

Enhancing the Social Planning and Research Capacity in North Durham and Clarington:

A community social profile and needs assessment

AUGUST 16, 2010



CDCD
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
COUNCIL DURHAM



*Enhancing the Social Planning and Research Capacity in North Durham and Clarington:
A Community Social Profile and Needs Assessment*

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Executive Summary

Enhancing the Social Planning and Research Capacity in North Durham and Clarington: A Community Social Profile and Needs Assessment is a report resulting from a collaborative, capacity-building project funded by the Ontario Trillium Foundation (2009-2011). In this collaborative, the Community Development Council of Durham (CDCD) and the North Durham Social Development Council (NDSDC) collaborated with a variety of local community stakeholders to increase social planning and community development in Durham's rural communities.

This report contains two major components of information. The first component provides a social profile of Durham's rural communities using recent statistical information and GIS technology. This is summarized in Section 2.0 - Community Social Profile. Second, this report summarizes the feedback gathered from recent focus groups and interviews conducted with local agencies and community members on the needs and expectations for social planning and research in North Durham and Clarington. This research is summarized in Section 3.0 - Needs Assessment.

The Needs Assessment revealed a number of organizational strengths, assets and opportunities for gathering information about community needs, collaboration and partnership development. Organizations in North Durham and Clarington learn about their communities and individuals they serve through a variety of means, including: informal information gathering (which is used much more frequently than any other type of method), networking opportunities, information listings, existing statistical data, and conducting local evaluations and needs assessments. Interview participants also discussed the benefits and challenges of using these various sources of information.

The importance of collaboration and partnership development among agencies and with the community is considered essential in North Durham and Clarington. As well, agency representatives recognize that collaboration and partnerships are important for the survival of individual organizations, and to meet the needs of clients and the community. Interview participants also provided a number of ideas and suggestions to promote enhanced social planning among agencies within Durham's rural areas. These suggestions include: enhancing the capacity of Durham's social planning councils and building on existing resources.

The Needs Assessment also revealed strengths, assets and opportunities, as well as, challenges, needs and concerns to be considered in future social planning activities within rural Durham communities. For the most part, community members generally enjoy living in Durham's rural areas. People like how supportive their neighbours are, especially in times of crisis. People are considered friendly, nice, and approachable. The Needs Assessment identified several areas of concern and existing service gaps that require special attention and significant investments, specifically in the areas of:

- volunteerism and community interaction
- access to services,
- recreation,
- youth-services and other key community groups,

- income and employment,
- transportation
- and engagement in social planning processes

General Findings

The results from this Needs Assessment indicate that high-quality and relevant information, cooperative and synergistic relationships and inclusive community participation are needed to build effective social planning in North Durham and Clarington.

Improving how information is collected, presented, and shared is important for the successful identification, expansion and continuation of services in rural Durham. Several specific recommendations were made in the above sections; however, some general recommendations are offered here for consideration:

- That agencies, local decision-makers and funders acknowledge communities' stories and experiences (qualitative research) as a credible source of information as they relate to identifying service gaps and needs.
- That statistics (quantitative statistics) are collected at a population level that allows comparison between communities within North Durham and Clarington; and that proportional statistics are considered to avoid dismissal on the basis of small absolute population numbers.
- That a communications plan is created for effective and timely dissemination and knowledge exchange between community members, social agencies, municipalities and funders.

A more resilient social service sector will depend on the willingness of agencies to take risks and trust each other in working towards common goals. Again, several general recommendations are offered here to enhance relationship building among agencies in Durham's rural areas:

- Reforms to funding formulas should be made, such as: funds to develop partnerships for project development, core funding based on expectations for partnership (e.g. the LHIN model), and use of pooled agency resources for collective benefits.
- That agencies use open source learning and information sharing (e.g. wikipedia).
- That agencies use open communication between each other and the community (e.g. using social media).
- That training is provided to agencies to learn about new ways of collaborating and communicating.

The third essential component in enhancing social planning in Durham's rural areas is the emphasis on community engagement and inclusive, meaningful participation. The needs assessment identified several areas of concern and existing service gaps that require special attention and significant investments, specifically in the areas identified by the needs assessment.

However given these concerns, many community members were not aware of the resources or services that currently exist (or became aware only after needing a service). In particular, many did not cite the information resources available to access needed information. Furthermore, many expressed significant disconnect between themselves and social agencies.

The following set of recommendations is offered to enhance community participation in enhancing social planning in North Durham and Clarington:

- That larger emphasis on the use, coordination and evaluation of community information resources for effective community information sharing, especially as new information sharing mechanisms, are introduced to the community (e.g. Information 211).
- That greater investment is placed into using an asset-based approach, helping communities to take pride and recognize strengths in their communities and using assets to affect community change on issues of concern.
- That greater investment be placed on the promotion of volunteerism and community connection, such as: developing a strong volunteer sector, re-training of volunteers, and creating relevant and meaningful opportunities for volunteers.
- That the community is given information about the social planning process and how to participate in decision-making processes with social service agencies and within municipal government.

By no means are these recommendations the final list, but only a suggested set of guidelines to help initiate social planning processes among invested stakeholders throughout Durham Region – specifically supporting Durham’s rural communities. Social planning and community development is a complex process, and the appropriate responses generated from the feedback gathered by this Needs Assessment, will depend upon the leadership, commitment and a “one-for-all / all-for-one” attitude by all community partners involved.

Rural communities throughout Durham Region possess many strengths and assets to build upon. Community leaders and residents both take pride in their communities, and believe social change can be achieved to create even better places to live. Agencies clearly have a strong interest and commitment to working with each other in collaboration for collective community benefit. Individuals and families living in these areas also are ready and willing to work towards building stronger communities. The challenge will be to create creative, inclusive and sustainable structures for effective information sharing, collaborative planning, and collective action.

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Section 1.0 Introduction

Enhancing the Social Planning and Research Capacity in North Durham and Clarington: A Community Social Profile and Needs Assessment is a report resulting from a collaborative, capacity-building project funded by the Ontario Trillium Foundation (2009-2011). In this collaborative, the Community Development Council of Durham (CDCD) and the North Durham Social Development Council (NDSDC) collaborated with a variety of local community stakeholders¹ to increase social planning and community development in Durham's rural communities (i.e. Uxbridge, Brock, Scugog, and Clarington).

The CDCD and the NDSDC are member agencies of the Social Planning Network of Ontario. The Social Planning Network of Ontario is a coalition of Social Planning Councils, Community Development Councils, Resource Centres, and Planning Committees located in various communities throughout Ontario. Each individual organization has their own mandates but is connected in the cause of effecting change on social policies, conditions and issues.

The overall goals of this collaborative project include:

1. Improve collaboration and organizational capacity of the CDCD and the NDSDC.
2. Enhance the ability of community organizations serving Durham's rural communities to gather, share, analyze and use data and information to support local planning, program and service delivery.
3. Enhance the ability of community organizations serving Durham's rural communities to cooperate and share information and resources when dealing with community wide issues and concerns.
4. To improve the engagement of Durham's rural community members in social research and planning processes.
5. To increase the interactions between community organizations serving Durham's rural communities and municipal and regional government.

Activities related to these goals are ongoing and long-term in nature. Successful outcomes will depend on the cooperation and collaboration of Durham's social planning councils, local non-profit and voluntary agencies, municipal and regional government, and funding bodies. This report is offered as a guide that can be used in a variety of collaborative processes for invested stakeholders.

¹ The Collaborative included representatives from: CDCD, NDSDC, Brock Township, North House, Brock Community Health Centre, North Durham Homeless Prevention, the United Way – Oshawa, Clarington, Brock & Scugog, Municipality of Clarington, and the John Howard Society – Clarington.

1.1 Report Objectives

This report was created for two main purposes. The first objective of this report is to provide a social profile of Durham's rural communities using recent statistical information and GIS technology. This is summarized in Section 2.0 - Community Social Profile.

Second, this report summarizes the feedback gathered from recent focus groups and interviews conducted on the needs and expectations for social planning and research in North Durham and Clarington. Focus groups and interviews were conducted to better understand the community organizations that work in and serve Durham Region's rural areas. The information gathered by this process sought to understand their research and data needs, as well as strategies to increase collaboration and partnership. In addition, community members living in rural areas of Durham Region were consulted to better understand strengths and needs, and gather feedback on how to better involve them in community development and planning processes. This research is summarized in Section 3.0 - Needs Assessment.

Ultimately, the intended impacts of the community profile and the needs assessment are to enhance the ability for local agencies and community members to meaningfully participate in the social planning process and influence consequential social change in Durham's rural communities.

1.2 Uses of the Community Profile and Needs Assessment

The data collected from this project can be used by a number of stakeholders to enhance social planning initiatives in Durham Region. The information and findings in this report are designed to support the social planning and community development activities of local non-profit organizations, the volunteer sector and community service organizations. Specifically, this work will be used by the CDCD and the NDSDC in the planning and development of their partnership agreements and strategic plans for coordinated social planning across Durham Region. This information is also presented for local municipal and regional government officials, as well as funding bodies in their planning and decision-making processes that impact the social service sector, and the communities in Durham Region's rural areas.

Not only can this research be used to enhance individual-level organizational planning processes, but is also intended to support collective actions undertaken by multiple stakeholders that are located or serve Durham's rural areas. We hope that the information offered by this report can help community members, social service agencies, municipal/regional governments and funders, work collaboratively to develop strategies and actions that meaningfully address social issues in Durham's rural communities.

Section 2.0 Community Social Profile

In order to gain a better understanding of the local context in Durham Region's rural communities, local documents and existing resources were reviewed. The information below was extracted from a number of reports and resources provided by the Project Advisory Committee.

2.1 Community Demographics

Statistics Canada census data are routinely summarized for the communities of Uxbridge, Brock, Scugog, and Clarington to better understand the demographics and trends in these communities. The following provide some example reports:

- *A Social Environmental Scan for the Township of Uxbridge* (Community Development Council Durham, 2003).
- *Township of Scugog Community Profile* (Township of Scugog website).
- *Clarington Profile* (Municipality of Clarington website).
- *Region of Durham Community Social Profile* (Community Development Council Durham and the United Way of Ajax/Pickering/Uxbridge, 2008)

These sources provide a summary of basic demographics, including population growth, age, sex, migration and immigration, household and families, employment and income, education and housing.

Population

According to Statistics Canada the population of Durham Region was 561,258 in 2006. This represents an increase of 11% between 2001 and 2006, and an increase of 22% since 1996. This growth is on par with the provincial rate since 2001 and is 5% higher than the 10 year provincial rate from 1996 to 2006. Population increases occurred both in the urban (Pickering, Ajax, Whitby, and Oshawa) and rural municipalities (Clarington, Scugog, Brock, and Uxbridge). While urban municipalities experienced the greatest amount of growth, rural municipalities experienced growth to a lesser degree, with the exception of the Municipality of Clarington with a population increase of 15% between 1996 and 2001 and 11% between 2001 and 2006. In comparison, the Municipality of North Durham has maintained a relatively low, though steady rate of growth over the 10 year period starting in 1996.

	Population			
	1991	1996	2001	2006
Durham	409070	458616	506901	561258
Pickering	68631	78989	87139	87800
Ajax	57350	64430	73753	90220
Whitby	61281	73794	87413	111190
Oshawa	129344	134364	139051	141580
Clarington	49479	60615	69834	77800
Scugog	17810	18837	20224	21440
Brock	11057	11705	12110	11990
Uxbridge	14092	15882	17377	19170

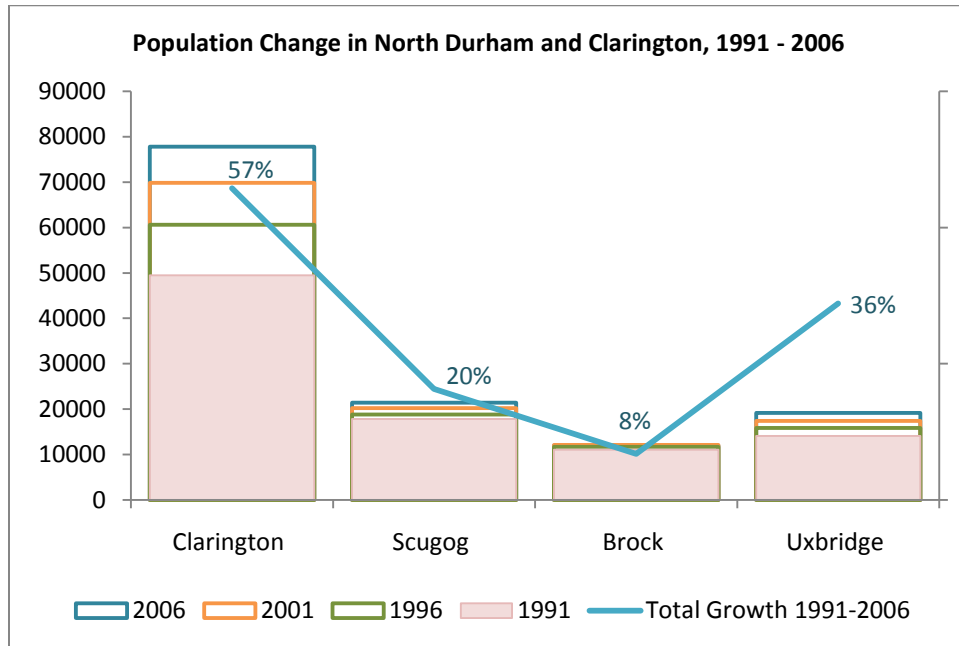


Figure 1

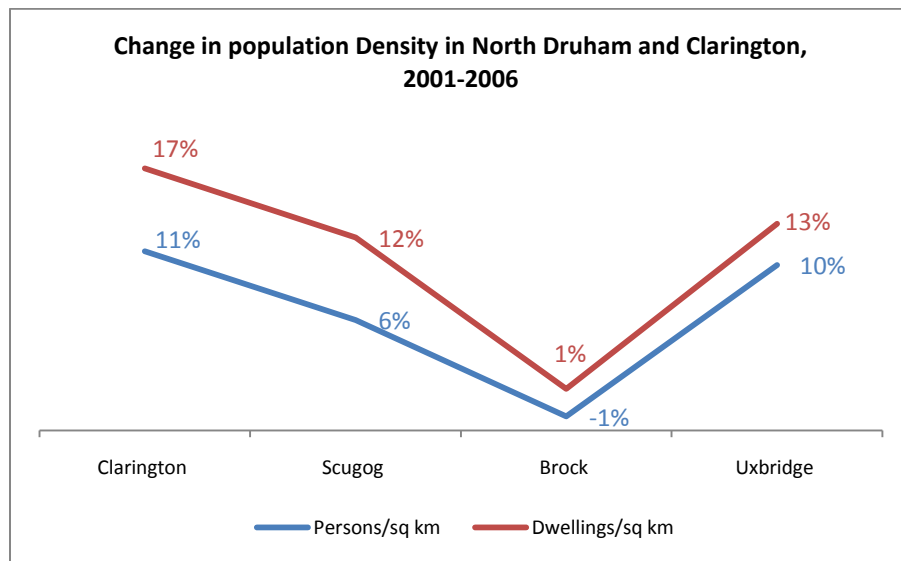
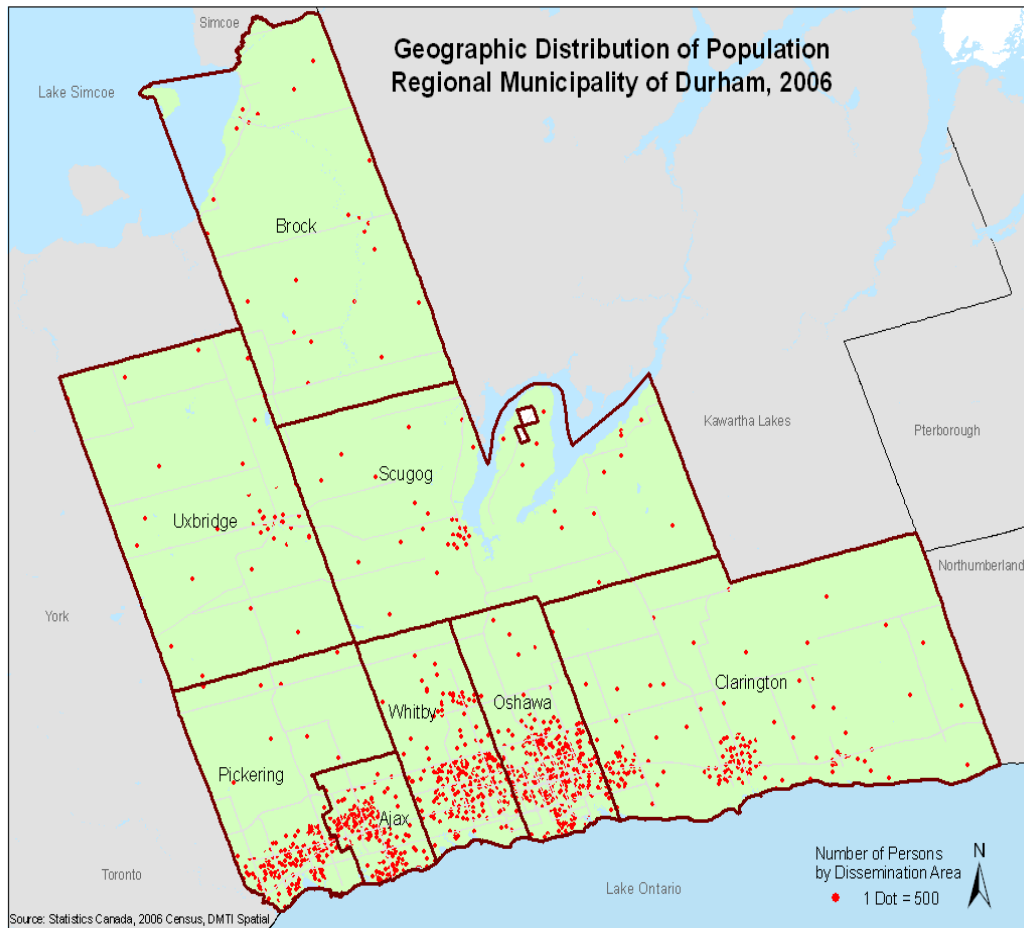


Figure 2



Map I

Age & Gender

The median age in Durham Region is 35.8 years. The population in Durham is a few years younger than Ontario (median age 38.2) and Canada (median age 38.8). North Durham (Uxbridge, Brock and Scugog) specifically is the oldest area with a median of 39.2 years.

As is shown by the population pyramid charts below, both the men and women who populate North Durham and Clarington are between the ages of 35 and 64; Clarington having the largest population of 35 to 39 year old residents. It is interesting to note that in the Scugog, Brock and Uxbridge communities, the female population is larger and aging at a more increasing rate in comparison to men.

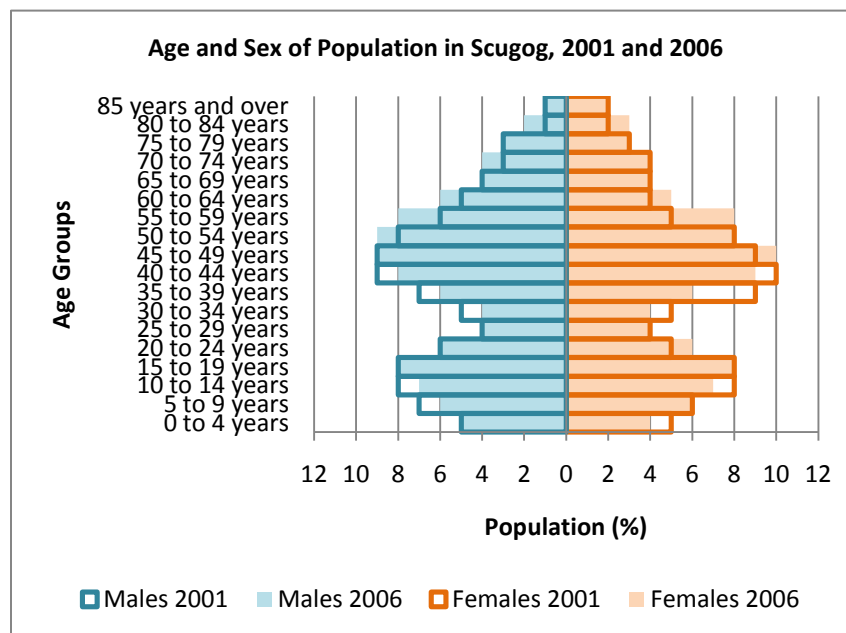
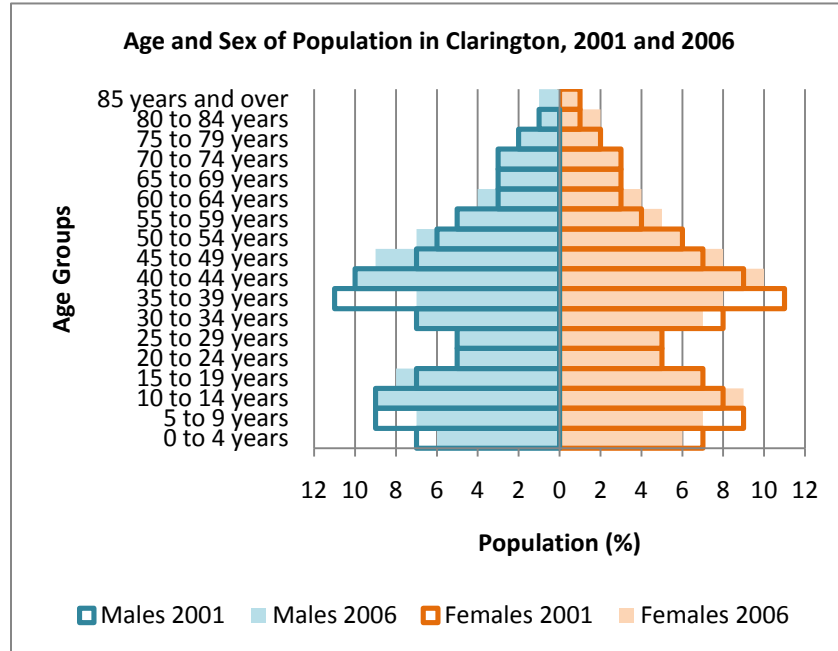


Figure 3a

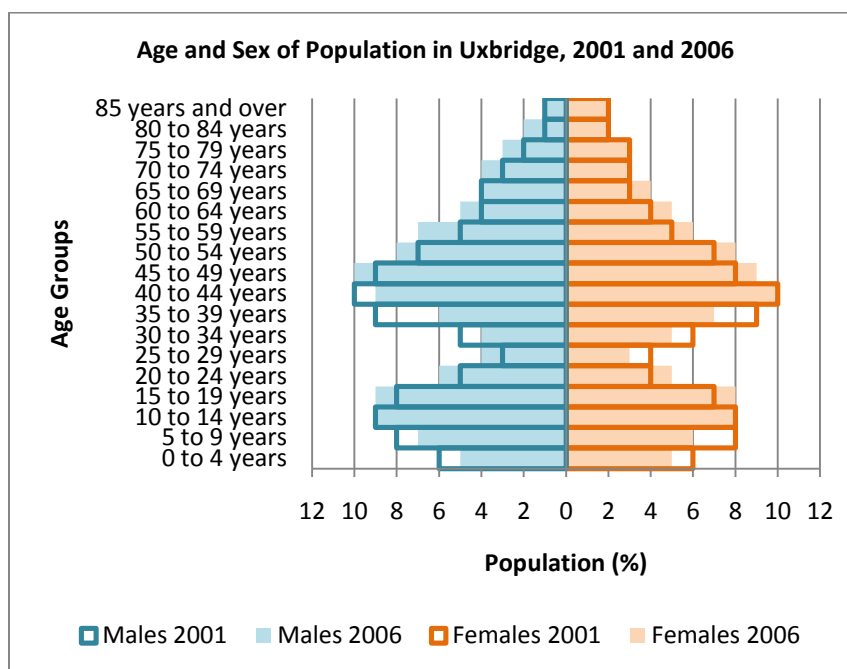
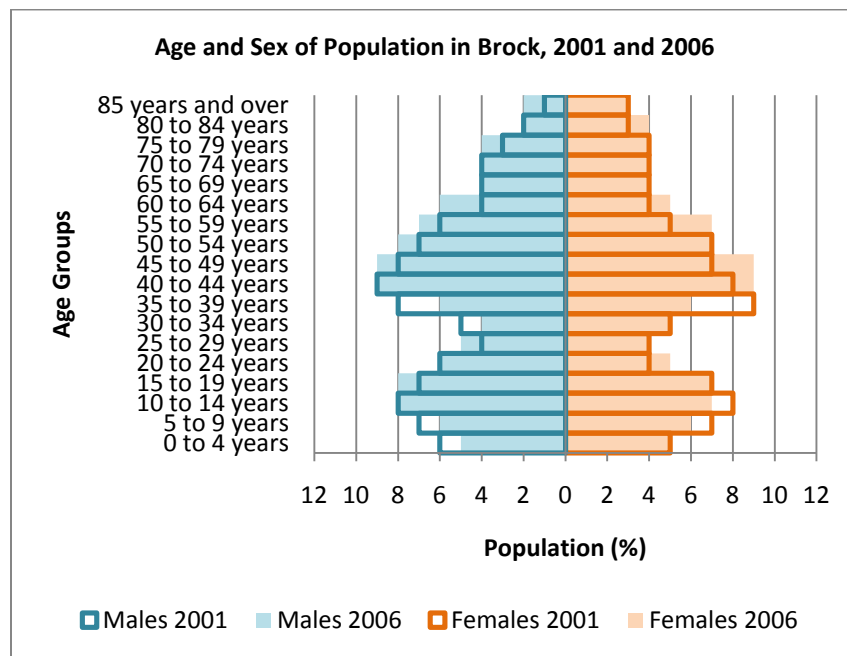


Figure 3b

Senior Population

The total number of seniors living in Durham Region is 16,850 (age 65 years and older), and represents 12% of the total population in the Region of Durham. This is slightly smaller than the percentage of seniors living in Ontario (12.8% of the total population) and Canada (13.1% of the total population).

From Figure 4 we see that since 2001 the percentage of seniors living alone has always been higher within the Township of Brock and in 2006 the total population of lone

seniors was the lowest within the Scugog region. Within this five year span only the senior populations living alone in the Township of Brock and Uxbridge have increased by more than 2%.

Figure 5 illustrates once again the population discrepancy between men and women. In this chart we see that the population of female seniors in Brock Township remains higher when compared to that of men, with the lowest population for both sexes living in Clarington.

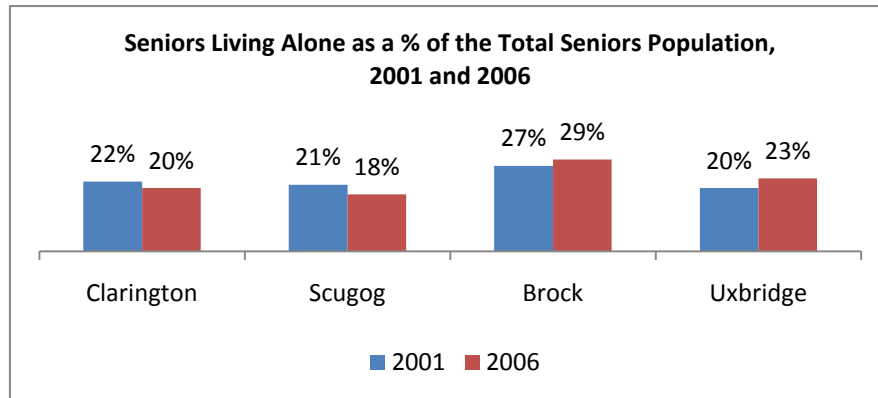


Figure 4

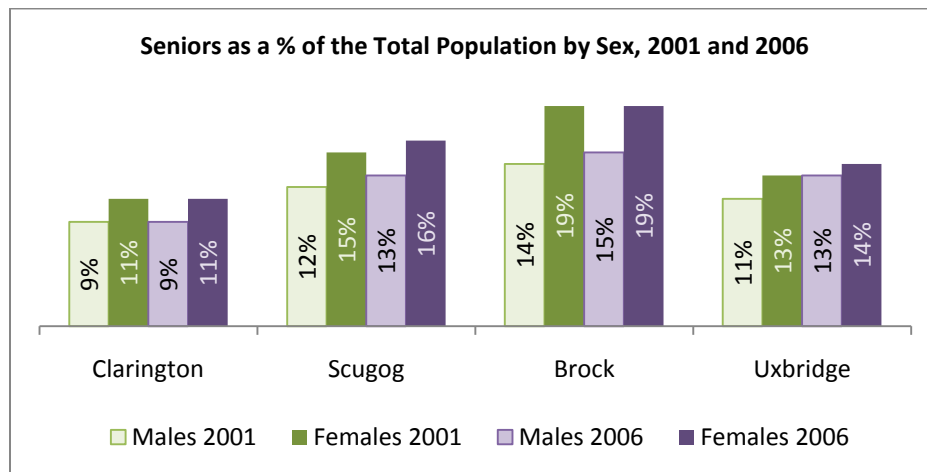


Figure 5

Family and Family Structure

Between 2001 and 2006 the number of families in Durham Region increased by 11%, from 143,515 to 159,900. Specifically, the number of families settling in the Municipality of Clarington increased by 13% and in the Township of Uxbridge the number of families increased by 12%.

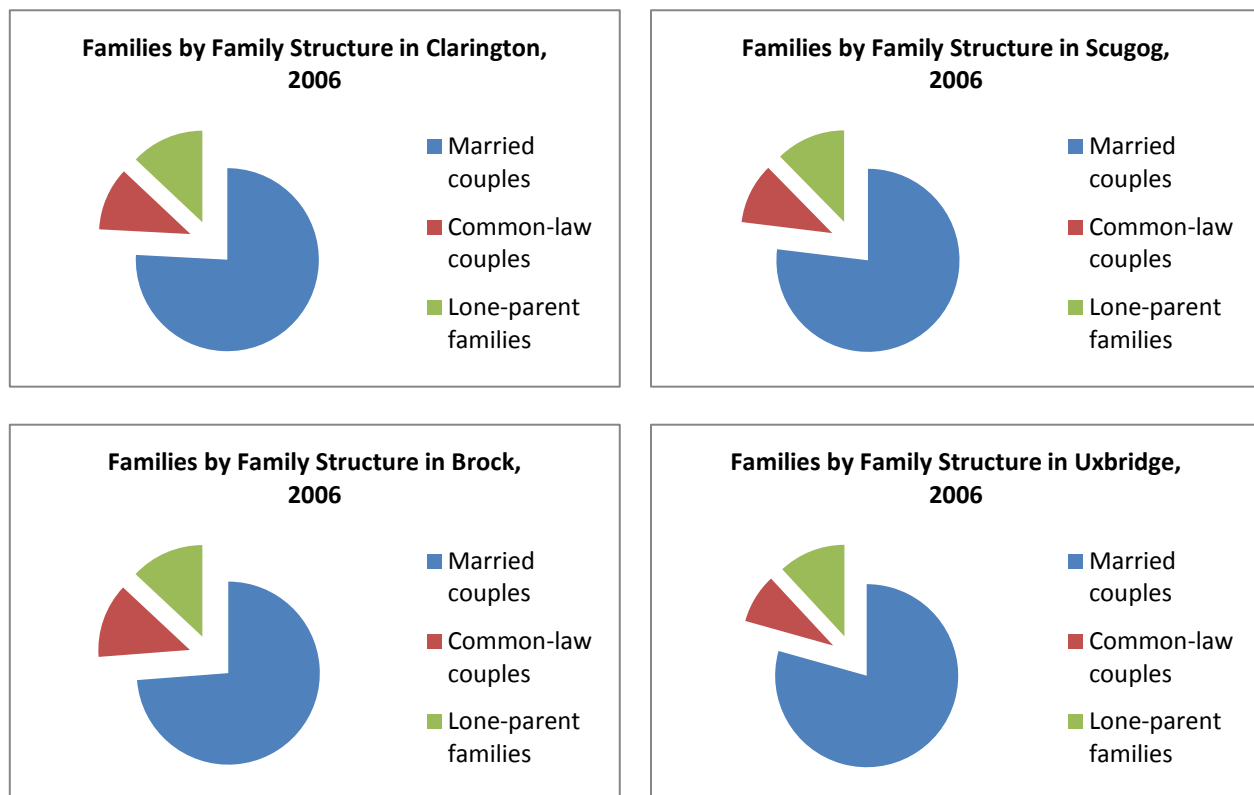


Figure 6

Lone parent families account for 18% of all families in Durham Region, with lone female parents significantly outweighing males. From Figure 7 we see that not only is the population within the Township of Brock mostly women (see Fig.5), but the majority of them are raising their families alone. While the percentage of female lone parent families is alarmingly high in every community, the largest difference is between Brock and Scugog at 16%.

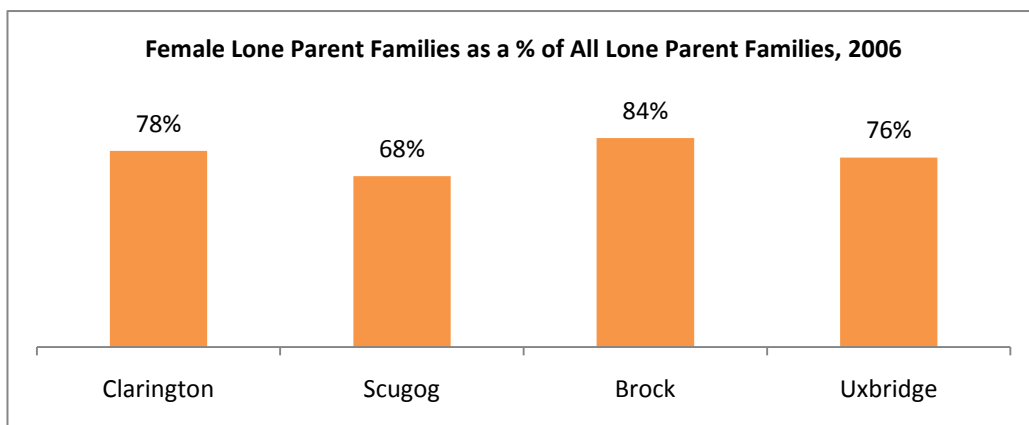


Figure 7

Immigration

In 2006 the immigrant population represented 20% of the total population in Durham Region. The municipalities with the smallest immigrant populations are those in North Durham (Brock, Scugog, and Uxbridge), with a combined 10% of the population being immigrants.

Within the five year period from 2001 and 2006 the percentage of immigrants in terms of the total population living within North Durham only rose by less than 1% in Scogog and Brock, lowered by 1% in Uxbridge and remained the same in Clarington. While there was little change in the statistics showing immigrants as a percentage of the total population, the growth in immigrant population grew the most in Clarington, as shown by Figure 9.

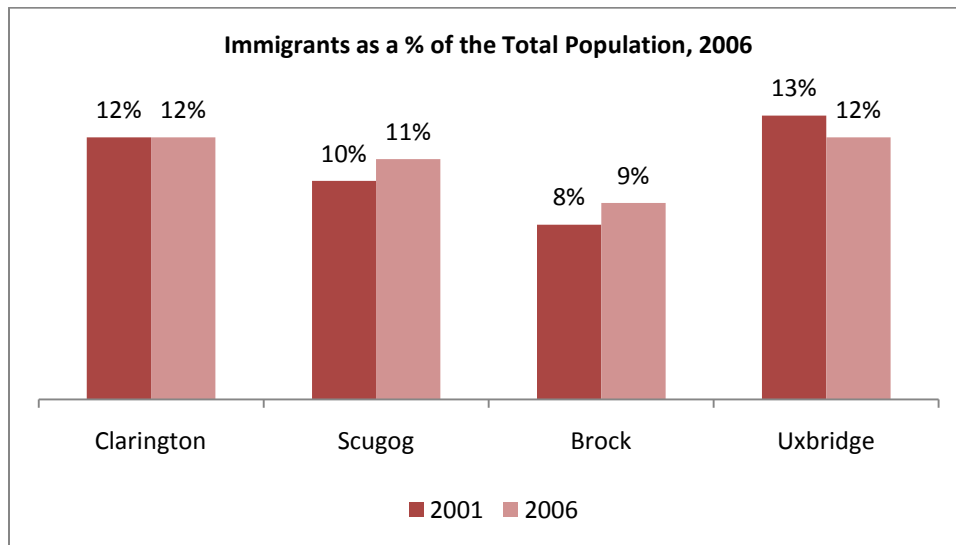


Figure 8

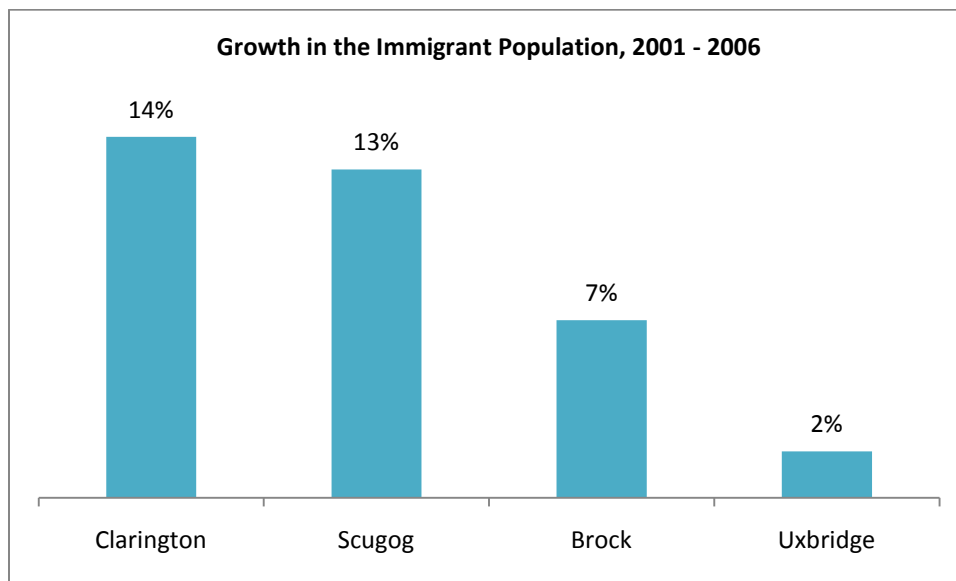


Figure 9

Visible Minorities

Overall, in 2006 visible minorities made up 17% of the population in Durham Region, which represents a 5% increase from 2001. The largest and most significant growth in visible minority population occurred in Whitby and Ajax. However, as illustrated in Figure 11, Scugog and Uxbridge experienced negative growth.

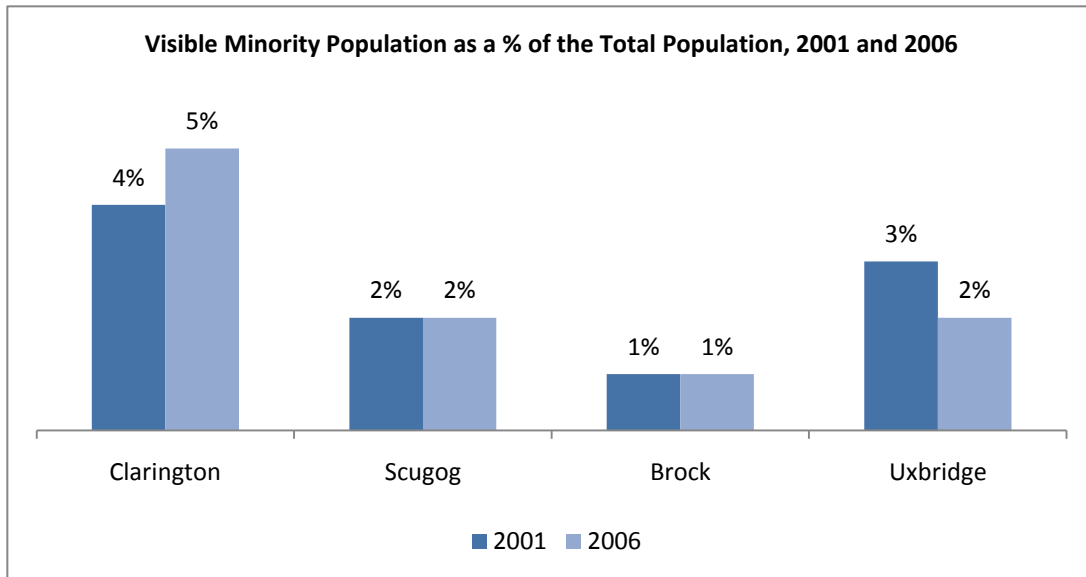


Figure 10

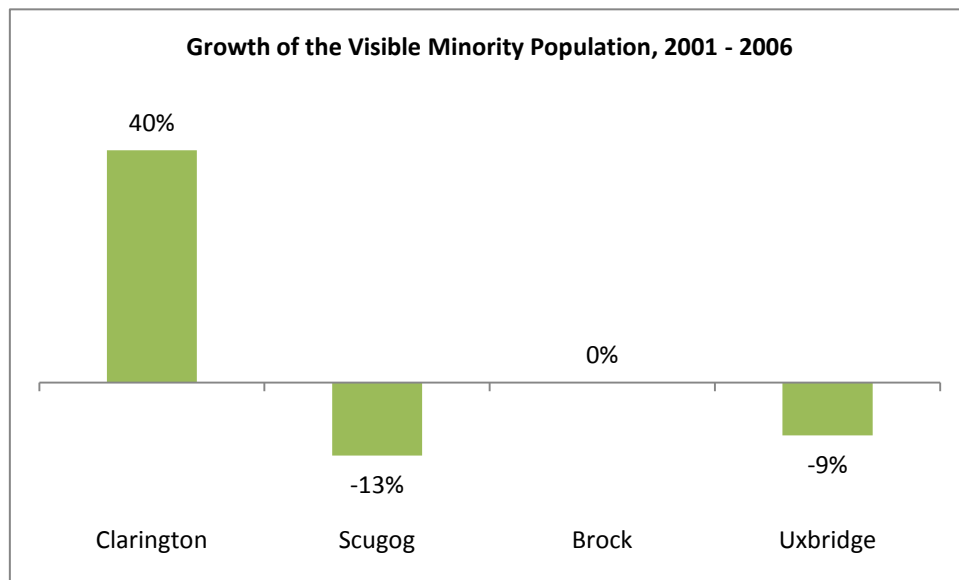


Figure 11

Aboriginal Population

Overall, the Aboriginal population in Durham Region remains low, with only 3% of the total population identifying Aboriginal ancestry in 2006. In reference to North Durham, Clarington and Brock, they are the municipalities with the highest proportion of its population identifying with Aboriginal ancestry, at 4%.

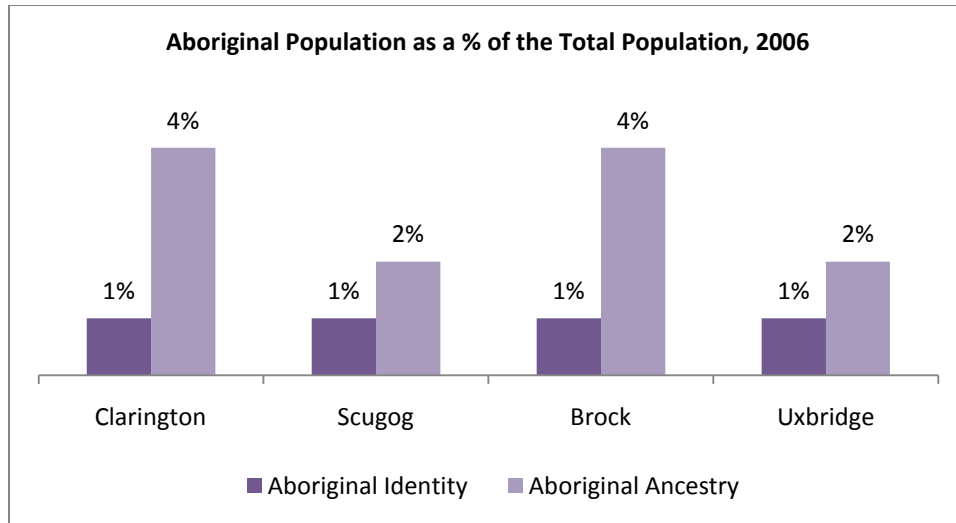


Figure 12

Labour Force Participation

In Durham, as in the province of Ontario, men are more likely to participate in the labour force than women, with 76% of all males 15 years and over participating (Figure 13). However, 66% of females 15 years and over in Durham are still actively part of the labour market. This is reflective of an increasing trend toward dual income families in communities across Canada.

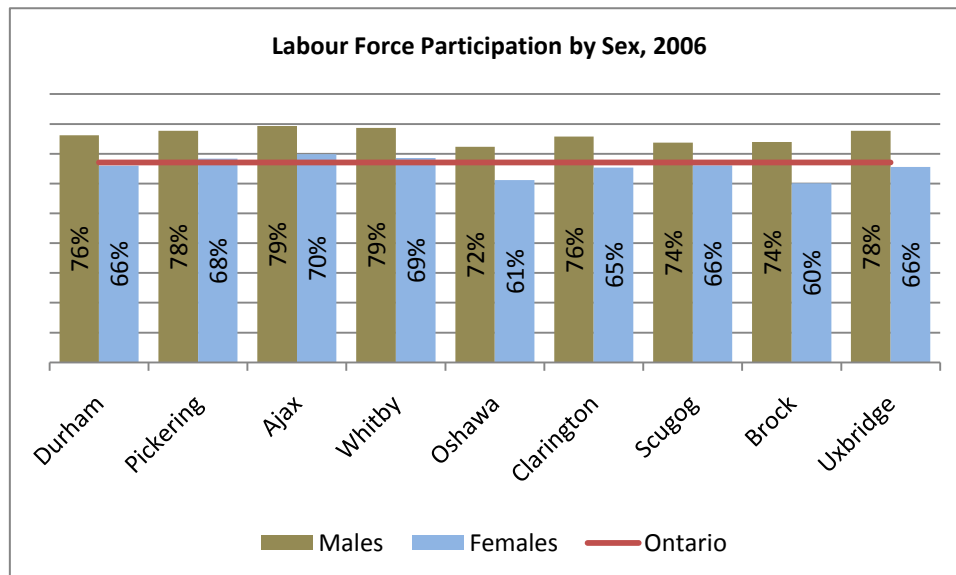


Figure 13

Place of Work – Commuting

65% of the population in Durham Region participating in the labour force works outside their municipality of residence (Figure 14). However, the proportion of the labour force that worked outside of their municipality of residence in 2006 was lower in North Durham. For example, the Municipality of Clarington had the lowest proportion of their population who were engaged in the labour market working outside the Durham Region.

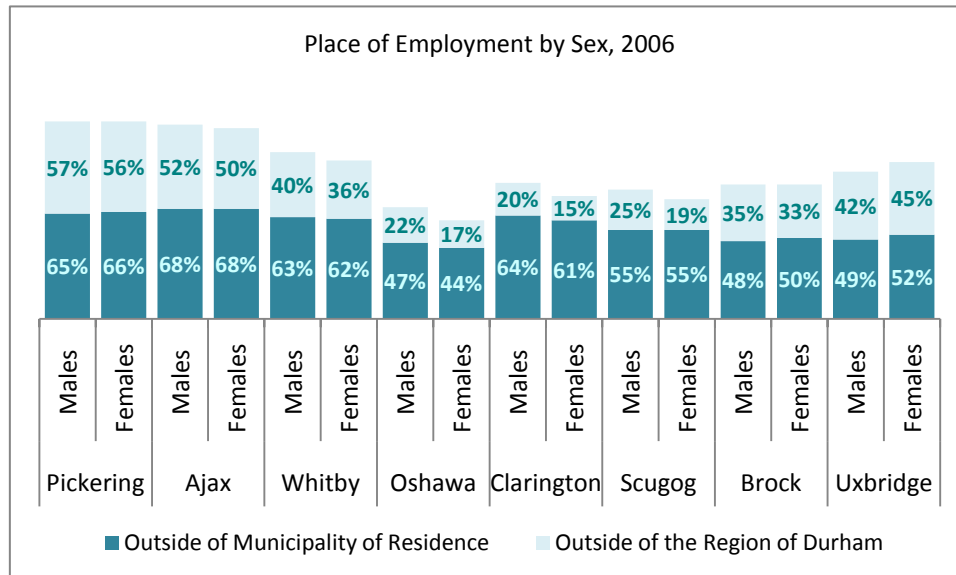


Figure 14

Unemployment Rate

The overall unemployment rate for Durham Region was approximately 6% in 2006, which was roughly equal to the provincial average at the time. The rate has generally been consistent in the region since 2001; however, it can only be assumed that this rate has since increased resulting from the recent recession in Canada.

In 2006 the municipalities with the lowest unemployment rates were the rural communities of Brock and Uxbridge, both having an unemployment rate around 4%.

In nearly all municipalities there is a minimal sex disparity in unemployment rates, with women generally experiencing a higher rate than men (Figure 15). Uxbridge is a minor exception to this, with males experiencing only 2% unemployment and women experiencing a rate of 6%.

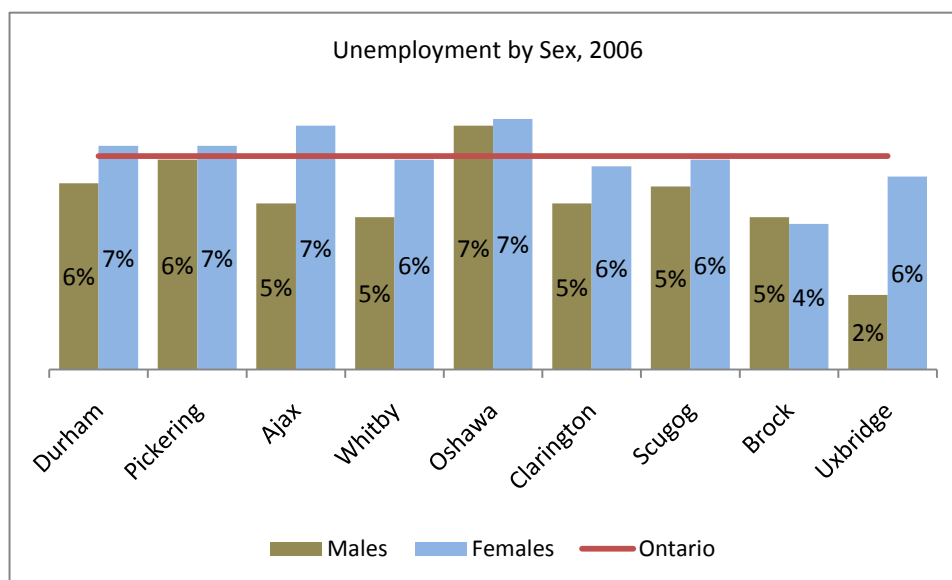


Figure 15

Youth aged 15-24 years are more likely to be unemployed than the general population, with 17% of young men and 15% of young women being unemployed in Durham in 2006 (Figure 16). These figures were congruent with provincial averages for youth at the time.

In 2006, the lowest rate of youth unemployment occurred in Uxbridge where only 6% of young men and 9% of young women were unemployed. As with the general population, sex disparities in youth unemployment rates were minimal across Durham, with the exception of Brock, where there was a 14% difference between male and female youth being unemployed in 2006. However, this may be the result of the informal employment of young men in the local agricultural sector.

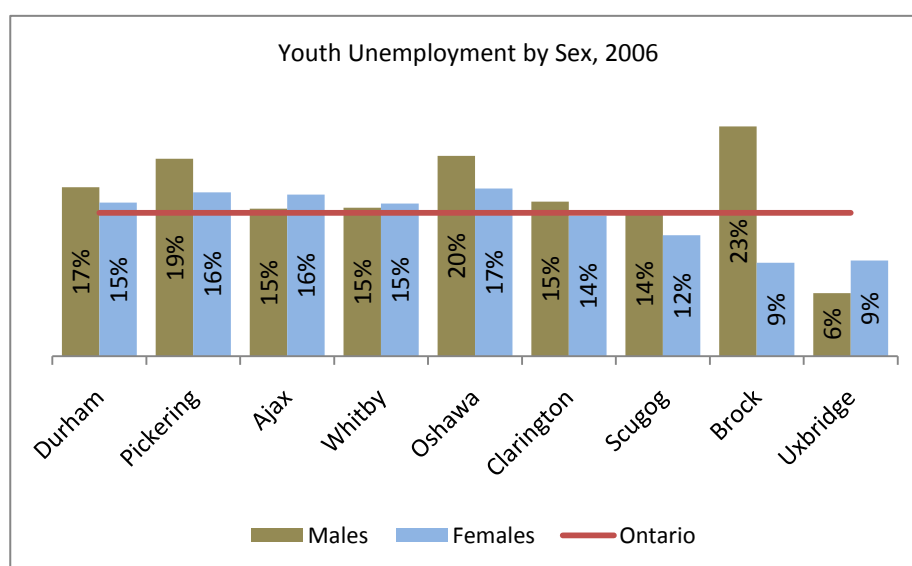


Figure 16

Income and Earnings

The average individual income for all residents in the Durham Region was \$40,249 in 2005. This represents an increase of 15% over the average income in 2000.

In 2005, the average individual income for males in Durham was 61% higher than that of individual females. This gender disparity was congruent across municipalities, with the greatest disparity occurring in Whitby and Clarington, where the average individual male income was 70% higher than that of individual females, as illustrated in Figure 18.

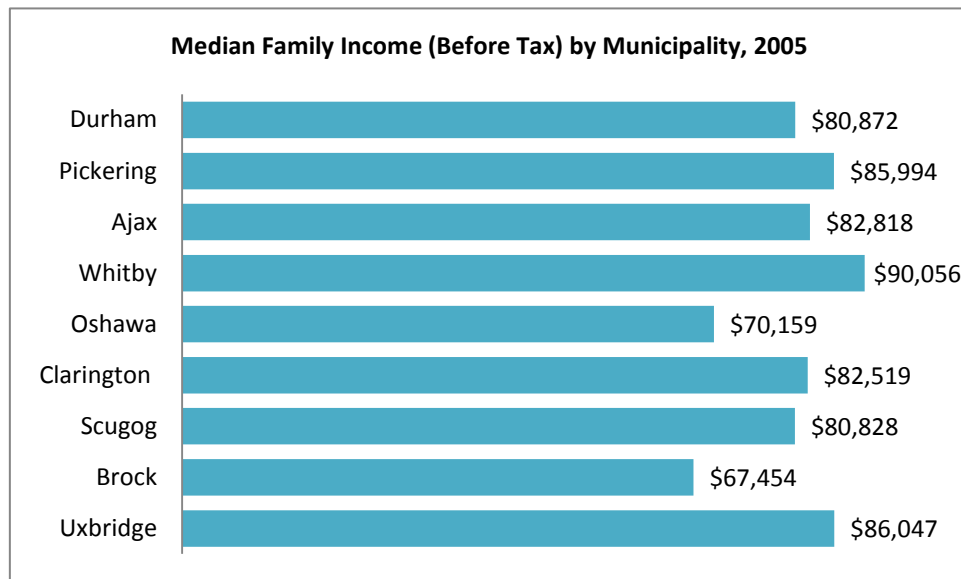


Figure 17

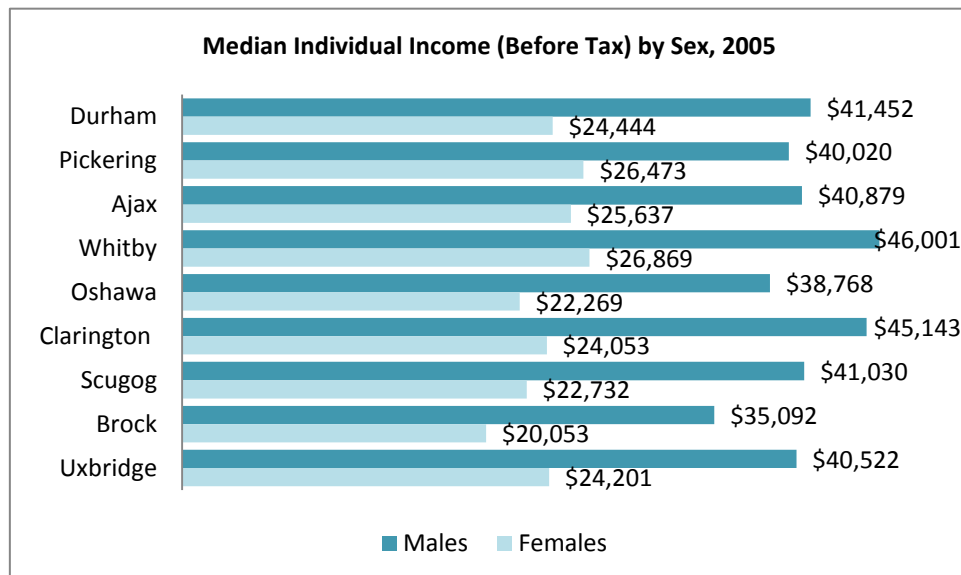


Figure 18

It should be noted that in 2005 the family structure which produced the most income was that of married couple families, whereas the lowest income per family structure was that of female lone parent families. As illustrated through Figure 7 the proportion of female lone families in North Durham and Clarington are high. The troubles that women face in raising healthy families alone and on such low income need to be considered, and steps taken to alleviate their struggle should be coordinated immediately. The economic implications of sexism are clearly stated within Figure 19 where it is shown that male lone parent families have a median family income that is considerably more than female lone parent families.

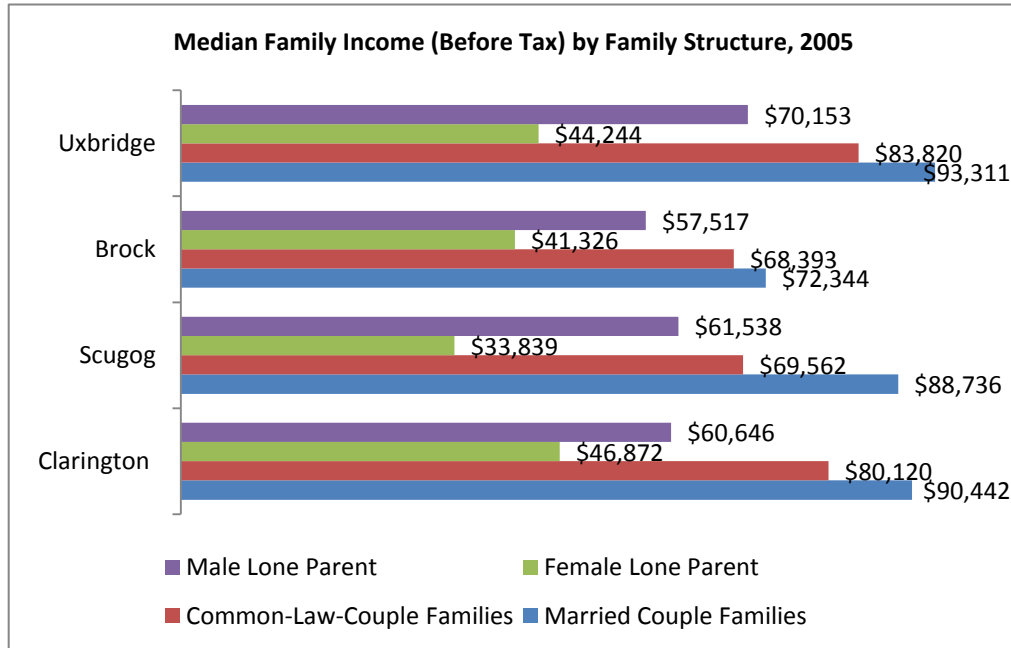


Figure 19

Prevalence of Low Income

In 2005, 9% of the population in Durham Region was living with low income. Statistics show that the number of individuals living with low income in Durham increased by 25% between 2000 and 2005. As illustrated by Figure 20, the largest increase from 2001 to 2006 in low-income as a percentage of the total population occurred in Uxbridge and the least occurred in the Township of Brock.

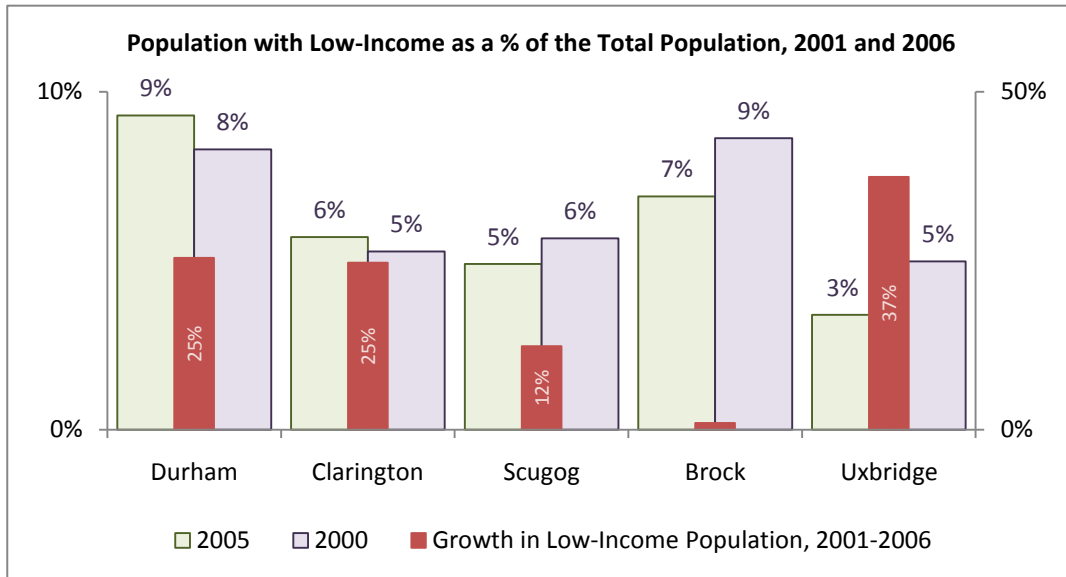


Figure 20

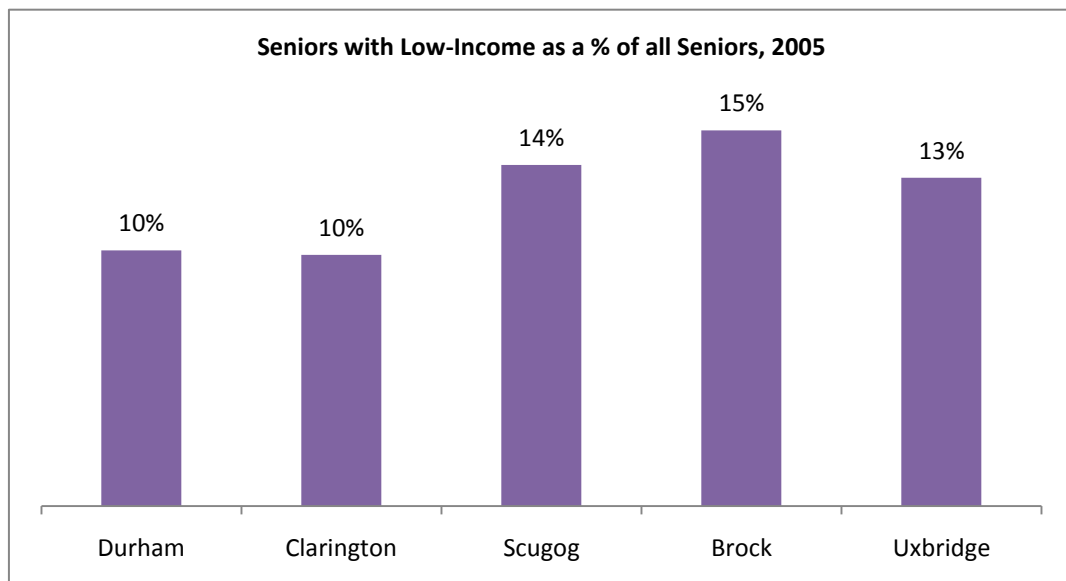


Figure 21

Housing

Between 2005 and 2006 there were 11,027 new housing units constructed in Durham Region. 65% of these units were single, detached family homes, and 77% of them were apartment units, none of them were public housing units. Interestingly, only 3% of these units were built in rural communities (North Durham and Clarington).

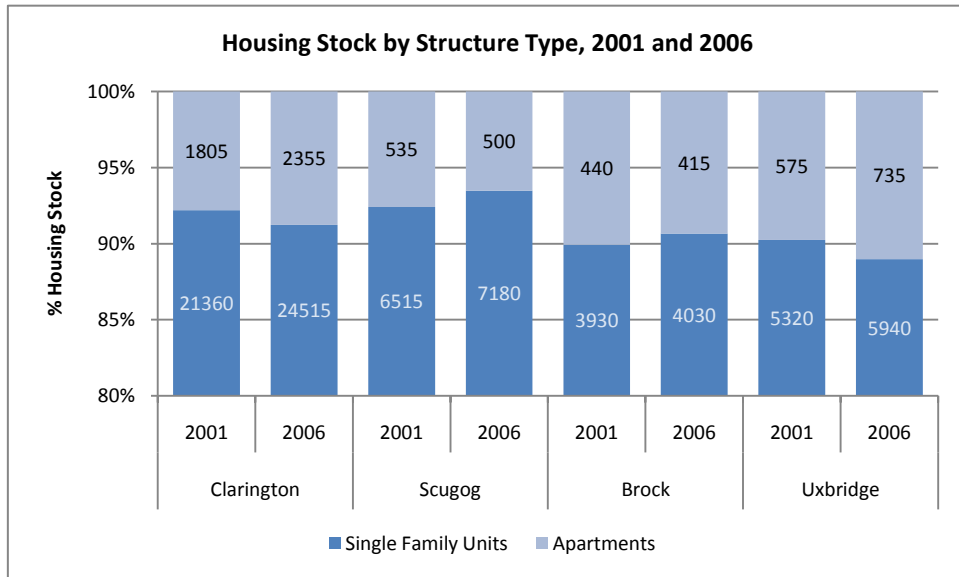


Figure 22

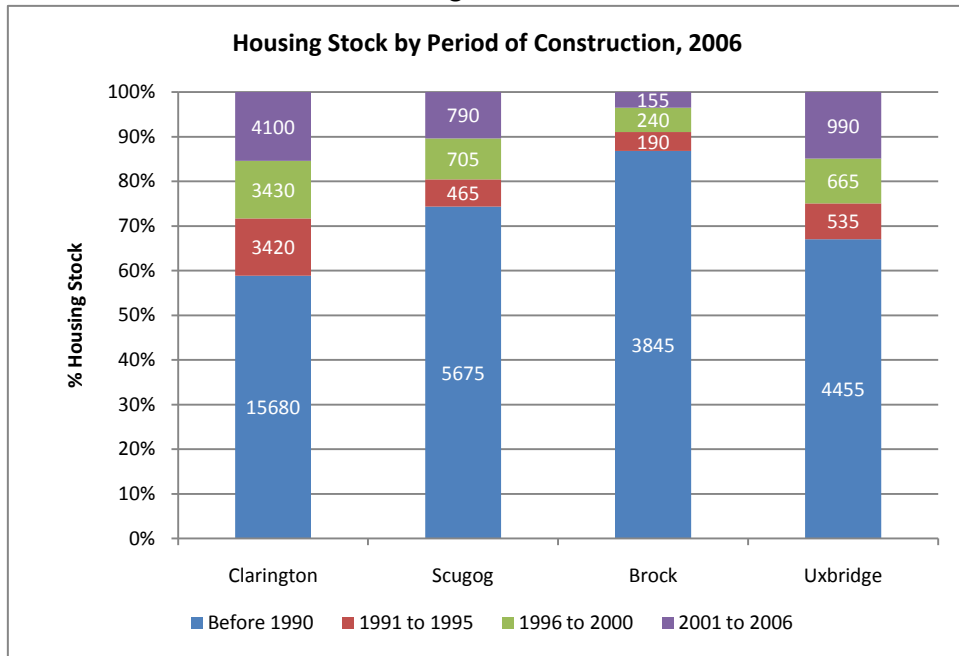


Figure 23

According to Statistics Canada, in 2006 31% of the housing stock in Durham was in need of repair, with 5% requiring major repairs. The city of Oshawa and three municipalities in North Durham had the highest proportion of their housing in need of repair, a fact that is reflective of an older stock.

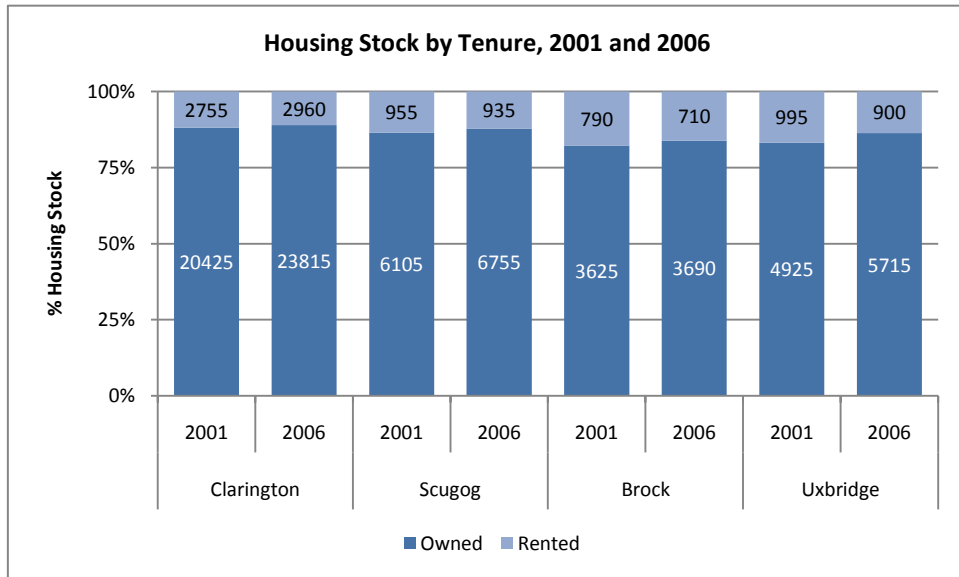


Figure 24

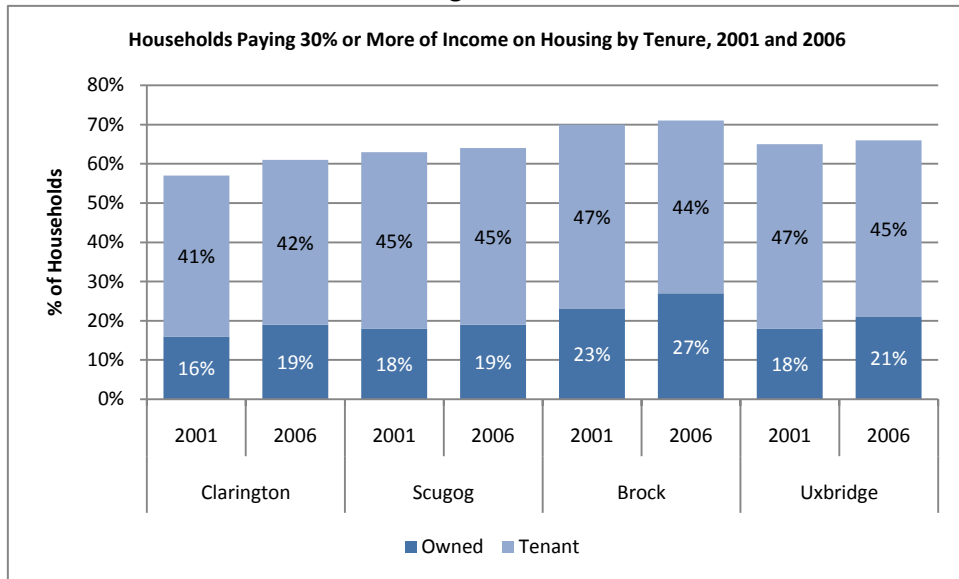


Figure 25

2.2 Existing Community Profiles and Past Needs Assessments

Several Needs Assessments and reports for strategic planning have been conducted in Uxbridge, Brock, Port Perry and Clarington to identify the needs and resources within these communities. Several examples include:

- *The Rural Charitable Sector: The Capacity Challenges of Nonprofit and Voluntary Organizations in Rural Ontario* (Susan Stowe, Cathy Barr, Foundation for Rural Living, Imagine Canada, 2005).
- *Brock Township Community Needs Assessment for Health Promotion* (Addiction Research Foundation, Durham Drug Awareness Week Inc., and the Township of Brock, 1998).
- *A Social Environmental Scan for the Township of Uxbridge* (Community Development Council Durham, 2003).

There are several common themes that come from these reports, including: access to funding, resources (e.g. volunteers), and training and networking opportunities. Significant community-level needs were reported in the areas of transportation, services geared to youth, and limited ability for the community to dialogue and mobilize on issues of concern.

2.3 Access to Information Resources

There are several existing information resources located in and serving Uxbridge, Brock, Scugog and Clarington. Several online resources, organizations, and networks serve these communities in meeting their information needs.

Information Durham (www.informdurham.com), provided by the United Way of Durham (the United Way Ajax/Pickering/Uxbridge and the United Way Oshawa/Whitby/Clarington/Brock & Scugog), and the NorthBook, available through contacting the North Durham Social Development Council, are two major information resources providing lists of available social and recreation services offered in these areas.

The Brock Information Centre and Silver Connections (www.silverconnections.ca) are two organizations that provide information for the community about the community. They provide information on services for North Durham.

The North Durham Social Development Council (www.northdurhamsdc.com) provides networking opportunities and support to its membership, working to address social needs in Uxbridge, Brock, and Scugog.

The municipal websites are also a source of information on local recreation and social support resources:

- Township of Uxbridge Community Guide:
<http://www.town.uxbridge.on.ca/index.asp?pgid=159>
- Township of Brock Community Information:
www.townshipofbrock.ca/community-information/community-organizations

- Township of Scugog Area Information:
http://www.township.scugog.on.ca/area_information.34.php
- Municipality of Clarington Community Services:
<http://www.clarington.net/htdocs/recreation.html>

Several public and resource libraries are located in Uxbridge, Brock, Scugog and Clarington. These include:

- Uxbridge Public Library and the Zephyr library: www.uxlib.com
- Durham Farm and Rural Family Resources in Uxbridge:
www.durhamfamilyresources.org
- Brock Public Library in Beaverton, Sunderland, and Cannington:
www.brocklibraries.ca
- Scugog Public Library in Port Perry: www.scugoglibrary.ca
- Clarington Public Library in Bowmanville, Courtice, Newcastle and Orno:
www.clarington-library.on.ca

Volunteer opportunities in Durham Region can be found by accessing Volunteer Durham (www.volunteerdurham.net).

Employment opportunities can be found through Job Connect and Community Employment Resource Centres (www.jobconnectontario.org) located in Uxbridge, Brock, Scugog, and Clarington.

These information sources are important resources in the community. The communities' awareness of these resources and their use are explored in the needs assessment process undertaken by this project.

Section 3.0 Needs Assessment

The Project Advisory Committee was established to help guide the assessment process used in this research. This Project Advisory Committee included a variety of stakeholders throughout Durham's rural areas, including representatives from: Brock Township, North House, Brock Community Health Centre, North Durham Homeless Prevention, the United Way – Scugog, Municipality of Clarington, and the John Howard Society – Clarington. The CDCD provided lead responsibilities in project administration, management, and implementation of this research process.

3.1 Research Methodology

Tool Development

Interview and focus group questions (see Appendix 1) were developed based on the overall research questions developed for this project, and with the direction provided by the Project Advisory Committee. The first several interviews and focus groups were observed for clarity and relevance of questions. No major changes were necessary to the questions in the interview guides. The icebreaker activities were eliminated from the focus group guide as a result of limited time in completing all of the questions.

Recruitment

Recruitment was primarily coordinated by the CDCD. Individual participants were identified through several ways. Individuals representing agencies located in or serving Durham's rural areas were initially introduced to the research at a NDSDC networking meeting. Agencies were informed about the research and invited to participate. Subsequently, agencies were contacted through email invitations, and by attaching recruitment letters (see Appendix 2). Agency representatives were invited to participate in one of the five scheduled focus groups (located in Uxbridge, Brock, Port Perry, Clarington, and Ajax) or to schedule an interview either by phone or in person. Individuals representing agencies were offered a 10-dollar travel subsidy to cover travel expenses for attending a focus group or an interview.

Community members living in Durham's rural communities were largely recruited through the assistance of local agencies. Several agencies on behalf of the CDCD referred clients to participate in a face-to-face interview or a focus group. Interviews and focus groups were conducted at a time and location suitable for the individuals involved. In some cases, focus groups were held with interested groups during a regular program session, such as at a continuing education class. Community members received a 10-dollar travel subsidy to cover travel expenses and a 10-dollar honorarium to thank participants for participating in the research. For participants who desired, a verification of volunteer community service hours was provided.

The Project Advisory Committee was instrumental in circulating the recruitment letters through their local contacts. Committee members emailed recruitment letters to their networks, and made announcements inviting people to participate in the research at various meetings and local events. In several cases, committee members supported the organization of interviews or focus groups with agencies and/or community members.

Participants

In total, 115 individuals participated in the research – representing either a community agency or the community.

Five focus groups and six interviews were conducted with individuals representing an agency located in or serving Durham's rural communities. The focus groups were held in each of the four rural communities: Uxbridge, Brock, Port Perry and Clarington. One focus group was held in Ajax to accommodate region-wide serving agencies located in Durham's urban areas (i.e. Pickering, Ajax, Whitby, Oshawa).

In total, 47 participants were involved in the research representing various agency sectors, including: agriculture, youth services, employment/homelessness services, municipalities, business, information services, community care/senior services, mental health and healthcare services, and emergency food services. Most of these participants (83% of agency participants) represented organizations that were located in and serving directly one or more of Durham's rural communities. Some individuals interviewed (17% of agency participants) represented agencies with a mandate to serve the entire region of Durham, but were physically located in Pickering, Ajax, Whitby, or Oshawa.

Nine focus groups and two interviews were conducted with community members living in Durham's rural communities. Three focus groups were held in Brock Township (one in Beaverton, one in Cannington, and one in Gamebridge). Two focus groups were held in the town of Uxbridge and Port Perry. Two focus groups were held in the Municipality of Clarington, specifically Bowmanville and Newtonville.

In total, 68 individuals participated in a community focus group or interview. Specific demographics of the participants included: youth/students (15%), young adults (29%), adults (29%) and seniors (26%). Several participants identified as low-income/living in poverty (13%), looking for employment (5%), and young parents (10%). One participant identified as Métis

Data Collection

Semi-structured interviews and focus groups were conducted by the CDCD with participants in order to gain information on how to enhance social planning in rural areas in Durham Region. Two researchers conducted the focus groups and interviews, one person to facilitate and one to take detailed notes. Participants received an information letter describing the research and signed a letter of consent (see Appendix 3). The information letter and consent form made it clear that participation was voluntary, and that the information was to be kept confidential. Participants chose to provide consent for the interview or focus group to be audio-recorded if they wished. In incidences where a participant was uncomfortable with being audio-recorded, careful notes were taken instead.

Data Analysis

The CDCD took detailed written notes during the interviews and focus groups. Notes were reviewed for accuracy and organized under major headings using the topics included in the interview and focus group guides.

Careful review of the content was completed to identify basic patterns and contradictions (or codes). Codes were presented to the Project Advisory Committee for accuracy of identified over-arching themes, and were involved in the identification of insights, conclusions, and recommendations.

Project resources did not provide the opportunity to transcribe the notes verbatim. Direct quotes provided in the results section were reviewed against the original audio-recordings for accuracy.

The research results are organized into main theme areas, based on the codes identified in the qualitative analysis. The results are summarized into the following two sections. The first section summarizes the needs and gaps identified by local organizations when undertaking social planning processes. The following section provides a summary of the needs and assets expressed by community members living in Durham's rural areas.

Limitations

It should be acknowledged that the findings presented in this report have some limitations.

The sampling strategy used for this study was purposive and targeted. Recruitment was time consuming, and so there was not the opportunity to randomly select interviewees from a population. In addition, the samples taken from each rural area in Durham Region are limited in size and scope, making it difficult to provide a detailed analysis of each community throughout Durham's rural municipalities. As a result, these findings cannot be considered exhaustive, and many areas identified warrant deeper exploration, particularly at the community-level.

3.2 Assessment of Organizational Social Planning Needs

The following provide a summary of the organizational strengths, assets and opportunities for gathering information about communities' needs and collaboration, as well as partnership development.

Gathering Information about Communities' Needs

Organizations in North Durham and Clarington learn about their communities and individuals they serve through a variety of means, including: informal information gathering, networking opportunities, information listings, existing statistical data, and conducting local evaluations and needs assessments. Informal information gathering is used much more frequently than any other type of method. Interview participants also discussed the benefits and challenges of using these various sources of information.

Informal Information Gathering

Information gathering using informal networking is the primary method of gaining information about communities, clients' needs and service gaps in Durham's rural communities. Agencies gain information through: connections and colleagues, volunteering in the community, attending community events, and talking with clients or concerned community members directly. One participant summarized this well:

"I do not live in Uxbridge, I work in Uxbridge, so that limits me in terms of knowing what is going on more on a weekend basis, a lot of what I rely is my

connections with my colleagues and my clients. Often times I will contact clients and people that I haven't met to find out what is going on, and what they want from that community in terms of what's going on, and then connect with who I would reach out to, whether its colleagues of colleagues or connecting with clients I have contacted and say I know you were involved with this, how do you get that information who would I contact?" (Agency representative, Township of Uxbridge).

Participants acknowledged that informal information gathering is subjective, and may not be capturing the correct information about the true needs and issues in the community. Agencies are frequently made well aware of the limitations of existing services from their informal information sources; however, they do not have the documented evidence needed when requesting funds to address unmet needs. As one participant described, *"As a housing provider in North Durham, there is a way that we sort of try to get information and we don't have a real accurate picture I would say of the homelessness issue in North Durham. We have our own anecdotal evidence and the evidence of other people working in this area, but I don't think there has been enough research to really have a good sense of what is going on"* (Agency representative, Township of Uxbridge). The major issue is how that 'anecdotal evidence' is collated to create statistically acceptable data sets of qualitative research, that then gets passed onto funders or other agencies in a reliable manner.

Networking Opportunities

Networking opportunities – such as interagency meetings at the North Durham Social Development Council and the Community Development Council Durham (when held in the past), the Durham Advisory Committee on Homelessness (DACH) – are considered important opportunities to share information and learn about the needs in the community. Even with these current supports, more support is required to help agencies move beyond information sharing to being able to coordinate services.

An extended discussion on networking is provided in the next section on partnership and collaboration.

Information Listings

Agencies also learn about their communities through information listings. The NorthBook or the "Bluebook" is a list of services to prevent homelessness in North Durham and was referenced in several interviews as a reliable information source. The North Durham Social Development Council, Durham Region Employment Network, the Brock Information Centre, and municipal community guides were also mentioned as important sources of information 'listings' for agencies.

Interview participants expressed concerns about how often the information is updated and kept current. Others spoke about the challenges in advertising and sharing these lists (e.g. few resources available/invested into marketing and outreach). Also, some observed that some listings are not comprehensive of all services offered in the community. For example, municipal community guides are considered really helpful; however, they generally focus on recreation services and do not include the full spectrum of services offered in the community. Interview participants also suggested

that one central resource for agencies and community members to refer to would be helpful.

Another significant drawback reported by interview participants is that these listings provide limited information. The listings primarily include contact information, and a brief description. An interview participant suggested that more detailed information about local service agencies would be helpful, such as types of services offered and a description of service boundaries/restrictions (e.g. length of waiting lists, when staff are available, what services can and cannot offer).

Libraries, the Internet, and the local newspapers were also cited as important information resources. Data can sometimes be accessed through the Durham Regional Police Services, Children's Aid Society, and the Region of Durham.

Existing Statistical Data

Using existing evidence is also an important method for understanding communities' needs and service gaps. However, data is not often collected at a level useful to communities in North Durham and Clarington. Statistics Canada data and RUFUS data (collected by the Public Health Unit), as examples, are often presented at the regional-level (i.e. North Durham or Clarington) rather than at the individual community level (i.e. Brock, Uxbridge, Port Perry, Bowmanville, Courtice, Newcastle, etc.). *"We've tried to gather information that is Brock Township specific, and often times this is not and is not gathered in a way that we can support, so that's a challenge"* (Agency representative, Township of Brock).

Others report challenges in knowing what to do with the information available. Information gathering has been an issue in Durham for years. In response to having a central location or database for information one participant said that, *"the problem would be that not all the information that would be batched that way would be relevant, you create a conundrum where people now have to go to a central depository to get information and the information volume is huge"* (Agency representative, Durham Region).

Also, some agencies find that by the time they receive the data, the information is too old and outdated to be of use. One participant who was interviewed expressed concern that government agency data is often too old to be precise and would like to know what is current. They felt as though they would be better off going and initiating conversation with patrons at a coffee shop.

Lack of information is also an issue. One agency that serves abused women reported the need to work by 'trial-and-error' when required information is not available. One participant dually noted, *"If you're dealing with an issue though that is hidden by the population that is dealing with it, for various reasons, sitting at a Tim Horton's doesn't help, because not one women in Tim Horton's is going to tell you that she is being victimized in her relationship"* (Agency representative, Municipality of Clarington). This group implemented programs through "gut-feelings" and their informal knowledge of the needs and issues in their community.

Conducting Local Evaluations and Needs Assessments

Only a few agencies reported conducting evaluations or research to systematically understand the needs and gaps of their clients and communities. These agencies

reported having used questionnaires and surveys to identify unmet needs of their clients or the community.

Organizations experience significant challenges in being able to carry out the necessary evaluation and research to identify community needs and to make important program decisions. First, agencies desire third-party support in undertaking evaluations or needs assessments. Agencies acknowledged that they risk collecting biased responses when asking questions about quality and service needs from their clients directly. Second, agencies lack the time, skills, and resources to facilitate and monitor ongoing evaluation and needs assessments. *“My frontline [staff] can’t spend time doing anything other than what they do, they are not well resourced. They are in class doing instruction and managing programs, they do not have time to go out and dabble with statistics”* (Agency representative, Durham Region).

Finally, agencies are hesitant to undertake systematic evaluation and needs assessments for fear of creating unrealistic expectations or not being able to meet the needs identified. As one interview participant stated: *“I don’t think that as part of a full functioning community, that we have actually looked at our services in our community ... we haven’t asked our community about what sorts of things [they need], the question of course or the danger in asking is setting expectations”* (Agency representative, Township of Brock).

The North Durham Social Development Council and the Community Development Council Durham were cited as organizations well positioned in Durham to support agencies in conducting evaluations and needs assessments.

In addition, agencies recognize that larger societal issues impact their communities, and are not easily addressed by one service agency alone. Durham’s social planning councils, the North Durham Social Development Council and the Community Development Council Durham, were again considered to have an important role in advocating for these larger issues on behalf of local social service agencies.

Collaboration and Partnerships in North Durham and Clarington

The importance of collaboration and partnership development among agencies and with the community is considered essential among agencies in North Durham and Clarington. An interview participant from Clarington also stated:

“It used to be, 10 to 15 years ago that shelters, for women experiencing violence, were very isolated in the community and were very hidden, people did not know where they were; but it had to evolve to include partnerships because it was discovered that one agency or one group of people can’t be responsible for the safety and well being of a group of individuals all on their own, and that shelters needed the support of the community and other professionals around them to get everybody’s needs met. Partnership is a relatively new concept in the VAW [violence against women] sector, but it is an absolutely and incredibly important one, because we have come an awful long way since being able to open up and become more integrated in the community” (Agency representative, Municipality of Clarington).

Agency representatives recognize that collaboration and partnerships are important for the survival of individual organizations, and to meet the needs of clients and the community:

“When you’re going after funding if you’re a single organization, and then you don’t have a lot of funds to say we can provide this and that, your chances of getting some are a lot slimmer, now if you can bring in 5 different organizations and everyone throws in and says we are going to make this happen and promote it, then when you go after government funding with 5 other organizations and they see there is a contribution being made by a number different groups in different segments of the community in question, there is more of a buy in for them, cause then they can see why they should provide more for those groups and provide natural sustainability” (Agency representative, Township of Brock).

The following outlines the existing opportunities to support partnership and collaboration in North Durham and in Clarington, followed by a discussion on the challenges and barriers to effective partnership development.

Opportunities to Promote Partnership and Collaboration

Opportunities to support collaboration and partnership development are quite strong in the North Durham communities, including Uxbridge, Brock and Scugog. Interview participants cited the North Durham Social Development Council’s inter-agency meetings as an important mechanism to support collaboration and partnership – specifically for Uxbridge, Brock, and Scugog.

The Community Employment Resource Centres (Durham College) located in several communities across North Durham is considered a “Jack-of-all-Trades” and an important resource that helps support collaboration in Durham’s rural communities. As well, the local chambers of commerce, the Central LHIN (Local Health Integrated Network), Silver Connections, and Region of Durham strategic plans are several other resources identified by interview participants as supporting collaboration and partnership among local agencies.

Organizations in North Durham collaborate and partner to share and combine limited resources and available space. For example, *“It’s not difficult to find partners, it’s not difficult to find free space, and this is never really a factor depending on the particular community, as long as it’s not super remote. There’s a strong willingness to partner in the North and a strong willingness to get work done”* (Agency representative, Durham Region).

Currently there are very little supports in Clarington to facilitate local-level collaboration and partnership. *“We have all these little halls that are empty, and I don’t know why kids can’t be there after school except that we need activities that they want to do and people to help and volunteer to run the activities and other then that these spaces are being maintained almost for nothing and I feel like it is such a waste”* (Agency representative, Municipality of Clarington).

There is a strong interest and awareness for the need to collaborate within the Municipality of Clarington, and with other communities throughout Durham Region. During the focus group with Clarington organizations, participants appreciated the

opportunity to meet each other, requested a contact list of all participants present, and expressed a desire for continued opportunities - like the focus group - to meet on a regular basis to share success stories and address challenges. One participant offered at the meeting to help start regular collaboration opportunities.

Organizational Challenges in Collaboration and Partnership

Organizations recognize the importance and need for collaboration and partnership development; however, they experience several challenges and barriers in doing so. One participant summarizes these challenges this way:

“If you take that approach of well I don’t enough assets we can’t do it, then it’s not going to happen. But if as a group of partnership and if collaboration is occurring, then well between the five of us, with \$200 each there is \$1000 and then we can run the event ... there is collaboration occurring but the challenge is again forming those partnerships, it takes time, it takes planning with contacts, it takes the effort in then contacting them and building relationships, having volunteers and having people available to go and do those talks, and I don’t have the time to be at every organization in the week, and these groups need to reach out to each other as well (Agency representative, Township of Brock).”

Several specific challenges or barriers to collaboration and partnership development were identified. These challenges included:

- A sense of competition about services offered and clients served.
- Fear of losing resources/funding.
- Geographic boundaries and identity (i.e. agencies not wanting or able to work outside specific geographic boundaries).
- Difficult to attend networking opportunities due to geographic location, lack of time, and not enough resources (e.g. to cover travel costs, staff to cover front-line activities).
- Lack of connections with non-traditional partners, including: schools, libraries, media, or recreation clubs.
- High turnover of staff.
- Lack of awareness of existing services or supports.

Several participants expressed that confidentiality and privacy laws were barriers when working to provide a circle of care for individual clients. However, one participant expressed that no matter what agency or organization, they need to come together and *“share the issues they are dealing with, not necessarily the people they are dealing with”* (Agency representative, Township of Uxbridge). This participant suggested that agencies need to discuss the broad and diverse issues faced, which they cannot manage to deal with on their own.

There are many organizations situated in southern communities in Durham Region (i.e. Pickering, Ajax, Whitby, or Oshawa), and have a mandate to service all of Durham Region, including Uxbridge Brock, Scugog and Clarington. Interview participants

representing Durham-wide agencies report having several unique challenges in addition to the challenges reported above. Durham-wide agencies report that they often do not have the networks nor have the relationships built in the North and Clarington that are needed to offer services in rural areas of Durham (e.g. in knowing who to partner with for available space for programming or client meetings, in doing outreach). One participant explains, *“It’s harder to make links because if you did not grow up in the community and you don’t know everybody it’s hard to make those connections. It’s about getting to know the right people and getting your foot in the door because they - the community [in rural areas] - are established”* (Agency representative, Durham Region).

Southern agencies also express that they are overloaded with the current service demands in the South, and are apprehensive about doing outreach and not being able to meet an increased demand. In addition, agencies report not having the appropriate resources needed to cover extra costs in servicing rural areas, such as transportation.

One service agency serving all of Durham Region expressed a different perspective. This agency places explicit priority on serving clients in rural areas of Durham, suggesting the issue is not necessarily an issue of resources, but an issue of values: *“We value going to clients in the north. We allocate enough resources for mileage, extra time (needed to drive north, etc.), because there is a need to support clients in a holistic way”* (Agency representative, Durham Region).

Agencies in Durham’s rural areas also express frustration that southern agencies have a mandate to service needs in North Durham and Clarington but are not able to do so. One interview participant representing an agency in North Durham explained that access to appropriate funding is a frustrating reality for services in the north because they do not always receive the amount that was initially allocated to them. A lot of this money is relocated to services in the south and while it may be perceived that it is a long way to come to serve clients, there is still a need. She explained that it may be more expensive to service people in the North but it cannot always be about efficiencies. It can rather be more about meeting needs and following through with the mandate that states that Durham Region, as a whole, should receive support.

Opportunities for Enhanced Social Planning

Interview participants also provided a number of ideas and suggestions to promote enhanced social planning among agencies within Durham’s rural areas. These suggestions include: enhancing Durham’s social planning councils and building on existing resources.

Enhancing Durham’s Social Planning Councils

The inter-agency meetings offered by the North Durham Social Development Council were considered a significant asset for agencies in North Durham. Many people want to see this service enhanced and expanded. Several suggestions include:

- Expand the inter-agency meetings to include meetings in South Durham and Clarington.
- Offer meetings on a rotating schedule (i.e. not always on a Friday).
- Offer inter-agency meetings with topics specific for volunteer board of directors or upper managers.

- Offer networking opportunities using technology, such as teleconferencing and online collaboration websites.
- Move beyond agency updates and information sharing to include inter-agency strategic planning, such as collecting agency updates ahead of scheduled meetings to identify opportunities for collaborative planning and creating synergies.
- Monitor/evaluate effectiveness and successes of the partnerships developed.

The North Durham Social Development Council also offers online collaboration tools, such as a community calendar. Organizations in Clarington suggested that these types of tools would be useful in their area as well.

The following provides additional suggestions to enhance the services offered by the North Durham Social Development Council and/or the Community Development Council Durham:

- Offer support for proposal development, and advocate for core funding and sustainability of local service agencies.
- Offer additional community development supports, such as services to facilitate meetings, hiring community developers in specific areas/communities across Durham Region.
- Offer more support in advocating for social issues on behalf of local agencies.
- Offer more Durham-wide meetings and events in North Durham and Clarington.

Adequate resources for these services were also a concern expressed by the agencies interviewed. Agencies acknowledged that the social planning councils are under-funded with no stable or core funding in Durham. One interview participant explained that they are pleased that the North Durham Social Development Council has the opportunity to be flexible and utilize participation from other agencies; however, recognize that funding to social planning councils is a significant barrier. One participant suggested that the \$10 membership fees are insufficient. In order for social planning councils to be more credible they need more funding. In the end this would benefit the community at large and would provide more opportunity and information pertaining to collaboration and partnership building.

Build on Existing Resources

Several other resources in North Durham and Clarington were discussed as possible resources to work with and to support social planning among agencies and within the community.

Representatives from the Brock Information Centre shared that they have computer-based information about organizations and suggested that information could be easily shared with other organizations. Connecting organizations like the Brock Information Centre and other networking groups, may provide opportunities for synergies and more coordinated information services for the community.

Participants suggested working more closely with municipalities would help enhance social planning in the local communities. Agencies would like to see more connections between the municipality and non-profit service agencies, such as: including agency

information in regular municipal newsletters/mail-outs, linking website information, sending information to and from municipal staff. Similar suggestions were made about collaborating with local schools.

The Welcome Wagon was also suggested as another resource to tap into and work more closely with. The Welcome Wagon is a service offered to welcome new people to the community and help them get settled. Agencies were interested in using this mechanism to give out more information about local services, as well as a way to collect new information about their needs and concerns.

Using local media and new media sources was suggested by agencies as a way to share information and collect information about the community. New media, such as twitter and social networking sites (e.g. Facebook) were suggested. One participant suggested using radio as an innovative way to share information and learn about the community. This person had heard about a youth-led program, allowing local youth to call in and discuss local issues and concerns.

3.3 Assessment of Community Social Planning Needs

The following provide a summary of the communities' strengths, assets and opportunities, as well as the communities' challenges, needs and concerns to be considered in future social planning activities.

Community Strengths, Assets and Opportunities

For the most part, community members generally enjoy living in Durham's rural areas. People like how supportive their neighbours are, especially in times of crisis. People are considered friendly, nice, and approachable. One community member from Port Perry expressed, *"Community to me means, people, friends, everybody helping each other doing whatever, if your neighbour needs help, which is how I was brought up. If someone needs their lawn cut or someone in our building is sick I will go and pick her flower bed for her. Port Perry as a community is very giving and that is what community is, it is about getting involved with the community"* (Community member, Township of Scugog).

Many individuals have chosen to live in the municipalities of Uxbridge, Brock, Scugog or Clarington as opposed to larger communities in South Durham because they perceive the communities as safer, quieter, and less busy: *"I was born here, and then we moved away. We lived in Oshawa, had our kids, and moved back here so that we didn't have to worry so much about my kids out riding their bikes. It feels safer"* (Community member, Municipality of Clarington).

People like attending local community events and local fairs. People enjoy volunteering at these local community events, and like to volunteer with service agencies and recreation groups. Volunteerism is important to community members, as many feel it is important to give back to the community that they live in.

In addition, people feel that the services offered in North Durham and Clarington are superior to services offered in other more urban communities in Durham Region. Service providers, including: teachers, health care providers, and social support service providers were felt to have a greater ability to provide more personalized, client-centered services. For example, *"The teachers even will call you here, and speak to you personally about concerns"* (Community member, Municipality of Clarington).

Community Challenges, Needs, and Concerns

Individuals living in rural areas expressed many issues of concern. Concerns centered on: volunteerism and community interaction, access to social services, access to recreation opportunities, supporting youth and other community groups, income and employment, transportation and engagement in social planning processes.

Volunteerism and Community Connectedness

Even though volunteerism was considered important to Durham's rural areas, many report that they do not know where to volunteer and sometimes are turned away from volunteering. One participant explained, *"We have a lot of second hand and thrift stores here, and those people have been there as long as I can remember. So it's not like they're not welcoming more help, but they seem to have it under control. I think they don't really want new people coming in [to volunteer]. They don't want to change - they have their set ways. I don't know which organizations need volunteers, either. They don't put it into the paper; you have to go explore it yourself"* (Community member, Municipality of Clarington). Another participant also expressed concern with accessing information about volunteering opportunities, *"There is nowhere to volunteer here. At the food bank, you either have to know the people there or you have to go to church there. I've tried at the humane society but they refused volunteers"* (Community member, Township of Scugog).

Others are simply too busy to volunteer. Volunteerism is challenging for families where one or more parents commute to urban areas for employment. *"A lot of people that have moved here I think are commuters. They're trying to bring up their kids in a better place, but they're tired and don't want to be bothered"* (Community member, Municipality of Clarington).

Some life circumstances prevent one from volunteering (e.g. raising children, poverty, and working). When asked: "Do you volunteer?" one participant answered, *"No, as a single mom I don't want to volunteer. I can't, I need to work"* (Community member, Scugog Township).

Among youth, the required 40 hours of volunteer work may not be meeting its primary goal of encouraging volunteerism among youth. Some youth do not see volunteer work as volunteering because it is mandatory and just one more academic component to complete. As an example, some youth find the inability to complete this component is a barrier to receiving a high school diploma. Participants said that they would complete their hours but have been putting them off. They expressed frustration with this prerequisite to graduate: *"I don't think they should even have those, it's not voluntary - why are people being forced to do them?... It is just another thing to keep kids from graduating from high school..."* (Community members, Township of Scugog). Non-profits also experience difficulty in attracting volunteers. *"Our big issue is getting volunteers, and attracting the volunteer community. Compared to 30 years ago, it is hard to ask people to volunteer their time with the stress factors today and with people's economic situations"* (Community agency, Township of Brock).

The following were suggested to help increase volunteerism in Durham's rural areas:

- Provide central location for volunteer opportunities (e.g. using a website)

- Provide volunteer opportunities at employment centres or recreation centres (acknowledging not everyone has access to computers and the Internet)
- Connect volunteer opportunities to job skills enhancement
- Support volunteers in access to transportation
- Provide volunteer opportunities to businesses (e.g. employee volunteer days)
- Host volunteer fairs and advertise in newsletters (in the community and/or at schools)
- Provide incentives (e.g. winning an ipod)

Community connectedness is of concern when working to support volunteerism and community engagement in North Durham and Clarington.

Community interaction in Durham's rural areas is challenged by a number of issues. First, with changing dynamics and increased growth in many communities – there is a divide being formed between new and established residents. There are concerns by some residents of neighbours not knowing each other and their communities, *“becoming ‘citified’ with the influx of people coming to the community, especially because most... people care about a small community, people care about each other”* (Community member, Township of Scugog).

Second, there are also concerns of a lack of connection between people living in Southern Durham, and Northern/Eastern Durham. One community member said that from her experiences she has found that people in the southern part of Durham don't know what or where the northern part of Durham really is and that some think that Port Perry and Uxbridge make up North Durham and do not recognize Brock Township as being a part of it.

Thirdly, small-town gossiping also challenges a sense of community connection. *“In a small town everyone talks about your business, you have no privacy. People start rumors and create drama”* (Community member, Township of Uxbridge). As well, there is a misconception that everyone has someone looking out for him or her. This misconception was identified by a community member living in poverty from Brock Township. He expressed that people in need do not always have family around to help them. This is a common assumption made by the general community. This makes many people feel isolated in the community, especially when they cannot find ways to get out and meet people.

Finally, communities hold onto a strong sense of individuality and ownership – limiting the ability to engage with people from other communities. One agency representative observed that people in Uxbridge want to know that their donations are staying in Uxbridge and that the donations are not going to 'North Durham'. Organizations have difficulty attracting people to participate in events that span the larger areas.

Access to Social Services

People in North Durham and Clarington are concerned about the availability and sustainability of services offered in their areas. Many are concerned about the shortage

of doctors, and the long wait-lists in accessing services. People are also concerned that many services are under-funded and/or on the brink of losing funding.

People also want to be more aware of existing resources and services in their communities, and are disappointed to find out about services after they require them. For example, one participant said, *“I know we have Big Brothers Big Sisters here, but I’ve been back in Bowmanville for 7 years now, and I didn’t know that until I drove by and happened to see it. It’s not advertised well. My son could have benefited so much from that”* (Community member, Municipality of Clarington). Many organizations are aware of this challenge, but are unable to afford the investment in marketing or advertising their services. One agency representative explained, *“Advertising is prohibitively expensive, so we can’t do that... We advertised once for the ‘walk a mile’ and it cost us \$500”* (Agency representative, Municipality of Clarington). It becomes a difficult situation when there are people who require services, and services may be cut because people are not aware and do not access existing services. Participants in one focus group from Brock Township expressed concern that services in Durham Region will be taken away because people are not accessing them. They suggest that the underlying problem is that those who need the services do not know that they exist.

Others feel that the information about existing services is disjointed and difficult to navigate. As a result, people rely on word-of-mouth or are unable to find the information that they need. Youth from Scugog Township expressed that there needs to be a central location where people can go and get information about what services are available in their community. One participant expressed that the bulletin board where job opportunities are posted is helpful; however, it is ineffective because the postings are not being updated. Word-of-mouth is how people find out about things in the community.

There is also a disconnect between what the community identifies as important needs to address compared with what local service agencies see as needs to be addressed. For example, a participant from Cannington expressed concern about a new methadone clinic, *“What’s going on with that? You would rather spend money on that instead of other services that single and struggling moms desperately need?”* (Community member, Township of Brock). Another participant said that there is a need for a women’s shelter, she herself needed advice and a place to stay when she came to the region but could not find one.

Agencies recognize this disconnect between perceived need and actual need, and acknowledge this as a challenge when offering services in the community: *“Issues around drug use in Brock are a big concern but some do not like to acknowledge it. Brock Township needs a needle exchange program, but people don’t realize how much they need one. People do not want to know that they exist because it puts shame on the community; the issue is hushed by both community members and professionals... Well, it obviously when you are in a public space in a parking lot and you are picking up needles. This is a health and safety issue regardless of anything else, and when they say that no we don’t need it [a needle exchange program] I think there is a disconnect”* (Agency representative, Township of Brock).

Access to Recreation

Residents feel that there is not a lot to do in Durham's rural communities from the day to day. They desire: more variety in the recreation services offered, to be more aware of the opportunities that do exist, and for programs to be more affordable. Youth participants from Port Perry thought that, *"the recreation centre should offer more than just childcare and hockey"* (Community member, Township of Scugog). Affordability of services is a concern mostly but not exclusive to young mothers, as one mother points out: *"I am raising 5 children right now, and although there are some things here, it is not affordable"* (Community member, Township of Scugog). Others have little knowledge about where recreation centers are and what is available, an issue that is also acknowledged by agencies a problem. *"There are so many organizations and groups out there providing fabulous programs and services but how do they get the word out, how do they convey the opportunities that are available to people in the community? It is a struggle"* (Agency representative, Municipality of Clarington).

Many feel that social opportunities are limited for adults, especially for single or unattached adults. Many want to get more involved, and want to meet new people, but find that there is little to do in the evenings. Community members participating in a focus group in Brock noted that the town *"dies at 5 pm"* and the town essentially shuts down. As one participant explains, *"I find it hard to meet people, because when I'm done work, everyone is going home for dinner. I would like to have a place to sit down and have coffee and talk and get to know each other"* (Community member, Township of Brock).

Many social events geared to adults are becoming more difficult to organize because of municipal and provincial restrictions. Finding the resources to cover costs of insurance, advertising and transportation (e.g. buses) is also a challenge when organizing events. One community member explained, *"We were going to do a Euchre tournament, but could not do a raffle because of municipality by laws, and the OLG [Ontario Lottery and Gaming] has come in also and made it difficult for municipalities to run things, because they want you to be going to the casinos. A lot of small places, like churches and things, rely on those little activities, like raffles and draws, to get by, so many of them are going to close. We only have 16 people at the church now, so if it continues, it will be another thing gone to bring the community together"* (Community member, Municipality of Clarington).

Recreation opportunities like bingo halls, pool-halls, swimming pools and movie theatres are desired. Participants suggest that there are too many fast-food businesses, and not enough businesses for recreation and entertainment. One participant suggested converting the theatre in Port Perry into a movie theatre once a week. There are others who suggested bringing back the movie theatres. Another suggestion was to update and modernize the bowling alleys.

Others are concerned about parks, fairgrounds and waterfront areas. Some are concerned about safety of equipment for children available at these places, and others want to see green space and waterfront areas cleaned up for public use and enjoyment.

Access to recreation for young adults is a concern. Uxbridge has a Youth Centre for example, and is a fantastic service for pre-teen and high school youth. However, there are little supports and opportunities geared to older youth, and young adults (age 16-30). As one youth explained there is not much to do but hang out and party in

Uxbridge, the “only things [to do] in Uxbridge are stores, pizza stores and beer stores- that is where the kids are. Can’t go to an arcade, it is different than Newmarket where you can join clubs or go for hikes and meet new people - they don’t have that here Uxbridge” (Community member, Township of Uxbridge). More information on youth-needs is summarized in the next section.

Supporting Youth

In all interviews and focus groups with community members there were concerns expressed for young people in Durham’s rural areas, regardless of age or demographic.

From youth themselves, they express that there are little opportunities presented by the community to provide meaningful recreation opportunities and youth employment. Many find themselves bored, and disengaged from community activities. Youth not only want a place where they can hang out, but also desire that local establishments and businesses are youth-friendly. Youth are also concerned about the lack of student jobs. They want to gain experience that will support them in finding meaningful careers in the future. “We need places for youth to have jobs. We want to work to gain work experience, however transportation makes it difficult to get to jobs. We have to rely on our parents to get us to the job” (Community member, Township of Brock).

Adults are also concerned about youth. “I think the biggest problem is with the young people because there’s nothing to do” (Community member, Township of Scugog). Many speak to the need for more youth-oriented recreation activities that are affordable and accessible. Transportation is also an issue. Even when opportunities do exist, many youth live outside villages and towns and rely on parents or older siblings for transportation. Also, parents express that recreation opportunities are too expensive. A research participant from Brock Township expressed concern that there are fewer jobs available to teens, and that they are bored. This “then puts stress on the parents because they have to pay for everything and drive them everywhere” (Community member, Brock Township).

Both youth and adults alike are concerned about youth engaging in drinking and driving, drugs, and violence (e.g. youth carrying knives, graffiti and break-ins). Participants expressed that there is a strong connection between providing alternative opportunities for youth to have fun, and meaningful activities as an alternative to more adverse risk-taking activities.

Older youth and young adults (aged 19-30) were felt to have a separate set of concerns in addition to the concerns expressed above. They express the need for continued, age-appropriate supports beyond teenage years, helping young people bridge the transition from adolescence to adulthood. One participant explained that there is a youth centre in Uxbridge however, “it is corny there, because they let in little kids that run around and play tag... [It’s] good for certain age group, but needs to be more for people that are becoming adults” (Community member, Township of Uxbridge).

Supporting Other Key Community Groups

Several other community groups were referred to in the interviews and focus groups. These groups included: First Nations/Métis, individuals living in poverty, single parents and young parents, people with disabilities, and seniors.

Addressing racism and discrimination against First Nations and Métis community members are needed. For example one participant is aware that some schools won't allow students to carry hand-sanitizers [for the flu season] with alcohol because "*Indians drink it*" (Community member, Township of Brock). Feedback from another participant expressed the need for renewed emphasis on opportunities to learn about traditional cultures and building relationships.

People living in poverty expressed several concerns around adequacy of social assistance rates, inadequacy of services, access to affordable housing and healthy food, and negative treatment from the community.

Single parents and young parents are of concern within rural communities of Durham Region. They are concerned about finding appropriate services to allow parents to work and raise children.

Finding employment among people with disabilities is also a concern. "*Learning disabilities, depression, etc., are not acceptable in the community; no one wants to accommodate you or work with you*" (Community member, Brock Township).

Seniors' needs in Durham's rural communities, centre on the issue of isolation and access to necessary services as a result. For example, "*When you get older, you can't drive*" (Community member, Township of Brock). Also, many agencies in the south are experiencing an increase in seniors moving to urban areas, and recognizing the need to acknowledge their different needs as compared to seniors who have always lived in an urban setting. In addition, participants expressed a large disconnect between youth and seniors.

Income and Employment

Economic sustainability of individuals and families in Durham's rural areas is a significant concern.

Many communities, such as Uxbridge, Port Perry, and Bowmanville are experiencing unprecedented growth in their population. But, with more people, community members are expressing a need for more businesses to be attracted to these areas. Participants acknowledge the need for high-end boutiques attracting a robust tourist industry; however, most cannot afford to shop in these stores. They express the need for more businesses (e.g. Wal-Mart, Staples) that are more practical, affordable and would bring jobs to the people living in these communities.

While some communities are growing, there are others that are drastically shrinking. Economic stability of the businesses and the families living in these areas are of particular concern. *A participant from Newtonville (Municipality of Clarington) stated that they noticed that "the village of Newtonville has gone downhill in the last 30 yrs. We used to have a rink for kids to skate on, two restaurants, a lumber yard, a barber shop"* (Community member, Municipality of Clarington).

Many people spoke of the recent recession and the difficulty in finding employment in Durham's rural areas due to company closures. People are concerned about the effects of free-markets and that local businesses are being re-located to countries with cheaper labour. Participants suggest that this did not have to happen and that communities should have been standing up to this and protecting local business.

In addition to concerns regarding businesses' downsizing resulting in job loss, many participants spoke of very specific employment challenges in Durham's rural areas. First, many report that there are not enough jobs for people who need them. Adding to the difficulty, some community members feel that gaining employment seem to be based on "who you know" or "who you are related to" rather than ability or qualifications.

In addition, many adults who have attained higher education or have technical skills (e.g. from working at General Motors) have difficulty finding jobs that match their skill sets. In addition, many are turned away from jobs because they are considered overqualified. One community member explained, *"You can't get a job if you have a degree. I have a teacher's degree, and was turned down for a Blockbuster job because I was overqualified"* (Community member, Township of Scugog).

There is also an interest in seeing more courses and education opportunities to help people, especially young people and people experiencing or at risk of low-income/job losses, in creating budgets and planning for spending.

Transportation

Generally community members feel that transportation in Durham's rural communities appears to be improving, particularly with transportation between towns and villages to larger urban areas of Durham Region (e.g. from Brock to Oshawa). However, more Go-Bus service is needed to larger communities outside Durham Region, including communities like Lindsay, Newmarket and Barrie. As well, enhancements are needed to the transportation service within communities (e.g. within Uxbridge) and between smaller communities in North Durham and Clarington (e.g. from Newtonville to Bowmanville). The surrounding communities and cities are too far to depend on the existing transportation, and the amenities are too far to walk and it takes too long to wait for the buses.

Increased transportation within communities and between smaller communities was suggested to be of particular importance for youth (in getting to recreation programs or jobs), and for people who do not have access/ability to drive.

Some residents had particular concerns about: the lack of education in using roundabouts, the number of potholes and condition of the roads and sidewalks (including snow removal in the winter months), the high cost of transportation, the need to re-route transport trucks from downtown or main streets and the need for bike lanes. Others expressed concerns regarding the safety and cost of taxicabs in rural areas.

Engagement in Social Planning Processes

Involving the community to a greater degree in social planning activities was identified as an important activity, but is lacking in many social planning initiatives in Durham. The community wants to be more involved with planning processes that occur in their communities to address the concerns that they have. Having the opportunity to be able to attend town meetings and come together as a community to talk about important issues was a valuable suggestion offered by several community members.

From this and other comments made throughout this research project, it is evident that many more people would become involved in their communities if they knew how. For

an Uxbridge youth, education was a barrier to participating in their community. They explained that they do not know much about politics or decision-making processes and because they have not been informed, and as a result they feel as though they could not make informed decisions or opinions.

Youth and young people have a strong interest in getting involved in planning and political processes; however, are often not heard by others in the community. As one young person said, *“Children and youth are from a different ‘positionality’ in society compared to adults and therefore have valuable insight into the planning of their community and the political agenda that facilitates it. They have ideas that their parents or elders in the community could never dream of and it is a major issue that adults do not listen to their perspective”* (Community member, Township of Uxbridge).

It is important to note that there are many people who do not want to or are unable to get involved. Some are simply disinterested, whereas others have been discouraged by past attempts, and others feel unheard when suggestions or issues are not taken seriously. One community member expressed, *“Community participation needs to be taken more seriously by municipalities. When people write letters they are not listened to - this is a major concern. If people do not begin to see more progress based on community input, they will forever be discouraged from sharing their input and it will be even more difficult to produce an inclusive community”* (Community member, Township of Scugog). Still others are simply unable to get involved due to existing life circumstances or priorities (e.g. raising children).

Agency representatives also acknowledge the need to include the general public better in social planning processes, and also recognize the need to overcome barriers such as: transportation, availability and ensuring that the communities’ voices need to be heard (i.e. not tokenistic).

3.4 Findings and Recommendations

The results from this Needs Assessment indicate that high-quality and relevant information, cooperative and synergistic relationships and inclusive community participation are needed to build effective social planning in North Durham and Clarington.

Agencies rely predominantly on informal information gathering to learn about the needs and gaps among their clients and within their communities. Informal information is collected for the most part as oral storytelling, and is considered the most relevant and routinely available source of evidence to agencies in Durham’s rural communities. These stories, however, are not often collected systematically, and are frequently considered invalid sources of information, especially when agencies seek funding or justify the need for new or expanded services. Where more ‘credible’ information is available (e.g. statistical data), many agencies find they have little capacity to understand this information, or rather that the information is irrelevant or out-dated to effectively incorporate into program practice and delivery. Even with the abundance of information available, in some cases relevant information simply does not exist to help address identified community issues or concerns.

Improving how information is collected, presented, and shared is important for the successful identification, expansion and continuation of services in rural Durham. Several

specific recommendations were made in the above sections; however, some general recommendations are offered here for consideration:

- That agencies, local decision-makers and funders acknowledge communities' stories and experiences (qualitative research) as a credible source of information as they relate to identifying service gaps and needs.
- That statistics (quantitative statistics) are collected at a population level that allows comparison between communities within North Durham and Clarington; and that proportional statistics are considered to avoid dismissal on the basis of small absolute population numbers.
- That a communications plan is created for effective and timely dissemination and knowledge exchange between community members, social agencies, municipalities and funders.

In an effort to turn information into action, a focus on effective partnership and collaboration between service agencies, is of particular importance. In North Durham and Clarington, there is a general recognition for the importance of collaboration and partnership building; however, there is a significant need to shift from a competition to a cooperation model. As well, networking opportunities need to move away from gathering agency updates to a stronger focus on identifying common goals and synergistic actions. Focusing on dialogue and the identification of common goals can bring new perspectives to existing information available, as well as to help agencies sort through the abundance of information in order to identify what is most relevant and of highest priority.

A more resilient social service sector will depend on the willingness of agencies to take risks and trust each other in working towards common goals. Again, several general recommendations are offered here to enhance relationship building among agencies in Durham's rural areas:

- Reforms to funding formulas should be made, such as: funds to develop partnerships for project development, core funding based on expectations for partnership (e.g. the LHIN model), and use of pooled agency resources for collective benefits.
- That agencies use open source learning and information sharing (e.g. wikipedia).
- That agencies use open communication between each other and the community (e.g. using social media).
- That training is provided to agencies to learn about new ways of collaborating and communicating.

The third essential component in enhancing social planning in Durham's rural areas is the emphasis on community engagement and inclusive, meaningful participation. The needs assessment identified several areas of concern and existing service gaps that require special attention and significant investments, specifically in the areas of:

- volunteerism and community connection,
- access to services,

- recreation,
- youth-services and other key community groups,
- income and employment,
- transportation,
- and engagement in social planning processes (see Section 3.3).

However given these concerns, many community members were not aware of the resources or services that currently exist (or became aware only after needing a service). In particular, many did not cite the information resources available to access needed information, such as Information Durham (see section 2.3). Furthermore, many expressed significant disconnect between themselves and social agencies.

The following set of recommendations is offered to enhance community participation in enhancing social planning in North Durham and Clarington:

- That larger emphasis on the use, coordination and evaluation of community information resources for effective community information sharing, especially as new information sharing mechanisms, are introduced to the community (e.g. Information 211).
- That greater investment is placed into using an asset-based approach, helping communities to take pride and recognize strengths in their communities and using assets to affect community change on issues of concern.
- That greater investment be placed on the promotion of volunteerism and community connection, such as: developing a strong volunteer sector, re-training of volunteers, and creating relevant and meaningful opportunities for volunteers.
- That the community is given information about the social planning process and how to participate in decision-making processes with social service agencies and within municipal government.

By no means are these recommendations the final list, but only a suggested set of guidelines to help initiate social planning processes among invested stakeholders throughout Durham Region – specifically supporting Durham’s rural communities. Social planning and community development is a complex process, and the appropriate responses generated from the feedback gathered by this Needs Assessment, will depend upon the leadership, commitment and a “one-for-all / all-for-one” attitude by all community partners involved.

Section 4.0 Concluding Comments

Rural communities throughout Durham Region possess many strengths and assets to build upon. Community leaders and residents both take pride in their communities, and believe social change can be achieved to create even better places to live. Agencies clearly have a strong interest and commitment to working with each other in collaboration for collective community benefit. Individuals and families living in these areas also are ready and willing to work towards building stronger communities. The

challenge will be to create creative, inclusive and sustainable structures for effective information sharing, collaborative planning, and collective action.

Appendices

Appendix I: Interview and Focus Group Guides

Agency Representative Interview and Focus Group Guide

Introduction:

Good morning/afternoon/evening. My name is..... I work as a researcher for the Community Development Council Durham, working in partnership with the North Durham Social Development Council and a variety of other community partners, including: Municipality of Brock, Brock CHC, North House, United Way – Scugog, the John Howard Society – Clarington, and the Municipality of Clarington.

Thank you for taking the time to speak with me.

We are talking to organizations from across Durham Region's rural communities to find out about their experiences and ideas about addressing social issues, and improve the communities that we all live in. The CDCD's mission is to identify and address social needs across Durham Region. We do this in partnership with NDSDC – and this project will help us do this better.

Specifically, we would like to understand what already exists to make it easier to learn about your community/clients in rural areas and work with them to address their needs (e.g. resources/assets), and what is happening that makes it more difficult (e.g. gaps, needs). We will be asking you questions about what opportunities exist and ideas for solutions to help address social issues important to you and this community. The interview should take about 1.5 hour (*focus group*), 30 minutes (*interview*). Before we begin, I would like to give you some information about the research project and your rights as a participant.

Go over Information Letter and Consent form – READ (word for word) Information Letter (to be left with participant) and Consent form to ensure that literacy levels are not a barrier to informed consent. Complete Consent Form and retain for the CDCD's records. Reminder – verbal consent (on the tape) is also acceptable if required.

There is also travel supplement available for organizations. Complete travel supplement form with participant if appropriate.

Interview Notes/Reminders

- Ask for details about answers – why something works or doesn't work, what factors make something a success, or to provide examples.
- NOTE: Roman numerals indicate probes that can be used when participants need some suggestions in order to answer the question. After each question, pause for a response before continuing with the next question (even within questions).
- NOTE: In interviews/focus groups where time is limited – ask key questions indicated by an asterisk (*).

Do you have any questions before we begin?

Ice-breakers (1/2 hour):

1. Names and introductions, including the organization they represent.
2. What things do you think of when you think of ...
 - i. Community
 - ii. Social Justice
 - iii. Sustainability
 - iv. Well-being

Ice breaker activity: Divide up each topic to individuals/groups to brainstorm individually,

using a mapping/web activity (write the word in the middle of a page, and write ideas/words connecting to the word assigned). Each individual/group presents back to larger group for discussion.

Topic 1: Research and Data needs (1/2 hour)

Strengths/Resources

3. * How do you understand / learn about the needs and realities of your community/clients you serve living in rural areas of Durham?
 - i. What types of information do you use for program planning / service development?
 - ii. How do you access or gather this information?
 - iii. How are clients/service users involved in the gathering and sharing of knowledge?
4. How does this information impact your work?

Needs and Gaps

5. What types of information would be helpful to you or your organization?
 - i. Are you currently able to access that information? Why or why not?
 - ii. What do you need to learn?
6. * What are some resources or technical supports needed to gather knowledge about rural clients/communities served?
 - i. What resources or technical supports needed for update/use?

Solutions

7. * What are some opportunities that could help increase the identification and access to relevant evidence and knowledge needed for your organization?
 - i. How could your organization play a role?
 - ii. How could outside organizations play a role?
 - iii. How could CDCD/NDSDC, as social planning councils, play a role?

Topic 2: Collaboration and Partnership (1/2 hour)

Strengths/Resources

8. How does your organization currently promote the sustainability and enhance well-being of communities?
 - i. Specific processes, community development, values/principles guiding action, specific decision making processes, leadership development
9. * What currently is in place to support the ability for your organization to partner and work with other organizations or members of the community?
 - i. Current structures in place
 - ii. Outside organizations that provide support

Research and Data Needs/Gaps

10. * What hinders organizations from being able to partner and collaborate?
 - i. Specific challenges? Please provide an example.
 - ii. Barriers – in mandate, organization structure, management?
 - iii. Lack of resources? *If yes, probe: lack of experience writing proposals, lack of*

time to write proposals or lack of upper management support to pursue resources?

Solutions and Opportunities

11. What could be done to overcome these barriers?
12. How can we use the existing strengths to address research and data needs?
13. * What support would you require to effectively network and partner with other organizations or members of the community?
 - i. Technical support
 - ii. Specific networking opportunities
 - iii. How might your organization help in creating these solutions?

Thank you and closing remarks:

This concludes the interview. Thank you very much for taking the time to speak with me today. Do you have any other comments, concerns or questions? Are you interested in hearing about the results of this research project? How can we contact you if you're interested in the results?

Pilot Test Follow-up Questions:

1. Were the questions clear?
2. Were there too many questions, too few questions, or just right?
3. Did the interview take too long?
4. Was there anything else we should have asked about?
5. Did I put you at ease, did I make you feel comfortable? Why or why not?
6. Did you find any part of this interview judgmental? If yes, which questions specifically? Do you have any suggestions to improve this?
8. Do you have any other comments or questions about the interview process?

Community Members Interview and Focus Group Guide

Introduction:

Good morning/afternoon/evening. My name is..... I work as a researcher for the Community Development Council Durham, working in partnership with the North Durham Social Development Council and a variety of other community partners, including: Municipality of Brock, Brock CHC, North House, United Way – Scugog, the John Howard Society – Clarington, and the Municipality of Clarington.

Thank you for taking the time to speak with me.

We are talking to individuals from across Durham Region's rural communities to find out about their experiences and ideas about addressing social issues and improve the communities that we all live in. The CDCD's mission is to identify and address social needs across Durham Region. We do this in partnership with NDSDC – and this project will help us do this better.

Specifically, we would like to understand what already exists to make it easier to live in your community (e.g. resources/assets), and what is happening that makes it more difficult (e.g. gaps, needs). We will be asking you questions about what opportunities exist and ideas for solutions to help address social issues important to you and this community. The interview should take about 1.5 hour (*focus group*), 30 minutes (*interview*). Before we begin, I would like to give you some information about the research project and your rights as a participant.

Go over Information Letter and Consent form – READ (word for word) Information Letter (to be left with

participant) and Consent form to ensure that literacy levels are not a barrier to informed consent. Complete Consent Form and retain for the CDCD's records. Reminder – verbal consent (on the tape) is also acceptable if required.

Tell participant about gift valued at \$10 for participating in the research project. Give gift to participant. There is also travel supplement available for community members. Complete travel supplement form with participant if appropriate.

Interview Notes/Reminders

- Ask for details about answers – why something works or doesn't work, what factors make something a success, or to provide examples.
- NOTE: Roman numerals indicate probes that can be used when participants need some suggestions in order to answer the question. After each question, pause for a response before continuing with the next question (even within questions).
- NOTE: In interviews/focus groups where time is limited – ask key questions indicated by an asterisk (*).

Do you have any questions before we begin?

Ice-breakers (1/2 hour):

1. Names and introductions.
2. Please describe what it is like living in _____ (specific community)?

Ice breaker activity (focus group only): Draw a picture of your community (if a larger group, divide into smaller groups).

3. What things do you think of when you hear the word ...
 - i. Community
 - ii. Social Justice
 - iii. Sustainability
 - iv. Well-being / Health

Ice breaker activity (focus group only): Divide up each topic to individuals/groups to brainstorm individually, using a mapping/web activity (write the word in the middle of a page, and write ideas/words connecting to the word assigned). Each individual/group presents back to larger group for discussion.

Topic 1: Expectations on the Voluntary Sector (1/2 hour)

Strengths/Resources

4. * What is currently being done to make your community a better place to live?
 - i. Note (if not identified above): community could include your family, friends, neighbours, services that you use
 - ii. Existing services (e.g. libraries, health centres), recreation and leisure, existing supports for children/youth/adults/seniors, existing job opportunities, etc.
 - iii. Please tell me a story, or give me an example of this in your community.
5. What is happening to promote social justice?
6. What is happening to promote sustainability?
7. What is happening to promote enhance well-being/health?
 - i. Use terms/phrases identified in Question 3.

- ii. What are individuals doing?
- iii. What are organizations doing?
- iv. What are municipalities doing?

Needs and Gaps

- 8. * What things make it more difficult to live in your community?
 - i. Living in a remote area, difficulties reading, cultural differences, transportation, access to telephone/internet, work, education, income, relationships, etc.
 - ii. Please tell me a story, or give me an example of this in your community.
- 9. What changes would you like to see in your community?
 - i. In an ideal world, what would your community look like?
- 10. What social issues are important to you?
- 11. What issues would you like to learn more about?

Solutions/Opportunities

- 12. * What could be done to make your community a better place to live?
 - i. *Probe about specific issues identified*
 - ii. What issues should be addressed first? (*pause*) second priority? (*pause*) third priority (*pause*)?
 - iii. What could individuals be doing?
 - iv. What could organizations be doing?
 - v. What could municipalities be doing?

Topic 2: Community Engagement (1/2 hour)

Strengths/Resources

- 13. * In what ways are you currently involved in your community?
 - i. Do you volunteer? In recreation? (e.g. dance, sports, music)?
 - ii. Do you participate in advocacy (e.g. writing letters, speaking at public meetings)?
 - iii. (if involved) What is your role? (e.g. fundraising, program activities, decision-making, planning)
- 14. (If involved) Why do you like being involved in your community?
- 15. (If involved) What do agencies/community groups do to make it easy for you to get involved?
 - i. If they are helpful? Helpful for what and in what way?
- 16. (If not involved) If you wanted to get more involved, what agencies/community groups would you approach?

Needs and Gaps

- 17. * What things make it more difficult for you to be involved in making things better for you and your community?
 - i. In making decisions?
 - ii. In planning?

iii. In taking action/advocacy?

18. (If involved) What challenges have you experienced when volunteering/working with community groups or with community agencies?
19. (If not involved) What makes it difficult to get involved with your community or with community agencies?

Solutions/Opportunities

20. * How could organizations support you or people you know in making your community a better place to live?
- i. *Probe about specific issues identified*
 - ii. to influence issues important to you?
 - iii. to influence decisions that impact you?

Thank you and closing remarks:

This concludes the interview. Thank you very much for taking the time to speak with me today. Do you have any other comments, concerns or questions? Are you interested in hearing about the results of this research project? How can we contact you if you're interested in the results?

Pilot Test Follow-up Questions:

1. Were the questions clear?
2. Were there too many questions, too few questions, or just right?
3. Did the interview take too long?
4. Was there anything else we should have asked about?
5. Did I put you at ease, did I make you feel comfortable? Why or why not?
6. Did you find any part of this interview judgmental? If yes, which questions specifically? Do you have any suggestions to improve this?
7. What is the most appropriate way to provide the honorarium valued at \$10? (cash, gift certificate)
8. Do you have any other comments or questions about the interview process?

Appendix 2: Participant Recruitment Letters

Agency Representative Recruitment Letter

Dear Colleague,

The Community Development Council Durham is working in partnership with the North Durham Social Development Council and a variety of other community partners, including:

Municipality of Brock, Brock Community Health Centre, North House, United Way of Oshawa Whitby Clarington Brock & Scugog, the John Howard Society of Clarington, and the Municipality of Clarington.

The overall purpose of the research project is to better address social issues in Durham Region's rural areas. We are doing interviews with several organizations and community members across the Region who are located and/or serve Durham's rural areas.

Benefits of the Research

Interviews and focus groups will be conducted with several organizations and community members throughout Durham Region (approximately 60 – 90 individuals). This research will assist the Community Development Council Durham and the North Durham Social Development Council and other partner organizations to plan services and improve community development initiatives in Durham's rural communities. Your organization will have access to the research report, and may use it to develop new strategies to support isolated families in rural areas and/or to educate others about the importance of the work you already do with them.

How You Can Help

1) Participate in an upcoming Focus Group or an interview (scheduled at your convenience)

Currently scheduled upcoming meetings:

- Uxbridge: **Wednesday September 30, 2:00 - 3:30 pm**
- Brock: **Wednesday October 7, 10:00 - 11:30 am**
- Port Perry: **Tuesday October 13, 2:00 - 3:30 pm**
- Clarington: **Wednesday October 21, 2:00 - 3:30 pm**
- Ajax: **Tuesday October 27, 10:00 - 11:30 am**

2) Encourage clients or community members living in rural areas to participate in an interview with the Community Development Council Durham.

Please RSVP to Rebecca Fortin (rfortin@cdcd.org)

See reverse for detailed information

Focus Groups

The following dates and locations have been set for a focus group for staff of social service agencies serving and or located in Durham Region's rural areas:

- Uxbridge: **Wednesday September 30, 2:00 - 3:30 pm**
Location: Uxbridge Campus Room 6, 2 Campbell Dr., Suite 201, Uxbridge
- Brock: **Wednesday October 7, 10:00 - 11:30 am**
Location: Brock Youth Centre, 38 Laidlaw St South, Cannington
- Port Perry: **Tuesday October 13, 2:00 - 3:30 pm**
Location: United Way, 181 Perry St, Unit G3, Port Perry
- Clarington: **Wednesday October 21, 2:00 - 3:30 pm**
Location: Garnet B Rickard Recreation Complex, 2440 Hwy 2/King St W, Bowmanville
- Ajax: **Tuesday October 27, 10:00 - 11:30 am**
Location: Community Development Council Durham, 134 Commercial Ave, Ajax

Additional focus groups may be scheduled, according to interest generated.

Interviews

Alternately, if you are unable to attend one of the focus group sessions – we can arrange an interview (by phone or in person).

Community Member Recruitment

We are recruiting community members who live in rural areas of Durham Region to participate in this project. When you come into contact with individuals, please tell them about the research project and ask them to participate in an interview. Individuals can also spread the word about the project. There is also an information flyer that you can distribute to community members or clients who are interested in the project. We are also conducting focus groups. If you are connected with a community group or could arrange a focus group with clients, please contact Rebecca if you are willing to help organize.

Project Timelines

We are asking that organizations RSVP to a focus group as soon as possible, **or at minimum 2 days prior to the scheduled focus group**. As well we hope to identify all potential research project participants for interviews as soon as possible (with organizations who cannot attend a focus group or with community members), but **no later than Wednesday October 30, 2009**.

Contact Information

If you have any questions, please contact Rebecca Fortin at 905-686-2661 ext 102, rfortin@cdcd.org at the Community Development Council Durham.

You may also contact Stephanie Zibert at the North Durham Social Development Council: 905-852-7848 ext 36, Stephanie.zibert@durhamcollege.ca or any one of the project partners:

-Janet Ries, Outreach Worker, North Durham Homelessness Prevention, 905-985-3553

-Larry O'Connor, Mayor, Township of Brock, 705-432-2355

-Cesar Caneo, Community Development and Youth, Brock Community Health Centre, 705-432-3322
-Anne Kewley, Fundraising/Networking, North House, 705-426-1150
-Cheryl Manikas, Campaign Manager, United Way United Way O/W/C/B/S, 905-985-9399
-Skip Crosby, Community Service Coordinator, Municipality of Clarington, 905-623-5728 ext 621
- Shelley Lawrence, Manager Clarington Office, John Howard Society, 905-623-6814

Community Member Recruitment Letter

Dear Friend,

- Interested in Social Issues?
- Interested in making your community a better place to live?
- Want to get involved more in your community?

If you said “yes” to any of the above questions – and you live in one of Durham Region’s rural communities (or Municipalities of Uxbridge, Brock, Scugog, or Clarington) we want to hear from you!

The Community Development Council Durham is working in partnership with the North Durham Social Development Council and a variety of other community partners, including:

Municipality of Brock, Brock Community Health Centre, North House, United Way of Oshawa Whitby Clarington Brock & Scugog, the John Howard Society of Clarington, and the Municipality of Clarington.

The overall purpose of the research project is to better address social issues in Durham Region’s rural areas. We are talking with community members across the Region who live in Durham’s rural areas.

An honorarium and money for travel will be provided. Your involvement can count towards community volunteer hours if needed.

Project Timelines

We hope to identify all potential individuals interested in participating as soon as possible, but **no later than Wednesday October 30, 2009.**

To get involved

Please contact Rebecca Fortin at 905-686-2661 (1-866-746-3696 - toll free) ext 102, rfortin@cdcd.org at the Community Development Council Durham.

You may also contact Stephanie Zibert at the North Durham Social Development Council: 905-852-7848 ext 36, stephanie.zibert@durhamcollege.ca.

Appendix 3: Participant Information and Consent Letters

Agency Representative Information Letter

We would like to invite you to participate in our research project. This letter provides you with information on the research project and outlines your rights, should you choose to participate. If you agree to everything in this letter, please sign the informed consent.

The Community Development Council Durham is working in partnership with the North Durham Social Development Council and a variety of other community partners, including: Municipality of Brock, Brock Community Health Centre, North House, United Way of Oshawa Whitby Clarington Brock & Scugog, the John Howard Society of Clarington, and the Municipality of Clarington, on a research project to better address social issues in Durham Region's rural areas. We are doing interviews and focus groups with several organizations across the Region who are located and/or serve Durham's rural areas.

Specifically, we would like to understand what already exists to make it easier to learn about your community/clients in rural areas and work with them to address their needs (e.g. resources/assets), and what is happening that makes it more difficult (e.g. gaps, needs). We will be asking you questions about what opportunities exist and ideas for solutions to help address social issues important to you and this community. This will help us identify ways to address social issues better in rural areas in Durham Region.

The interview/focus group will take about 30 to 60 minutes, and it will be audio taped. If you choose to participate, we will give you a \$10 to supplement your travel in coming to this meeting.

If you choose to participate, you and your organization will be considered a key informant in our project. Your name and organization will not be included in the summary our final report.

The notes and tapes summarizing this interview/focus group will be kept private and in a locked room and they will be destroyed when the research project is finished. You can withdraw from the research project or choose to have any of your information withdrawn up to one week from now (the date of the interview/focus group).

Rebecca Fortin and Sarah Squire will be conducting the interviews/focus groups, and Ben Earle, the research project manager. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Ben at the Community Development Council Durham: 905-686-2661, bearle@cdcd.org. You may also contact Stephanie Zibert at the North Durham Social Development Council: 905-852-7848 ext 36, Stephanie.zibert@durhamcollege.ca.

Thanks again for your time.

Agency Representative Consent Form

I have been told that the researcher will ask questions about my experiences and ideas about social issues in Durham's rural areas and that our discussion will be audio-taped. I understand that I may decide not to participate, or not to answer some of the questions.

My name and organization will not be attached to these interview/focus group notes and no-one except the research team will know which person said what.

An information letter has been given to me for more information about the project and my rights. If I have any further questions I can contact Ben Earle at the Community Development Council Durham: 905-686-2661 ext 115, bearle@cdcd.org. If I prefer, I can contact Stephanie Zibert at the North Durham Social Development Council: 905-852-7848 ext 36, Stephanie.zibert@durhamcollege.ca.

I agree to have our discussion recorded on audio-tape. Yes No (circle one)

Name (please print) _____

Signature _____

Date _____

Researcher's Name _____

Signature _____

Date _____

Community Member Information Letter

We would like to invite you to participate in our research project. This letter provides you with information on the research project and outlines your rights, should you choose to participate. If you agree to everything in this letter, please sign the informed consent.

The Community Development Council Durham is working in partnership with the North Durham Social Development Council and a variety of other community partners, including: Municipality of Brock, Brock Community Health Centre, North House, United Way of Oshawa Whitby Clarington Brock & Scugog, the John Howard Society of Clarington, and the Municipality of Clarington, on a research project to better address social issues in Durham Region's rural areas. We are doing interviews and focus groups with several individuals who live in rural communities in Durham Region.

Specifically, we would like to understand what already exists to make it easier to live in your community (e.g. resources/assets), and what is happening that makes it more difficult (e.g. gaps, needs). We will be asking you questions about what opportunities exist and ideas for solutions to help address social issues important to you and this community. This will help us identify ways to address social issues better in rural areas in Durham Region.

The interview/focus group will take about 30 to 60 minutes, and it will be audio taped. If you choose to participate, we will give you a gift valued at \$10 to thank you, \$10 to supplement your travel in coming to this meeting, and a form to verify community volunteer hours (if needed). We will also give you brochures about local services and programs if you are interested.

If you choose to participate, you may decide not to answer any questions and you can choose to end the interview/focus group at any time. Nothing you do or say in this interview/focus group will affect any services you currently receive or the services you may receive in the future. Your name will not be attached to the notes and no one except the research team will know which person said what. No personal information, or information that could identify you as a participant, will be shared with anyone outside the research team. However, if you chose to tell the researcher about the abuse or neglect of a child or an adult, they have a legal obligation to report.

The notes and tapes summarizing this interview will be kept private and in a locked room and they will be destroyed when the research project is finished. You can withdraw from the research project or choose to have any of your information withdrawn up to one week from now (the date of the interview/focus group).

Rebecca Fortin and Sarah Squire will be conducting the interviews/focus groups, and Ben Earle, the Research Project Manager. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Ben at the Community Development Council Durham: 905-686-2661, bearle@cdcd.org. You may also contact Stephanie Zibert at the North Durham Social Development Council: 905-852-7848 ext 36, Stephanie.zibert@durhamcollege.ca.

Thanks again for your time.

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not to participate, or not to answer some of the questions.

Nothing I do or say in this interview will affect any services I currently receive or the services I may receive in the future. My name will not be attached to these interview/focus group notes and no-one except the research team will know which person said what. However, if I choose to tell the researcher about the abuse or neglect of a child or an adult, they have a legal obligation to report this information.

An information letter has been given to me for more information about the project and my rights. If I have any further questions I can contact Ben Earle at the Community Development Council Durham: 905-686-2661 ext 115, bearle@cdcd.org. If I prefer, I can contact Stephanie Zibert at the North Durham Social Development Council: 905-852-7848 ext 36, Stephanie.zibert@durhamcollege.ca.

I agree to have our discussion recorded on audio-tape. Yes No (circle one)

Name (please print) _____

Signature _____

Date _____

Researcher's Name _____

Signature _____

Date _____