

Neighbourhood Change Research Partnership Toronto CMA Team Update, September 2013

Alan Walks and Emily Paradis

1. Working Groups

- 1.1. **Collective Efficacy in Neighbourhoods.** (Coordinator: Rob Howarth, Canadian Association of Neighbourhood Services.) The full working group and a proposal subcommittee have met several times since November 2012, and have developed a proposal with the assistance of recent PhD graduate Rory Crath (U of T Faculty of Social Work). The project, *“Collective efficacy” in neighbourhoods: The role of community-based organizations*, will be led by Rob Howarth and Daniyal Zuberi (U of T Faculty of Social Work). The project’s main component is a scoping literature review of definitions of collective efficacy, theoretical debates, and ways of measuring communities’ capacity for identifying and pursuing collective goals. This will be followed by analysis of variables relating to social capital, networks, and collective efficacy in the United Way Toronto Vertical Poverty data from 3200 high-rise tenant households.
- 1.2. **Tower Neighbourhoods and Immigrant Settlement.** (Coordinators: Sutama Ghosh, Ryerson & Alan Walks, U of T). This working group met May 7, 2013 to review a proposal from Sutama Ghosh. The proposal is being revised to incorporate feedback from the group and will soon be submitted to the NCRP for consideration. NCRP has co-sponsored three events with Toronto’s Tower Neighbourhood Renewal Office (TNRO) and other partners from this working group (see below).
- 1.3. **Urban Youth, Schooling and Crime.** (Coordinators: Scot Wortley, Criminology, U of T, and Kathleen Gallagher, Curriculum, Teaching and Learning, OISE/UT). This working group met December 5 2012 and May 6 2013 to discuss project ideas and share information about data sources, in particular the student census of the Toronto District School Board. Several working group members are developing NCRP proposals.
- 1.4. **Age-Friendly Neighbourhoods.** (Coordinator: Sheila Neysmith, Social Work, U of T). This group held its first meeting on November 2 2012, and subsequent meetings February 5 and May 7 2013. Active community partners include United Way Toronto and WoodGreen Community Services. It has reviewed maps of Toronto’s older adult population in relationship to income and visible minority status, and has discussed potential projects. NCRP is developing a potential partnership with WoodGreen Community Services’ large study with older adults in East York.
- 1.5. **905 Regions & Hamilton.** (Coordinators: Alan Walks, Geography, and Shalini Sharma, Economics, U of T). NCRP Data Analyst Richard Maaranen has developed income and change maps for Toronto’s “905” regions, including York, Peel and Halton regions, as well

as Hamilton. The 905 maps have been shared with community partners in York, Peel and Halton regions and with the Toronto Star (see below), and a 905 working group will meet for the first time in November to consider future directions for this analysis. Maps and data for Hamilton have also been developed and are being shared with an academic-community team in Hamilton. Data on transit accessibility in the 905 and elsewhere is currently being calculated for analysis. Alan is working on this, while Shalini is working on analysis of immigration trends.

2. Data Analysis & Mapping

- 2.1. **Youth and Older Adults.** Richard Maaranen has produced a series of maps showing the populations of youth and older adults in relationship to income and specific visible minority group concentrations for the Toronto CMA. These have informed discussions of the working groups on youth and age-friendly neighbourhoods.
- 2.2. **Updates to 2010.** Maps, tables and graphs for the “three cities” analysis of Toronto have been updated using tax filer data, and now cover the period 1970 – 2010.
- 2.3. **Research Data Centres Program of Research.** NCRP has submitted an application under the new SSHRC-RDC “Program of Research” designation. The NCRP RDC Program of Research spans five years and multiple Statistics Canada Research Data Centres, and will allow for a simplified RDC access procedure for future NCRP projects. The Program of Research lists CMA coordinators and some community partners as co-investigators, enabling them to act as principal investigators on project applications for RDC access under the NCRP. Approval of this application is expected by early October.

3. Networks & Partnerships

- 3.1. **United Way Toronto Income Inequality Project.** NCRP has partnered with the Research, Policy and Public Education division of United Way Toronto for its “Building Opportunities” project focused on income inequality. Mihaela Dinca-Panaitescu (United Way Toronto) and Alan Walks (University of Toronto) will collaborate on the development of two publications: a brief backgrounder on income inequality for a general audience, and a portrait of income inequality in Toronto and its intersections with gender, family characteristics, immigration, race and ethnicity.
- 3.2. **Toronto Neighbourhoods Research Network.** The next TNRN meeting is planned for the fall, and will focus on issues with using data from the 2011 National Household Survey (the non-mandatory replacement for the former long-form census).
- 3.3. **Other Networks.** Emily Paradis is representing the NCRP on the Technical Advisory Committee for partner St. Christopher House’s project on the informal economy in West Central Toronto.

4. Research Projects

- 4.1. **Family Homelessness in Toronto's Inner Suburbs.** This project is led by Emily Paradis and coordinated by Ruth Wilson, the recipient of the 2012-2013 Faculty of Social Work fellowship that is dedicated to the NCRP. Through its Community Advisory Board structure, the project has developed partnerships with service agencies and residents' groups in the seven low-income neighbourhood clusters that are the focus of the study: Rexdale, Parkdale, Weston-Mount Dennis, Jane-Finch, Thorncliffe-Flemingdon Park, Mid-Scarborough, and Dorset-Kennedy. Data analyst Jennifer Logan has completed analysis of the merged United Way-Neighbourhoods CURA survey data from 3200 high-rise tenant households. With the guidance of the Academic Advisory Committee and the Community Advisory Board, the research team constructed a Risk of Homelessness Index using six indicators of inadequate housing. Preliminary results of the quantitative analysis were disseminated in a poster presentation at the International Homelessness Research Conference in Philadelphia in June. A bulletin summarizing these findings is planned for the fall. The team is now completing a series of focus groups with service providers in each of the study neighbourhoods. Focus groups with families will begin in September.

5. Publications & Events

- 5.1. **Toronto Star 905 Series.** Toronto Star published a series of articles on poverty in Peel and York Regions, using maps and data from the NCRP on an exclusive basis. All government, social agencies and relevant NGOs in the region now know about and have access to our initial set of findings, which feature 40-year trends in clear maps and graphs. These findings in much greater detail will eventually be published in both an accessible report and as an academic paper. The key findings have, however, been quickly and widely disseminated and discussed without waiting for the final report. The NCRP and SSHRC were explicitly acknowledged.
- 5.2. **Income Inequality and Polarization in Canada's Cities: An Examination and New Form of Measurement.** Toronto CMA coordinator Alan Walks has published a major paper in the Cities Centre Research Paper series, examining inequality and polarization in Canada's largest CMAs at the metropolitan scale, and at the neighbourhood scale for Montréal, Toronto and Vancouver. The paper is available at <http://www.citiescentre.utoronto.ca/publications.htm>.
- 5.3. **Tower Neighbourhood Renewal Events.** The NCRP co-sponsored three events about Tower Neighbourhood Renewal. On November 27, several NCRP researchers participated in **Tower Renewal Research: Taking Stock**, a half-day workshop organized by the City of Toronto Tower Neighbourhoods Renewal Office (TNRO). On December 11, TNRO and NCRP presented a free public forum, **Tower Renewal Updates from Toronto and Down Under**, featuring tower renewal projects and new academic research from Toronto and Melbourne, which drew about 120 participants. On April 16, about 75 people attended **Sweden: Low-Carbon Neighbourhood Design**, an evening forum held at U of T and co-sponsored with ERA Architects, TNRO, and the Swedish consulate.