Employment Opportunities and Programs for Black youth: A Literature Review

Prepared for
Community Empowering Enterprises (CEE)

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Executive Summary

This report presents a literature review of the educational, employment, social, familial and economic situation of young people in general, and racialized young people in particular – with a focus on the employment, education and social situation of Black Toronto youth between the ages of 18 and 29. This cohort of young people belongs to two generational groups – what social scientists refer to as Millennials and Generation Z.

The literature referenced here tells of the experiences, interests, needs, activities and practices of youth locally, nationally and internationally. Attention is given to the gendered ways in which males and females experience life through familial, educational, employment, social service, judicial and other structures. The report is designed to excavate the barriers and highlight the assets pertaining to Black youth in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). While not an exhaustive study, this report serves to identify that for Black youth to obtain productive employment, programs and services for them ought to be culturally relevant and responsive to their respective individual and community needs and interests with attention to the structures and the contexts that enable them to exercise their agency.
The Black Canadian population is culturally, linguistically and transnationally diverse and make up about 8.5% of the Toronto population – Jamaicans comprise the largest group. Estimates of the population range from 400,000 to 500,000. The Toronto District School Board (TDSB) census of Black students (using parents’ birthplace) provides what we consider to be approximate insights (at least by inference) of the Black youth population in the Toronto area. Furthermore, in the absence of administrative or authoritative data on race, and since much of the available data of the racialized population is aggregated as “visible minority,” we reference specially created statistical information from the TDSB. Accordingly, the TDSB profile of Grade 9 students (2003-2006) indicates that

- 41% of Black students are of Jamaican origin (21% of whom were born in Jamaica and 79% in Canada of Jamaican-born parents);
- 13% of Caribbean origin (26% were born in one of the 15-plus other islands, and 74% in Canada to parents from these islands);
- 15% of Somali origin (52% were born in Somalia and 48% in Canada of Somali-born parents);
- 7% of other Eastern African origin (39% of whom were born in one of the Eastern Africa countries – e.g. Kenya or Ethiopia – and 61% to parents born in one of these countries);
- 6% in Western African origin (43% of whom were born in Western Africa and 47% in Canada of parents born in Western Africa);
- 9% identified as being from other regions – either by birth or having parent from those regions (e.g. United Kingdom, Northern Africa);
- 9% self-identified as 3rd generation (that is having both parents born in Canada); but the vast majority self-identified as second-generation Canadians.

What follows is organized around the three questions that the literature review seeks to answer:

a) What are the social/economic barriers faced by Black youth (18-29 years old) living in Toronto/GTA? What are the assets they possess?

- TDSB data (2003-2006) indicates that well over 40% of English-Speaking Caribbean-Canadians were living in female-led households; and it was estimated that well over 40% of Black students were in the lowest income quartile, or lower socio-economic level, of the student population (James, Brown & Parekh, 2014).
- In Ontario, Black youth “represent 65% of the children in care, despite the fact that the Black population in this urban centre is only 8%” (Pon, Gosine & Phillips 2011, p. 386). We suggest that youth who experience foster care or the child welfare system likely have particular issues which they have to deal with later in life.
- The schooling climate of low expectations, insensitive disciplinary practices, and Eurocentric curriculum contribute to negative schooling and educational experiences of Black students – males did less well and were almost twice as likely as females to repeat a grade in school. These experiences which include higher levels of attrition, lower levels of post-secondary attainment, higher levels of suspensions, and lower reported positive relationships with caring adults (teachers) ultimately operate as barriers in the educational lives of students. But studies also indicate that females were more likely
than males to have parents who expect them to go to university or college where they outperform males in attaining post-secondary degrees (Polanyi et al 2014).

- Violence was identified as a primary health risk for Black youth (Mensah & Lovell 2005), who tended to have higher rates of depression, anxiety, and psychosis due to racism. As well, there is a prevalence of high rates of obesity among Black women (Canadian Community Health data, 2000-2001). And as a group generally, Black people have high rates of diabetes (Chiu et al 2010), as well as the highest rates of hypertension which is a major risk factor for cardiovascular disease. Nevertheless, Black youth were found to be “deeply cynical of the health care system” (Mensah & Lovell 2005, p. 4).

- According to a Toronto Teen Survey (2010) of young people, Black, African, and Caribbean youth were less likely than their White peers to access sexual health services. Their reasons for not doing so were racism, homophobia, poor experiences, mistrust, discomfort with discussing the issues, lack of confidentiality, and for young women, lack of access to female providers.

- Findings indicate that Black youth, especially Black males, were stopped, searched, documented by police, and admitted to correctional institutions at far higher rates than their White peers. In Ontario, while Blacks are only 3.9 per cent of the population, they comprise 17.7% of admissions to Ontario’s correctional facilities in 2010–11 (Owusu-Bempah & Wortley 2014, p. 281).

- However, despite the many beleaguering problems and barriers experienced by Black youth, there are a number of assets within their repertoire that are sustained by their community affiliations, mentorship networks, and post-secondary attainment supports. These assets or social and cultural capital – including resilience, education and parental involvement (Anucha, 2012), and what Tara Yosso (2005) refers to as “Community Cultural Wealth” (CCW) – if recognized and employed by service or program providers have the potential to help young people effectively navigate and negotiate the societal structures thereby giving them the needed skills and confidence to settle into adulthood.

b) What are the predicted labour market trends in Toronto/GTA? Within this, which industries would provide the best opportunity for Black youth facing barriers?

- Today’s youth population (15-24) make up 12.8% of the GTA’s population and are faced with a labour market drastically different from that of their predecessors – a precarious work situation (YSS 2014) that is characterised by insecurity, uncertainty, and credentialism; an older workforce (due to low retirements); employment opportunities regulated by government and workplace priorities requiring “soft” as well as science, technology, engineering and mathematic (STEM) skills or expertise; and lack of employer investments in training (Lavis 2011) that would help meet the requirements of the “knowledge economy.”

- In this labour market context, in 2011, Black Toronto youth (aged 15-24) in the GTA experienced the highest (28%) unemployment rate (Polanyi 2014); and the neighbourhoods in which they resided, had fewer cumulative job growths.

- The Ontario economy has undergone transformation from a goods-producing industry to an increasingly knowledge-based or “idea-driven creative economy” (Florida & Martin 2009, p. 1). The long-term trend in employment trajectories will increasingly depend on services that rely on creativity as opposed to routine physical jobs which depends largely on physical abilities.
The most promising labour trends are within the following five industries: 1) professional, scientific and technical services, 2) health, social services, 3) other business services, 4) construction, and 5) education.

The three main sectors that offer the best avenue for full-time employment are: 1) sales and services occupations (i.e. chefs, cooks, hair stylist, and related occupations); 2) administrative, social science, education services (i.e. administrative officers, community and social service workers, early childhood educators and assistants); and 3) trades, transport, and equipment operators and related occupations (i.e. sheet metal workers, crane operators, construction helpers and labourers). As previously mentioned, the projected employment growth for the GTA (2014-2019) is estimated to be highest among 5 sectors, and the three outlined above also overlap with this projection.

Black youth will do well to aspire to fields that require a short amount of time between training and earning. This is not to suggest that other avenues and possibilities are out of reach, but rather by expediting access to full-time employment with the necessary experience and skills (i.e. re/education, credentials, social/cultural capital), seems to be a viable and most reasonable strategy toward attaining long-term success in employment and careers as Black youth enter adulthood.
c) What are the most effective practices for providing meaningful employment programs to youth facing multiple-barriers? What elements are needed for CEE’s life skills training to be recognized (informed and validated) by employers?

- Three core areas on which to focus in preparing youth for the employment market are: 1) assets, 2) credentials, and 3) networks.
- Meaningful employment programs for youth need to have clear mission and goals with “a clear definition of which youth the program serves, the outcomes it wants young people to achieve, and the strategies it will use to attain these outcomes” (Collura 2009, p. 1). As well youth must be provided with the chance to build skills in the areas of: reading, writing, listening and speaking, and arithmetic and mathematical operations (i.e. Basic Skills); creative thinking, decision making, problems solving, visualization, learning, and reasoning (i.e. Thinking Skills); and responsibility, self-esteem, sociability, self-management, integrity and honesty (i.e. Personal Qualities) (Collura 2009).
- Young people must also be helped to develop employer-desired and recognized “soft skills” which according to the United Way Toronto (2014) “Youth Success Strategy” (YSS) is “non-technical, transferable skills that help individuals make a successful transition from educational and training settings to the labour market” (p. 10). These are the same as those identified by Collura above, but YSS has added teamwork, critical thinking, computer literacy, competence in document use and information management, ability to learn continuously and adapt; and to the Personal attributes are added, positive attitudes, anger management, motivation, and responsible behaviour (YSS 2014, p. 10).
- Self-employment or entrepreneurship tends to be a “necessity-driven” area which young people are encouraged to try. But Hempel (2010) suggests: “Don’t bank on self-employment” for it is “a risky undertaking.” He continues to make the point that entrepreneurship should not be an immediate solution for youth, but should be a long-term initiative once transferable skills and work experience have been acquired by the youth – especially when potential entrepreneurs, as studies indicate, tend to be constrained by age, lack of financial capital, human capital (skills), and social capital (networks) (see CERIC 2008; Ghavidel, Farjadi & Mohammadpour, 2011; Silander, Chavez-Reilly & Weinstein 2016).
- In his study: “Community resources and opportunities in ethnic economies: A case study of Portuguese and Black entrepreneurs in Toronto,” Teixeira’s (2011) reveals that: African and Caribbean small business owners in Toronto experience institutional discrimination in terms of access to credit and financing. As well, the absence of a community populated by people of their background is a factor in their limited successes.
- In the case of Black youth, providing mentorship is likely to be helpful. One-on-one mentoring relationships between an adult and a youth have been demonstrated to improve the youth’s emotional well-being and social behaviour. Mentoring can serve as a cornerstone in programs for marginalized youth as it can produce, according to the Center for Prevention Research and Development (2005), higher rates of attendance, participation or involvement in programs other activities including pursuing higher education; more positive attitudes; greater sense of self-worth; reduction in anti-social behaviours; and positive attitudes about their future, peer relationships, older people, and schooling (p. 2).
Exposure to race related stressors, such as racism, racialization and discrimination, must be factored into services that are to be provided to them. Hence, service providers will need to build on their culture-specific coping strategies. Joseph and Kuo (2008) offer the following counseling ideas to mental health providers: “In working with populations of African descent, clinicians should carefully consider clients’ full repertoire coping strategies from a broad, cultural perspective that include general (etic) as well as Africultural (emic) coping resources” (p. 21).

The social dynamics of a neighbourhood have an effect on the assets or social capital of young people, their understanding of their social situation, and their ambitions in life. In fact, in a study of the social networks, labour market attachment, and perspectives on job attainment of young adults in the Jane and Finch of Toronto, Graham and colleagues ascertained that negative social situation or relationships within the community (e.g. gang involvement) helped to motivate the young people to pursue post-secondary studies in the hopes of leaving the community and gaining upward social mobility. In other words, the participants aspired to secure employment opportunities outside of the neighbourhood and “develop social networks within the wider labour market” (Graham et al 2015, p. 780). As one respondent commented: “Education is a big deal here. If you had education, you wouldn’t be here. Youth in Jane and Finch can’t think that their life is going to be here for the rest of their lives. I never want that for myself, I dread that for myself, I can’t have that for myself” (Graham et al 2015, p. 779).

Given the significance of the community in young people’s lives, Graham and his colleagues (2015) advise that youth employment programs need to outreach to them in their communities and in that way foster or build on the assets the community provides. And insofar as families are important conduits to the community, and through families, youth tend to access community-based resources (see also James, 2012); it is crucial that programs harness family resources since families are an important source of mobilization and social capital.
Conclusion

CEE has been providing Black young people with employable skills while nurturing their social and cultural capital which have not only been benefitting the youth, but the Black community and the society as a whole. Such a program is vital to many of these young people who face multiple barriers to successfully participate in society.

While an empirical research would serve to provide information about the effectiveness of the work undertaken by CEE, cursory observations and media reports (e.g. Campanella, Toronto Star, 2015) point to an agency that, in its brief years of operation, has been providing exemplary service to youth and their communities. In this regard, it is appropriate that CEE maintains the comprehensive approach to serving young people; for this approach has brought the organization considerable success, and is consistent with what research has indicated make for effective and successful youth-centred programs. It would be useful for CEE to embed research (not only evaluation) in its activities so that others might know about its work and benefit from its story. Doing so would provide opportunities for CEE to measure its success on an ongoing basis. Furthermore, in the absence of disaggregated data – as we have demonstrated in this report – about Black youth, such research would serve a larger social good. We would get to know, not only about the experiences of young people, but the areas of opportunities and needs for support.

Care must be taken to help structure opportunities and possibilities for youth – taking into account what can realistically be achieved given the youth situation, their understanding of what is possible, and the efforts they are willing to, or can, invest. In this regard, a scaffolding approach must be taken to ensure that the youth are able to reach achievable goals without being intimidated by perceptions of insurmountability. By scaffolding the youth learns that what can be achieved is within his or her reach without him or her having to exert needless stress.
Introduction

By 2016, it is estimated that Canada’s racialized population will reach one fifth of the total population. For urban centres, like the Greater Toronto Area (GTA), it is estimated that approximately half of elementary and secondary students will be from racialized populations – the majority being first and second generation immigrants from the Caribbean, South and Central America, Africa and Asia (2006 Census). And in a society in which stratification – sustained by colonialism, classism, racism, xenophobia, sexism, discrimination, and other such structural factors – racialized youth, and Black youth in particular, will have to confront the realities and challenges of having to effectively navigate and negotiate these structural barriers. Undoubtedly, these barriers have particular implications for the successes of young people.

Youth between the ages of 18 and 29 represent two generational cohorts. The older age of the cohort – born between 1980 and 1995 – are referred to as the Millennial Generation (Foote & Stoffman 1998). The younger age group are named Generation Z. In their growing up or formative years, this group of youth (18-29) have been influenced by quantum leaps in technology (particularly evidenced in their access to and use of communication devices like cell phones, Facebook etc), which have informed their consumption and communication patterns. Generally speaking, both generational cohorts face many of the same issues – for instance, an education system that is not culturally responsive to their needs, interests and aspirations as well as access to employment – all of which have implications for full participation in the society and life-long earning potential.

The Millennials is a generation that was mostly raised by ‘Baby Boomer’ (now mostly in the 60s) who have been instigators of, witnesses to, and participants in major political, economic and social changes in society such as: increase in the participation of women in the workforce, major increases in immigration that have brought unprecedented racial diversity to North America, record changes and concomitant impact of technology on society, and proliferation in family patterns some of which was brought about by marriage breakups. Even so, these Baby Boomer parents have been well-positioned and likely suited to provide their millennial children with the comforts often typical of middle class life (Ng & McGinnis Johnson 2005; Howe & Strauss 2000). And while today’s young people (for instance, 18-29 year-olds) might have higher levels of post-secondary education compared to their parents’ generation, they are beset with high levels of unemployment (Ng & McGinnis Johnson 2005). And the media represent them as a
generation with a heightened sense of entitlement and lack of work ethic (Howe & Strauss 2000). While the Millennials may be disparaged with terms like “narcissistic” and “overconfident,” Generation Z (those born after 1995) who are raised by Generation X parents, has been described as “educated, industrious, collaborative and eager to build a better planet” (Kingston 2014).

While we advise against homogenizing the experiences of these two generations (particularly when dealing with the experiences of racialized group members), nevertheless, we recognize that these young people have a number of things in common. These are: 1) the disjuncture between education and employment readiness; 2) the 2008 economic crisis which is resulting in parents not retiring or leaving the workforce, due in part to the added financial burden they have of caring for unemployed or underemployed young adult children; 3) the rise of precarious work; and 4) an increasingly diverse and highly competitive global workforce. The implication here is that today’s cohort of young adults (18-29 years) are part of a diverse Canadian generation, who are living and working in a context in which local, societal and global/international (i.e. relating to immigration, refugee crisis, climate change, and offshoring and automation of jobs) issues directly affect their employment opportunities, possibilities, and outcomes.

Two pressing structural barriers which help to frame the contours with which the youth must live and navigate, are: 1) the culture of Whiteness and 2) anti-blackness racism. The culture of whiteness, as described by Michael Omi and Howard Winant (2002) suggest that Whites’ access to privilege has been institutionalized at the structural level and seen in their control of institutions and the imposition of dominant values. Hence, Whiteness serves as the symbolic and
standard reference for what constitutes being human, and those outside of a white “racial formation process” are constructed as inferior, limited and/or “foreign.” Anti-Blackness Racism attributes racism experienced by people of African descent or Black people to the historical conditions resulting from colonialism dating back to slavery, controlled immigration, and school and labour segregation. James and colleagues (2010) explain that specific laws and resulting practices contribute to employment, housing and school segregation of Black-Canadians. James (2012) also argues that stereotypes of young African Canadian males “as immigrant, fatherless, troublemaker, athlete, and underachiever contribute to their racialization and marginalization that in turn structure their learning processes, social opportunities, life chances, and educational outcomes” (p. 464) – and as such contribute to the construct of them as “at risk.” This construction in turn contributes to the conditions that mediate these youth’s life chances which is something that all youth serving agencies must take into account if they are to address the particular needs of Black youth.

It is worth mentioning that while Canada revels in its significance as a diverse society with multicultural policies and practices as evidence, there is limited, or a lack of, authoritative data based on race; and in cases where race data is available, it is generally aggregated as “visible minority.” Hence, the lack of disaggregated data makes it difficult to provide a fulsome profile and discussion of racialized groups such as Black youth. Nevertheless, data from a variety of sources will be used to help answer the following questions:

a) What are the social/economic barriers faced by Black youth (18-29 years old) living in Toronto/GTA? What are the assets they possess?

b) What are the predicted labour market trends in Toronto/GTA? Within this, which industries would provide the best opportunity for Black youth facing barriers?

c) What are the most effective practices for providing meaningful employment programs to youth facing multiple-barriers? What elements are needed for CEE’s life skills training to be considered and recognized by employers as informed and valid?

**Question A – What are the social/economic barriers faced by Black youth (18-29 years old) living in Toronto/GTA? What are the assets they possess?**

*What some youth had to say about finding jobs in their community:*

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Teesha: If you are a young person, and you’re Black, and you live in one of the 13 Priority Neighbourhoods, and you say: ‘I wanna work,’ and you actively – or you don’t even really have to actively do anything – you just tell... someone who's in charge of employment; you’ll get a job. No doubt, 'cause there are all these organizations coming in, wanting to hire youth, and... there’s all these youth-serving [agencies]. So, I think it's pretty easy to find employment in your neighbourhood. But your neighbourhood’s only so big; so the moment you step outside of it, there’s no have funding for youth-serving organizations. ... Like... people don’t care. But if you live in one of the 13 Priority Neighbourhoods, there’s a lot of caring. [laughter]

*[Flemington Park participant]*
Sheila: I’ve got turned down for jobs just for my address. They don’t want to say it directly, but when you go into a workplace . . . just because of your address, they will say: ‘You’re the wrong person and we don’t want you for this job. Basically, its sometimes just hard to look for a job when you don’t have the experience in a new field or you’re trying to get experience in a new field.

[SBL participant]

O’Dean: My experiences with looking for... jobs have been horrible. Right? . . . It's not easy. Especially when you have a background that might not be, let’s say, acceptable... to certain people. It makes it difficult, you know? And, like, all the opportunities get narrowed into a box. And, we don’t really – Like, I don’t really feel that there’s... people in the community that really understand this fact – ’cause not everybody’s been living... the normal, straight, narrow lifestyle. Some of us took detours, or made mistakes. And . . . once you figure out yourself, looking for a job is like super difficult – at least in my experience. Yeah.

[KGSV participant]

Adam: I would not say that it is exactly 50/50, part of it is on the youth themselves. Sometimes we just don't know how to, or don't have the necessary skills, to present themselves inside of a interview situations, or work environment. Where you are supposed to act a certain way, (some) youth just don't understand that that it is a different lifestyle. On top of that it is a lot harder, the employers look at them a certain way as well.

[Dorset Park participant]

The above comments were taken from focus groups discussion about social enterprises conducted by CEE with youth (18 to 29 years old) of African descent living in Toronto. They were asked to reflect on the social and economic barriers they faced accessing jobs in the GTA. These everyday barriers, they admit, have had an impact on their home, schooling, and work lives. These youth, as the studies we reviewed indicate, have had to grapple with a schooling climate that is based on a disciplinary system of Eurocentrism that sustains low expectations of them; over-representation in foster care; negative social messages that help to contribute to police surveillance and carding; and a difficult labour market that sees both themselves and their parents disproportionately in lower socio-economic brackets due to unemployment, underemployment or precarious work. Dealing with the concomitant barriers or challenges requires particular strategies which Black youth tend to employ in ways that build on their rich
community resources, resilience nurtured by their families and communities, their mentorship networks, and educational attainment.

In this section and the others, we use statistical data of the Black youth population in Toronto to show, by inference, how the characteristics of their conditions contribute to, or account for, the barriers they face. The discussion is organized around the following themes: 1) Family, 2) Education, 3) Health, 4) Judicial system, and 5) Gendered experiences and work opportunities.

In the absence of extensive data, we rely on specially created statistical profile of Black students using data from the Toronto District School Board (TDSB) census. Developed by James, Brown & Parekh (2014), the report: “An educational profile of African and Caribbean Canadian Students: the 2003-2006 cohorts” was a collaboration of the York Centre for Education & Community (YCEC) and the TDSB. We suggest that given that the data is of students who were in TDSB schools in 2003 to 2006, it is highly likely that the profile represents some of the 18-29 age group of youth currently served by CEE (at least those in their 20s). This information serves to inform us about the schooling and educational issues, concerns, challenges and barriers faced by Black youth during their schooling, and as such, set the stage for their early adulthood. Indeed, the barriers faced by the youth influence their transition to adulthood. To a degree, Black youth and their families understand the societal structures they must navigate and negotiate, cognizant of the need to work within and against the structures if they are to become productive citizens as well as realize their life ambitions. Their shared knowledge and experiences provide Black youth with particular cultural and social capital – or what can be considered assets. We return to a discussion of the youth’s assets in the final section.

Black Canadians – demographic overview:

The Black Canadian population is culturally, linguistically, and transnationally diverse. While making up roughly 2.5% of the Canadian population, Black Canadians within the GTA total approximately 397,175 (Toronto CMA NHS profile, 2011. But it is often suggested that this is a very low figure. Some scholars have added as much as 200,000 to this figure). Black youth aged between 15-24 is said to represent 8.6% of “visible minority” youth in Toronto CMA.

Family

Canada overall, and Toronto in particular, continue to grapple with structural racism and White privilege. Inequities in employment and income based on race and gender have resulted in far too many racialized youth living in families with low socio-economic status. In the Hidden Epidemic: A report on Child and Family Poverty in Toronto, Polanyi and his colleagues (2014) reveal that:

- Individuals of Middle Eastern and African backgrounds were three times more likely to be living on low incomes compared to their European counterparts.
- The number of low-income children in Toronto in 2012 stood at 145,890, resulting in 29% of Toronto’s children (aged 0 – 17) living in poverty.
The TDSB (Student Census 2003-2006) estimate that Black students are in the lowest income quartile, or the socio-economic level, of their student population – specifically, Jamaicans (45.7%), Somali (60%) and Western Africans (66.4%).
One-parent led households

Black youth (including those of African and Caribbean descent) tended to be raised in one-parent, mainly female-led, households at a higher rate than other youth within the GTA. Their female-led lone families are more likely to be a poverty-risk for the families of these young people.

Lone-parent families had an average income that was less than half that of two-parent families in 2011. And the average income in Toronto was 42% higher for men than for women.

A consequence and related struggle for one-parent led households was affordable housing. According to Polanyi and his colleagues (2014): “The average cost of a two-bedroom apartment in Toronto in 2013 was $1,216; based on that amount, a lone parent working full-time at minimum wage would be forced to spend more than 50% of her or his after-tax monthly income on rent” (p. 16).

Low-income families were typically concentrated in low-income neighbourhoods: “Fifteen neighbourhoods (five downtown, four in Thorncliffe and East Toronto, two in Scarborough, and four in the Northwest of the city) had child poverty rates in 2012 between 40% and 63%” (Polanyi et al 2014, p. 10).

An Educational Profile of TDSB’s African and Caribbean Canadian Students revealed that 48.5% of Jamaicans, 40.8% of Other English-Speaking Caribbean-Canadians, and 45.6% of Black Canadians were from female-led households (James, Brown & Parekh, 2014).
In her research, on the culture of Whiteness its construction of the ideal household constellations, Nancy Dowd found that there was an overwhelmingly negative stigma in the portrayal of single-parent families. She writes that “a remarkably consistent view of single-parent families dominates popular culture as well as public policy. ‘Single-parent family’ is a euphemism. . . for ‘problem family,’ for some kind of social pathology. Single-parent families are characterized as part of the ‘underclass’; broken and deviant, as compared to the nuclear, traditional, patriarchal family. Some equate the rise in the numbers of single-parent families with social decline and the death of the ‘real’ family” (1997, 3).

**Foster Care**

Racial disproportionality in child welfare systems within Canada can be explained by the inter-relationship of race and racism regarding how child welfare decisions are made (Barth, Miller, Green, & Baumgartner, 2001). With reference to the US situation, Barth et al. (2001) argue that the disproportionality of African-Americans involved with child welfare services is linked to African-American children being at higher risk for needing child protection services, especially in light of high incarceration and death rates associated with African-Americans.

In Ontario, Black youth represent 65% of the children in care, despite the fact that the Black population in this urban centre is only 8%” (Pon, Gosine, and Phillips 2011, p. 386). This overrepresentation highlights, as posited by these and other scholars, an anti-Black discourse when it comes to family structures and parenting styles. While we recognize that the inclusion of foster care data falls outside the age range (18 to 29), we believe that in order for youth programs to successfully address the experiences of their participants, agencies will need to provide comprehensive and tailored activities, particularly to those participants who may have gone
through the child welfare system. Undoubtedly, experiences in foster care present particular issues to deal with in later life.

In their investigation into “Why are so many black children in foster and group homes?” the Toronto Star exposes a system that is insensitive to and slow in addressing the large-scale poverty, cultural misunderstandings, and racism affecting Black people. In sum, the findings indicate that:

■ 41% of the children and youth in the care of the Children’s Aid Society of Toronto are Black. Yet only 8.2% of Toronto’s population under the age of 18 years is Black.
■ Of children in care in Toronto, 31% were born to Black parents. A further 9.8% of children in care had one parent who is Black.
■ Black children in Toronto stay longer in foster care and group homes than any other group of kids.
■ A survey conducted by the Children’s Aid Society of Toronto found 45% of Black children taken from parents in the 2008 fiscal year spent more than 12 months in care.
■ Only 20% of white children taken during that period spent more than a year in care. For children with Asian parents, the number was 18%.

Figure 1:4 – Country of birth for Black parents served by Children’s Aid Society of Toronto
Figure 1:5 – Black and Aboriginal Children in Care with Children’s Aid Society of Toronto

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First Nations</th>
<th>Metis</th>
<th>Inuit</th>
<th>Caribbean</th>
<th>African</th>
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<tr>
<td>23.33%</td>
<td>2.33%</td>
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<td>8%</td>
<td>3.67%</td>
</tr>
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<td>9.3x</td>
<td>3.4x</td>
<td>11.3x</td>
<td>2.5x</td>
<td>1.9x</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

OVERREPRESENTED: First Nations and black children in care in Ontario are overrepresented when compared to the percentages they make up of the province’s under 18 population. All figures below are for under 18 populations, based on a survey of 6,900 children. Only 15 Inuit children were involved.

- Per cent of children in care whose parents and/or ancestors are from this background
- Per cent of the under 18 population in Ontario that the group represents
- How many times more a group in care is overrepresented

**Education**

The schooling climate of low expectations, insensitive disciplinary practices, and Eurocentric curriculum contribute to negative schooling and educational experiences of Black students. These experiences which include higher levels of attrition, lower levels of post-secondary attainment, higher levels of suspensions, and lower reported positive relationships with caring adults eventually operate as barriers in the educational lives of students.

**An Educational Profile of TDSB 2003-2006 African and Caribbean Canadian Students**

This report presents a profile of Grade 9 students (2006-2011). The Grade 9 cohort included students who were followed from Fall 2006, when they started Grade 9, until Fall 2011. The survey found that most self-identified Black students were born in Canada. But when parents' country of birth was examined the majority of students, or their parents, were born in two

---

5 Overall, there were four key self-identified racial groups: White at 31%, South Asian at 23%, East Asia at 17%, and Black at 12%. Of the four cohorts, we had a similar, although not identical, distribution: White at 31%, South Asian at 19%, East Asian at 19%, and Black at 11%. This analysis is based on the 11% of students (N = 5,679) who identified themselves as Black.
countries—Jamaica (41%) and Somalia (15%). Given that the range of regions of birth totalled 70 different countries, students were identified as follows:

- Canada third generation (that is, both parents born in Canada): 506 or 9%
- Jamaica—2,312 or 41% (that is, 21% of these students were born in Jamaica and 79% were born in Canada of Jamaican-born parents)
- Other Caribbean--- 744 or 13% (that is, 26% of these students were born in one of more than 15 other islands than Jamaica; 74% of their parents were born in these islands).
- Somalia-- 864 or 15% (that is, 52% of these students were born in Somalia and 48% were born in Canada of Somali-born parents)
- Other Eastern Africa-- 416 or 7% (that is, 39% of these students were born in one of the countries in Eastern Africa outside Somalia, such as Kenya or Ethiopia, while for 61% of their parents were born there)
- Western Africa-- 313 or 6% (that is, 43% of the students were born in Western Africa and 47% were born in Canada of parents born in Western Africa)
- Other—524 or 9% had other regions of birth for the student or parent (e.g. United Kingdom, Northern Africa).

In terms of the generational status of self-identified Black students, the vast majority were identified as second-generation.

**Figure 1:7 – Generational Status of Self-identified Black Students by Family Birthplace, 2003-2006**

The census data also provided information about parental education. While many students could not specify the exact educational attainment of their parents, the majority of the parents who had attended university were from Somalia (42.3%), East Africa (38.5%) and West Africa (30%). The regions scoring the lowest post-secondary parental attainment were from the Caribbean.
In terms of program study, Jamaican (44.5%), Caribbean-descent (37%), and West African (37.4%) were pursuing an applied degree.
Figure 1:9 – Program of Study across Self-Identified Black Students by Birthplace, 2003-2006

![Percentage of Self-Described Black Students by Birthplace](image-url)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Birthplace</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>TDSB Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Other East Africa</td>
<td>69.5%</td>
<td>76.9%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other West Africa</td>
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</tr>
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</tr>
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<td>Jamaica</td>
<td>43.5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
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<td>76.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

School suspensions, unfair discipline, attrition, and post-secondary confirmation rates

According to the *Toronto Star*, the Toronto District School Board 2006 data indicates that:

- Black students accounted for nearly 29 per cent of suspensions, but only made up 12 per cent of the student population.
- 1 out of every 7 Black Grade 7 and 8 students reported being suspended at least once. For White grade 7 and 8 students, it was 1 of every 20.
- Only 42 per cent of students of Caribbean descent, 48 per cent of West African descent, and 53 per cent per cent of East African descent reported that school rules were applied fairly.
- The overall drop-out rate for Black students was 23 per cent (Jim Rankin, March 22, 2013, *Toronto Star*).

The attrition rates of TDSB’s African and Caribbean Canadian students were reported to be:

- 27.9% for Canadian-born (second-generation), 21.4% for Caribbean, 20.5% for Jamaican, and 19.4% for Somali.
- For Somali students with a graduation rate now about 80% – a 27% increase between 2005 and 2013 – it seems that parental outreach and teacher training programs funded by the Ministry of Education have helped to address the level of achievement. Further, college applications increased from 13% in 2005 to 24% in 2013 and university enrolment has reached 41% among the 2013 group (*Toronto Star*, Rushowy 2015).
Figure 1:10 – Grade 9 Cohort-5 Year Outcomes of Self-Identified Black Students across Family Birthplace, 2003-2006

- Grad or 30+ credits: 59.3% Canada, 66.0% Jamaica, 66.5% Other English Caribbean, 74.7% Somalia, 81.7% Other East Africa, 83.4% West Africa, 66.2% Other, 84.0% TDSB Total
- In TDSB Fall Next Year: 12.8% Canada, 13.5% Jamaica, 12.1% Other English Caribbean, 5.9% Somalia, 6.3% Other East Africa, 7.3% West Africa, 13.2% Other, 5.5% TDSB Total
- Dropout: 27.9% Canada, 20.5% Jamaica, 21.4% Other English Caribbean, 19.4% Somalia, 12.0% Other East Africa, 9.3% West Africa, 20.6% Other, 10.5% TDSB Total

Figure 1:11 – Post-Secondary Confirmation of Self-Identified Black Students by Family Birthplace, 2003-2006

- Confirm University in Ontario: 20.2% Canada, 17.1% Jamaica, 19.1% Other English Caribbean, 39.9% Somalia, 50.0% Other East Africa, 33.9% West Africa, 22.1% Other, 51.7% TDSB Total
- Confirm College in Ontario: 13.6% Canada, 22.7% Jamaica, 24.5% Other English Caribbean, 14.0% Somalia, 15.6% Other East Africa, 28.4% West Africa, 24.6% Other, 14.8% TDSB Total
- Apply to post-secondary in Ontario: 8.1% Canada, 10.6% Jamaica, 11.0% Other English Caribbean, 18.4% Somalia, 11.1% Other East Africa, 10.5% West Africa, 11.6% Other, 10.4% TDSB Total
- Did not apply to post-secondary: 58.1% Canada, 49.5% Jamaica, 45.4% Other English Caribbean, 27.7% Somalia, 23.3% Other East Africa, 27.2% West Africa, 41.6% Other, 23.1% TDSB Total
Lower reported positive relationships with caring adults
From a survey of 1,706 Jane-Finch youth (Grade 6 to 12) were attended eight TDSB schools, ACT (Assets Come Together) for Youth Project (2009-2014) sought to develop a comprehensive youth strategy in terms of building assets for youth within the Jane-Finch community (Anucha). Findings from the survey on the youth relationships with caring adults indicate that:

- 22% of students disclosed that they received parental assistance with homework. The number drops with each consecutive grade change – from 40% in grade 6 to 12% by grade 12.
- Only 27% of the students surveyed reported that parental participation at school events and meetings was “very often or often.” The participation rate was highest for middle school (i.e. grades 6, 7 and 8) students (40%, 31%, 30%) compared to high school – going as low as 23% by grade 12.
- The majority of students responded positively to feeling supported by teachers (67%) from whom they received lots of encouragement (57%), and were pushed to be the best (67%).
- Students’ ongoing relationships with caring adults in the community were significantly lower. Overall, only 36% of students felt that there were people in their community who cared about them. Again, the highest number of students who felt this way was in middle school – 48%. Interestingly, by grade 9 that sense of care dropped to 38%.
- In terms of having access to mentors, only 28% of respondents said that they did.

Health (both mental and physical)
Overall, Black youth face significant inequities in access to healthcare which understandably have an impact to health outcomes (Nestle 2012).

Accessing healthcare
- A report on Black youth’s access to health care services in Scarborough, Ontario, noted that Black females tended to access a regular provider more often than their male counterparts, but walk-in clinics continue to serve as the primary type of health service used. The study participants who relied on walk-in clinics felt that their services “offered little time to understand and question their health provider” (Mensah & Lovell 2005, p. 4).
- Black youth cited “violence” as their primary health risk and were “deeply cynical of the health care system” (Mensah & Lovell 2005, p. 4).
- Citing data from a 2001 Canadian Community Health survey, Quan and colleagues (2006) noted that visible minorities were less likely to have had contact with specialist physicians or to be admitted to hospital than Whites.

A Toronto Teen Survey (2010) on what Black, African, and Caribbean youth had to say about sexual practices was conducted in Toronto. Some 1,200 youth (44% of whom identified as Black) participated in the survey, and interviews were conducted with 118 of the youth and 80 service providers between December 2006 and November 2009. The study, supported by Planned Parenthood Toronto, revealed that:
Black youth were less likely than their White peers to access sexual health services. The key factors cited by Black youth for not accessing sexual health clinics was racism, poor experiences, worry over lack of confidentiality, and for young women, lack of access to female providers (p. 3).

Contrary to the stereotypes and tropes pertaining to Black youth presumed “hyper-sexualization,” the survey showed that 39 per cent of Black youth reported having penetrative sex (vaginal or anal) compared to 52 per cent of White youth (p. 2). However, gender differences in terms of sexual readiness influenced the respondents’ outlooks. Black women reported feeling pressured to have sex while Black men felt they were expected by their peers to be “ready all the time” (p. 2).

Black LGBT youth experienced “dual forms of discrimination” (p. 1) and overall Black youth were less likely to identify as ‘not straight’ or heterosexual. Participants cited high rates of homophobia within the community, the criminalization of homosexuality “back home,” and fear of being ‘outed’ and ostracized by family, friends, and community (p. 7).

In terms of accessing sexual health information from a variety of sources (professionals, friends, mass media), Black youth scored the lowest compared to other ethno-racial peers. Participants cited feelings of mistrust regarding doctor-patient confidentiality, lack of caring teachers, and having varying levels of comfort levels when discussing these issues with family and friends.

**Figure 1:12 – Percentage of Youth Accessing Sexual Health Information by Source and Ethno-Racial Diversity**

![Figure 1:12 – Percentage of Youth Accessing Sexual Health Information by Source and Ethno-Racial Diversity](image)

Source: Toronto Teen Survey (2010).
Mental health

- Research indicates that Blacks in Ontario experienced higher rates of depression, anxiety, and psychosis due to racism (Pascoe and Richman 2009).
- Black Canadians are 4 times less likely to use mental health services than Canadian-born Whites (Kirmayer et al 2007).
- A study by Annoual, Bibeau, Marshall & Sterlin (2007) reveals that forensic psychiatric units in Southwestern Ontario “have a disproportionately high number of men of colour, including African-Canadian men” (p. 13).
- While Black youth make-up only 6.7% of the population of Toronto, a high proportion of them – approximately 25% -- were admitted into Ontario’s Early Intervention Program (for onset of psychosis) (Archie et al 2010).

HIV and AIDS

- African, Caribbean and Black (ACB) communities account for 2.9% of the country’s population, yet account for 17.3% of the reported HIV cases (Public Health Agency of Canada, 2013; Wilson 2015)
- There are inadequate discussions about sex and sexuality between parents and their children in the home because of the taboo about sexual topics (Mensah & Lovell 2005).
- African and African-Caribbean men on the “down low” (i.e. men who have sex with other men in secrecy while maintaining heterosexual relationships) are increasingly at risk (so are their partners) of contracting STIs and HIV due to low levels of condom use (Robertson 2007).

Diabetes

- Diabetes rates are almost twice as high for Blacks (8.5%) compared to Whites (4.2%) (Chiu et al 2010).
- Data from the 2000-2001 Canadian Community Health Survey found that prevalence of obesity was highest among Black women and Aboriginal men and women (Walsh 2004).
Figure 1:13 – Percentage Obese (BMI >= 30) by Sex and Race, Canada, 2000 Source: Canadian Community Health Survey, 2000/01. Statistics Canada.

Source: Bryan & Walsh 2004

**Heart disease and hypertension**

- Black people have the highest rates of hypertension at 19.8% compared to hypertension rates among White population at 13.7% (Heart and Stroke Foundation of Ontario)
- 11.1% of Black people tend to have two or more major risk factors for cardiovascular disease. This is more than Chinese, South Asian, and Caucasians (Chiu et al 2010).

**Judicial system**

**Carding and Interactions with police**

In 2012, the *Toronto Star*, in an investigation titled: “Known to Police” reviewed police data on arrests and charges made by the Toronto police. The findings indicate an overt and seemingly deliberate policing of racialized people, particularly Black males. Skin colour within the database was identified as either ‘white,’ ‘black,’ ‘brown,’ (i.e. South Asian, West Asian, and Arab) and ‘other.’ Findings indicate that:
In a given patrol zone, young, Black males were documented by police 1.9 to 251 times greater than the number of them that actually lived there; and young brown men were documented by police at rates between 1.3 to 69 times greater than the number of them who lived in the patrol zone;

In 72 of the city’s 74 patrol zones, Black people were stopped and documented by police at rates between 1 to 10 times higher than Whites.

Figure 1:14 – Police documentation by skin colour
Toronto high school students experiences with the police

Wortley and Tanner’s (2003) 2002 survey of 3,400 Toronto high school students reported that:

- Over 50% of the Black students had been stopped and questioned by the police on two or more occasions in the previous two years compared to 23% of Whites, 11% of Asians, and 8% of South Asians.
- Over 40% of Black students had been physically searched by the police in the previous two years compared to 17% of their White and 11% of their Asian counterparts.
- 34% of the Black students who had not engaged in any type of criminal activity had been stopped by the police on two or more occasions in the previous two years compared to only 4% of White students in the same behavioural category.
- 23% of Black students with no deviant behaviour had been searched by the police compared to only 5% of Whites who reported no deviance.
- 65% of the Black drug dealers in the high school study had been arrested at some time in their lives compared to only 35% of the White drug dealers.

Incarceration rates: Federal and Provincial

- Canada’s incarceration population has grown by 16.5% between March 2003 and March 2013.
- The incarceration of Black inmates has increased annually and has grown by nearly 90% over the last 10 years (2003-2013).
Blacks represent 8.6% of the Federal offender population.

The proportion of Black offenders in Federal incarceration jumped to 9.12% in 2010-2011, from less than 6 per cent a decade earlier.

4% of Black prison inmates were women and 96% were men.

Approximately 50 per cent of Black inmates were 30 years of age or younger (Sapers 2013).

In Ontario, while Blacks are only 3.9 per cent of the population, they comprise 17.7% of admissions to Ontario’s correctional facilities in 2010–11 (Owusu-Bempah & Wortley 2014, p. 281).

With data of the population of young people – aged 12 to 17 years – in Ontario correctional facilities (obtained through freedom of information requests by Owusu-Bempah (2013), Toronto Star reporters revealed that:

- Indigenous young men make up 2.9% of the population, yet they comprise nearly 15% of young male admissions to the facilities. In other words, there are five times more Indigenous young men in correctional facilities than are in the general male population.
- For Black boys, the proportion of jail admissions is four times higher.
- Such overrepresentation did not exist for White boys, or those of other racialized groups.
- In terms of young women, only those of Indigenous backgrounds are overrepresented in correctional facilities. In fact, they are 10 times more likely to be in the correctional population than their representation in the general Ontario population of young girls.
- Notably, young male incarceration rates have steadily declined since the introduction of the Youth Criminal Justice Act in 2003. But Black and Indigenous young men have not enjoyed the same rate of decline as White boys. Nor have Indigenous girls.

**Gang violence – violence and homicide in Toronto**

In 2006, the Criminal Intelligence Service Canada (CISC) reported that some 344 “street gangs” and 11,900 “street gang members” were active in 166 urban, rural, and Aboriginal reserve areas across the country. The average street gang member was between 21 and 30 years old, and 6% of Canadian gangs were composed exclusively of members 17 years and under.

Gang activities were reported to consist primarily of street-level illicit drug trafficking and prostitution, and many involved weapons trafficking, robbery, home invasions, extortion and fraud, as well as strategic violence (planned or organized incidents to increase the gang’s profits, gains and criminal capabilities), and tactical violence (with opportunistic, reactive or expressive incidents that can sometimes lead to unintentional or collateral harm to the public).

CISC (2006) reports a total of 80 street gangs in the Greater Toronto Area, noting that they were highly engaged in firearm-related incidents. It was reported that Toronto’s rate of homicide stood at 2.5 per 1000,000 (1977-2007). However, the risk of homicide victimization was higher for the following groups: Males, young people, and Black Torontonians.
Males accounted for 73% of all homicide victims during and after the 1990s, compared to about 64% of all victims from 1974-1989.

Since 1998, the average age of homicide victims has been 33 years, and 40% of victims tend to be under the age of 25 years, compared to an average age of 37 years in the 1970s when 25% of victims were under age 25 years.

The homicide rate per 100,000 Black Torontonians was almost 5 times greater than the average overall homicide rate per 100,000 people (p. 93).

Gender experiences pertaining to work and educational attainment

Despite the rising educational attainment of females, there continues to exist gendered patterns in employment and pay equity program and employment interests.

- While women in general, and Black women in particular, outperform men in attaining post-secondary degrees, women in Ontario earned 31.5% less than men (Polanyi et al 2014).
- Generally, Canadian women represent almost 47% of the labour force, but continue to be underrepresented in upper management positions:
  - As heads of Financial Post 500 Organizations – 5.6% in Canada;
  - Board of Directors – 14% in Canada;
  - Senior officers – 17.7% in Canada;
  - Management occupations – 36.5% in Canada.
- “Visible minorities” holding executive and/or senior management positions plateaued at 3% even though they are expected to grow to 21% of the workforce by 2017 (Elliott, Leck, Rockwell and Luthy 2013, p. 239).

Gendered schooling and program trends

Data from the *Youth in Transition Survey* (YITS, cited in Kerr 2010) found gender differences in academic and social engagement and long-term PSE participation. The Ontario sample of YITS revealed that:

- Males were almost twice as likely as females to repeat a grade;
- Females were more likely than males to have parents who expect them to go to university or college (73% vs. 65%);
- A higher proportion of females in Ontario were achieving top grades overall at school;
- Females tended to spend more hours per week doing homework (Kerr 2010, p. 14);
- In 2006, females made up the majority (58%) of undergraduate university students;
- Overall enrolment in college programs in 2008–2009 stood at 53% female and 47% male – proportions that have remained relatively consistent for the past decade (p. 4).
- The only avenues to postsecondary education and training in which females continued to be underrepresented were apprenticeships, “where females comprised around 19% of registrants in 2007 (Statistics Canada, 2009a).” (Kerr 2010, p. 4)
- Females employment in service and nurturing fields (i.e. administrative support and service workers, health and education) continued to outnumber males.
Males continue to outnumber females in technical fields such as trades, industry, natural and applied sciences, and in fields requiring physical strength, as well as in management occupations.

Choices of career directions tended to be constrained by traditional societal and cultural beliefs which continue to promote gender differences in abilities and interests (Kerr 2010, p. 14).

**Figure 1:16 – Distribution of overall grades and hours spent doing homework**

**Figure 1:17 – Female to Male earnings ratio**

Source: Kerr 2010
The assets of Black Youth

Despite the many beleaguering problems and barriers of Black youth, there are a number of assets within their repertoire that are sustained by their community affiliations, mentorship networks, and post-secondary attainment supports. Some of these assets or social and cultural capital, or what Tara Yosso (2005) refers to as “Community Cultural Wealth (CCW), if recognized and employed by service or program providers have the potential to help young people effectively navigate and negotiate the societal structure thereby giving them the needed skills and confidence to settle into adulthood. In what follows, we highlight some of the assets of Black youth.

Yosso’s “Community Cultural Wealth”

Noting how Pierre Bourdieu’s theory of cultural capital encapsulates White, middle class culture as the standard, Yosso (2005) proposes an alternative concept called “community cultural wealth.” With reference to the schooling and education of students of colour, she argues that while unrecognized and unacknowledged, students of colour “bring with them from their homes and communities into the classroom” at least six forms of capital that comprise Community Cultural Wealth (p. 70). Yosso defines each capital as follows:

Chart 1:1 – Yosso’s Community Cultural Wealth Assets
1. **Aspirational capital** is the hope, dreams and imagination of youth who, despite their present circumstances and often without objective means to obtain specific goals, continue to maintain the possibility of attaining their ambitions.

2. **Linguistic capital** “includes the intellectual and social skills attained through communication experiences in more than one language and/or style” (Yosso 2005, p. 78). For many Black youth (as with all individuals) communication styles are related to their sense of identity or identification and agency. Such communication styles – language, accent, idioms, expressions, music – must be recognized, acknowledged and supported and appropriately worked into the code-switching or bilingual/multicultural repertoire of young people – an essential capital.

3. **Familial capital** refers to the cultural knowledges gained from kin, family, friends, significant others, and communities (social, cultural geographic and communities) from whom young people gain their sense of self and position in the society and the world – and from whom they learn their “sense of community history, memory and cultural intuition” (Yosso 2005, p, 79).

4. **Social capital** comprises the networks of individuals. For young people, their peer-based networks and community resources provide “both instrumental and emotional support” so that enable able to effectively navigate through society’s institutions (Yosso 2005, p. 79).

5. **Navigational capital** provides the know-how to maneuver “through social institutions’ which were not created with racialized people and communities in mind (Yosso 2005, p. 80).

6. **Resistant capital** is the skills and knowledges acquired from “oppositional behavior that challenges inequality” (Yosso 2005, p. 80). This type of “cultural wealth is grounded in the legacy of resistance to subordiation exhibited by Communities of Color. Furthermore, maintaining and passing on the multiple dimensions of community cultural wealth is also part of the knowledge base of resistant capital” (Yosso 2005, p. 80).

While Uzo Anucha’s *ACT for Youth* project in one Toronto community indicated that few youth reported having positive relationships with caring adults, an important finding was assets that she identified among them. They were:

1. Resilience – the surveyed students (1,706) reported positive/healthy identities and positive projections about their futures.
2. Parental involvement – the youth counted their parents as important resources and strong parental involvement in their lives.
3. Education – the youth exhibited a strong belief in the value of education.
Question B – What are the predicted labour market trends in Toronto/GTA? Within this, which industries would provide the best opportunity for Black youth facing barriers?

What some youth had to say about their ideal job:

Hazel: *I want to become a teacher.*

Adam: *My ideal job is firefighting.*

Marsha: *My ideal job is to actually be a nurse or a flight attendant.*

Asam: *I would be a producer, promote, or like entertainer for my favourite type of music.*

Nadia: *My ideal job is to own my own hair salon.*

Althea: *My ideal job is to become a paediatrician.*

Tanisha: *Anything that involves, like, acting, or theatre, or singing.*

Hyacinth: *My ideal job is social worker.*

Dave: *The ideal job is any job.*

The jobs to which these Black youth aspire reflect their wide range of interests and sense of possibilities in terms of their employability and life-long earning potential. Nevertheless, while they might be optimistic, there seems to be a reality for some that they will have to confront the social, economic, political and cultural structures that are likely to mediate achieving their “ideal jobs.” This might be drawn from response like: “anything that involves acting, theatre, or singing” or as another said “any job.” But beyond their idea of what is possible, CEE will need to structure its youth development programming cognizant of the labour market trends and the inter-relationship of barriers and assets facing Black youth. The following section begins with a brief description of Black youth within the GTA and the current labour market context. We go on to propose a list of viable and timely job prospects that take into account where the labour market and Black youth meet in terms of training, experience, education, and earnings.

Where are youth, specifically Black youth, within the labour market?

While today’s youth population (15-24) make up 12.8% of the GTA’s population, they are faced with a labour market drastically different from that of their predecessors. Young adults in general are faced with a work environment that is:

1. Precarious – it is characterised by “insecurity, uncertainty and lack of control in Southern Ontario” (YSS 2014, p. 8);
2. An aging population with no retirement age which would help anticipate possible job prospects;
3. New government and work-place priorities (i.e. the rise of the “knowledge economy”, “soft skills,” and credentialism);
4. Lack of employer investments in training (i.e. earning and development expenditures has fallen nearly 40% since 1993.) (Lavis 2011); and
5. STEM-based or oriented job opportunities.

In 2011, the unemployment rate for individuals 15 to 29-year-olds was 11.8%; for teenage girls the unemployment rate was 18.7% and for teenage boys 25.2%. For men aged 20 to 24, unemployment was 15.7%; and 23% for individuals without a high school diploma (Act for Youth Project). Racialized Canadians in the labour market are confronted with a “colour code” – in that for every dollar paid to non-racialized Canadians, racialized women earned approximately 81.4 cents (Polanyi et al 2014). The 2006 racialized employment, unemployment and participating rates were as followed (Block & Galabuzi 2011):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Participation Rate</th>
<th>Employment Rate</th>
<th>Unemployment Rate</th>
<th>Average Employment Income</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
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<td>62.6%</td>
<td>6.2%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>70.7%</td>
<td>63.2%</td>
<td>10.7%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average employment income in 2006 was:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Non-racialized men</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-racialized women</td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black men</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black women</td>
<td>$25,336</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Further, Black Canadian youth (aged 15-24) within the GTA experienced the highest rates of unemployment in 2011.

**Figure 2:1 – Toronto CMA Youth (15-24) Unemployment Rates**
Source: Statistics Canada, 2011 National Household Survey. Data is for the Toronto CMA

In addition to a youth unemployment rate of 28%, Black youth (including those of African and Caribbean descent) tend to be raised in one-parent, mainly female-led, households at a higher rate than other youth within the GTA (Polanyi 2014). Their female-led lone families tended to place these youth at risk of poverty since the salaries of their lone-parents often do not provide viable liveable wages. The Living Wage in Toronto in 2008 was calculated at $16.60 per hour based on the income of two full-time earners in a family (52 weeks at 37.5 hours a week). But for single parents in Toronto, their average salary was $34,465 (PEPSO). Therefore prior to their early adulthoods, Black youth are faced with barriers that limit the range of possibilities in terms of post-secondary attendance (in light of obstructive debt levels) and, at times, unsecure household conditions.

The 2011 TDSB student population survey revealed that Black youth live disproportionately outside of the downtown core in Toronto’s self-described “priority neighbourhoods.”

**Figure 2:2 – TDSB Student Population by Ethno-racial Background**

What is pertinent to note is that the TDSB self-reported ethno-racial housing distribution of Black youth overlaps with David Hulchanski’s research on the location of Toronto neighbourhoods with the highest rates of low income.
An increasing geographic divide between high-and-low income neighbourhoods in Toronto also highlight an asymmetrical employment growth in terms of neighbourhoods. That is, for instance, Toronto’s downtown employment rate in 2014 increased by 3.2% or 14,890 jobs. The five-year cumulative job growth for the downtown core between 2009 and 2014 was 14.8%; whereas other neighbourhoods witnessed negative growth: Scarborough Centre -2.5% and North York Centre -1.5% (Toronto Foundation 2015, p. 66).
Along with systemic barriers, high unemployment rates, and diminished employment opportunities, youth with only a high school diploma tend to have difficulties in finding a job. It is estimated that by 2020, “70% of jobs in Ontario will require some form of post-secondary education.” (YSS 2014, p. 4). For Black youth, indications are that many are not participating in formalized post-secondary educational pursuits. For instance, while 29.1% (or 3,745) of TDSB high school graduates did not apply to any form of post-secondary education in 2011, for Black
TDSB graduates 47.3% did not apply (YSS 2014, p. 4). Despite the low applications to post-secondary education by Black youth, the career opportunities for high school graduates in the GTA is not entirely dismal, as there remains a significant number of career opportunities for high school graduates in the GTA. The following section will provide an overview on both national and local labour trends.

**National labour trends**

Research prepared by the Policy Research Directorate of Human Resources and Development Skills in Canada indicates the following employment projections by industry between 2008 and 2017. Within each section, the industries are listed in decreasing order of growth:

**Chart 2:1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>High-growth industries:</th>
<th>Medium-growth industries:</th>
<th>Low-growth industries:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Computer systems design services</td>
<td>• Accommodation and food services</td>
<td>• Agriculture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Oil and gas extraction</td>
<td>• Public administration</td>
<td>• Food and beverage products</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Health care and social assistance</td>
<td>• Computer, electronic, and electrical products</td>
<td>• Fishing, hunting and trapping</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Other transportation equipment</td>
<td>• Mining (except oil and gas extraction)</td>
<td>• Support activities for mining, oil and gas extraction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Professional business services</td>
<td>• Construction</td>
<td>• Manufactured mineral products</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Other professional services</td>
<td>• Management, administrative and support services</td>
<td>• Metal fabrication and machinery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(scientific, technical)</td>
<td>• Information, culture and recreation services</td>
<td>• Printing and related activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Wholesale trade</td>
<td>• Paper manufacturing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Educational services</td>
<td>• Motor vehicles, trailers and parts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Finance, insurance, real estate and leasing</td>
<td>• Other manufacturing (textile, clothing, furniture)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Rubber, plastics and chemicals</td>
<td>• Wood product manufacturing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Retail trade</td>
<td>• Forestry and logging</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Other commercial services</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Transportation and warehousing services</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Goddard 2011

The *Manpower Employment Outlook Survey* describes a moderate hiring climate for the first quarter of 2016. Their survey of over 1,900 employers across Canada revealed that:

- 9 per cent of employers planned to increase hiring
- 3 per cent were unsure
- 7 per cent were planning to cut back on staff
- 81 per cent expected their current staffing levels to remain the same.
In terms of job growth per sector:

- Transportation and Public Utilities garnered the strongest hiring prospects with a net employment outlook of 15 per cent.
- Manufacturing–Durables report a net employment outlook of 12 per cent (an increase over last quarter’s predictions).
- Construction also expected a net employment outlook of 12 per cent
- Wholesale, Retail Trade, and Public Administration anticipate a net employment outlook of 11 per cent
- Service jobs are expected to grow at 10 per cent, while Finance, Insurance and Real Estate are anticipated to decrease to 7 per cent from last quarter’s predictions in net employment outlook.

In terms of provincial hiring expectations:

- Quebec projected an employment growth rate of 5 per cent; Atlantic Canada a rate of 10 per cent; Ontario a rate of 8 per cent; and Western Canada a rate of 7 per cent.

Overall, and in terms of projected employment trends for the GTA (2014-2019), the highest projected number of new positions is expected to be within the following five sectors: 1) professional, scientific and technical services, 2) health, social services, 3) Other business services, 4) construction and 5) education.

Figure 2:5 – Projected Employment by Industry Growth, Toronto Region, 2014-2019

Source: Toronto Foundation 2015

According to the Toronto City Planning Division’s Flashforward (2002) the following three sectors offer the best employment opportunities:
• The business services sector is estimated to increase from its 2011 levels to nearly 1.5 times by 2031.
• The accommodation, food and beverage, and other services will strongly outpace overall employment growth.
• The finance, insurance and real estate sectors are projected to outpace overall employment growth.
• While the retail, health, education, and social services sectors are expected to grow, the expected rate will be slower than for the overall population and employment growth rates.

Figure 2:6 – Projected Toronto Employment by Sector

Source: Toronto City Planning Division 2002

It is worth noting that for the past three decades, the Ontario economy has undergone transformation from a goods-producing industry to an increasingly knowledge-based or “idea-driven creative economy” (Florida and Martin 2009, p. 1). The long-term trend in employment trajectories will increasingly depend on services that rely on creativity as opposed to routine physical jobs which depends largely on physical abilities. Accordingly, “Creativity-oriented jobs require knowledge and understanding in specific fields, but they also depend heavily on the ability of workers to recognize patterns, analyze alternatives, and decide the best way to proceed. Creativity-oriented jobs that depend upon the operation of a heuristic include scientists and technologists, artists and entertainers, and managers and analysts” (Florida and Martin 2009, p. 5).
In the following section, using Dominique Riviere’s report: “Labour Market and Employment Trends in Canada” we report on job prospects within the GTA with reference to educational levels and projected growth strength. Included in the employment descriptions are jobs listed under “good” growth rates.
Chart 2:2

Career opportunities for high school graduates in Toronto and Ontario (general range of these projections is between 2006 and 2031)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Fair/Average-to-Good</th>
<th>Fair/Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sales and Service Occupations</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chefs; Cooks; Hair Stylists and Barbers;</td>
<td>Retail Salespersons</td>
<td>Sales Representatives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Security Guards and Related Occupations</td>
<td>and Sales Clerks;</td>
<td>(Wholesale); Janitors,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Visiting Homemakers,</td>
<td>Caretakers and Building</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Housekeepers, Etc.;</td>
<td>Superintendents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Babysitters, Nannies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>and Parents’ Helpers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Labour trends in **Sales and Service Occupations** - predicted to be good/high growth:

**Chefs (NOC 6241-B)**

- According to the 2006 census, there were about 10,400 chefs in the Toronto region, an increase of more than 55% from the previous census. **Almost 60% of Ontario’s chefs work in Toronto**, this has to do with the fact that tourism and business meetings bring many visitors to the region. Continuing investments in festivals and conferences are expected to enhance job prospects for persons in this occupation. **Chefs specializing in the preparation of foreign cuisines will have improved job prospects given the culturally diverse population in the Toronto area.**
- **Employment opportunities will be better for chefs who are creative and who can plan menus to suit changing consumer preferences at competitive prices.** According to the 2006 census the number of workers in this occupation increased to over 18,000 or almost 43% from the previous census. Some employment opportunities are expected to rise as qualified chefs pursue promotional opportunities.

**Cooks (NOC 6242-B)**

- This is a relatively large occupation with year-round employment opportunities available due to the high density of eating places and large institutions that employ cooks in the region. **Cooks with experience preparing “ethnic” cuisines will have improved job prospects**, given the cultural diversity of Toronto’s population.
- According to the 2006 census, about 23,000 cooks worked in the Toronto area. It is expected that **most job openings that will arise will be due to high turnover, as this is mostly an entry-level position with a relatively young workforce.**
Hair Stylists and Barbers (NOC 6271-B)

- According to 2006 census data, there were nearly 14,000 hairstylists and barbers in the region, an increase of nearly 10% from the previous census. **Toronto has over 40% of all Ontario's hairstylists and barbers.** Given the large, growing population in this region, it is expected that opportunities will also increase as a result of this growth – especially in terms of the racial, ethnic and cultural needs of the client population.

- There is a steady demand for skilled hairstylists and barbers, however some salons and barbershops hire only those who are experienced and who bring an established clientele with them. **An increasing number of professionals rent chairs in salons while others choose to work out of their own homes.** Employment prospects are best for those who possess a broad range of experience.

- **This occupation is sensitive to economic downturns.** Less than 20% of workers in this occupation were aged 55 years and over at the time of the 2006 census. As a result, most employment opportunities will be created by replacement and turnover needs rather than retirements.

Sales Representatives – Wholesale Trade (Non-Technical) (NOC 6411-C)

- According to the 2006 census, there were over 32,000 workers in this area, representing more than half of all sales representatives in wholesale trade in Ontario.

- **The demand for sales representatives in wholesale trade is sensitive to the overall state of the economy** and likely the cultural differences of the client population. Employment growth in this occupation is influenced by consumer spending, and demand for the products and services being sold. The increased usage of e-commerce may reduce the demand for workers in this occupation. Consumers are able to purchase products directly over the Internet.

- Sales representatives in wholesale trade have a slightly older age profile compared to all occupations in Ontario. Employee turnover and retirements will be the main source of job openings over the next several years. **Employment prospects will be better for individuals with previous sales and customer service experience, who demonstrate good communication and negotiation skills.**

Security Guards and Related Occupations (NOC 6651-D)

- For more skilled positions, companies tend to hire candidates that have related work experiences and solid references, thereby reducing turnover. Entry-level positions are often filled with older, mature workers whose objective is occasional income.

- Some employers such as factories, retail stores, and casinos tend to hire their own Security Guards rather than sub-contract all or part of the building and grounds security. These employers appear to pay better than the security firms.
Chart 2:3

Career opportunities for post-secondary graduates (encompassing trades certificates and college diplomas)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trades, Transport and Equipment Operators and Related Occupations</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Fair/Average-to-Good</th>
<th>Fair/Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Electricians; Industrial Electricians; Sheet Metal Workers; Crane Operators; Material Handlers; Construction Trades Helpers and Labourers</td>
<td>Construction Millwrights &amp; Industrial Mechanics; Truck Drivers</td>
<td>Plumbers; Welders &amp; Machine-Related Operators; Automotive Service Technicians, Truck and Bus Mechanics, and Mechanical Repairers; Heavy Equipment Operators</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Labour trends in Trades, Transport and Equipment Operators – predicted to be good/high growth:

Electricians (Except Industrial and Power System) (NOC 7241-B)

- Employment prospects for electricians (except industrial and power system) in the Toronto region were expected to have been good in the 2012-2013 period. According to the 2006 census, electricians represented one of the largest trades occupations in the region with more than 10,000 individuals.
- Technological change continues to have a strong influence on the occupation. The trend toward energy conservation through the use of solar panels, motion sensors and power saving lighting, and the upgrading and retrofitting of older facilities are stimulating the demand for electricians. Changes in electrical wires used in the residential and commercial sector require electricians to possess extensive knowledge of different types of wiring used for voice, data, and video. Electricians with a master’s licence will have the best opportunities.

Industrial Electricians (7242-B)

- Employment in manufacturing has regained some strength over the last year, supporting continuing good prospects. However, growth in this sector is expected to be slow over the short-term.
- As the sector continues to recover from the recent recession, demand is expected to strengthen. This occupation has an older age profile – that is, workers tend to be on average age of 45 years old compared to 40 years for all occupations in Ontario. An increasing number of opportunities may come from retirements.
- Technological change continues to have a strong influence on the occupation. Electricians with a master's licence, while not required in the industrial sector, will have the better opportunities given their flexibility to work in both industrial and construction settings.
Sheet Metal Workers (7261-B)

- The Toronto region has a strong residential construction sector in areas such as condominium units and apartment buildings. It also has an active non-residential and institutional construction sector.
- Combined with an improving manufacturing sector, and the older local age profile of this occupation, it is expected that job opportunities will be good in this economic region.

Crane Operators (NOC 7371-B)

- Prospects depend heavily on conditions in construction as about 40% of workers are employed in the sector. **Current condominium and high-rise construction activity along with other non-residential projects should support fairly strong demand for these tradespersons.**

Material Handlers (NOC 7452-C)

- Material handlers have a slightly younger age profile, with over 30% of Ontario workers under the age of 30. **The majority of opportunities is expected to arise due to turnover -- as these young workers leave for other jobs or advancement.**
- Individuals with forklift operator certification and experience on other material handling equipment will have the best prospects.
- Employment opportunities for this occupational group fluctuate with economic conditions, especially those in manufacturing. The wholesale trade, transportation, warehousing and retail trade sectors are also significant employers of material handlers. **Increased automation of storage and retrieval systems has been negatively impacting job opportunities.**

Construction Trades Helpers and Labourers (NOC 7611-D)

- A number of large construction projects, such as a new subway line and facilities for the Pan Am Games, were expected to fuel employment growth in this area of occupation.
- Although there was a decline in employment commencing in 2008 with the recession, **the recent improvement in economic conditions has allowed demand for workers in this occupation to recover.** Road, highway and other infrastructure construction are expected to continue for the foreseeable future.
- Construction trades helpers and labourers have a younger age profile when compared to all occupations in the province, with over 80% of people in this occupation under the age of 50 at the time of the 2006 census. **This is an entry-level position for those entering the construction sector.**

Chart 2:4

| Administrative, Social Science, Education services | Administrative Officers; Community and Social Service Workers; Early Childhood Educators and Assistants | Paralegal and Related Occupations |
Labour trends in Administrative, Social Science, Education services - predicted to be good/ high growth:

Administrative Officers (NOC 1221-B)

- In the Toronto economic region, the employment prospects for administrative officers were expected to be average for the period 2012-2013. This is a large occupation in the region with a labour force of more than 34,000 according to the 2006 census. At that time, close to half of the administrative officers in the province were employed in Toronto. The wider sphere of business activities in this region is expected to add to the work opportunities for these workers.

- Job prospects are expected to be more favourable for individuals with strong multi-tasking skills, proficiency in computer applications and the ability to learn and use new technologies. Individuals who are fluent in English and French languages and who have knowledge of industry-specific data management software will have improved employment prospects. Many of the job openings will be for contract positions.

General Office Clerks (NOC 1411-C)

- According to the 2006 census, general office clerks were the third largest occupation in the region with a labour force of nearly 57,000. At that time, about half of Ontario's general office clerks worked in Toronto. The wider sphere of business activities in this region is expected to add to the work opportunities for these workers, and job openings are also expected to improve through staff turnover, as this is mostly an entry-level position.

- This was the fifth largest occupation in Ontario with a workforce of approximately 113,000 according to the 2006 census. This is an increase of less than 4,000 from the 2001 census. A significant number of job openings is expected to materialize as a result of high turnover, as this is mostly an entry-level position. Employment opportunities are usually available year-round, across a variety of industries and will be better for individuals with strong multi-tasking skills and good knowledge using up-to-date office machinery and computer applications. Industries that are more resistant to economic fluctuations will provide more stable job prospects for this occupation.

Receptionists and Switchboard Operators (NOC 1414-C)

- With a labour force of about 26,000 receptionists at the time of the 2006 census, this is estimated to be a fairly large occupation in the region. Almost half of Ontario workers in this occupation tend to be in the Toronto region. Bilingualism in English and French are considered to be an asset in securing employment in these areas.

- Advancements in technology, including automated telephone answering services has altered the job functions of these workers. The job of switchboard operator has mostly disappeared with this function being taken over by automated services and receptionists. Other office duties, including data entry, accounting and general office work, have been incorporated into some receptionist positions. Employment opportunities for receptionists are usually available year-round. Individuals with good communication skills as well as strong multi-tasking and computer skills will have better opportunities in these areas.
Community and Social Service Workers (NOC 4214-B)

- According to the 2006 census, there were close to 13,000 community and social service workers in this area. **About one-third of Ontario community and social service workers work in the Toronto region.**
- Demand in this occupation is mostly dependent on government funding. Employment growth has been fairly strong over the last several years, as health and social services budgets have increased to meet the changing needs of a growing, aging population. Some opportunities have occurred with a shift in the delivery of services to a more community-based model. Job prospects are likely to lessen with tighter government spending expected over the next few years. Positions within voluntary organizations are vulnerable to declines in charitable giving. **Growth areas have included mental health services, early childhood services, services to the elderly, and community-based outreach services.**
- Employment prospects will be better for individuals with post-secondary education, and **previous work experience in social service work or as a volunteer.**

Early Childhood Educators and Assistants (NOC 4214-B)

- Early childhood educators are a fairly large occupation in the region. It had a labour force of 26,000 workers at the time of the 2006 Census, having increased 14% over the previous census. **Toronto's younger, growing population has been pushing demand for these childcare workers while the availability of subsidized spaces is a moderating factor.** Qualified individuals who speak multiple languages and/or have experience working with diverse cultural population are likely to have better prospects.
- The funding of full-time kindergarten and early childhood positions within elementary school classrooms in Ontario should help support improved job prospects. In addition, **increasing regulation of childcare provision and public policy emphasis on early childhood development has been pushing demand for the higher skilled workers within this grouping.** The job outlook is also sensitive to the level of public funding for childcare spaces.
- **Job prospects will be better for those workers with post-secondary qualifications and those with enhanced skills such as a second language or experience with special needs children.**

**Chart 2:5**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Health Occupations</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Fair/Average-to-Good</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nurse Aides, Orderlies, and Patient Service Associates</td>
<td>Nurse Aides, Orderlies, and Patient Service Associates</td>
<td>Other Assisting Occupations in Support of Health Services</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Labour trends within Health Occupations are predicted to be good due to high growth:

**Nurse Aides, Orderlies, and Patient Service Associates (NOC 3413-C)**

- Employment prospects for nurse aides, orderlies and patient associates was predicted to benefit from the higher population and high density of health care facilities in Toronto. This is a relatively large occupation in this region with a labour force of nearly 18,000 at the time of the 2006 census.
- Compared to the previous census, all of Ontario's eleven economic regions experienced a large gain in the number of people in this occupation. Employment growth is expected to continue — largely to meet the health-care needs of an aging population. Over the next few years, the share of seniors in the total population will increase due to demographic factors such as higher life expectancies.
- The Government of Ontario's 'Aging at Home' strategy is expected to have positive impact on job prospects in this area. This will offer more home care and community support services to seniors. It is also expected that many job openings will also arise in nursing care facilities, as these centres admit more patients for continuing care to relieve accommodation pressures in hospitals. According to the 2006 census, nursing and residential care facilities employed close to three quarters of these workers.
- This occupation has experienced a high rate of turnover and job openings due to the rise in replacement needs. High turnover is partly due to the relatively low number of full-time positions available in this occupation. However, the level of financial commitments to publicly funded health-care institutions can affect employment in this occupation.

**Chart 2:6**

**Career opportunities for post-secondary graduates** (encompassing college and university degrees)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Business, Finance and Administration Occupations</th>
<th>Customer Service, Information and Related Clerks</th>
<th>Insurance Adjusters and Claims Examiners; Accounting and Related Clerks; Customer Service Representatives (Financial)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
Labour trends with Business, Finance and Administration Occupations – predicted to be good / high growth:

Accounting and Related Clerks (NOC 1431-C)

- Employment prospects for accounting and related clerks were expected to be average in the Toronto region for 2012-2013. In this significant group of occupations, according to the 2006 census, were over 36,000 accounting and related clerks in the region, almost 55% of the Ontario total.
- Almost all clerks work in a computerized environment. As such, computer skills have become an essential requirement for employment. Job opportunities are expected to be moderated by improvements in computer-based technology. Given the large size of this occupational group, job opportunities are expected to grow because of the need to replace workers who leave or retire from these occupations. Staff turnover is also expected to occur as some clerks obtain additional training and progress to professional accounting occupations.

Implications for youth development programs

Based on the projected labour markets and current educational attainment levels of Black youth within the GTA, we suggest that CEE should continue to adopt a programmatic response that addresses the immediate needs, interests, and aspirations of the youth in the programs.

The three main sectors that offer the best avenue for full-time employment are: 1) Sales and services occupations (i.e. chefs, cooks, hair stylist and related occupations); 2) Administrative, social science, education services (i.e. administrative officers, community and social service workers, early childhood educators and assistants); and 3) Trades, transport and equipment operators and related occupations (i.e. sheet metal workers, crane operators, construction helpers and labourers). As previously mentioned, the projected employment growth for the GTA (2014-2019) is estimated to be highest among 5 sectors, and the three outlined above also overlap with this projection.

Black youth from marginalized neighbourhoods and out of work, need to aspire to fields that require a short amount time between training and earning. This is not to suggest that other avenues and possibilities are out of reach, but rather by expediting access to full-time employment with the necessary experience and skills (i.e. re/education, credentials, social/cultural capital), seems to be a viable and most reasonable strategy toward attaining long-term success in employment and careers as Black youth enter adulthood.
Question C – What are the most effective practices for providing meaningful employment programs to youth facing multiple-barriers? What elements are needed for CEE’s life skills training to be recognized (informed and validated) by employers?

What some youth had to say:

Jabaree: I feel that programs try to tell you what you . . . what you have to do to get where you need to get. I don’t feel like they focus on what you want for yourself; [or] how your safety is important to yourself. It is just good to understand that – how important you are to yourself and just making yourself safe. Just going through all that, you realize where you want to go in life understanding yourself. . . . A lot of these organizations, when you get in and start talking with them, it’s just about . . .: ‘Yea you need to go to school. This is what you need to do.’ And they just tell you what you need to do; and you feel like you heard that long time ago. But you’re still here. So, I feel if you take somebody and make them understand themselves and what they really want to do, things can be better for them.

[Breaking the Cycle East participant]

Millicent: It’s hasn’t been all bad, because in my first job . . . I knew somebody who worked there, so I was lucky. . . . And then, a few things grew from there, in terms of getting experience . . . . But when you decide to move past that minimum wage point, or the point where everyone gets the experience [beyond] that level . . ., you realize... there’s no support. And . . . when you go to an employment centre and you see that there’s nobody from your community – there’s nobody of your colour; there’s nobody who you’ve seen in school, even. You’re kind of, like: ‘Okay, so then, really, there’s no opportunities for me in my community.’ And that’s the visual picture in front of your face. And, other than that, when you go to, like, an employment centre, . . ., they pretty much tell you everything that’s already on the Internet. So... what’s the support? There is none. . . . There’s no support there.

[KGSV participant]
The above comments by Black youth point to their disappointments in their attempts to obtain employment. They indicate that they want to work with people who understand their needs and can relate to them – not people who merely repeat things that they already know (like they “have to go to school”; “have to dress up for a job interview”) or can access on websites. The youth indicate that effective programs must be relevant and responsive to their various needs and aspirations. Further, research indicates their needs to be consistency between post-secondary training and labour readiness of youth if existing programs for today’s youth are to be effective.

**Figure 3:1 – Job Readiness for Young People**

Writing about young people’s readiness for the job market, McKinsey and colleagues (2013) indicate that there is a disjuncture between post-secondary training and labour readiness of today’s young people – a situation that is acerbated by the fact that employers have reduced their share of training. In fact, Lavis (2011) indicates that employers’ development expenditures fell nearly 40% since 1993.

Given the barriers Black youth face and the existing labour market situation, what strategies should workers use to provide them employment opportunities and job readiness? As a culturally responsive agency, CEE will need to build on the assets and cultural capital of the youth it serves (see Yosso 2005). In other words, in order for Black youth to succeed, programming must simultaneously take into account the barriers they face, while also providing the skills for employment – building on their cultural capital and other assets. In what follows, we outline some of the unsuccessful youth program identified by researchers, and go on to present how CEE might tailor their life skills training programs to emulate or match best or effective practices that serve to respond to the needs that Black youth are likely to face in today’s job market.

Ineffective or Unsuccessful Programs

1. **Entrepreneurship and temporary employment**

Interest in entrepreneurship education, particularly for racialized and marginalized youth, is generally driven by a number of concerns. Firstly, entrepreneurial education seeks to impart managerial skills to individuals in order to expand their potential to create valuable economic incentives for themselves and others. Secondly, entrepreneurship is conceived as a way to circumvent restricted access to, and unfair treatment within, the formal labour market due to race and racism. Thirdly, entrepreneurial programs are seen as a viable solution to youth unemployment while also improving Canada’s overall economy. And since small businesses represent 98% of Canadian businesses (Pinto 2014), governments have increasingly prioritized the development of youth-focused entrepreneurialism and financial curricula. But the question must be asked, have such programs worked? The research indicates that there are mixed results – both positive and negative.

In his article: “When truthiness prevails: Entrepreneurial education for kids won’t work” Pinto (2014) posits that

- Canadian youth entrepreneurship initiatives (i.e. Manitoba’s Building Futures, Ontario’s Specialist High Skills Major, British Columbia’s Young Entrepreneurship Leadership Launchpad) lacked proper integration of career learning and business concepts. The idea here is that they are mostly facts-based and are lacking in relevant and appropriate development of youth.
- Youth start-up activities did not reduce unemployment; and a great number were plagued by an early exit due to lower human and social capital. This assertion is based on a 28-year study of 23 OECD countries by Ghavidel, Farjadi and Mohammadpour (2011) who also found that an increase in youth start-up activities was directly correlated to lack of income choice (i.e. what has been coined the “refugee effect”).
Entrepreneurial education tends to focus on individuals and their education (and presumably their particular failures) as opposed to addressing the need for effective government policy in generating job opportunities.

Teixeira’s (2011) research on “Community resources and opportunities in ethnic economies: A case study of Portuguese and Black entrepreneurs in Toronto” reveals that:

- African and Caribbean small business owners in Toronto experience institutional discrimination in terms of access to credit and financing.
- Lack of success seemed to be due to Canada’s “ethnic economies.” Ethnicity and race often influence the particular sectors and/or services offered by particular cultural groups -- i.e. “Italians are concentrated in the construction business, Koreans in convenience stores, Jews from Poland in the manufacturing sector, Blacks in the retail trade and Greeks in the restaurant business/food services” (Teixeira 2001, p. 2058).
- Black businesses tend to be more dispersed. That is, unlike Portuguese entrepreneurs who remain within the “immigrant corridor” (i.e. Little Portugal), Black small businesses have a higher rate of “suburbanisation.” In other words, the businesses tend to be located in the suburbs and away from the main hub of their community which results in less community support.
- Black entrepreneurs tend to rely less on group resources in the form of family and/or co-ethnic labour (for example, 70.4% for Portuguese vs. 50% for Blacks). Thus, among Blacks there is diminishing access to low-cost labour from within the family unit.

Hempel’s (2010) article, “Don’t bank on self-employment,” highlights how:

- Self-employment is a risky undertaking. Experts believe that the percentage of potential entrepreneurs in any given population is 20%.
- Youth self-employment is mostly necessity-driven and largely concentrated in developing countries (i.e. no other choice).
- Entrepreneurship should not be an immediate solution for youth, but rather ought to be a long-term initiative once transferable skills and work experience have been acquired.
- Potential entrepreneurs in general, and youth facing barriers in particular, tend to be constrained in the following three critical ways: lack of financial capital, human capital (skills), and social capital (networks).

Youth-focused entrepreneurial programs

Silander, Chavez-Reilly and Weinstein’s (February 2016) article, “How to be an entrepreneur: Summer learning and youth development” provided an assessment of the Network for Teaching Entrepreneurship’s (NFTE) summer program. Titled: Make Your Summer Program – though American – is instructive here. Using experiential learning, the program sought to teach “youth skills and knowledge related to the entrepreneurial mindset . . . [and] skills related to critical thinking and problem solving, opportunity recognition, comfort with risk, flexibility, orientation towards failure, communication and collaboration, locus of control and self-efficacy” (2016, p. 4).

Using a robust understanding of market research, branding, pricing, and an overall business process, findings indicate that through the program, participating students’ (including 63.9% Black and 17.2% Hispanic) overall confidence and knowledge increased (see Figure 3:2), but contextual and social factors continued to impact the self-employment options of the youth. Student explanations for “not starting a business this year” were attributed to major barriers in terms of financing and age (see figure 3:3).
Figure 3:2 – Participant Perceptions of Program Impact

- I feel that I will remember what I have learned in this course much better than a normal classroom course.
  - Agree a little: 41.0
  - Agree a lot: 47.2

- The skills I learned and the experiences I had in this camp will help me in my life.
  - Agree a little: 34.3
  - Agree a lot: 61.9

- The skills I learned and the experiences I had in this camp will help me in business.
  - Agree a little: 23.2
  - Agree a lot: 70.7

- The skills I learned and the experiences I had in this camp will help me in school.
  - Agree a little: 38.7
  - Agree a lot: 51.9

Figure 3:3 – Reasons for not starting a business this year

- I don’t have enough money***
  - Pretest: 45.1
  - Post-test: 41.3

- I’m too young***
  - Pretest: 37.5
  - Post-test: 32.1

- I don’t have a good business idea***
  - Pretest: 9.2
  - Post-test: 23.9

- I don’t have the skills**
  - Pretest: 8.7
  - Post-test: 17.4

- I’m too busy***
  - Pretest: 17.4
  - Post-test: 26.1

- Other***
  - Pretest: 7.6
  - Post-test: 8.7

- My family won’t let me
  - Pretest: 2.2
  - Post-test: 1.6

- I don’t want to
  - Pretest: 2.2
  - Post-test: 5.4

***p<.001
CERIC’s (January 2008) “National youth entrepreneur social attitude and innovation study” examined attitudes toward entrepreneurship among young job seekers, employment service providers, and young entrepreneurs in Ontario and British Columbia. This involved a total of 70 agencies with 361 youth completing individualized surveys, and participating in forums and focus groups. The key findings of the study indicate that few young people received educational training about entrepreneurship, especially as a potential career option. Similar to Silander, Chavez-Reilly, and Weinstein’s research, it was reported that the survey respondents (the majority of whom had completed high school (54%) or were attending high school (46%)) felt that significant financial barriers prohibited them from starting their own businesses.

Figure 3:4 – Barriers to Starting and Running Your Own Business

![Barriers to Starting and Running Your Own Business](image)

In terms of preferred organization type, the majority of the youth in CERIC’s study stated a desire to work for either a large, medium or small company. Hence, a low desire for self-employment.
Figure 3:5 – Preferred Organization Type

Source: Silander, Chavez-Reilly and Weinstein 2016

Writing about “Temporary jobs: Port of entry, trap, or just unobserved heterogeneity,” Berton, Devicienti and Pacelli’s (2007) discusses the employment trajectories of workers entering temporary jobs. Through their main research question, they sought to ascertain whether temporary jobs were “a part of entry towards permanent employment or do the workers run the risk of being trapped into temporary jobs?” (Berton, Devicienti and Pacelli 2007, p. 2). Based on their sample of 7,889 newly hired entry employees (i.e. permanent contract, temporary, apprentices, self-employees, etc.) from Work Histories Italian Panel’s (WHIP)’s employment data of 1998 to 2004, they found that:

- Temporary workers were characterized as displaying “lower and decreasing levels of persistence” and “suffer from frequent exit to unemployment” (Berton, Devicienti and Pacelli 2007, p. 8);
- Workers on training contracts tended to more often transition rate to permanent employment; and
- While workers engaged in apprentice training remained in employment the longest (up to five years), their conversion rate to permanent jobs was also low.
Effective Strategies / Best Practices

In what follows we reference extensively the United Way Toronto Youth Success Strategy (YSS, 2014), which outlines best practices. These practices or strategies are expected to enhance the employability and life-long earning potential of youth. Best practices focus on three core points: 1) Assets, 2) Credentials, and 3) Networks.

1. Clear mission and goals

Collura (2009) highlights how successful youth programs have adopted “a clear definition of which youth the program serves, the outcomes it wants young people to achieve and the strategies it will use to attain these outcomes.” (p. 1)

2. Employment skills

Collura (2009) references the United States Secretary of Labor’s Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills Three-Part Foundational Framework (SCANS-3) in terms of employability skills. In this construction, best practices are about providing youth with the chance to build skills in the following ways:

1) Basic skills: Reads, writes, performs arithmetic and mathematical operations, listens and speaks;

2) Thinking Skills: Thinks creatively, makes decisions, solves problems, visualizes things, knows how to learn, and reason; and

3) Personal Qualities: Displays responsibility, self-esteem, sociability, self-management, integrity and honesty
Chart 3:1 – United States Secretary of Labor’s Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills Three-Part Foundational Framework (SCANS-3) Three-part Foundation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SCANS’S THREE-PART FOUNDATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Basic Skills:</strong> Reads, writes, performs arithmetic and mathematical operations, listens and speaks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. <strong>Reading</strong> — locates, understands, and interprets written information in prose and in documents such as manuals, graphs, and schedules</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. <strong>Writing</strong> — communicates thoughts, ideas, information, and messages in writing; and creates documents such as letters, directions, manuals, reports, graphs, and flow charts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. <strong>Arithmetic/Mathematics</strong> — performs basic computations and approaches practical problems by choosing appropriately from a variety of mathematical techniques</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. <strong>Listening</strong> — receives, attends to, interprets, and responds to verbal messages and other cues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. <strong>Speaking</strong> — organizes ideas and communicates orally</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **Thinking Skills:** Thinks creatively, makes decisions, solves problems, visualizes, knows how to learn, and reasons |
| A. **Creative Thinking** — generates new ideas |
| B. **Decision Making** — specifies goals and constraints, generates alternatives, considers risks, and evaluates and chooses best alternative |
| C. **Problem Solving** — recognizes problems and devises and implements plan of action |
| D. **Seeing Things in the Mind’s Eye** — organizes, and processes symbols, pictures, graphs, objects, and other information |
| E. **Knowing How to Learn** — uses efficient learning techniques to acquire and apply new knowledge and skills |
| F. **Reasoning** — discovers a rule or principle underlying the relationship between two or more objects and applies it when solving a problem |

| **Personal Qualities:** Displays responsibility, self-esteem, sociability, self-management, and integrity and honesty |
| A. **Responsibility** — exerts a high level of effort and perseveres towards goal attainment |
| B. **Self-Esteem** — believes in own self-worth and maintains a positive view of self |
| C. **Sociability** — demonstrates understanding, friendliness, adaptability, empathy, and politeness in group settings |
| D. **Self-Management** — assesses self accurately, sets personal goals, monitors progress, and exhibits self-control |
| E. **Integrity/Honesty** — chooses ethical courses of action |

**Source:**
SCANS 3-part foundational framework also overlaps with the United Way YSS’ emphasis on soft skills. They define Employer-recognized soft skills as “non-technical, transferable skills that help individuals make a successful transition from educational and training settings to the labour market” (p. 10). Employers identify the following soft skills as desirable:

- Teamwork
- Communication (spoken and written)
- Problem solving & critical thinking
- Numeracy
- Computer literacy
- Competence in document use and information management
- Ability to learn continuously and adapt
- Personal attributes: positive attitudes, anger management, motivation and responsible behaviour (YSS 2014, p. 10)

The Conference Board of Canada’s Employment Skills 2000+ outlines a number of skills and behaviours needed in order to successfully progress in today’s labour market. The document describes a three-prong process that focuses on 1) Fundamental skills, 2) Personal management skills, and 3) Teamwork skills.

Chart 3:2 – Fundamental Skills
Chart 3.3 – Personal Management Skills

**Personal Management Skills**
The personal skills, attitudes, and behaviours that drive one’s potential for growth

You will be able to offer yourself greater possibilities for achievement when you can:

**DEMONSTRATE POSITIVE ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIOURS**
- feel good about yourself and be confident
- deal with people, problems, and situations with honesty, integrity, and personal ethics
- recognize your own and other people’s good efforts
- take care of your personal health
- show interest, initiative, and effort

**BE ADAPTABLE**
- work independently or as part of a team
- carry out multiple tasks or projects
- be innovative and resourceful; identify and suggest alternative ways to achieve goals and get the job done
- be open and respond constructively to change
- learn from your mistakes and accept feedback
- cope with uncertainty

**LEARN CONTINUOUSLY**
- be willing to continuously learn and grow
- assess personal strengths and areas for development
- set your own learning goals
- identify and access learning sources and opportunities
- plan for and achieve your learning goals

**BE RESPONSIBLE**
- set goals and priorities balancing work and personal life
- plan and manage time, money, and other resources to achieve goals
- assess, weigh, and manage risk
- be accountable for your actions and the actions of your group
- be socially responsible and contribute to your community

**WORK SAFELY**
- be aware of personal and group health and safety practices and procedures, and act in accordance with them

Chart 3.4 – Teamwork Skills

**Teamwork Skills**
The skills and attributes needed to contribute productively

You will be better prepared to add value to the outcomes of a task, project, or team when you can:

**WORK WITH OTHERS**
- understand and work within the dynamics of a group
- ensure that a team’s purpose and objectives are clear
- be flexible: respect, and be open to and supportive of the thoughts, opinions, and contributions of others in a group
- recognize and respect people’s diversity, individual differences, and perspectives
- accept and provide feedback in a constructive and considerate manner
- contribute to a team by sharing information and expertise
- lead or support when appropriate, motivating a group for high performance
- understand the role of conflict in a group to reach solutions
- manage and resolve conflict when appropriate

**PARTICIPATE IN PROJECTS AND TASKS**
- plan, design, or carry out a project or task from start to finish with well-defined objectives and outcomes
- develop a plan, seek feedback, test, revise, and implement
- work to agreed-upon quality standards and specifications
- select and use appropriate tools and technology for a task or project
- adapt to changing requirements and information
- continuously monitor the success of a project or task and identify ways to improve

Source: Conference Board of Canada, Employment Skills 2000+
3. Comprehensive approach

In light of the barriers faced by Black youth, best practices for youth employment according to Collura (2009), also need to adopt a more holistic approach to workforce development. As such a number of workshops and services that address the specific needs of this population of youth should enlist the following services:

A) Workshops on financial literacy

Mandell (2008) defines financial literacy as “the ability of people to make financial decisions in their own best short-and long-term interests” (14). Financial markets and investment opportunities are increasingly complex. Not only does the financial market offer a broad range of borrowing opportunities and individualized assets, it also structures changes to national social welfare policies. As such, individuals are now expected to contribute a larger share of their income to their post-secondary education and to their pensions. Therefore, personal financial management remains key to improving young adults’ ability to make sound financial decisions in terms of savings, cost of consumption goods, and housing.

Using data from the 2009 National Financial Capability Study” in the United States, de Bassa Scheresberg’s (2013) examined the “financial literacy and financial behavior among young adults.” The sample of 4,468 young adults ages 25 to 34 years – 51% male, 49% female, 57% White, 12% African-American, 21% Hispanic, and 7% Asian American – showed that only 49% of young respondents with a college education and 60% of young respondents with postgraduate education could correctly answer three simple questions designed to assess financial literacy. The results revealed that African-Americans at 49% compared to 33% of Whites and 15% of Asian Americans, relied on high-cost borrowing; and scored the lowest in planning for retirement – i.e. African-American 31% compared to 35% for Whites and 36% for Asian Americans (Bassa Scheresberg 2013, p 6). The study also showed that generally

- Financial literacy tends to be low among minority group members such as African-Americans and Latinos, women, lower-educated and lower-income.
- Individuals who are less financially literate are less likely to plan for retirement, to accumulate wealth, participate in the stock market, and are more likely to pay high interest and fees on their debt, and subjected to high-cost of borrowing because of the methods they use (de Bassa Scheresberg 2013, p 3).
- Those who displayed higher financial literacy or higher confidence in their math or personal finance knowledge had better financial outcomes: they were less likely to use high-cost borrowing methods, and they were more likely to plan for retirement or have set aside savings for emergencies.

Based on their study designed to educate young adults about personal finance and improve their ability to make sound financial decisions, Carlin and Robinson (2012) examined the question: “What does financial literacy training teach us?” Members of the study were Los Angeles students aged 13–19 years old who participated in a simulated finance experience at the Junior Achievement Finance Park of Southern California. Utilizing the Junior Achievement (JA) financial curriculum, participants undertook:

- “19 hours of didactic (in-classroom) study of financial institutions, taxes, credit, and personal budgeting. The educational experience culminates in an all-day visit to JA Finance Park, which is a simulated experience where students get hands-on practice in personal budgeting. In the curriculum, students receive
three primary messages: (1) be wary of the costs of credit; (2) plan for the future; and (3) take future costs into account when maximizing wealth today. Students participate in many concrete exercises that solidify these ideas.” (Carlin and Robinson 2012, p. 236).

In essence, Carlin and Robinson reveal that:

- Students who received a 19-hour financial literacy curriculum followed by a simulated finance experience were more frugal, paid off debt faster, delayed gratification, and relied less on credit financing after training.

**B) Sexual health**

In light of how African, Caribbean and Black (ACB) communities account for 17.3% of the reported HIV cases and higher rates of teen pregnancies, workshops on intervention of HIV transmission, knowledge of contraception and condom use, and sexual behaviour and exposure to high-risk situations (number of partners, intravenous drug use) are important to cover in programs for young people (Public Health Agency of Canada, 2013; Wilson 2015). In this regard, Sikkema and colleagues’ (2000) work on “HIV prevention intervention for women living in 18 low-income housing developments” provide useful insights. The site of Sikkema and colleagues’ investigation was 18 low-income, inner-city housing developments in 5 geographically diverse US cities: Milwaukee, Roanoke, Cleveland, Rochester, and Tacoma. The researchers used a quasi-experimental research design and assigned participants to either an intervention group or a comparison group, so that 9 housing development populations received the experimental intervention and 9 served as comparisons.

- The Comparison condition procedures involved mailed packets that offered AIDS brochures and a coupon to receive 10 free male condoms. The Intervention condition procedures involved condoms and AIDS educational materials. In addition, a one-year community intervention program was undertaken at 9 housing development. The intervention had 3 overlapping phases:
  -“(1) inviting cadres of women regarded as opinion leaders to attend a focus group to provide input on the planned intervention and a 4-session risk reduction workshop conducted in the development (2 months); (2) encouraging these women to form “Women’s Health Councils” (WHCs) and to recruit female friends and neighbors to participate in the risk reduction workshop series (2 months); and (3) assisting each WHC to carry out community events to reach all women tenants and to strengthen behavior change intentions, attitudes, and normative perceptions concerning risk reduction (9 months)” (Sikkema et al 2000 p. 58).
  -A follow-up survey was sent one year after the workshop intervention and 2 months following the last community event to women in all 18 housing developments in the study.
  -Data revealed that the use of condom during intercourse in a two-month period was 30.2% among women in intervention developments and 33.9% among women in comparison developments. The 12-month follow-up found that women in comparison developments held at 36.3%, while women in intervention developments increased to 47.2% (Sikkema et al 2000 p. 60).
In terms of access to condoms, the study found that there was a greater increase in the percentage of women in the intervention developments who carried a condom or said they had a condom at home (from 54.5% to 83.3%) than among women in the comparison developments (from 55.1% to 63.9%) (Sikkema et al 2000 p. 61).

Knowledge about HIV risk increased more among women living in the intervention condition developments than among those living in the comparison developments. In addition, women in intervention developments were more likely to communicate with male sexual partners about condoms.

The article: “Reducing the risk: Impact of a new curriculum on sexual risk-taking” by Kirby, Barth, Lelan, and Fetro (1991) report on a sexuality education curriculum that focuses on social learning theory, social inoculation theory, and cognitive-behavioural theory.

The curriculum was implemented in 13 California high schools with 758 high schools students (47% male, 53% female, 62% White, 20% Latino, 9% Black) who were assigned to treatment (429) and control groups (329). Using a quasi-experimental evaluation, participants were surveyed before their exposure to the curriculum, immediately afterwards, six months later, and 18 months later.

60 per cent of the students who were exposed to Reducing the Risk curriculum discussed abstinence and birth control with their parents; and close to 50 per cent agreed or strongly agreed that the curriculum enabled them to talk to their parents more easily. It was also found that the curriculum reduced unprotected intercourse, either by delaying the onset of intercourse or by increasing the use of contraceptives.

Earlier, with reference to a Toronto Teen Survey (2010) of Toronto youth, it was pointed out that Black, African, and Caribbean youth were less likely than their White peers to access sexual health services. Their reasons were racism, poor experiences, mistrust, discomfort with discussing the issues, lack of confidentiality, and for young women, lack of access to female providers. And compared to their peers, Black youth were less like to obtain sexual health information from professionals. Young women felt pressured to have sex, young men felt that they were expected to be “ready all the time” (p. 2), and in the case of LGBT youth high rates of homophobia within the community and fear of being ‘outed’ and ostracized by family, friends, and community were cited as reasons for not disclosing or identifying as ‘not straight.’

The researchers of the Toronto Teen Survey recommended that developing gender and cultural sensitive programming based on policies that provide assurances of confidentiality, privacy and accountability policies, help to promote accuracy of information, ensure access to condoms and other harm reduction materials, and challenge the presence of homophobia.
C) Mentorship

One-on-one mentoring relationships between an adult and a youth have been demonstrated to improve the emotional well-being and social behaviour of youth. Thus, mentoring programs often serve as a cornerstone approach for marginalized youth as it can produce, according to the Center for Prevention Research and Development (2005), the following favourable outcomes:

- Higher participation rates in terms of school attendance, activities, and access to higher education;
- Increased positive attitudes in self-concept, self-worth, and a reduction in anti-social behaviours and use of harmful substances; and
- Higher sense of positive feelings towards one’s future, peer relationships, older people, and schooling (p. 2).

In “A qualitative evaluation of a mentor program for at-risk youth” de Anda (2001) found that:

- There were positive social emotional developments among mentees – specifically, reduction in violent behaviour, improved school performance, feelings of not being judged, more goal-oriented (such as acquiring a driver’s licence to secure a job placement), and higher levels of communicative skills (de Anda 2001, p. 101-103).
- The project R.E.S.C.U.E (Reaching Each Student’s Capacity Utilizing Education) in which the youth participated was a mentoring program for at-risk high school youth in an urban setting in Los Angeles. The weekly mentoring activities involved firefighters serving as mentors to high school students (i.e. the activities ranged from time spent together, to outings involving water rafting, sporting events, etc).
- There were 18 mentor-mentee relationships that lasted over a one-year period. Of the 18 mentees, 9 were African-American, 8 Latino, and 1 bi-ethnic.

In Canada, Larose, Savoie, DeWit, Lipman and DuBois (2015) investigated whether mentoring relationship quality (MRQ) was tied to specific kinds of interactions between mentor and mentee (be it social, academic, counselling) in a community-based mentoring program. Specifically, they studied

- 1) the frequency of mentor-mentee dyads in terms of relational, recreational, and tutoring activities; 2) the mentees’ perceptions of received support based on the frequency of said activities; and 3) the association between perceptions or received support and subsequent MRQ (p. 531).
- The longitudinal study involved 997 families enrolled in Big Brothers and Big Sisters (BSBS) community programs across a number of Canadian cities. Mentors enrolled with BSBS were expected to spend anywhere from 1 to 4 hours a week with a mentee for a minimum period of 1 year.
- Upon enrolment, families completed initial and follow-up questionnaires every 6 months over a 30-month period. Participants included 40% boys and 60% girls (aged between 6 and 17 years), 35% White North European, 12% Aboriginal, 11% African Canadian, 5% East Asian, and 6% White East European (Larose et al 2015, p. 532). In terms of the socio-economic background of the participating families, 55% had annual household annual income that was at or below $30,000, 31% reported not having completed postsecondary education, and 31% reported receiving social assistance.
The results reveal that the specific type of association and its frequency either strengthens or weakens perceived support and MRQ. Frequent tutoring activities weakened this association.

On a programmatic level, tutors needed better training in academic coaching and dropout prevention methods.

Frequent practices of both recreational (i.e. playing a game for fun) and relational activities (i.e. “listening to mentees, talking about their dreams and aspirations, and exchanging viewpoints about daily life events” (p. 541) appeared to have strengthened the quality of MRQ.

Overall, meaningful mentoring relationships were constructed by practicing activities that were mutually meaningful and motivating for youth.

D) Counselling – relating to general and emotional problem – incl. Afrocentric strategies

The problems and issues experienced by Black youth – poverty, exposure to violence, discrimination, and in some cases, being in foster care – are sustained by structural inequities which affect the capacity of youth employment programs to provide suitable psychotherapeutic and counselling support.
Pate, Brown Lerner, and Browning (2012) in “Beyond the numbers: Data use for continuous improvement of programs serving disconnected youth” highlighted successful community-serving organizations, like Massachusetts-based Roca.

Founded in 1988, the Roca program integrates youth development principles as part of its intensive outreach and engagement programing geared primarily to high-risk young males and young mothers. This High-Risk Intervention Model is a three-phase process – with two years of intervention, followed by two years of follow-up services – which seeks to impart development in life skills, education, and employment.

Of the 2011 Roca graduates (which typically number upwards of 800 youth a year), 90% gained employment and/or engaged in education, 86% had no new arrests after leaving the program, and there were no new pregnancies for 81% of the young mothers (Pate, Brown Lerner, and Browning 2012, p. 1).

As part of its Intervention Model, Roca also employs the concept of “transformative relationships.” In other words, youth-worker-participant relationships – which are maintained for over a period of up to three years – are based on mutuality, shared experience, and a sense of responsibility to oneself and to another. Roca’s transformative relationships allows “for the modeling of behaviour, provide a safe place to practice new behaviours, and can provide motivation for change out of the feeling of not wanting to disappoint another or because that other person has a stake in the behaviour” (Pierce Baker, p. 3).

Youth workers used a “motivational interviewing” approach in their work with youth – i.e. a “client-centred, directive method for enhancing intrinsic motivation to change by exploring and resolving ambivalence” (Miller and Rollnick, 2002). As part of their case management approach, Roca youth workers engaged in “relentless outreach,” and 2 to 3 weekly contacts with each participant – with each contact along with outcomes and personal impressions catalogued within their database (Pate, Brown Lerner, and Browning 2012, p. 7). Motivational interviewing are used to keep participants engaged over a period of at least two years in order to motivate youth to participate in skill building activities and courses while also ensuring appropriate intervention strategies and programming for youth were in place.


How exposure to violence in the family, school and community among 175 urban African-American youth (69 males and 106 females, 56.1% were in middle school and 43.9% were in high school) structured their attitudes and behaviours with regard to dating patterns pertaining to violence.

Scholars suggest that violence in dating amongst African-American teens is a public health problem. In fact, data from the Centre for Disease Control and Prevention indicates that teen dating violence (TDV) was highest among African-American students (12.4% of boys and 11.8% of girls) (cited in Black et al 2015, p. 2175). Research suggests that experiencing TDV in high school is also linked to increased risk of re-victimization through intimate partner violence (IPV) later in life. Citing Schnurr and Lohman’s (2008) study of 765 adolescents (42.7% being African-American), Black et al (p. 2177) note that African-American males early exposure to unsafe school environments and to violence at home increased their likelihood of perpetrating TDV.
Using questionnaires, participants within Black and her colleagues’ study were assessed on social support, school safety, alcohol and drug use, mental and physical health, and various forms of violence (including TDV) and trauma.

The data revealed that in terms of child abuse: More than one third of the youth (37.9%) reported they had experienced severe physical abuse, 4.4% reported to being a victim of sexual abuse, and 31.1% reported being the victim of acts of neglect (Black et al 2015, p. 2184-2185).

In terms of community violence: 39.1% experienced community violence while 94.8% witnessed acts of community violence (Black et al 2015, p. 2185).

In terms of TDV: participants indicate moderate approval for physical TDV, youth were more accepting of vignettes involving female rather than male perpetration of violence, while males were significantly more accepting of vignettes involving male rather than female perpetration of dating violence (Black et al 2015, p. 2185).

Black and her colleagues encourage youth programs to: 1) address the complex effects of child abuse, school violence, and community violence, and 2) recognize the importance of planning prevention programs that address variables affecting attitudes and behaviors of high-risk youth who have already been exposed to multiple types of violence.

In their article, “Black Canadians’ coping responses to discrimination,” Joseph and Kuo’s (2008) point out that Black Canadians exposure to race-related stressors necessitates both general and culture-specific coping strategies. They note that individuals’ coping norms, responses, and strategies are bounded by their cultural values and beliefs.

With reference to the “transactional model of stress and coping,” Harrell (cited in Joseph and Kuo p. 2) notes that race-related discrimination becomes stressful “when transactions between individuals or groups and their environment that emerge from the dynamics of racism . . . are perceived to tax or exceed existing individual and collective resources or threaten well-being.” On this basis, Joseph and Kuo’s (2008) examined Black Canadians coping responses to racial discrimination using an “integrated coping framework” that incorporated general (i.e., problem-and-emotion-focused coping) and African-centered references (p. 2).

Problem-focused coping generally involves individual-based mobilization “with the intention of changing the reality of the person-environment interaction” (Joseph and Kuo 2008, p. 3).

Emotion-focused coping refers to “regulating one’s emotional responses to stressful situations without changing the realities of the stressful situation” (p. 3).

Afrocentric conceptualizations of coping relies on coping strategies that are derived from African cultures. Accordingly, Africentric coping behaviours rely on 4 primary dimensions:

- “cognitive/emotional debriefing represents adaptive reactions by individuals of African descent as a result of efforts to manage stressors (e.g., hoping for things to get better); (b) spiritual-centered coping refers to behaviors that reflect a spiritual sensibility (e.g., praying that things will work themselves out); (c) collective coping represents a reliance on in-group to manage stressful situations (e.g., resolution and comfort sought from others or a group); and (d) ritual-centered coping involves African cultural practices (e.g., burning incense for strength or guidance in dealing with a problem) as stress responses” (Joseph and
In their study, Joseph and Kuo examined how Black Canadians coped with racial discrimination and whether they used both general and Africultural coping strategies in response to discrimination. The 190 students who participated in the study were recruited from the Department of Psychology and Black Student Associations at an Ontario university. Of the participants, 69.7% were female, and ranged in age from 18 to 68 years (with a mean of 26.94 years), 50% were born in Canada, 78.4% were single, 13.2% were married, and 80.5% identified both of their parents as Black. Their level of education varied – 1.6% had completed grade school, 15.3% had completed high school, 42.1% had partially complete university, 8.9% had received a university degree, and 11.6% had completed graduate or professional school. In terms of employment, 2.67% were unemployed, 23% were employed full-time, 23.5% were employed part-time, and 47.3% were students. To complete the profile, 27% were first-generation, 20% 1.5 generation, 41.1% second-generation, and 3.7% third-generation (Joseph and Kuo 2008, p 6-7).

The study participants were given a set of four hypothetical vignettes “describing incidents of interpersonal, institutional or cultural discrimination.” Based on the responses, “63 of the respondents were assigned to the interpersonal discrimination group, 62 were assigned to the institutional discrimination group, and 65 were assigned to the cultural discrimination group” (Joseph and Kuo 2008, p 8).

Results: The coping strategies used by the participants in the study varied according to the type of racial discrimination. Most often they coped with institutional discrimination by relying on problem solving mechanism, followed by spiritual-centered measures, cognitive/emotional procedures, collective actions/events, and ritual-centered mechanisms. In instances of interpersonal discrimination, participants relied most often on spiritual-centered coping strategies, followed by ritual-centered, collective, cognitive/emotional, and problem-solving coping strategies. In instances of cultural discrimination, participants were most likely to use problem-solving measures, followed by cognitive/emotional debriefing, collective, spiritual-centered, and ritual-centered coping strategies (Joseph and Kuo 2008, p 16-17).

Joseph and Kuo (2008) offer the following counseling ideas to mental health providers: “In working with populations of African descent, clinicians should carefully consider clients’ full repertoire coping strategies from a broad, cultural perspective that include general (etic) as well as Africultural (emic) coping resources” (p. 21).
E) Networking

Networking has always played an important role in individuals being able to gain access to employment opportunities and setting career trajectories. Whatever the case, culturally relevant vocational practices are increasingly proving to be helpful in facilitating and enabling individuals to succeed at adaptive interethnic interaction – a necessary part of the networking process.

In their article “Young adult social networks and labour market attachment: Interpersonal dynamics that shape perspectives on job attainment,” Graham and his colleagues (2015) note that:

- There is an important relationship between social capital and career aspiration. Using data from individual interviews with 36 young adults (29 were Black) aged between 17 and 29 residing within the Jane-Finch neighbourhood, Graham and colleagues identified how family members, neighbourhood, and interpersonal relationships shaped the respondents levels of motivation and perseverance in securing employment.

- In terms of interactions and experiences with employers, the respondents described two areas of significance: 1) the nature of their interactions; and 2) the quality of their employee-employer relationship. Regarding their interactions at work, it was noted that positive interactions helped to support personal development. And with regard to the quality of the employees’ overall working relationship (i.e. dynamics within organisations) – despite having secured employment via long-standing relationships with employers – the employees indicated that applying for vacant positions seldom materialized in employment, and many had to resort to volunteering with organisations to better their chances (Graham et al 2015, p. 776).
Labour market attachment was also influenced by family support. One respondent described how her perseverance in seeking employment stemmed from her mother’s work ethic: “My mom, she has an immigrant background, and like a lot of immigrants in this community, they just work. I don’t know if any of them just came to this country to pursue a dream or anything, but their dream was probably a better future for their family and they just work, that’s what I think, that is at the core of the story for me” (Graham et al 2015, p. 777). Graham and colleagues continued to point out that while family members may contribute to the respondents growing sense of labour market knowledge and success, they may not always be equipped with labour market expectations (i.e. post-secondary credentials). As offered by one respondent: “I was the first one in my family to go to university, so I didn’t know what a bachelor, what a masters, any of that was, and I ended up going to one information session and asking completely stupid questions, and they kind of laughed at me, so I kind of learned mostly about it when I got there” (Graham et al 2015, p. 777).

The social dynamics of neighbourhood influence social capital. In fact, the researchers ascertained that negative social relationships within the respondents’ community (i.e. gang involvement) was a motivating factor for them to pursue post-secondary studies in the hopes of leaving the community and gaining upward social mobility. In the words of one respondent: “Education is a big deal here. If you had education, you wouldn’t be here. Youth in Jane and Finch can’t think that their life is going to be here for the rest of their lives. I never want that for myself, I dread that for myself, I can’t have that for myself” (Graham et al 2015, p. 779). Similarly, other respondents cited a desire to secure employment opportunities outside of Jane-Finch in order to “develop social networks within the wider labour market” (Graham et al 2015, p. 780).

Graham and his colleagues offer the following program ideas that youth employment support program might adopt in order to better mobilize the youth, given their efforts:

- More outreach services are needed within community in order to foster employee-employer relationships that will support positive interactions among employers and employees; and

- Since families are important sources of social capital, programs ought to harness family resources noting the ways in which families act as an important source of mobilization (i.e. what family members are going to achieve). What seems to be lacking within research in general, according to Graham and colleagues, are for programs to highlight the ways that families may better access community-based resources that might generate social and cultural capital.
Conclusion

It was good to have experienced the community support and the enthusiasm of past and present program participants at CEE’s recent (January 29) Open House. The participants of the Culinary Program, for instance, demonstrated their skills and abilities as they showed their pride in the work – so did the painter and other artists. Observing the youth at the Open House, it was clear that CEE has not only been providing them employable skills, but also social skills which evidently builds on the asset or social and cultural capital which brought experiences with CEE. Conversations with the program facilitators indicated that they received much energy from the interactions with the participants. The counsellors talked about the willingness of participants to talk through issues with which they are/were confronted as they worked toward the realization of their career and occupational goals. Indeed, the “wrap-around” that CEE provides participants very much speaks to the valued and appealing supports that is needed for the kinds of participants who seek the agency’s services.

While an empirical research would serve to provide information about the effectiveness of the work undertaken by CEE, cursory observations and media reports point to an agency that, in its brief years of operation, has been providing exemplary service to youth and their communities. In this regard, it is appropriate that CEE maintains the comprehensive approach to serving young people; for this approach has brought the organization considerable success, and is consistent with what research has indicated make for effective and successful youth-centred programs. It would be useful for CEE to embed research (not only evaluation) in its activities so that others might know about its work and benefit from its story. Doing so would provide opportunities for CEE to measure its success on an ongoing basis. Furthermore, in the absence of disaggregated data – as we have demonstrated in this report – about Black youth, such research would serve a larger social good. We would get to know, not only about the experiences of young people, but the areas of opportunities and needs for support.

It is the case that through educational and social programs, we seek to nurture high aspirations, sense of optimism, and confidence that their ambitions can be realized. Often in doing so, we tend to take “the sky is the limit” approach without regard to where the youth’s lived experiences, life situation, current credentials, and cultural capital sit in relation to “the sky.” Care must be taken to help structure opportunities and possibilities for youth – taking into account what can realistically be achieved given the youth situation, their understanding of what is possible, and the efforts they are willing to, or can, invest. In this regard, a scaffolding approach must be taken. For instance, there is a tendency to encourage young people to pursue university – sometimes even as they struggle or had struggled with completing high school. While such struggle cannot be used as evidence of how well such an individual will do in university, a staged and supportive process might best serve the youth in attaining the educational goal. To this end, the youth should be encouraged and supported to complete high school, then post-high school option – of which university is one – is presented to the youth. The idea is to actively to engage the youth in seeing what is achievable within his or her reach without him or her having to exert needless stress.

On the question of early career goals, becoming entrepreneurs is sometimes presented to jobless young people as a viable career or means of employment. Yet research (Hempel 2010; Pinto 2014; Silander, Chavez-Reilley & Weinstein 2016; Teixeira 2011) consistently shows that entrepreneurship for young people often is untenable – if not unreasonable – since besides age,
lack of finances (or access to resources) and a suitably exceptional business idea could be a barrier – particularly in a precarious economic market and discriminating socio-cultural context. For marginalized youth, given their social situation, their ability to launch a successful business could be limited; because of, as Hemple (2010) contends, their lack of financial capital, human capital (skills), and social capital (networks). In the case of Black youth, the fact that members of their community, compared to other racialized communities, is more dispersed geographically (Teixeira 2011) suggests that their entrepreneurial endeavours would potentially fail, due to, in part, lack of intra-community support – especially in cases where what is on offer is more likely to appeal to members of their community. The point is, it is possible that young people might at some point will be able to establish a business, but getting there is likely to involve a process of scaffolding (opportunities that provide experiences by which they gain skills, build confidence, and establish social networks – in short the necessary social and cultural capital) that will enable them to secure the finances and other resources for such undertaking and career trajectory.

Taking into account the societal conditions and the assets – the social and cultural capital, resilience, sense of purpose and obligation to help their parents (often immigrant parents) realize their dreams of success (from their investment in them), and the Community Cultural Wealth (Yosso, 2005; see page 29 of report), of Black youth, James’ (2012) framework of Community-Centred Approach to Education (CCAE) (broadly conceived) is relevant. With reference to the schooling and education of young people, James argues that facilitators of education and services for youth – be they teachers, youth workers, coaches, social service providers – need to centre or reference the communities (i.e. peer, group, ethno-racial, geographic) in which the youth reside, with which they identify, have a sense of belonging, and/or traverse (p. 124). Hence, facilitators must have a sense of the youth’s culture, and knowledge of their communities. CCAE asserts that the lived experiences, resources, skills, abilities and learnings of young people – in short, positionality, biographies, and inter-related complex identities/identification – need to be valued, acknowledged and integrated into the programs into which they are invited to participate.

- begins with an understanding that the young people exist in relation to their communities;
- requires attention to the relationship between them and their parents, school (teachers), peers, and communities;
- takes into account that the youth’s sense of self and their possibilities are informed by and in relation to the larger society’s perceptions and media representations of their peer group, ethno-racial community and geographic community;
- entails recognition that the culture of their various and diverse communities help to shape their behaviors and structure their perceptions;
- involves integration of knowledge from and of their communities in building relationships and facilitating programs;
- demands utilizing their knowledge of backgrounds and experiences to build program activities and pedagogy that will meet their needs, interests, expectations and ambitions.
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