, you know, they're handing it out... because it's so highly addictive. And ever since then there's just been, you know, crime has taken off, random crimes.

Businesspeople told us that crime and the perceptions of crime in Spence neighbourhood affect their businesses. Two respondents remarked on the serious downturn in their business after a shooting in late 2005 that resulted in the death of a young man was featured prominently in the news: "People read that and it just feeds more into that perception they have of the neighbourhood."

It is significant that in Centennial, what we heard most from respondents were concerns expressed by parents about the safety of their children. Concerns in Spence are more about the activities of youth—young people in their teens and twenties. In these inner-city neighbourhoods, both children and youth are at risk. Most Canadians, we believe, would consider it to be immoral that children and youth face such situations in their day-to-day lives in the heart of Canadian cities. If we do not as a society protect these young people from such dangers, we are allowing the conditions to persist. At least some of the young people who are regularly exposed to such dangers will themselves

become dangerous, adding to the vicious cycle of poverty and crime. Young people need other activities and opportunities, the kind that are routinely available in more well-to-do suburban neighbourhoods. (See also page 17.)

Policing in Spence

Some of the people we spoke with feel positively about the police role in Spence. Most people, however, do not. There is, we were told by many, a limited police presence in Spence. As one person commented:

Well, there's no police presence, you don't see cops walking the beat or anything like

Mixed Reviews for Operation Clean Sweep

The whole idea of the Operation Clean Sweep thing has positive effects in that there's more of a police presence and they're more focused with dealing with, not just responding to, this thing or that thing but actually following what's happening within the gang activity and within the drug activity in the community.

A great thing, I think it's a great thing. I don't know, exactly, like you see the statistics in the newspaper and stuff, but they must be doing something. Like even the prostitution, I don't see as much of it out there.

I think there's a lot of people in the community who are happy about it. They're kind of happy to see any kind of measure that's going to try and deal with

some of the violent stuff that occurs.

Well, it doesn't work to eradicate a problem, it just kind of puts the band-aid fix, or sweeps the problem to another neighbourhood or something like that, you know?

Well I feel like Clean Sweep has probably picked up a lot of people, but as soon as you pick up people and charge them it just sends them to another area.

The point is that person [street sex worker] is standing there not because they want to stand there. They have a drug addiction that needs to be fed and they're going to, until they've solved their drug problem, they're going to be standing there or somewhere else. So when you look at the city as a whole, moving crime around doesn't help, it's just going to move to a different area.

that. You see them drive by in their cruisers, and you're lucky if you can get them out of that cruiser, kind of thing. You know, that's where they are and that's where they stay.

When police are visible, we were told, it makes a difference: "I think the presence of the police is very important because troublemakers when they see the police they just don't like to hang around. They shy away from them."

Our interviews also strongly suggest that perceptions of safety and security are different for Aboriginal than for non-Aboriginal Spence residents. One Aboriginal woman referred to the police as a "gang," and said,

We don't like that kind of a gang in our neighbourhood, especially when they harass our young people. ... The police have a gang, they're just another gang in our neighbourhood and they're taking over our neighbourhood and it doesn't feel good. So, if the police want to know about gangs they can take a look in the mirror.

This claim arises from the view, expressed by Aboriginal and African respondents, that their young people are being stopped and harassed by police. A long-time community worker in Spence told us that:

One of the things that's raised its ugly head in the last few years around here is that there are some really bad apples in the police department who are racist, who are violent towards community people, who harass people for no good reason. So, I mean, that's a serious concern. I don't believe by any stretch that it's all or even most of the police department that behave that way, but I think that there are significant numbers that do. There are just too many stories that we hear to ignore it.

This, of course, is the same complaint raised so

frequently in Centennial neighbourhood. And as was the case there, several in Spence referred to the police as an "outside force," with little or no connection to or knowledge of the neighbourhood. The police, we were told, respond to incidents. They are reactive. Something happens, they are called, they deal with it—although there were many complaints about the slow police reaction time—and they leave. No relationships are built; little happens that is positive.

Perceptions of Operation Clean Sweep

Many Spence respondents told us that they like Operation Clean Sweep because they see less of people causing trouble in the neighbourhood. They also like Clean Sweep because most consider it important that police are more visible in the neighbourhood. Nevertheless, many residents said they believe that Clean Sweep is not really a solution because it merely pushes the problem into another neighbourhood (see sidebar, page 47).

The views are nuanced. Many are saying that Clean Sweep is good because the increased police presence reduces crime, and they have been concerned about the lack of police presence. But they are also saying that Clean Sweep merely moves the problems to other neighbourhoods; it does not solve the problems. What is really needed, most are saying, is the kind of ongoing relationship that comes with community policing.

Perceptions of Community Policing in Spence

Spence residents know what they mean by community policing. One community worker told us that: "Every time we have a community meeting people say the police have to build closer relationships with the community—that comes over and over." She added:

We did for a while have the system where there were police officers that were assigned

to a beat within the community and they got to know the people there so the people that lived within the community could go to that person and say 'Ok, this is happening or that is happening' and they would assist in dealing with the situation. People in the community want that back. They get told that it's there, but it isn't there, because the reality is that although people get assigned to beats, they are constantly pulled off for special assignments, so they're not really present.

Another resident concurred with this view:

Well, community policing is to me when officers take ownership of an area and everything that goes on in that area, and they don't leave that area to go and do Charging Bison [a military exercise] and to

Neighbours as a Source of Safety

I think more of a solution is building neighbour networks. Like, part of the reason I feel really safe here is I've had fantastic neighbours, like, just unbelievable.

Just knowing your neighbours makes you feel safe because you know in a way if you're friends with people, friends look out for each other.

To me the biggest safety initiative is getting neighbours to know each other. It's the whole idea of eyes on the street. If somebody's watching, looking out for you, looking out for your kids, then they're safer.

go out to the airport for protocol because some hot shot's coming to town. They stay in their area, period. That's their neighbourhood, and they know every person in the neighbourhood by name, they know what's going on. ... They become the face of the police for the community. That isn't happening. The guys are way too stressed. There's not enough officers.

Many of those we interviewed told us they considered the role of the police to be less important in promoting safety in the neighbourhood than are various community-building initiatives that are actively pursued in Spence. One resident said: "I think it's not so much the police, it's the community itself. It has to be the community first to do the work, and the police as backup." For example, many people said that simply getting to know one's neighbours improves neighbourhood security (see sidebar).

It is clear that people believe that the SNA, I-CAN, and other community-based organizations are doing an excellent job, and that their work has contributed significantly to improving safety in the area.

You look down, say, Langside Street, I remember two, three years ago and boarded up houses like crazy, you know, and that was scary. Now I think you probably don't see one boarded up house anymore. ... And some of these places have been fixed up and there are families living in there now who seem to care for the property and for the neighbourhood—which is very good. And what we need is more of that. ... Like I said, that is a positive step since three, four, five years ago or so, you know.

What is needed now, people are telling us, is for the police to become fully a part of this neighbourhood revitalization. Rather than being an outside force that comes into the neighbourhood to re-

spond to an incident, and then immediately leaves to respond to the next incident, and the next, and the next—the police should become partners with the community residents, agencies and businesses to build a better neighbourhood.

William Whyte Neighbourhood

Residents of William Whyte also expressed concerns about safety and security issues. But there is in William Whyte a sense that the presence of violence in this community has become “normalized.” Violence has come to be understood as a regular feature of everyday life in this part of the North End. Nevertheless, this normalization of violence—and the harsh conditions that accompany it—is countered with a strong sense of pride in the North End.

Safety in William Whyte

Residents are well aware of problems. As one woman told us: “It’s parties just about every weekend and it’s always young punks and there’s always fighting.” She added, “I’ve had things thrown through my windows a few times, too. One time it was a beer bottle, the other time it was a brick ... anything can happen around here, it gets so crazy sometimes.” A middle-aged man described it this way: “Too many kids walking around with knives, hockey sticks. It’s just crazy. Guns, a lot of kids with guns, that’s just—a lot of kids selling crack. Yeah, it’s crazy, nuts. Lots, lots, lots of violence.”

Some residents suggest that drugs—crack cocaine and crystal meth in particular—are at the heart of the problem. A community worker who has lived most of her life in the neighbourhood told us:

I think the bigger issue for the last couple of years has been [that] the crack and meth situation in the community has really made people that normally wouldn’t be violent or vicious, you know, their lives are changing

and they’re changing in order to get their next fix so they’re doing crazy things.

A younger woman added:

Definitely the drugs and the violence are an issue, especially the drugs, because it’s just so open and out there that it’s almost like the norm for these kids growing up in the inner city. Like it’s ... part of life almost for a lot of them, so that’s really concerning.

As this woman said, drugs and violence have become “almost like the norm” for kids growing up in the neighbourhood. The situation seems to be getting worse: “When I was younger we were fighting fist and fist. Now people got guns. You know, it’s getting pretty violent out there.”

Violence has become such a regular feature of everyday life that residents have had to take its presence in stride. One development worker who works with street-involved women put it this way:

You know, what amazes me a lot, what I hear from the women, is how they accept that violence is a part of their day-to-day life, like, a story that would horrify me if it happened to me or anybody that I know outside of work, but that’s something that’s part of their everyday life, and that’s the horrifying part. It’s how normal it’s become for them, to take risks like that and to be injured and to be assaulted and to be sexually assaulted.

This is not to say that the residents do not take precautions or alter their behaviour. Many spoke of the strategies they use, such as avoiding particular places (such as the Merchant Hotel—“I never walk by there alone”), and never walking the streets at night, especially by themselves.

One interesting finding to emerge from the interviews in William Whyte is that many of the residents do not perceive gangs to be a significant concern. As one resident told us, “I don’t see them

as stereotypical gangs. ... I just see them as my neighbours, if anything, just because they are. Just because I think I have a better understanding and more of an understanding of who they are, why they're there." But while gangs may not be a serious issue, this was certainly not the case when it came to drug use, drug dealing, and prostitution. One resident said: "It's not the gangs that are really the problem; it's just the dealers and the people that are buying." Another concurred: "Drugs is a number one issue."

The presence of the drug and sex trades has generated concerns about the safety of the children in the neighbourhood. Residents spoke of their worries about needles littering the neighbourhood, and young children being exposed to and involved in drugs and prostitution.

Small kids, they come out and see this bullshit every day. There's hookers and some of them are 11, 12 years old. So it's crazy. Sometimes they're out there five, six o'clock in the morning ... these young girls, like, where they should be sleeping, going to school. And no, they're out there hooking.

One grandmother told us that, "We don't allow the grandchildren to go anywhere, even at the playground by themselves, no we don't ... If they're to go somewhere I would go with them, yeah. Because I'm keeping my own granddaughter and I wouldn't let her out of my sight. I wouldn't go anywhere with my granddaughter, no, it's too dangerous."

If one looks at the community through a deficit lens, then all that will be seen is the problems encountered in the area. But if one looks at the community through an asset lens, then one finds enormous strengths. And these can be built upon. A woman who told us about her son being jumped on the way to the store also remarked: "I'm telling you there are some amazing teenagers who live within the North End, and they've accomplished so much you wouldn't believe it ... There's a lot of positive things, you know, look at our gradu-

ation at Children of the Earth [the Aboriginal high school] ... They demand excellence and they got it."

While residents are well aware of the problems that exist, they also take considerable pride in their community. After all, the North End is home. Said one respondent: "I'd rather walk around in the North End than anywhere else. I feel safer here. I know more people." Another added: "There's a safety net here, ... for Aboriginal people there is. There's a safety net, and a comfort level."

It is evident that the lens through which we choose to view the area determines, to a large extent, what we see there. It is possible to see the North End—and William Whyte—as full of problems, as a "troubled area" and a "dangerous area." And in many respects that would be accurate. But it is equally possible to see the community as an area full of warm and vibrant people, and "amazing teenagers." To miss the many strengths is to misunderstand the more complex reality.

Policing in William Whyte

While some respondents believe that the police "try to do the best they can" and are "doing as much as they can do, as much as they're allowed to do," numerous people told us that the police are slow to respond when there are troubles in the neighbourhood. Several residents expressed concerns about what they perceive as a lack of respect by the police, especially for Aboriginal people. One woman who told us about how slow she found police response to be said, "More of an issue for me [is] lack of cop respect because of 'who you might be.'" She attributed this lack of respect to the existence of two cultures:

I really think the problem is more to do with the separation between two people, two cultures, lack of respect on either culture. ... Like, I mean, we live in a very racist city, our city is the most racist I've ever seen in Canada.

One way that this divide between the cultures can manifest itself is racial profiling. One woman described a visit by police to her home after she called them about an incident:

Like, I make sure I always have a lot of nice stuff in my house and that, like, I buy the stuff myself, and one time a police officer came in here and said, 'Oh, you have so much nice stuff, you must be doing good in the business.' And I says, 'What are you talking about?' He says, 'Oh, only crack dealers own this kind of stuff.' I said, 'Well, I'm not a damned crack dealer. I buy this stuff

out of my own pocket.' And I found that he, oh, he just really kind of pissed me off, like, just because I'm Native, I'm not allowed to have nice stuff?

The problem, some people argue, extends to "spatial profiling." One woman angrily said, "So just because you live in a certain neighbourhood then you're a criminal, you're a this or a that, all these negative stereotypes." Spatial profiling extends to stereotyping young people in the neighbourhood. As one community worker told us:

I don't know when it became a crime to be a teenager, but apparently it is because a lot of teenagers get harassed by police, and if they're walking down the street in a group of more than two—which is frequently the case because teenagers like to hang out in groups—then they're called a gang and they're treated like a gang. I also know of teenagers who have been pulled over by the police and harassed and threatened and beaten by police and who were told they were dealers of drugs when they're not. Now, how's that going to teach a young person respect for the law? I don't think it does, and I know this to be a fact because I've seen it happen.

The result of these perceptions and actual events, almost inevitably, is conflict. And because the police have the power, many people in William Whyte distrust and even fear them (see sidebar).

Referring to young people, a woman in her 50s who has lived in the neighbourhood most of her life said: "A lot of them are scared of the police because the only time they see the police is either they're picking up their big brother or their father or something, so they see them as negative." This woman added: "People shouldn't be afraid to talk to you [the police], but they're afraid to talk to you because I might look like someone that you're looking for and you're going to beat me up before

Residents' fear and distrust of the police

I know a few cops that I don't even get close to, I stay arm's distance away. I hear stories. ... I don't know what's wrong with them. They don't like coming down here and when they do they just give the people a hard time. They wanna' arrest somebody, they don't come down here for nothing. It doesn't matter what you did, they wanna arrest somebody.

There's a lot of mistrust [of police] in the community, that's for sure.

They've got power issues ... I think the police have a very negative role in my community. A lot of the community, they don't respect the police, they don't call the police, you know. The community kind of takes it upon themselves to deal with stuff as opposed to calling the police.

you find out I'm not that person." She was quick to say that "it's not all policemen," and it is important to acknowledge that. Yet there are enough stories about the rough treatment by the police of people in the neighbourhood, and particularly of young Aboriginal men, that the result is fear and distrust of the police in general. And it goes both ways. One young Aboriginal woman described it this way: "I think there's a lot of prejudice that goes both ways. The police to the people and from the people to the police, and they don't trust each other, they don't get along, they knock heads."

Perceptions of Community Policing in William Whyte

While William Whyte residents are keenly aware of the problems in their neighbourhood,

The need for community response in William Whyte

I think honestly one of the keys to moving forward is to empower the people.

I think this community is a very vibrant community. I think a lot of good things are happening in this community, you know, and I think that one of the biggest keys to trying to change things is to really focus on this community as a community that has a lot of strength.

I think really people do care about their community. They're just not given the opportunity to really take an active part in making it safe. ... We tend to look, I guess, that the outside can come in and clean this up. But it's really the inside out. We have to clean ourselves up. We have to do that ourselves.

they also have a strong sense that things can get better. As was the case in Spence, many of those we interviewed in William Whyte see community empowerment as the ultimate solution (see sidebar).

There is a distinct sense, then, that the community itself needs to take the lead in resolving issues of safety and security. As one Aboriginal man told us, "I don't think it should be up to the police service to do anything. I think it should be up to the people themselves to come together and say, 'Well, we know we can stop this.' ... It shouldn't be up to them [the police]. It should be up to the people."

That is not to say that residents in William Whyte see no role for the police service. Quite the contrary. People do want a police presence, but as in the other two neighbourhoods, they want the police to be more a part of the community. As one young Aboriginal woman told us:

It's how they deal with the community, you know, because they just don't seem like they're a part of it. They just, you know, they're not working together with the community. They're working against the community. And I think that if they would just be more open to community input and being more compassionate towards these inner-city communities, because there are good residents that perhaps they could change, you know, that people wouldn't fear them as much. And maybe they can ... do something positive in the community.

As in the other neighbourhoods by working with the community, building relationships, creating trust, the police can play an important role in creating the conditions in which residents of William Whyte can find a new way forward—so that violence is no longer a normalized aspect of their lives.

Viewpoints from the Winnipeg Police Service

The prevalence of crime and violence in inner-city communities in Winnipeg has created a difficult and challenging job for the Winnipeg Police Service. How have the police responded to this challenge? What strategies have they adopted to resolve issues of safety and security? Where does community policing figure in these strategies? What barriers do police encounter in their endeavour to meet increasing demands being placed upon the Service? And how do officers react to the negative assessments voiced by inner-city residents, especially regarding charges of racism and mistreatment by police? These were the kinds of questions we posed to four general patrol officers, one community constable, Deputy Chief Menno Zacharias, and Chief of Police Jack Ewatski.

We were impressed by the police officers we interviewed. Most told us they entered policing to do something worthwhile, to “do good.” They take pride in the job they do, and they do care. As one officer remarked, “I feel bad when people in the inner city say that they’re ignored by police or the police don’t care. We do—or we wouldn’t be working in the area. We are frustrated sometimes, just like they are.”

The frustrations that many police officers experience, we found, have a systemic basis, one that is rooted partly in the increased pressures on the police service to resolve all manner of societal problems. As one of the few social services that operates 24/7, the police find themselves inundated with calls for assistance, especially from the residents of inner-city communities, whose access to other resources has become more and more limited.

But the frustrations also emanate, we believe, from the particular logic of the policing strategy used in the inner city. We examine this strategy, after first describing what officers told us about

their perceptions of the problems of drugs, gangs, and violence in the inner city.

Drugs, Gangs and Violence

The police acknowledge that drugs and gangs and related violence are a growing problem in Winnipeg, particularly in the inner city, confirming what we were told by so many of the residents, businesspeople, and community developers. Chief Ewatski told us,

If I could pull a magic switch and say there’s no more illegal drugs in the city, well, we’d probably reduce crime in the city by 80 percent. And I don’t think that’s an overly bold statement. But that’s not going to happen. We’re not going to be able to flip a switch.

The large presence of illegal drugs induces the creation of gangs, who organize to control the flow of drugs and the large profits to be made from their sale. One officer said: “Where there’s drugs there’s gangs. Gangs will control the drug trade.” The gangs and illegal drugs connection, Chief Ewatski adds, “leads to violence for the protection of drug turf, for the competition between people selling drugs, as well as some of the crimes that take place with people who have used illegal drugs and do not have control of their senses.” The result is the drug- and gang-related violence that was described to us in last year’s *State of the Inner City Report*, and that has been confirmed in our interviews this year with residents in Centennial, Spence, and William Whyte. The officers we interviewed offered a similar analysis. One told us: “It’s the hard drugs that are, you know, they just kind of exploded. It’s become so common. There’s so much crack down here [Division 11]. ... It’s really kind of wreaking havoc.” Another remarked: “The gangs are absolutely terrorizing and destroying the city. Absolutely. We have to have more support.”

Nonetheless, as one officer told us: “We know who 85 percent of these people are—we know who they are, we know where they are, we know what they do—we just don’t have time to do anything about it.”

To understand why this is the case, we turn to a consideration of the Winnipeg Police Service inner-city policing strategy.

Winnipeg’s Inner-City Policing Strategy

Winnipeg’s inner-city policing strategy is what some of the officers call a “blended” approach. Chief Ewatski told us that this blended approach includes the following elements: the inner city—police Divisions 11 and 13—has the highest ratio of police officers to population in Winnipeg; the front-line of the strategy is comprised of the general patrol officers who work in two-person cruiser cars and respond to 911 calls; there are community police officers in some parts of the inner city; there are School Resource Officers in certain North End schools; there are various special units (for example, the gang unit, the arson unit); and there is, most recently, Operation Clean Sweep, which has now been made permanent in the form of the “Street Crimes Unit” which will cover the whole city.

While police departments in many other jurisdictions have faced budgetary restraints, the WPS has benefited from budget increases in recent years. In 2005 Winnipeg City Council authorized \$146.7 million for the WPS, an increase of \$6.1 million over the previous year’s budget. As well, the provincial government authorized just under \$4 million for hiring 46 new police officers in 2005 (WPS Annual Report 2005), and Deputy Chief Zacharias confirmed that an additional 47 positions were created in 2006.

Still, all of the officers we interviewed said the resources available to the WPS are limited. Several commented that the WPS does not have the support staff to facilitate the work of more front-line officers. Deputy Chief Zacharias noted:

The people on the street are only as effective as the backups that they get, and when you don’t get the backups, that means that you have to take people off the street to do that work that those people could do, and that’s basically the stage we’re at. Part of our effectiveness is being eroded by our inability to grow the civilian side of the service.

Thus the solution to inner-city policing problems is not simply an increase in the number of general patrol officers; the problems run deeper.

General Patrol Officers: Reactive, Incident-Driven Policing

The heart of the strategy, and the front-line of the service, are the general patrol officers who respond in cruiser cars to 911 calls. Almost all of their time is spent responding to calls for service, and there is always a backlog of calls. As one officer told us, the front line “is the group that is stretched the most thin, that’s the most overworked.” Another officer explained:

Our main function is answering calls for service, and in this area it’s 99.99% what you’re doing because of the volume of calls that are there. So in a sense you’d be running from call to call to call, to complaint or incident. Once that’s dealt with, on to the next one, kind of thing.

Deputy Chief Zacharias told us that “our calls-for-service queue at any given time is anywhere from 60 to 120 calls waiting.” One officer told us that as recently as five years ago:

We could come in on a busy night and we could see there would be so many calls in the queue, it was like calls waiting for us to do. And we could say to ourselves, and take pride in the fact, that we’re going to go in and we’re going to clean it up. We’re going to clean up the queue. ... [But] it’s gotten in the last five years that you will never take a

day where you can say, “Wow, we’ve taken care of all the calls waiting.”

This officer also told us that, “It just seems now that it’s a never-ending cycle.” Another added: “As general patrol members, there’s nothing you can do about it. If you hammer and you take as many calls as you possibly can, well then, it’s just more calls will come up.”

There is a deep sense of futility attached to this strategy. As one officer remarked: “We don’t have a chance to get to know an area and a community as well as we can. It’s simply a numbers game, we have to respond to those 911 calls.”

Community Policing

According to the officers we interviewed, there is community policing in Winnipeg’s inner city. Officers are assigned to a neighbourhood, they get to know the people and the organizations there, they develop relationships and trust, they come to know intimately who is doing what and where, and they can be much more proactive. But the number of officers working in this area is small.

Community policing has worked well in Winnipeg to the extent that it has been tried. Deputy Chief Zacharias, who helped implement community policing in District 6 in 1990, told us:

I think we had a good model going there, and if we had enough people to do it city-wide people would have really liked it. The level of service was really quite incredible. I mean, we had a lot of people, like at one point in time citywide we had 25 people walking designated beats. ... What we did is the beat areas were actually identified based on high crime areas through the computer system and people loved it, people thought it was great. We liked it too, but like I said, we’ve had to filter some of those people back.

This seems to be the story of community policing in Winnipeg. When it is tried, it works well

and people like it. But the relentless demand for front-line general patrol officers, and sometimes the call for the creation of ever-new special units—the arson unit, the drugs unit, Operation Clean Sweep, for example—drains the strength of community policing, leaving it under-resourced. Community policing is “the first area manpower is taken away from” when other needs arise.

The School Resource Officer Program

The School Resource Officer (SRO) program places police officers in some North End schools. Each SRO officer is responsible for a high school—one for each at St. John’s, R.B. Russell, and Children of the Earth—plus five of the feeder schools for each. This program is a form of community policing. The officers’ job is to get to know the students and staff, and to develop good relationships and a sense of trust. It is a preventative strategy with a long-term focus. As we’ve seen, many inner-city children fear and dislike, perhaps even hate, the police. Echoing comments we heard from community residents, one officer remarked:

And why is that? Well, it’s got to be either they’re taught to fear us, or their encounters with us are unpleasant. Not that we are unpleasant with children, but we’re coming into their home and arresting a relative or seen on the street trying to deal with the subject and it’s not pretty. And it’s probably the biggest benefit of having a police officer in the school.

This officer sees the SRO program as a means to “break the cycle of all these problems.”

Chief Ewatski is a strong supporter of the SRO program, although he acknowledges that he was not at the outset.

When it was first proposed, quite frankly, I wasn’t a supporter of it. I did not feel that there was a need, first of all, to have that kind of presence in the school. ...[But] we

ran the pilot project for three years and I turned around 180 degrees. I'm a strong supporter of that type of approach in the school system itself.

Operation Clean Sweep (now the Street Crimes Unit)

According to Chief Ewatski, one of the objectives of the "Operation Clean Sweep" (the name of which, he told us, did not originate from the

police service) was for police to be highly visible in the community. "It wasn't just about going out there and just arresting everybody we saw and stopping everybody we saw." To this extent, Clean Sweep had elements of community policing built in. While the Chief acknowledges that one of the outcomes of Clean Sweep was that some of the "bad guys" were displaced to other neighbourhoods—a concern expressed by community residents—he maintains that this aggressive approach had the benefit of shutting down crack houses and "cracking down" on people who were in violation of their recognizance and bail conditions.

With the provincial government dedicating funds (through the collection of fines under the Highway Traffic Act) to a new Street Crimes Unit of 47 officers, Operation Clean Sweep has now been made a permanent feature of the WPS strategy. According to Deputy Chief Zacharias, this unit will not be tied to calls for service, but will focus instead on "generating intelligence." It will involve a form of "evidence-based policing," whereby officers are to be encouraged to "let the evidence lead you to where you should go." And much of the information will be provided by a version of the COMPSTAT computer system.

The central feature of this policing strategy is that it is not tied to the 911 call system, and so officers can be proactive in going after crime-related problems. This was a factor that was exciting to the officers we spoke with (see sidebar).

While the Street Crimes Unit may have the benefit of avoiding the continual cycle of going from "call to call to call", there are foreseeable limitations to this new strategy. When it was piloted in the West End, the program included not only a considerable police presence on the streets, but also a local citizen's advisory body. At least one community worker told us that Clean Sweep officers were beginning to work closely with and build good relationships in the community.

Officers' Views on the New Street Crimes Unit

We'll be able to do a lot of the proactive things and probably will be able to put a bigger dent in the gangs and the drugs.

The idea of Clean Sweep I think is great. Because any time you can bring together a group of officers who like what they're doing, who are dedicated to what they're doing, and aren't bound by our dispatch system ... when you're not bound by that, constantly having to go out, you can do that, you can develop your strategies.

I mean, we know who the gang members are, we know who the drug dealers are, we know where they operate. We just can't go after them because we're too busy taking 911 calls. ... But now that Clean Sweep is going to be around we'll be able to do a lot of the proactive things and probably will be able to put a bigger dent in the gangs and drugs.

Because this permanent Street Crimes Unit will operate on a citywide basis, it will not have a neighbourhood-based citizen's advisory body, and therefore will not be able to develop the same kind of community rapport.

The Street Crimes Unit is thus likely to become even more of a "zero-tolerance" form of policing. More drug dealers and gang members may be arrested and removed from inner-city neighbourhoods, but they will soon be back, either because, in the view of many officers, the justice system is "too lenient" with them, or because following incarceration they are released after serving their time. In either case, they will come back into the community and are likely to resume the same kinds of activities. As one officer remarked: "We can go out and do our job and be it the next night or in a week or six months, eventually those people are out, and the problem as to why has never been dealt with."

What Prevents Effective Policing?

With the present focus on reactive, incident-driven policing, general patrol officers are most likely to interact with inner-city residents in situations that are tense and conflict-laden. As one officer described it, "We deal with people at their maddest, their baddest, and their saddest." Officers we spoke with certainly understand both the challenges and barriers created by this aspect of their job, and how it limits their ability to be effective.

INCREASING DEMANDS ON THE POLICE SERVICE

One obvious pressure on police is the demands being placed on the entire force. As one officer put it, "everyone phones the police for everything now." Another officer commented on what was interpreted as the misuse of the 911 call system:

Unfortunately a big percentage of those calls are people who don't understand how to properly use 911, so it's a lot of wasted time. And I think we need to almost educate

people on why we're there and why you phone 911. ... You'd be absolutely astonished at what we go to that comes in as a high priority call.

At least two factors contribute to this situation. For one, the depletion of the social safety net in recent decades has increasingly limited the other resources available to citizens—especially those in inner-city communities—to manage their troubles. The police service is the one agency that is regularly available to the citizenry, which may help to explain why "everyone phones the police for everything now." For another, the increasing calls by politicians to "get tough" on crime have created unrealistic expectations and greater demands for police services to "solve" all manner of societal problems.

CHANGES TO THE COMPUTER DISPATCH AND REPORTING SYSTEM

According to several of the officers we interviewed, dispatchers no longer have the discretion to screen out calls that are non-emergency, and it now takes much longer for officers to enter information into the reporting system. As one officer told us: "Our reporting system is unbelievably inefficient. It just bogs everything down." Another remarked: "It's probably the greatest area of concern and frustration for front line officers these days, is our new dispatch system. On both parts—for officers and our people that work in the dispatch system."

Officers also expressed frustration with the demands being placed on the service to handle the huge volume of domestic violence calls, which, according to Deputy Chief Zacharias, are "still around 15, 16,000 a year." As one officer stated:

We deal with the same people over and over, and as much as we can do to protect them with what the courts have decided the actions we should take, we can't protect people from themselves. ... So that's where it becomes frustrating for us, because is

that a police problem or is that a societal problem?

Again, the police are telling us that unless root causes are addressed, they will continue to be overwhelmed, running from call to call to call, or as one officer put it, “chasing our tails.”

INCREASING SPECIALIZATION

Several officers commented on the problems created by the increased specialization of the police service. As one officer commented: “Every strategy that comes up once again takes away from our front line.” Another remarked:

Every time we create a new unit or something to target something, we don't hire any extra personnel to make that unit. All we do is take people from other spots to fill them, so you end up with holes in other spots. ... Even the number of people in community policing seems to have decreased from when it first began.

This issue was also raised in relation to the Street Crimes Unit:

It'll be interesting to see what happens because they're now taking general patrol members into those Clean Sweep spots, leaving more vacancies in general patrol. So it's going to have—some areas are going to be better, some areas are going to be worse.

This suggests that the increasing specialization of the police does not necessarily translate into increased efficiency of the service, and may well exacerbate the pressures on front-line officers.

RACIAL PROFILING?

One other significant barrier to effective policing is the apparent disconnect between inner-city community residents and the police over the issue of police mistreatment, specifically in the form of racial profiling. Many of the residents we inter-

viewed reported that Aboriginal people and new immigrants are treated badly by the police. When we posed this issue to members of the Winnipeg Police Service, we got a different interpretation. Both Chief Ewatski and Deputy Chief Zacharias were ready to admit that there were likely some incidents where police mistreatment occurred.

Police officers say they don't have time to engage in racial profiling

I don't think it's a fair statement to make to say that we target Aboriginal youth and we go after them and those are the people we go after most. Because if you actually worked within our department you'd see that it's actually a ridiculous statement because the call volume is so astronomical. We don't have time to target anybody—anybody.

We're reactive. We're always one step behind. We're not targeting, we're being told who to target. ... We are reacting to someone's description of what happened and this is who we're looking for.

If I'm going to a break and enter in progress, involving a suspect described as Aboriginal, I'm going to stop Aboriginal suspects who look like that suspect in question. That's what I'm paid to do. And as far as targeting goes, certainly in our division we don't have a lot of time to just cruise around and pick on people. I mean, we're just going from call to call, basically.

Chief Ewatski noted:

I'm not going to deny the fact that there have been times that police have treated people in a manner that is not acceptable. And when those incidents occur we deal with them, and if we could prove that that is actually the case, that that has happened, then those officers are sanctioned. There's consequences to their actions too.

Deputy Chief Zacharias responded in a similar fashion:

I think that it's possible there are isolated incidents where that happens ... I'm saying we have some people out there that probably go further than they should sometimes when they're making an arrest, not necessarily only with Aboriginal people, with a lot of people, and I mean, if people are willing to come forward and give us a statement and explain what happened, I mean, we're very anxious to investigate these kinds of cases. We don't need those people here.

Nonetheless, all of the officers we interviewed did not consider racial profiling a feature of policing in Winnipeg. Officers see this issue as "definitely the most frustrating part of our job." They say they do not profile or target on the basis of race. In part, this is because so much of their work is reactive (see sidebar, page 59).

Officers suggest that what appears to be racial profiling is merely a function of the large proportion of Aboriginal people who are concentrated in Winnipeg's inner-city communities:

I think it's due to population demographics. I mean, we have a large Aboriginal population in downtown Division 11, so we end up dealing with a lot more Aboriginal people than you may in a lot of other areas of the city, just simply because there happens to be more Aboriginal people living in the area.

In these terms, "it's not a profiling thing; it's just who fits in our category."

Chief Ewatski maintains that members of the WPS engage in "bias-free policing," but at the same time the circumstances can be confusing. He illustrated this with an example:

You look at our general culture now and you have people who are not gangsters or street gang members, who want to also look like street gang members and act like street gang members, like, the way they dress, the way they act, the way they do things. But they're nowhere involved in that type of activity. As a police officer, how do I know that you are a street gang member who could be prone to violence, including violence against police, or somebody who just likes dressing like that? ... How do they know the difference? So, of course, when they drive by you and when you dress like a gangster or you act like a gangster, what's the first thing that's going to cross their mind?

The Chief also expressed concern that charges of racial profiling and racist treatment of Aboriginal people by the police have become part of "urban lore"—that allegations of police racism become stories that circulate and grow within the Aboriginal inner-city community.

It's the perception that still I think we need to work on. Why are people still saying that, even if it isn't happening. Why are they still saying it? If it is happening, then we have to do something about it. I tend to believe that those type of incidents where our police officers treat people in a biased manner, acting on their own biases, are few and far between. But it's that perception that's still there, and how do you deal with that perception?

Moving Forward

A primary consequence of the reactive, incident-driven policing is that in almost every case that general patrol officers interact with inner-city residents, they do so in tense, conflict-laden situations to which they have been called by the 911 dispatcher. Naturally, in this situation, inner-city residents' views of the police will inevitably continue to worsen, notwithstanding best intentions of the police service.

Several officers saw the potential benefits of moving the service towards more community policing. Said one officer, it "is a fantastic idea." Another remarked:

[Community policing] is essentially trying to bring us back to what policing used to be ... where you had the option where you could meet people and get to know what the heck was going on in the area, so that when something happened you could say, 'Okay, this is probably where this is going to come from' ... as opposed to strictly what it's become is just reactionary, we're going here, we're going there, and there's no chance to get to know what's going on and get to know the people.

Realizing this shift would involve placing more emphasis than is now the case on long-term, preventative policing. Unless prevention is built more firmly into the inner-city policing strategy, police officers will remain on their present treadmill. Chief Ewatski confirmed for us that proactive and preventative action is key:

I think it's clear, we have to understand that we have to use all of our public money that funds the police service much more wisely in terms of not just acting in a reactive manner but in a proactive manner and looking at some of the funding that we get as an investment into the future of public safety. That's why we put a high emphasis on crime

prevention, and working with our partners within the community to try to prevent crimes because we realize that it's less expensive to try to prevent crimes than it is to try to respond to crimes. So there has to be a balance between having to deal with the reality of what is occurring in terms of public safety today, as well as looking forward to say, well, how do we prevent us from being in these types of situations too where we're at times overwhelmed by certain types of crimes.

The Chief adds that while the police service has the authority and responsibility for peacekeeping, "We can't do it by ourselves. We need the public to assist us and that starts with significant and sincere engagement with the community, and taking it right down to the neighbourhood level."

Bridging the Divide: a Community Mobilizing Approach to Inner-City Policing

We have been told by inner-city residents and businesspeople in Centennial, Spence, and William Whyte, by inner-city community workers, by police officers who work there, and by the Chief and Deputy Chief of the Winnipeg Police Service, that drugs, gangs, and violence are cause for grave concern in Winnipeg's inner city. About this, there is virtually no disagreement.

Beyond this finding, however, there is not much common ground. There are seriously differing perceptions of the role played by the police in Winnipeg's inner city. Inner-city residents and community workers have one set of perceptions and interpretations; the police have a different set of perceptions and interpretations.

Inner-city community respondents raised concerns not only about the general lack of meaningful police presence in their neighbourhoods but, more pointedly, about what a large proportion see as police mistreatment of inner-city residents,

and about racial profiling. Many have stories and anecdotes to back up these claims. Many say they distrust, dislike, and even fear the police. Nevertheless, most say they want a greater police presence, especially in the form of community policing. And most are quite clear about what they mean by community policing: uniformed cops on the beat, who stay in a neighbourhood long enough to get to know people (and especially children) by name, and who work to develop relationships with, and earn the trust of, neighbourhood people and organizations.

The police, by contrast, perceive what they are doing as very positive: they are fighting crime, and therefore contributing to the betterment of the community. They entered policing as a profession, they told us, precisely because they see it as a way to “do good.” In contrast to many of the residents we interviewed, members of the WPS do not see racial profiling as a feature of policing in Winnipeg. As well, the police see Operation Clean Sweep and its citywide successor, the Street Crimes Unit, as an appropriate and promising solution to inner-city safety and security concerns.

Thus, not only are there differing perceptions and interpretations of the role of the police in the inner city, there are differing prescriptions for solving the problems related to safety and security. There is, in short, a deep *divide* between the inner-city community and the Winnipeg Police Service.

A central part of the explanation for this divide, we believe, is the character of the inner-city policing strategy, the core of which is what we have called reactive, incident-driven policing. We maintain that this strategy cannot, by its very nature, build bridges between the police and the inner city. It is a strategy that only serves to open up and, over time, to *deepen* the divide between the police and the inner-city community.

Inner-city residents and community development workers think about inner-city issues in a *community-centred* way. They see inner-city polic-

ing through this lens, which leads them to favour an inner-city policing strategy in which the police become part of neighbourhood revitalization efforts. This standpoint does match the comments made by Chief Ewatski about the need for proactive and preventative action, and his view that the WPS “can’t do it by ourselves.” We believe that these insights can be the basis for building a bridge across the divide that now separates the inner-city community from the police.

Clean Sweep and Zero-Tolerance Policing Widen the Divide

So long as the core of the inner-city policing strategy continues to be reactive, incident-driven policing, the problems of crime and violence will grow. The introduction of Operation Clean Sweep is evidence, we suggest, that the leadership of the WPS knows this; they know that the backlog of incidents will inevitably grow larger. Police officers expressed great frustration with this approach. That is why they are so pleased with the introduction of Clean Sweep. It is proactive. Police can go to crack houses, pursue known drug dealers, and seize weapons. They can make arrests, remove the troublemakers, and make neighbourhoods safer.

But Clean Sweep is a limited strategy. Our interviews suggest that criminal activities are simply being displaced. To the extent that this strategy has been successful in the West End, including Spence, it is because it has pushed the gang members, street sex workers, and drug dealers to other neighbourhoods, whose situation is now worse as a result. Admittedly, this notion of the spatial displacement of crime is a contentious issue in the empirical literature. Nevertheless, while some research has found that displacement does not occur with respect to crimes such as home burglaries and car thefts (Ratcliffe 2002; Hesseling and Aron 1995), other offences such as drug dealing and prostitution have been found to be susceptible to displacement (Sherman 1990; Eck 1993).

Further, Clean Sweep is potentially dangerous.

It is a variation of zero-tolerance policing (see: Greene 2000; Silverman 1998). In zero-tolerance policing officers have increased powers to stop and search people suspected of committing crimes—even minor offences. It is reasonable to fear that this is a slippery slope to the kind of profiling that many people in the inner city already argue is prevalent. The result would be that the police would—even more than is already the case—be seen as an occupying force from the outside, and thus as the “enemy.” The divide between the inner-city community and the police would grow wider.

While it might be argued that the streets are made safer because more people are in jail, the jails are already full to capacity and this appears to be solving nothing. When people are released from jail their chances of finding employment are likely to be even less than when they went in. They are likely to resume their criminal activities, for lack of alternative opportunities. The problems are not only still there, but intensified.

To the extent that Clean Sweep and the Street Crimes Unit are modeled on the kind of zero-tolerance policing initiatives pursued in Rudolph Giuliani’s New York City, we would be wise to exercise due caution given the results of careful empirical studies of that experience (see: Greene 2000; Herbert 2001; Hopkins Burke 2001; Wacquant 2006). Reductions in crime rates in New York City were paralleled by similar declines, and in some cases steeper declines, throughout the United States, and the reduction in New York City’s crime rates began three years prior to Giuliani’s arrival. In addition, the number of uniformed police officers in New York City grew from 27,000 in 1993 when Giuliani arrived, to 41,000 in 2001, an increase of 14,000 (more than 50%) officers in eight years (Wacquant 2006). This represents a vast public expenditure to achieve results little different from those achieved elsewhere with different policing strategies. It is not likely that Winnipeg could afford a 50 percent

increase in the size of our police force, even if such were warranted.

What New York City did achieve under Giuliani was a considerable increase in: the incidence of police misconduct and abuse charges; claims made to the Civilian Complaint Review Board regarding police brutality and misconduct, especially by African-Americans; and civilian complaints about general patrol incidents (Greene 1999). Whether similar consequences will follow from the Street Crimes Unit is a matter of empirical investigation. However, given what we know about Winnipeg’s inner city, and the concerns expressed to us by inner-city residents about racial profiling, any policing strategy rooted in an aggressive, zero-tolerance approach is likely to create as many problems as it solves, or more.

We need an approach to inner-city policing that does not widen the divide between the inner city and the police, but rather *bridges* that divide.

Reframing the Issue and the Shift To Community Mobilization

The particular way in which we frame an issue can lead to particular ways of seeing and interpreting it, and thus particular kinds of strategies for its solution.

If we follow the current political trend to “get tough” on crime—a trend that frames the key problems confronting inner-city communities as the high incidence of drugs, gangs, and violence—then what logically follows is a move toward the kind of zero-tolerance policing strategy embodied in the Street Crimes Unit.

If, by contrast, we frame the issue as being about the social and economic conditions that lead to drugs, gangs, and violence, then we see these dangers as *symptoms* and we are led to seek deeper, more lasting solutions beyond “fighting crime”—solutions that have prevention as their primary focus.

In his interview with us, Chief Ewatski made the case for a blended inner-city policing strategy

that places more emphasis than is now the case on long-term, preventative policing. He made the case, we maintain, for a shift of resources to community policing. More than that, we believe that he has made the case for what can be called “community mobilization”—a policing strategy in which the police work in close partnership with community-based organizations engaged in a wide variety of neighbourhood revitalization initiatives.

It is significant that Toronto Chief of Police William Blair in an interview with us in late June 2006 about Toronto’s Regent Park public housing project, where community policing innovations are underway, made precisely this argument. Echoing Chief Ewatski, Chief Blair told us that: “There is, I think, a growing realization in policing that the police can only achieve so much,” and so they have to develop the trust of, and work closely with, the community.

Blair uses the concept “community mobilization,” by which he means police working *with* the community, a mobilized community, to collectively build safer and healthier neighbourhoods. In community policing and community mobilization the uniformed officer on the beat gets to know, and builds relationships with and works with, not only residents but also school principals and teachers, community health workers and social workers and youth workers, business associations, and community-based organizations. They are all mobilized to do together the preventative work of keeping a neighbourhood safe. Chief Blair concludes:

Community policing, and I think what is the next stage of community policing, which is community mobilization, helping the community to become stronger and more capable of keeping itself safe, is ultimately the goal that we have to work towards.

With a greater proportion of resources committed to community policing and community mo-

bilization, and with a corresponding shift in the philosophy of the WPS as a whole, policing would begin to contribute directly to the revitalization of Winnipeg’s inner city, and thus, over time, to a reduction in the incidence of crime and violence. In the process, bridges would be built between the inner-city community and the police.

Community policing and community mobilization would bring the WPS, through their beat officers, directly into the process of neighbourhood revitalization. Police officers would work hand-in-hand with the community. Policing would become not just an outside force engaged in conflict, but a community force engaged in rebuilding.

In this way, the police would become a part of a process of ‘asset-based community development.’ Asset-based community development identifies and builds upon a neighbourhood’s strengths or assets, unlike the more traditional approach to inner-city neighbourhoods which is to see them through a ‘deficit lens’—that is, to see inner-city neighbourhoods solely in terms of problems.

The importance of how we frame an issue can be seen in the way in which many inner-city residents interpreted the problem of gangs. Many have a nuanced and sophisticated view of the presence of gangs in the inner city. None condone gang activity, some fear it. But many argue that those young people identified as gang members are often not, but rather disaffected youth with not enough to do and with no meaningful job prospects. The trade in illegal drugs becomes an attractive alternative for some. Many of those inner-city people that we interviewed expressed fears about their own children being drawn into gang and related illegal activity, while at the same time expressing a deep understanding of why this happens in their community, and a compassion for youth growing up in the midst of the harsh realities and limited opportunities that characterize inner-city life.

This more subtle and sophisticated framing of the issue of gangs, drugs, and violence leads logi-

cally, we believe, to a shift in Winnipeg's inner-city policing strategy toward a differently-blended approach, at the core of which is community policing and community mobilization. This is not a "soft" approach. It would be very hard work. It is about uniformed police officers walking the beat, getting to know the people and the community, developing relationships, using conflict resolution and problem-solving skills, earning the trust of the people. While not ignoring the need to make arrests and 'get tough' when necessary—there would continue to be the need for a strong force of front-line, general patrol officers whose job would be to respond to 911 calls and, when warranted, to make arrests—this new approach would acknowledge and build upon the strengths of inner-city neighbourhoods.

It is this different framing of the issue that enables us to understand the paradox mentioned earlier—that so many inner-city residents and community workers distrust and dislike the police, but want more police in the inner city. What they mean is that the problems are real, but that they want different solutions. They want community policing, and they want the police to be part of a process of community mobilization. We believe that they are right. A policing strategy centred on reactive, incident-driven policing is bound to fail. A policing strategy infused with the philosophy of community policing and community mobilization offers hope.

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Measuring Progress in the Inner City:

Are Community-Based Organizations Having an Impact?

In the early stages of planning for the 2005 *State of the Inner City Report*, our community partners expressed an interest in developing a set of qualitative indicators to measure change in the inner city. There was a general sense that real progress was being made for individuals and families in the inner city, but much of it was not recognized because of how ‘success’ is measured. Community-based organizations (CBOs) expressed an interest in developing indicators that could help to show that participation in community-based programming has benefits beyond what is traditionally and quantitatively measured.

Given limited time and resources, it was agreed that the 2005 project would focus on a small number of objective indicators, largely gathered from 2001 census data. Members also agreed that further development of a more comprehensive method of measuring community change and growth would be deferred to the 2006 project.

As the State of the Inner City (SIC) Steering Committee proceeded with planning in 2006, we reviewed the academic literature on community and social indicators and measures of social well-being. We collaborated with CBOs to explore the concepts further and to determine more carefully what indicators would be useful to better understand the outcomes of participation in community-based programs.

What Are We Measuring and Why?

There has been a marked increase in the use of community indicators since the early 1990s. This has been partly due to a drive towards more evidence-based policy making and delivery, based on the premise that policy is more likely to be effective and efficient when it is grounded in clear and comprehensive information and evidence (Dobilas and Battye, 2005, p. 6). Whether or not evidence is truly used to effect policy change, funding and granting agencies increasingly require that recipients describe “indicators” and “outcomes” as part of their financial accountability.

There is evidence that community indicators can capture aspects of social change that can't be measured using purely economic indicators (Diener, 1997, p.194). Community indicators can be a useful way to expand awareness and focus attention on conditions that have been typically ignored (Cobb, 2000, p. 2). They can help to identify troubling trends and they can be used to generate program accountability. For example, an increase in food bank use would suggest an increase in the number of households with insufficient financial means to meet their basic needs. An increase in the number of youth involved in criminal activity certainly alerts us to a problem that can then be further examined and solutions sought.

The development of community indicators has become a popular exercise in recent years. Communities are discovering that the process of developing indicators can bring many different sectors of the community together, fostering new alliances and relationships and providing citizens with a better compass for understanding community problems and assets, with the potential to drive community change.

However, the community indicator exercise also has its limitations. Cobb and Rixford, of *Redefining Progress*¹, caution that well-meaning attempts to balance broad and often conflicting interests can ‘water down’ results and the attempts to balance everyone’s interests “tends to make indicators politically conservative in the sense that they pose only a slight challenge to the status quo” (Cobb, 2000, p. 24). Cobb and Rixford (2005) argue that if the development of indicators is not driven from a common set of values and commitment to change, then it can result in a futile exercise that highlights problems but offers no insight into how to solve them. That is, nothing will be done once the measuring is complete.

There is general consensus in the literature that meaningful social measurement requires both qualitative and quantitative measures. Objective social indicators are useful in that they are easy to define and quantify, and they allow for comparison over time, place and group (Diener and Suh, 1997, 193).

However, there is increasing interest in measuring individual and community change from the perceptions of individuals. For example, qualitatively measuring ‘social well-being’ has become increasingly popular. The point of subjective well-being research is that in order to directly understand the well-being of an individual, it is necessary to look beyond objective resources and circumstances. This form of measurement is built

from indicators that are based on individuals’ own experience of their lives, based on their own standards (Diener and Suh, 1996). Individuals’ own assessment of their well being must be taken into consideration, and must be valued above or equally to the judgements of policy makers and academics (Diener and Suh, 201).

There is also a growing trend to use ‘narratives’ or ‘life-stories’ in social science research. The use of life-stories “results in unique and rich data that cannot be obtained from experiments, questionnaires, or observations,” (Lielich, Tuval-Mashiach, and Zilber, 1998). The powerful impact of personal stories is most certainly not captured by statistics and other quantitative measures.

It is these forms of measurement that we found to be most consistent with the priorities identified by community-based organizations. Repeatedly we heard our community partners refer to the power of the ‘stories’ that they hear from the people that they work with everyday. As one told us:

.....What I like is their stories. It may not be numbers and facts, but it’s their true feelings and what the Centre does for them, or what the resources or programs do for them.I think that really, for me, makes me feel like okay, we’ve got these numbers, but are we making a difference? And sometimes you don’t see it, ‘cause it may look small or it may even look invisible. But the community, when they write it down and they say how they feel and they say what they got out of it, we may not have even thought of that.

State of the Inner City community partners feel very strongly that progress is being made in the inner city. Good things are happening; but the positive effects are often clouded by the overwhelming challenges resulting from the poverty and racism that continue to exist. Traditional indicators, while potentially useful, are unable to capture the potent individual stories that give inner-city activists the

¹ www.rprogress.org

will to continue with the slow, painstaking work that is characteristic of community development.

“It’s not always forward movement. This is not about where they are moving to, this is not about how far, where on the continuum are they moving. I’m happy if a woman moves, you know, an inch. Going into detox is movement. Going five or ten times is movement, but the point is that she’s past that pre-contemplation stage and she’s really starting to consider options.”

The process that this person describes is long and it certainly does not fit into the neat and tidy parameters that funders often require in their quest for measurable outcomes. The broader benefit for individuals, families and communities, from even the slightest ‘movement’, is difficult to measure. For example, what is the long-term impact on children who see their parents participating in the community and working hard to improve their lives? While immediate gains may not be visible, how does this contribute to the choices that children eventually make when planning for their own futures?

CBOs agree that challenges continue to overwhelm, and the very important social indicators measuring things like poverty and crime demonstrate that we have a long way to go to solve the problems of the inner city. But they also agree that many inner-city residents are not only surviving, but are overcoming significant barriers to the benefit of themselves, their families and their neighbourhoods. However, much of this goes unnoticed as governments and funders are preoccupied with quantitative measures.

One interviewee who works with Aboriginal women healing from abuse and violence pointed out that:

“Funders just want to know how many women we are providing service to and the outcomes of that service. What they don’t take into consideration is the broader effects of these women’s healing. The changes that

result for their children, their families and the broader community.”

Another interviewee noted that funders want to see the “*miracle change*”, and indicators and other measurement tools do not reflect the long hard work that is involved for families with huge obstacles. She observed that program evaluations and other means of ‘measuring’ also don’t acknowledge that people come to programs with strengths.

“...that’s really hard on families, to you know, make us [agencies] the heroes when the families have been, you know, working and struggling and we’re just building on what they do.....I guess this is just a caveat around evaluations. That they not diminish the people and the strengths that they bring to begin with....”.

Narrowing the Focus to Develop a Practical Measurement Tool

Discussions with SIC community partners, interviews with seven CBO directors, and a focus group with CBO staff quickly led us to focus on developing a method to better understand not just the *state of the inner city*, but the *state of the people* living in the inner city, by developing a tool to gather their stories and hear from them how they perceive their social well being and what participation in CBOs means for them.

In an effort to make the task more manageable, given limited time and resources, it was agreed that CCPA would work in collaboration with the community-based organizations that are part of

² CLOUT members include Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre, Andrews St. Family Centre, Wolsely Family Place, Rossbrook House, Ndiniwemaaganag Endaawad, North End Women’s Resource Centre, Native Women’s Transition Centre, Community Education Development Association (CEDA).

the coalition known as CLOUT—Community Led Organizations United Together.² The plan was to develop a ‘generic’ tool, through a community development process, that we could then test with participants of CLOUT organizations. The longer-term plan is that once tested and refined, this tool could have broader community application.

The process has continued with further research of the literature on qualitative indicators. Measuring individual perceptions of Social Well-Being (SWB) and developing understanding through Narrative Inquiry have been determined by CLOUT to be appropriate methods to better understand the outcomes of participation.

Measures of SWB are receiving growing attention from economists. There is a growing acceptance of the idea that individual perceptions of well-being are critical to understanding the effectiveness of public policy. John Helliwell, a leader in SWB research, argues that “policy interventions should be routinely accompanied by prior and subsequent measures of well-being.” He argues that “a fairly small set of questions can provide useful assessments of the level and distribution of well-being, and of the types of social capital and institutions that support it” (Helliwell, 2005, p.19). Providing participants with the opportunity to articulate their perceptions through their stories can add a dimension of understanding not possible through quantitative measurement.

Such a fundamental change in the process of shaping policy development would have powerful implications. Consider, for example, what social assistance policy might look like if determined by ‘client’ measures of SWB?

CLOUT organizations don’t dispute that both quantitative and qualitative indicators have a role to play in the shaping of government policies and community programs. But they are particularly interested in knowing how participants *think and feel* about their participation so that they can shape their programs accordingly. Do they feel that they

have benefited? Have their lives and the lives of their families improved? Do they have a better understanding of external causes—systemic barriers and colonization—and how they can move forward in spite of them? What is and is not working for them? What needs to change?

As noted by one interviewee “we need to be accountable to our funders, but it is more important to us that we are accountable to the people and communities that we serve”.

Developing a tool that integrates measures of SWB with a mechanism to share life stories, is one step to better understanding the impact of policies and programs on peoples’ lives so that we can push forward with what works well, and improve what needs improving.

CLOUT agreed that measuring change in perceptions of SWB throughout various stages of participation in community-based programs could provide valuable information to the organizations themselves, but also to governments, funders and the broader community. The next step was to develop a tool and a process to gather the information required.

Developing the Measurement Tool

Representatives from each of the CLOUT organizations, along with researchers from the CCPA-Manitoba, worked to develop a set of open-ended questions that were sensitive to the diverse and often complex lives of participants, free (as much as possible) of cultural biases, and flexible enough to allow individuals to tell their ‘stories’ however they wished to tell them. CLOUT has now agreed on a draft tool with which they are comfortable and which they believe will be useful (Appendix A). It includes both brief measures of social well-being (closed questions, for example “I would describe my housing as satisfactory/ unsatisfactory”) and opportunities for people to expand their replies, with their more broad perspectives and comments (“If unsatisfactory, why?”).

The Limitations of the CLOUT Tool

While CLOUT is comfortable with the tool that was developed, they are also quite clear that there are significant limitations. There was a lot of discussion about the root causes of the problems facing many individuals living in the inner city. One of the most important objectives for CLOUT is to increase their program participants' understanding of the effects of colonization and the systemic barriers that are keeping many from moving forward. But the group felt that it was difficult to specifically determine this from a generic interview tool. There is hope that some respondents may talk about this in their stories, but it was decided that asking a specific question may be intimidating for some.

CLOUT is also very clear that much of what they are able to do is *in spite* of public policies and programs that they view as inadequate at best and damaging at worst. While they can do their best to help individuals adapt, increase awareness, and advocate for their 'clients', the reality that housing is sorely lacking, social assistance incomes are inadequate, and access to good jobs, child care and training are limited, is largely out of their control. And unless public policy shifts considerably to address these issues, improvements in the economic and social well being of the people that they serve will remain marginal.

Next Steps

It is the desire of the State of the Inner City Team and CLOUT to move what is believed to have been a truly collaborative development project to the stage of implementation. Discussions continue on how this might be feasible given the resources that will be required. However SIC and CLOUT have agreed that if we are able to obtain the resources that will allow us to proceed with the implementation stage, it is imperative that the project results in a transfer of skills to the community being researched. Therefore, there is agreement that community residents, identified by

CLOUT organizations, will be trained and hired to conduct the interviews with participants of the CLOUT organizations.

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Appendix A

Excerpted from the indicator framework developed by CLOUT in 2006. Only some questions are included here for illustration.

Purpose: To better understand how participation in community-based programs contributes to the lives of individual participants, families and communities.

Note that this tool is designed to be administered through an interview process that would be recorded on audio tape. It would not be provided to individuals to simply fill out. Following the standard questions, Parts C & D encourage the respondents to tell their personal stories and to discuss the community agencies they use or depend on.

Part A. General Questions

1. Age_____
2. Gender_____
3. What ethnic background do you identify with?
(Interviewer to provide examples -Aboriginal, non-aboriginal, African etc.)
4. If the interviewee is an adult# of children (at home? In care?)

5. How long have you been a participant in this program?
6. Are you involved in other programs in the community? If yes, can you name them?

Part B. Indicators and Suggested questions

1. Health

Research has shown that one of the most reliable indicators of a persons health status is their own assessment

1.1 How would you rate your own health? (ask for each of physical, mental, spiritual)

1.1.1 Physical

- 1.Poor_____
- 2.Average_____
- 3.Very Good_____
- 4.Excellent_____

1.1.2 Mental

- 1.Poor_____
- 2.Average_____
- 3.Very Good_____
- 4.Excellent_____

1.1.1 Physical

- 1.Poor_____
- 2.Average_____
- 3.Very Good_____
- 4.Excellent_____

1.1.2 Mental

- 1.Poor_____
- 2.Average_____
- 3.Very Good_____
- 4.Excellent_____

1.1.3 Spiritual

- 1.Poor_____
- 2.Average_____
- 3.Very Good_____
- 4.Excellent_____

1.2 How would you best describe your health during the last 12 months:

1.2.1 My physical health has
improved _____
declined (is worse) _____
remained the same _____

1.2.2 My mental health has
improved _____
declined (is worse) _____
remained the same _____

1.2.3 My spiritual health has
improved _____
declined (is worse) _____
remained the same _____

1.2.4 My *emotional* health has
improved _____
declined (is worse) _____
remained the same _____

For each of the above, the interviewer should ask the respondent to elaborate where appropriate.

2. Access to resources (child care, housing,)

(stability, isolation)

2.1 I have access to child care that meets my needs

Yes _____
No _____

2.2 I have lived in my current residence for

0 - 6 months _____
6- 12 months _____
12 months—2 years _____
more than 2 years _____

2.3 I would describe my housing as:

Satisfactory _____
Unsatisfactory _____
If unsatisfactory, why?

2.4 I am currently looking for better housing

Yes _____
No _____
If yes, ask respondent to elaborate—why?

2.6 My children (or I if the interviewee is a child) participate in sports

Yes _____
No _____
If no, why not?

2.7 My children (I if a child) participate in other recreation/ organized activities

Yes _____
No _____
If no, why not?

3. Sense of self value

Self-Confidence
Motivation
Empowerment

3.1 To what extent would you agree with the following statement?

3.1.1 I feel that I have many strengths to share with others in my community.

Agree very much _____
Agree somewhat _____
Disagree _____

If agree very much, are they being used?

If no, why not?

3.3 Over the past 12 months, the likelihood that I will ask for what I need has

improved _____
not improved _____
remains the same _____

If it has improved, why do you think this is so?

3.4.1 I feel that I can make decisions and take action

Yes _____
No _____
Somewhat _____

3.4.2 Over the past 12 months, I feel that my ability to make decisions and take action has

Improved _____
Declined (worse) _____
Remained the same _____

Why do you think this is?

4. Social networks

social cohesion- social supports

4.1 How would you most accurately respond to the following statement?

4.1.1 I have safe places to go to.

Very much _____

Somewhat _____

Not at all _____

4.1.2. Over the past 12 months my access to safe places has:

Increased _____

Decreased _____

Remained the same _____

4.2 If you were ill at home, is there someone who would look after you?

Yes _____

No _____

5. Reciprocity

6. Greater sense of safety and stability

7. Physical Safety

8. Financial Security

8.1 Which of the following statements best describes your family financial situation

We have enough money to purchase most things that we want and need _____

We have enough money to take care of only the basic needs _____

care of basic needs for my family _____

If you do not have enough money, how do you make ends meet?

8.2. If you were in financial trouble, do you know someone that could assist you?

Yes _____

No _____

If yes, who?

8.3 Over the past 12 months, my financial situation has:

Improved _____

Declined _____

Remained the same _____

8.4 I feel that there are adequate opportunities and supports to help me to find a good job

Yes _____

No _____

(if no, ask them to explain what they think is lacking)

9. Stress

10. Trust

11. Belonging

12. Participation

13. Sense of Purpose

14. Hope for the future