

# Self-Empowerment Livelihood Improvement Program (SLIP) 2021

**TRU**Potential

**CDCD**  
Community Development  
Council Durham  
Building Strength in Our Community Since 1970



**New Life**  
Neighbourhood Centre

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

First, we would like to thank community partners and organizations for implementing, collaborating, making decisions, and working together on this project to accomplish common goals.

**Karen Bell**, Owner of TRU Potential, owns the Self-Empowerment & Livelihood Improvement Project. Karen is the Facilitator and the Community Partners coordinator.

**Ann Thompson**, Director and Board Member of New Life Neighbourhood Center, Co-Facilitator of the SLIP Program.

**Hermia Corbette**, Executive Director of Community Development Council Durham responsible for program assessment.

**Noel Thompson**, Treasurer and Board member of New Life Neighbourhood Center (workshops held at NLNC)

## INTRODUCTION

This report summarizes the program and results of the Self-empowerment and Livelihoods Improvement Project (SLIP) for economically vulnerable people. The SLIP program was designed and delivered in the Durham region by **TRU Potential** in coordination with community-based organizations. The SLIP program is a three-phase personal development program for homeless or under-housed individuals in Durham Region. The program's goal was to coach individual participants, determine their "purpose" (personal), train them in skills that help them achieve their goals, and coordinate local support services to ensure their success.

Several measures inform this report. The project coordinator employed rigorous, ongoing monitoring that was integral to project evaluation, including information collected from each participant, an assessment of workshop tools and materials, performance indicators for each phase of the program, and a post-project review document changes or results.

The project captured the learning that will facilitate knowledge sharing through these methods:

1. Participants went through a detailed intake assessment process at project start and completion to gauge employment readiness and confidence levels.
2. After each life skills workshop, participants received a feedback form to provide input regarding the program session to track participation and progress.

3. Participants received both pre-and-post-tests designed to better understand their knowledge of the labour market and employment skills before advancing into the second stage. The tests assessed participants' learning and information retention.
4. Upon completion of the project, two focus groups were facilitated — one for participants and the other for service providers — to tease out learning, unexpected outcomes, recommendations, and other considerations.

## **PROJECT OVERVIEW**

Through the Slip Project, participants from low-income backgrounds participated in a fifteen (15) week program.

The project aims to enhance people's economic well-being, help economically vulnerable people access community services that improve their financial stability and impact the lives of the individual participants.

The project expected to learn more about the multi-faceted needs of homeless individuals. Chronic homelessness in this context is defined as "the situation of an individual, family, or community without stable, safe, permanent, appropriate housing, or the immediate prospect means and ability of to acquire," particularly in Durham, is uniquely nuanced and requires more significant examination. The project is intended to humanize homelessness. Many barriers faced by individuals are reflective of their realities. Homeless individuals [*generally?*] do not have access to telephones, personal computers, clothing, [*shower facilities?*], or even a safe place to sleep to be prepared for employment-related tasks such as job interviews. The skills and knowledge gained in the sessions will become more important in their transition to fully engage in the world around them.

Combining employment skills training with life skills training and wrap-around services, the project seeks to learn about assisting individuals in identifying their purpose. Furthermore, can participants experiencing homelessness accelerate their navigation out of poverty? The project aligned with personal development, social and economic participation framework.

## **PROJECT SUMMARY DATA**

- Project Location: Regional Municipality of Durham
- Project Term 12 months
- Project commencement date: July, 2022
- Primary focus population: Adults aged 25 to 64 years

**Expected beneficiaries** of the project were a) vulnerable and marginalized men and women seeking inclusion in the (Durham Region) community through enhancing their access to employment, volunteerism, and educational opportunities, and b) local communities. In addition, the project included engaging participants in local governments' discussions. c) Local economies will benefit by integrating those traditionally excluded from participating in social and economic development.

## **PROJECT PARTNERS**

Three leading organizations were involved in the project:

**TRU Potential** offers programs to meet the needs and requirements of individuals to enhance their personal development, career goals, and business objectives. TRU Potential creates a space for people to access programs and services to address their unique needs and requirements. All of this is done to assist with building capacity within an individual's life, which also transforms their community.

**The New Life Neighbourhood** is dedicated to following Christ's example by helping individuals and families in our community obtain essential food and skills that lead to self-sufficiency and a pathway to independence.

**Community Development Council Durham (CDCCD)** is an independent, not-for-profit social planning organization that has been working to enhance the quality of life for individuals, families and communities in Durham for 50 years. We organize a variety of research, community development and social planning initiatives as well as administer and deliver front-line social service programs. Please visit us at [www.cdcd.org](http://www.cdcd.org) for more information.

## **PROJECT LOCATION**

Workshops were delivered at The New Life Neighbourhood Centre, 33 Olive Avenue, in Oshawa. The location serves as a hub for those experiencing and at risk of homelessness. In addition, the centre hosts the HOPE Coalition, a local homelessness advocacy group. The project coordinator attended onsite sessions and was housed at the CDCC office in Ajax.

## **PROJECT OBJECTIVES**

The goal of the project was to harness and mobilize the considerable resources for the delivery of appropriate programs and services to support the attainment of social and economic self-

sufficiency through learning, skills training, personal development, and support services for individuals experiencing, or at-risk of homelessness in the community.

The project format offers new directions in the nature and delivery of life skills and access to community services and social development programming. In this regard, communities and service providers seek to deliver new strategies to find work and learning opportunities for the people who are homeless and are at risk of homelessness.

The project helped participants by supporting their engagement and/or re-engagement with the labour market. The program assisted people in securing and maintaining jobs, to be actively participating in meaningful employment, developing livelihoods, and income-generating activities in the labour market. The program delivers to participants a broad range of activities, including personal and life skills, employment readiness, job coaching, personal development and support services available to individuals who, for a variety of reasons, have been displaced from the social and economic mainstream,

The project selected participants without the necessary skills to enter the labour market. The program's purpose is to provide participants with the opportunity to participate in a learning environment where they can work towards attaining or improving their essential skills and receive support to secure and keep employment. A vital component of the program was strong community mobilization by building effective partnerships with local agencies, employers and existing public sector programs.






## **COMBINE MODEL AND ACTIVITIES**

The program offers quality skills development and support services available to a group of individuals who, for valid reasons, may not have access to these opportunities. The program model is as follows:





-  Fifteen (15) participants were selected for the project
-  Twelve (12) workshop sessions delivered
-  The project had a twelve (12) week duration:
  -  6 weeks – Self-empowerment workshops
  -  6 weeks – Industry and community partners' presentations
-  Provide learning materials and resources to participants, and
-  Offered ongoing support

## Cross-cutting themes













Among the issues faced by participants, skills and competencies to address them included:

-  Increasing self-awareness
-  Learning new skills, including communication, visioning and goal setting, and life planning
-  Developing self-esteem
-  Identifying employability
-  Enriching social abilities, accessing social and professional returns and managing transitions

The **principles** guiding the project were:




-  Being participant-centred
-  Supporting human resource development
-  Encouraging self-determination, and
-  Enhancing the success rate of social-economic engagement by providing training, support services and a sense of community participation

## PROGRAM SUMMARY

-  Identify poverty and homelessness challenges
-  Seek out and engage public/ private sector partners and funders
-  Confirm SLIP activities and work plan
-  Deliver a program with respect to the requirements and skill levels of participants to bring them into the economic mainstream
-  Execute project and test solutions (results achieved)
-  Offer support services to augment the training program
  -  Support services will be limited to the longer-term, unique needs of participants
  -  Primary consideration will be given to meeting those needs, which will impact readily on participants' employability, career planning, and personal development
-  Program completion report preparation and knowledge sharing
  -  Prepare program report:
-  Disseminate project results/ solution
-  Convene partners to discuss scale and replication

## DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT

**TRU Potential**, in offering its service, is mindful of critical issues regarding the unique needs and requirements of the target group:

-  The program design considers underlying risk and protective factors in planning and providing services and offer evidence-informed activities that purposefully promote resilience.
-  The program builds trusting relationships by ensuring that participants are connected to appropriate resources to meet their needs, and
-  The expected impact is to strengthen participants' sense of identity, belief in the future, self-regulation, and self-efficacy as well as their social, emotional, cognitive, and behavioural competence.

## KEY ISSUES WITH REGARDS TO SOCIAL-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGES IN THE REGION

The project was delivered to address the rising issues of homelessness in Durham Region, and the program significantly impacts the Oshawa community. The Durham 2018 Point-in-Time (PiT) Count, which sought to identify the number of clearly homeless individuals in the Durham Region in a 24-hour period, showed that at least 291 people experienced homelessness in April 2019. 30% of those individuals self-identified as experiencing chronic homelessness. Additional developments, such as the closure of the General Motors automobile plant in 2019, likely impacted those numbers. It was estimated then that over 14,000 residents would be at-risk of homelessness and poverty.

## CHALLENGES FACED BY THE TARGET POPULATION

A number of factors have stood in the way of the social and economic development of the target population. Traditionally, the most important have been difficulties in gaining access to services and programs.

Especially racialized communities as they face increasing poverty and displacement in the economic arena. Visible minorities are experiencing a disproportionately high level of poverty. They are three times more likely to be poor than others because of the barriers and challenges they face in finding and keeping jobs. Many factors are clearly at play in the rise of poverty among the population, of which race is probably one. How they fit together, though, requires a thorough examination before policy-makers settle on a particular course of action to deal with the problem.

It is certainly true that poverty among racialized participants has become a more pressing problem. While new entrants into the labour market have always struggled to become established, the rapid changes that have occurred in our economy in the past two decades have



accentuated the problem, eliminating large numbers of entry-level manufacturing jobs that were often a stepping-stone for new Canadians. But if first-generation newcomers do have to struggle, it should be a different story for their children who were born and raised here.

***[However, this is not the case for the racialized population; their children born here face similar problems of exclusion]***

## **TRU Potential – THE ORGANIZATION**

**TRU Potential** is a learning and development organization operating in the Greater Toronto Area. **TRU Potential** offers programs to meet the needs and requirements of individuals to enhance their personal development, career goals, and business objectives. TRU Potential creates a space for people to access programs and services to address their unique needs and requirements. All of this is done to assist with building capacity within an individual's life, which also transforms their community.

TRU Potential's approach to learning is centred on self-reflection and self-actualization. This approach allows the individual to be responsible for their own growth and development with the assistance of the group dynamic. Upon completion of the program, there is an improvement in the individual's self-awareness, self-knowledge, and development of strengths and talents which overall improves their potential and helps in building skill capacity.

SLIP uses an outcomes-based approach that asserts that solutions to tackling poverty and homelessness, including empowering the vulnerable and marginalized, exist within the interactions of complex systems that create conditions and opportunities for a life free of dependency.

The SLIP program framework highlights the existence of a support system and the intractability of changes within each area of support ranging from family and community, health and nutrition, and housing to knowledge transfer, policies and responsive capabilities. Each system of support contributes to the complexity and challenges that constrain the development of effective and sustainable solutions to tackling the realities of poverty and homelessness.

To solve complex, socio-economic, multi-system issues related to poverty and homelessness in our communities TRU Potential, in partnership with NLNC and [CDCD](#) Housing Services, employ an integrated model-for-change approach that not only involves engaging innovative partners but also testing a framework that enables expandable, demonstrated impact (see model below). This approach allows for partnership coordination and building, identification of funding opportunities as well as replications in other communities across the GTA.

## **SERVICE DELIVERY**

The approach we advance is one which ultimately results in a circular flow, where part of the success of individuals is shared with others in the community. This speaks to the question of effectively generating and properly harnessing resources. **TRU Potential** is pursuing the objective of personal development, which is inextricably linked to the concern of young people from the Durham Region founded on the recognition that development (economic development) must involve the target group in order to be effective.

The challenge is to ensure that the development intervention and training impact the target group as positively as possible, and in turn, the group/communities are enabled to have a positive impact on development and economic renewal. Key issues regarding participants in the target communities vis-à-vis economic development have been equity, access to economic activities, and lack of adequate information regarding government programs and initiatives. **TRU Potential** is ideally poised to deliver a program of entrepreneurship and business skills development in this community and for the target group.

## **PROJECT ACTIVITIES**

Using this innovative approach, the SLIP completed activities. Once the SLIP program is completed, participants will be transferred to the NLNC Productivity Hub to complete the sessions listed below:

### **SLIP COACHING SESSIONS**

The SLIP project is based on the understanding that self-awareness is the first fundamental step in the personal development process that paves the way toward rising above their circumstances. Furthermore, participants are coached by developing a life plan to move through this phase of their life with dignity, resilience, confidence, and hope for a better future.

## PROJECT RESULT ACHIEVED Logic Model

<b>Description</b>				
<p>A three-phase, personal development program for homeless/under-housed individuals in Durham Region, aimed at coaching individuals to determine their goals, training them with skills to achieve their identified purpose successfully, and coordinating local support to ensure project success.</p>				
<b>Objectives</b>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- harness and mobilize the considerable resources for participants</li> <li>- offer learning, skills training, and personal development and support services for individuals experiencing or at-risk of homelessness from the target community.</li> <li>- work closely with participants to build knowledge and skills and support them to enter the world of work</li> <li>- support the attainment of social and economic self-sufficiency</li> </ul>				
<b>Activities</b>	<b>Output Level Results 2021-2022</b>	<b>Outcome Level Results</b>	<b>Impact</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Develop program application processes and intake assessment criteria</li> <li>- Promote programs in the community, and community-based organizations</li> <li>- Establish partnerships with service organizations</li> <li>- Recruit fifteen (15) participants</li> <li>- Coordinate, and deliver twelve (12) coaching sessions, embracing six (6) skills training segments, and six (6) speakers' bureau sessions focusing on social supports that are available to participants</li> <li>- Monitor, track and evaluate participants' progress, through surveys, focus groups discussion, and prepare program reports</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 15 participants selected for the program</li> <li>- 7 participants graduated from the program</li> <li>- 12 workshop sessions were delivered</li> <li>- 6 weeks Self-Empowerment workshops delivered</li> <li>- 6 weeks' presentations by the community and industry reps</li> <li>- 7 participants graduated from the program</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Increased economically vulnerable individuals' access to community services that enhance financial stability</li> <li>- Increased vulnerable individuals, social and economic participation</li> </ul>		
	<b>Inputs</b>			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ontario Trillium Foundation funding.</li> <li>- Project provided learning materials and material resources to participants</li> <li>- Community and industry representatives shared information regarding services, and resources available</li> </ul>			
	<b>Indicators</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- # of participants who completed coaching sessions</li> <li>- # of participants who indicate improved self-awareness</li> <li>- # of participants who develop life plans at the end of the workshops</li> <li>- # of participants who have gained employment</li> </ul>				

The project recruited and selected, and selected fifteen (15) participants from the target communities

The project considered the particular needs and requirements of the individuals recruited. A comprehensive examination of the labour market needs of participants was conducted, identified needs were reviewed, and action plans were produced indicating priority areas.

Participants gained requisite skills, including financial literacy and employment preparation. Vulnerable low-income individuals acquired connections with local service providers, employers, and government officials. Wrap-around support connected participants with local service providers – such as housing, education, and health care – to meet their needs and requirements.

The project used support services to augment the skills training. The support services were limited to the unique longer-term needs of participants in today's labour market, and primary consideration was given to meeting those needs, which will impact readily on participants' employability and personal development

The SLIP project is an exciting, hands-on training and development project using blended learning approaches designed to meet the employment and personal development needs of individuals selected from the target community in a learning-paced process. The project involves focused training modules using highly interactive instruction. The project emphasized practical tools that can be applied in group learning and community-based development work.

SLIP learning modules involve training and development sessions led by facilitators. Each workshop was followed by a series of learning reinforcement tools and practices to increase, extend, and apply the learning to actual challenges. In addition, the SLIP project provides an assessment and measurement tool so trainers and facilitators can track and evaluate the project's impact on participants' performance.









The skills development sessions involved group instruction led by facilitators, employing powerfully designed presentations and participant learning aids. Facilitators guided participants through one-on-one and group-based fun experiential exercises, practice sessions, and rehearsals. Participants are offered relevant tools and action plan to apply right away. Participants were given a to-do list; and reinforced the training workshops.


In our quest to strengthen vulnerable people's abilities, SLIP holds the core belief that capacity building, personal development and coaching, are essential elements of people's entry to and participation in the labour market. For this reason, the project facilitates cross-disciplinary learning relevant to strengthening knowledge in drama, music and the arts.


Learning reinforcement tools: Participants were given a to-do list crafted to reinforce the training workshops in a readable handout format

The personal development and life skills group sessions examined barriers and challenges people faced in confronting difficulties related to accessing and pursuing employment opportunities. Group activities conducted by facilitators assisted participants in examining the meaning and value of training in the context of their life situations and learning and employment goals and plans. The group activities aimed to explore and examine ways and means to accelerate participants' learning. The speakers provided hands-on information and responded to individuals' issues, questions and concerns in the project.

## OUTCOME LEVEL RESULTS

-  The project helped people by supporting their re-engagement with the labour market. The skills development training, personal development work, post-employment job coaching, and support services improved work skills and job searching. The project assisted graduates in securing jobs, thus increasing their prospects to actively participate in meaningful employment activities. The project improved participants' capacity to make positive life choices and increased their labour market participation.
-  Participants had the opportunity to hear from guest speakers, ask questions regarding services and resources available in the community, industry, and public sectors, and build their network(s) and contacts.
-  SLIP program methodology inspires group support; and self-direction. Participants encouraged one another as they engaged in a personal discovery process and skills development.
-  Through diverse learning modes, participants increased their ability to effectively participate in social and economic development; engaged in mutual learning activities through peer learning and group work; learned how to take care of themselves as individuals; identified their purpose, and; developed an awareness of their personal strengths.
-  Improved vulnerable people's abilities through learning and practical experiences.
-  Provided continuous support to participants of the project to share experiences; and ideas and get reinforcement to continue their career development goals
-  Addressed the challenges and issues the target group faces, including barriers that hinder them from participating in social and economic life.
-  The community-based initiative enabled participants to meet their social, economic and cultural needs, supported vulnerable individuals in their personal development, and enhanced their social inclusion and economic participation.

 Delivered direct services to participants such as information, resources, labour market-focused development, and support services. These services were delivered based on participants' unique needs assessments conducted at the outset of the project.

 Assisted program graduates in securing jobs, thus increasing their prospects to be actively participating in meaningful employment activities

## **RELEVANCE OF RESULTS ACHIEVED**


The project helped create and maintain thriving, inclusive communities, offer opportunities for low-income individuals, and address practices that perpetuate the harmful effects of exclusion. The project promoted practices consistent with the objective of inclusiveness by providing training and support services to help participants break barriers and learn ways to participate in a sustainable healthy life.


The model integrated basic and personal development skills and used skills training as the context for learning. As a result, it helped connect individuals to the world of legitimate work and increased proper incentives to acquire the combined knowledge and experiences needed for success.


Having youth and older participants in the sessions together helped people understand each other's views and allowed different generations to increase their appreciation for one another. This, in turn, led to better communication and strengthened the group process.

## **CHALLENGES, RESULTS NOT ACHIEVED**


Several factors accounted for participants not being able to commit to the project's schedule


 Ongoing cumulative effects of limitations in social capital and opportunities resulted in some participants leaving the program. Participants in this category were not ready to move past behavioural barriers and build the requisite core competencies needed for employment. Though the program facilitator worked with participants in this category to identify barriers, the challenge to the participants was evident in managing and working through barriers


 Some participants experienced triggers from their past traumatic experiences during the program.


 Traditional and emerging learning deficits disadvantaged some participants: for example, the gap between conventional education and digital literacy among vulnerable populations. Digital technologies are rapidly integrating into the economic environments. The mismatch in digital skills development poses challenges for a number of participants. Some were ill-

prepared to participate in aspects of the learning and development components that required a basic set of digital skills


 Intergenerational dynamics: younger participants versus older participants in a combined learning environment posed significant challenges for some participants


 Family issues, such as child care for sole support participants, were reasons some participants discontinued their involvement in the program


 Lack of infrastructures such as transportation, child care, personal computer, or cell phones created barriers for some participants


 Financial needs: participants had difficulty with associated costs, such as transportation to attend workshops and related program sessions


## LESSONS LEARNED




 The implementation of the action stages of the project offered deeper insights regarding the way data is collected in respect of programming, with implications for developing strategies and approaches designed to improve skills training outcomes for individuals traditionally excluded, and chronically underserved groups in labour market/employment preparation programs, and services.




 Multiple intersecting factors that pose barriers or, conversely, support segments of the population in participating, accessing and benefiting from skills development and training programs in achieving employment


 Integrate principles of Individualized support that include a) rapid job search rather than work-readiness training, and b) integration with mental health and other supportive services

 Keep an open door to rapidly serve individuals in need when participants consider themselves ready


 An invaluable lesson learned in the project was that in a future project, the model would engage participants in the following ways:


-  Work one-on-one with the participant to assess interests, barriers, and strengths,
-  Develop an individualized employment plan,
-  Offer counselling with regard to public benefits, since the potential loss of benefits upon getting a job can sometimes serve as a disincentive to seeking employment,

-  Integrate employment assistance with mental health treatment and other supportive services to better help the individual work through employment barriers, and
-  Continually reassess the client and provide additional support or replacement as new barriers emerge.
-  Individuals experiencing or at risk of homelessness are motivated to engage in services, employment and other life changes at different times and different ways


 The SLIP program strategy supports participants' transitions to employment by applying program principles and techniques that foster positive change, meet individual needs and interests, and help participants acclimate to the norms and practices of the workplace.

## **PROJECT SUCCESS INDICATORS**

 Number of participants who completed all coaching sessions and graduated from the program

 Number of participants who indicate improved self-awareness

 Number of participants who develop a life plan at the end of the workshops

 Number of participants who received access to employment and self-empowerment preparedness support

## **Partnerships Created – Engagement of Community Service Organizations**

The project's established partnerships engaged with diverse services and support programs in the community. They focused on addressing participants' needs and requirements in housing, clothing, outerwear, healthcare, food and nutrition, employment, and mental health, enabling participants to access these supports that would aid in their transition from where they were to independence and empowerment.

Linkages with the community, industry, service providers and public sector organizations are key resources for promoting the SLIP program. Accordingly, the project worked with stakeholders to establish communication links to help disseminate information and distribute promotional materials, handled enquiries for potential program participants, and provided requisite information regarding services and resources available to participants.

Having community service providers involved in project delivery increased networking and partnerships among the community and industry. Service providers' presentations were essential contributions to help address unique challenges and barriers participants face in the communities. The partnership helped service providers understand and appreciate how the program contributes to individuals and communities. More importantly, community organizations' receptivity and commitment to the project are ideal for the project's sustainability.



[Community services provided feedback on the SLIP program is in appendix A]

## **SLIP Program Sustainability**

**TRU Potential** is well-positioned to bring together relevant partners and stakeholders, in combative implementations of the SLIP program, to help reduce incidents of poverty and homelessness.






**TRU Potential** fills a critical need in mobilizing financial and partnership resources and establishing a model that will pave the way for the identification of sustainable solutions in the social and economic engagement of vulnerable populations.

The nature of the ongoing delivery of the SLIP program by **TRU Potential** is dependent on financial contributions from its partnership base, including service providers and grant funding organizations (funders). It should be recognized that the level of financial support (funding) is a prerequisite for going forward.

## **Moving forward, the pathway to growing the SLIP program**

**TRU Potential** has developed a three-year business plan. The plan outlines strategic priorities and objectives for the three-year period for programming, infrastructure, communications, and marketing.

What is required are:

-  Strengthen the relationships among community and industry partners
-  Increase communications and outreach efforts to broaden slip program reach
-  Strengthen organizational infrastructure
-  Elaborate on program plans and evaluations
-  Secure sustainable funding for the program

## **CONCLUSION**

The model offered many benefits for hard-to-employ individuals and many positive results, including facilitating participants' entry into social and economic activities, lowering recidivism, reducing public benefits receipt, and improving the lives of vulnerable individuals.

I am pleased to have had the opportunity to prepare this report. I am confident the report will be helpful in the future direction of the SLIP program.

### **Melinda Holligan**

SLIP Coordinator

Community Development Council Durham (**CDCD**)

2022

## APPENDIX A

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### Community partners' feedback on their engagement in the SLIP Program:

#### a) School of Health and Community Services, Durham College, Oshawa

1. Why did you choose to be a community partner?

*In the dental hygiene program at Durham College, we have developed a number of community partners in the Durham Region. We were thrilled to participate when Karen Bell reached out to us.*

2. What did you like/dislike about your involvement?

*We liked everything about the involvement. Our students gained valuable knowledge in the community and problem-solving access to dental care solutions for the community.*

3. Would you consider the SLIP as part of the coordinated support to help the marginalized and those living in poverty?

*Yes, absolutely. It connects marginalized community members to valuable resources and health initiatives that they can connect with.*

4. Will you continue to be a community partner? Yes/No? Why?

*Yes, Absolutely!*

5. Is this program worth sharing with your colleagues? Yes/ No? Why?

*Yes, it is, and we have already reached out to other health programs. Please keep in touch and let us know if you need any other resources from our DC programs.*

#### b) Ontario Disability Support Program, East Region Area 2, Social Assistance Operations Division, Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services

1. Why did you choose to be a community partner?

*ODSP is always interested in strengthening our relationships with the community. As a manager at the ODSP office, I like to connect with people where they are most comfortable, usually; in a community setting. This allows me to hear honest points of view about our services; and speak candidly about the program, what it has to offer and how it can help people. It will enable OSDP to share about the program in a different setting.*

2. What did you like/dislike about your involvement?

*As a service provider, I liked that I could present information in a way that met the client's needs. I like that the program facilitators welcomed me and that the attendees were warm, welcoming and engaged. There's nothing I didn't like about my involvement.*

3. Would you consider the SLIP part of the coordinated support to help the marginalized and those living in poverty?

*Of course, programs that get people out of the house, out of their comfort zone and engaging with others are the first step to empowerment. It creates confidence and a sense of community for people who are otherwise reasonably isolated people.*

4. Will you continue to be a community partner? Yes/No? Why?

*Yes. From a professional point of view because ODSP believes in strengthening its capacity to meet people where they're at. Personally, because I had a lot of fun and felt very connected to all the service users.*

5. Is this program worth sharing with your colleagues? Yes/ No? Why?

*Yes, and I would love it if you could send me something I could share virtually with my staff so they can tell their clients about it.*

#### **c) Regional and City Councillor, Ward 4**

1. Why did you choose to be a community partner?

*TRU Potential and SLIP are essential pieces of the entire approach. I support what you are doing entirely.*

2. What did you like/dislike about your involvement?

*First: No dislikes! Second: I am always treated kindly and with respect for my efforts, as I am sure you put forward for any volunteer.*

3. Would you consider the SLIP part of the coordinated support to help the marginalized and those living in poverty?

*Absolutely. See my #1 response above.*

4. Will you continue to be a community partner? Yes/No? Why?

*Yes.*

5. Is this program worth sharing with your colleagues? Yes/ No? Why?

*I have shared. As this is in my Ward, my colleagues say, "Thanks for keeping us posted." If anything ever came to a vote, I feel confident there would be Council support.*

### **New Life Seventh-day Adventist Church**

1. Why did you choose to be involved with the SLIP program?

*I chose to be part of this program because I believe in the facilitators and believe in empowering people.*

2. What did you like/dislike about your involvement?

*I regret not being more involved due to other obligations.*

3. Would you consider the SLIP part of the coordinated support to help the marginalized and those living in poverty?

*One hundred percent!*

4. Will you continue to be part of The Productivity Hub? Yes/No? Why?

*Yes, because I believe it's my Christian duty*

5. Why do you feel the youth left?

*They weren't ready for the program or facing many issues that pulled them in a different direction.*

6. Is this program worth sharing with your friends and colleagues? Yes/ No? Why?

*Yes, because it values all people and gives them purpose and hope.*

### **Durham Youth Services**

Below are some key points the Durham Youth Services representative gave for their feedback:

- *Positive reinforcement*
- *Positive peer circle*
- *Mental health support*
- *Positive direction*
- *Goals: are goals being attained – income security*
- *Meeting the needs of participants learning styles*
- *Language when giving support – aware of triggers*
- *Considering barriers*

- *Stigma*
- *Religious basis*
- *Literacy education – Incorporate training services-access to basic technology*
- *Diversity training, pronouns [**gender identity?**]*
- *Oppression*
- *Recognizing biases*