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Anti-Poverty Community Organizing and Learning (APCOL) Project Final Case Study Report (Cover Sheet)

Identification
Community: Weston - Mount Dennis
Major Theme of Case Study: Local Economic Development
Community Co-Lead (include all contact information):   Cutty Duncan   cduncan@socialplanningtoronto.org
Academic Co-Lead (include all contact information):   Peter Sawchuk   peter.sawchuk@utoronto.ca
Report Author(s):   Erin Oldynski   oldynski@gmail.com   Peter Sawchuk   peter.sawchuk@utoronto.ca
Date Submitted (dd/mm/yyyy):   14/09/2012

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2. Overview of Case Study (1pp)

a. Summary of focus of case study

The focus of this case study was to follow community organizing activities around local economic development in the Weston – Mount Dennis neighbourhood of Toronto. The study followed a group of community residents working with the Mt Dennis Action for Neighbourhood Change (ANC) to develop the West End Local Economic Development (WE LED) campaign. The strategy of WE LED is to:

- Engage with marginalized groups, including local business owners, to develop a collective approach to neighbourhood economic development
- Identify local economic development priorities and strategies
- Explore ways to support small and medium size businesses in the neighbourhood to make them more sustainable, successfully with a stronger sense of community
- Pursue economic opportunities for local youth and residents, including supports for self-employment and entrepreneurship, as well as links with potential employers.

b. Relation to APCOL project themes

This case study relates to the APCOL project theme of Access to Jobs, Vocational Training and Living Wages, which is among the four basic needs cited in the APCOL proposal; a) Health/Nutrition/Food Security; b) Safe Shelter / Housing; c) Opportunity for Adequate Education; and d) Access to Jobs, Vocational Training and Living Wages. It also relates to APCOL's overall goals of contributing to local neighbourhood capacity to engage in anti-poverty work as they define it and building an understanding of the role of community-led organizing in the broader processes of positive social, political and economic change.

c. Linkage to community need

Improving the economic conditions of youth, residents and locally business owners in the Mount Dennis area has been a priority for the Mt Dennis ANC. The WE LED campaign aims to develop a solid local economic development strategy based on community research involving local business owners, residents and community organizations. The campaign is a collaborative effort to learn how to improve the economic conditions of the area with a focus on strengthening local assets while also building links to city-wide movements focused on the systemic roots of poverty. Ultimately, the goal of WE LED is to bring about long lasting and positive changes in the Weston – Mt Dennis area.

d. Summary of major achievements/outputs

University and community researchers together completed 12 one-on-one in-depth interviews with community organizers in Weston – Mt Dennis. The major achievements to emerge from the case study include: 1) The formation of the West End Local Economic Development campaign and associated website

(www.weled.ca); 2) Creation of the www.shopwestside.ca website to provide resources and promotion for local businesses, and; 3) Creation and distribution of the WE LED magazine which features local businesses and commentary on issues of economic development in the neighbourhood.

3. **Description of University-Community Research Partnership (1p)**
   a. Roles of organizations involved in the case study, their contributions and changes in capacities in relation to APCOL project themes.

This case study involved a collaborative relationship among several organizations, including the Mt Dennis Action for Neighbourhood Change, the City of Toronto, Social Planning Toronto, APCOL, the University of Toronto Commercial Gentrification (CGEN) research project, and the York Youth Coalition (YYC).

One of the most important contributions of ANC and YYC has been their support for the launch of WE LED. Unlike other campaigns that tend to focus on resident engagement, WE LED is unique in that it has successfully engaged local small businesses in its campaign. Organizing local businesses is understood as an important task in improving neighbourhood economic conditions, but it is difficult because business owners are usually preoccupied with their day-to-day operations. Despite this challenge, the WE LED campaign has been able to reach out to business owners. The role of ANC and YYC were crucial in this by leveraging opportunities and resources brought by CGEN and APCOL.

There were three stages involved in the process of developing the WE LED campaign. The first stage was CGEN research activities – business interviews, surveys and follow-up outreach – that were partially the process of community engagement through which community researchers developed their relationships with local business owners. The second stage was the presentation of research findings to a wider community: the first presentation given to the city's Integrated Labour Market Planning Group; and the second presentation given to a wide range of community stakeholders at the community forum organized by WE LED. These events allowed WE LED to present information, and to develop trust and build relationships with local business owners, which other stakeholders involved in economic development in the area lack. Third, WE LED's production and dissemination of communications materials such as a magazine and website have further assisted this effort to solidify its presence among many other stakeholders. Each of these stages have contributed to situating WE LED, ANC and YYC in a critical position in the neighbourhood so that other stakeholders, such as city planners and elected representatives, cannot simply dismiss WE LED's organizing efforts.

4. **Financial summary (2pp)**

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a. Final copy of case study budget/expenditures including brief notes of explanation where revisions were made to approved original budget document.
{Not Included in Condensed Final Report}

5. **Summary of Work Plan & Case Study Outputs (3pp)**
   a. Final copy of case study work plan document including brief notes of explanation where revisions were made to approved original work plan document

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Mount Dennis APCOL Case Study Project Plan
(October 15, 2011)

OVERVIEW

FOCUS:
Economic Development Concerns as it relates to Youth, Small Business and Emerging
Entrepreneurs in the Mount Dennis Area of Toronto

OVERALL PURPOSE:
To work with and develop local leaders across youth, small businesses, emerging
entrepreneurs, and community stakeholders in the Mount Dennis area of Toronto to
develop a locally organized response for improved economic development opportunities
and strengthen local business.

LEARNING GOALS
- Learn about the community and its leadership
- Learn about local networks and groups/organizations in the community that may
  support or inform the work
- Identify issues that affect the success of local business owners
- Identify strategies for local business success and increased economic opportunities

CORE PARTICIPANTS:
- YYC Youth
- Residents
- Business Owners (Small/Micro Businesses/Home Businesses & emerging
  Entrepreneurs
- BIA representatives

CORE PARTNERS:
- Social Planning Toronto
- Action for Neighbourhood Change – Mt. Dennis
- APCOL Project/OISE
- C-GEN Project/Geography – University of Toronto

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Objectives	Tasks	Number of events/group sessions/time	Timeline/ status
GOAL 1: Establish Focus, Planning and Advisory Committee			
Create Initial Work Plan for the project with core partners	• Finalize/Revise focus of the case study, Work Plan and Budget documents	• 6 meetings of core partners • 4 meetings of core participants	May – Oct 2011

Establish and Expand Advisory Committee	• Identify, engage and develop residents, business owners and other community stakeholders wanting to assist with researching local business views and related information This group will constitute an advisory committee for the case study research.
	• Initial Research Committee members include:
	    ANC - 1
	    Social Planning - 1
	    YYC-1
	    Local Business – 1
	    Resident – 2
	    Youth – 2
	    APCOL – 2
	    C-GEN – 2
	• Recruit community-based researchers to participate in the research project (number of community-based
		• 4 meetings of Advisory Committee
		• Recruitment of additional Committee members and animators
		• C-Gen orientation and training session with community-based researchers
		• APCOL orientation and training session with community-based researchers
			Sept – Nov 2011

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	researchers = 4-8) • Advisory Committee and including community-based researchers to meet with C-GEN and APCOL researchers for orientation, training in research and planning.		
Goal 2: Conduct Research and Share Findings			
Conduct Research	• Complete C-GEN business interviews carried out by C-GEN RAs and community-based researchers. • Complete APCOL key community informant interviews, revise interview instrument, and complete interviews with community residents by APCOL RAs and community-based researchers. Community-based researchers and/or Advisory Committee members to act as liaisons with community residents arranging interviews.	• C-GEN interviews • 3-6 consultation meetings with Advisory Committee concerning interpretation of results and ongoing C-GEN research information need requests of the committee • APCOL interviews • 3-6 consultation meetings with Advisory Committee concerning interpretation of results and ongoing C-GEN research information need requests of the committee • 2 C-GEN and APCOL RA meetings to share findings • 2 presentation of findings meetings between C-GEN, APCOL researchers and Advisory Committee (December 2001; February 2012)	Sept 2011 – March 2012

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Present findings to community and stakeholders	• Hold public meeting/forum for Advisory Committee, community-based researchers, C-GEN and APCOL researchers to present findings • Preparation by APCOL. C-GEN and Advisory Committee leaders of first publication of project reporting key findings in APCOL newsletter	• Dates to be determined between February and May 2012	Feb to May 2012
Determine next steps	• Review findings and feedback from public forums to determine strategies for moving forward on research focus and purposes	• 3 meetings of Advisory Committee with support of C-GEN and APCOL reseachers	March to June 2012

Goal 3: Case Study Evaluation & Completion

Case Study Completion and Final Outputs & Responsibilities	**REQUIRED OUTPUTS:** • Collective evaluation of project **[Lead Responsibility: Advisory Committee plus all core participants and partners]** • Organize and conduct a business/community exercise to develop priorities/visioning and local business success strategies **[Lead Responsibility: Advisory**	• 1 project evaluation meeting • Ongoing consultation of Advisory Committee to prepare assigned outputs • Ongoing consultation as needed of C-GEN and APCOL researchers to prepare assigned outputs • Ongoing consultation between Rankin, Sawchuk/Chamberlain/Oldynski and Advisory Committee	May to August 2012

	Committee]	lead to prepare final project report
	• Write/Develop strategy moving forward for info gained from research, community forums and community priority setting/visioning exercise. [Lead Responsibility: Advisory Committee]	
	• Implement an online communication strategy (i.e., Blogs, Facebook, Website) that creates opportunities for businesses and residents [Lead Responsibility: Advisory Committee]	
	• Consultation with APCOL Arts and Popular Education Committee to consider how arts and culture can be used to disseminate findings and experiences to other communities [Lead Responsibility: Advisory Committee]	
	• Prepare refereed academic research article [Lead Responsibility: Rankin with Sawchuk as necessary]	
	• Prepare and submission of APCOL Final Case Study Report based on template provided by APCOL	

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b. Training, skills development: community organization and community
members (list names of all people involved and the capacity in which they
participated)

Throughout the development of WE LED, community residents worked closely with
university researchers to develop the roles of community researchers and organizers.
While some roles were more formalized, such as the paid full-time staff at the ANC,
other roles were less formalized but particularly critical to the development of the
campaign, such as the paid part-time community organizers. Most of the following WE
LED members attended the bi-weekly organizing meetings held at the Mt Dennis ANC
as well as the initial interview training and WE LED campaign planning sessions (listed
under 'events').

Facilitator:
Cutty Duncan (Mt Dennis ANC)

Participants:
Sara Abdo (Mt Dennis ANC)
Natalia Khabarova (Mt Dennis ANC)
Shadya Yasin (York Youth Coalition)
Omar Francis (York Youth Coalition)
Kurt Strachan (Community Organizer)
Sojica John (Community Organizer)
Dr. Gail Matthews (Community Organizer)
Shane McLeod (Community Organizer)
Ayana Francis (Community Organizer)
Michael Miller (Community Organizer)
Fatma Yasin (Community Organizer)
Erin Oldynski (University Researcher)
Thomas Saczkowski (University Researcher)
Julie Chamberlain (University Researcher)
Kuni Kamikazi (University Researcher)
Heather McLean (University Researcher)

c. Events (including dates, location, number of attendees)

1. Interview Techniques Training. November 1, 2012 at Mt Dennis ANC. 8
   participants.
2. WE LED Discussion and Campaign Planning for 2012. December 13, 2012 at Mt
   Dennis ANC. 12 participants.
3. CGEN presentation to Integrated Labour Market Group. February 29, 2012 at
   York Humber Employment & Social Services, 605 Rogers Rd. Approximately 25
   participants.

4. "Re)defining 'Anti-Poverty Activism' in Weston-Mount Dennis: Discourse, Power, and the Subject" Presentation by Erin Oldynski at the Dean's Graduate Student Research Conference, University of Toronto. March 22, 2012. Approximately 15 participants.

5. CGEN presentation at WE LED event. April 18, 2012 at Shilla Dynasty Korean Japanese Restaurant, 1161 Weston Rd. Approximately 40 participants.

6. "Storytelling as a Transformative Project in Equitable Community Development," Presentation by Erin Oldynski at the Sociology and Equity Studies in Education Student Conference, University of Toronto. April 21, 2012. Approximately 25 participants.

    d. Written outputs (titles, authors, length, date)

1. Abdo, Sara, "Future Projects," *WE LED News,* Issue 1, Spring 2012; *(370 words)*

2. Abdo, Sara, "State of Business on Weston Mt Dennis," *WE LED News,* Issue 1, Spring 2012; *(400 words)*

3. Duncan, Cutty, "Think Economic Development," *WE LED News,* Issue 1, Spring 2012; *(262 words)*

4. Francis, Ayana, "Eastern Décor," *WE LED News,* Issue 1, Spring 2012; *(183 words)*

5. Francis, Ayana, "Kaneshi Market," *WE LED News,* Issue 1, Spring 2012; *(269 words)*

6. Francis, Ayana, "L&S Health Care Inc.," *WE LED News,* Issue 1, Spring 2012; *(385 words)*

7. Francis, Ayana, "New Era Hair Studio," *WE LED News,* Issue 1, Spring 2012; *(240 words)*

8. McLean, Heather, "Major Development in Mount Dennis & Weston Road," *WE LED News,* Issue 1, Spring 2012; *(942 words)*

9. Oldynski, Erin, "Storytelling as a Transformative Project in Equitable Community Development," *Presented at the Sociology and Equity Studies in Education Student Conference.* Toronto, Ontario. April 21, 2012; *(5,585 words)*

10. Oldynski, Erin, "(Re)defining 'Anti-Poverty Activism' in Weston-Mount Dennis: Discourse, Power, and the Subject," *Presented at the Dean's Graduate Student Research Conference.* Toronto, Ontario. March 22, 2012; *(3,278 words)*

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    e. Summary of changes in community and/or community partner capacity for anti-poverty activism

Throughout these research and organizing activities, both community researchers and ANC/YYC have increased their capacity to respond to issues around gentrification. There were not many formally structured capacity building opportunities previous to the formation of WE LED, but ANC created opportunities and space where much informal and mutual learning took place. In particular, changes in individual community researchers and their relationship with the term 'gentrification' have been significant, and this changing understanding about gentrification is continually informing their organizing strategies and efforts. At the same time, many residents have also commented on the complexity of organizing around the issue of gentrification and positioning their campaign in a context of competing visions put forward by various stakeholders.

6. Research Findings (8pp)
    a. Summary of academic and policy research literature relevant to the concerns of the case study;

Throughout the development of this case study, community residents and business owners have come together to formally organize under the banner of WE LED in a powerful way that demands recognition from elected officials. Individually, community residents have little power to influence economic development, but as a collective brought together by shared experiences of poverty and displacement, the group gains political and social leverage. In *The social space of gentrification in Toronto's Downtown West* Mazer and Rankin propose that exploring how marginalized people experience "neighbourhood upgrading" allows for an analysis that is based on the everyday life of capitalism (2011). Mazer and Rankin argue that pairing such an analysis with Henri Lefebvre's framing of 'right to the city' allows for the posing of basic but transformative questions such as: What is the city for? Who gets to live here? Who decides and how? (2011). According to Lefebvre, 'right to the city' refers to an embedded moral claim to the right to the city that can be found by starting from the experiences of those at the greatest risk of displacement (1991). Such a claim includes not only the physical space where people live but the system of signs and symbols that manifest in such social spaces as political practice, struggle, and desire (1991). In the case of Weston – Mt Dennis, this concept is useful for thinking about the ways in which community members have the right to not only remain in their neighbourhood but to also influence and improve their neighbourhood (Hartman et al, 1982).

Familiarity with the policies that contributed to the development of Toronto "priority neighbourhoods" such as Weston – Mt Dennis is also useful for understanding the

political ideology that underpins such community labelling. In developing priority neighbourhoods, representatives from the private, public, and labour sectors in Toronto first came together to create the report *Strong Neighbourhoods: A Call to Action.* This report was a response to a number of pressing social issues, including more families living in poverty than ever before, poverty being geographically concentrated, severe income polarization, decreasing income support services, and social services not keeping pace with changing demographics (2005). A close reading of the report finds that the discussion of these social issues uses the discourse that "Strong Neighbourhoods Matter" and employs the following supporting arguments to justify this claim:

- Without preventative support to improve outcomes in these areas individuals live with reduced opportunities, and society as a whole must pay for more expensive remedial services to address the situation (13).
- Ensuring our neighbourhoods are healthy and provide a good quality of life is crucial to Toronto's continued success and prosperity (13);
- Single parents on social assistance who were offered a package of services that included child care and recreation for their children, employment training, and visits by a public nurse, were more likely to leave welfare for work than those left to fend for themselves (14), and;
- "Only cities that become home to innovation and inclusion will rise to the top in the global age. The diversity of the city will not drive innovation if those who are different or poor find themselves increasingly marginalized" (quoting Neil Bradford, 14).

Throughout the report a neo-liberal ideology underpins each of the arguments used to support the claim that "strong neighbourhoods matter." Such ideology calls for an increased role of the private sector in public infrastructure development, and frames those who live in poverty as marginal, vulnerable, and as an unfair burden to the health care and social welfare system. This neo-liberal framing and understanding of people living in poverty at socially deviant has had devastating consequences for particular business owners in Weston – Mt Dennis. For example, earlier this year the Weston Business Improvement Association (BIA) decided to set up chairs and tables in front of minority owned businesses in a way that blocks garbage collection and foot traffic to their stores, without first consulting or notifying the business owners. The patio furniture was installed in a location that would benefit the weekly farmer's market which services middle and upper class out-of-town visitors, at the expense of locally owned businesses which service lower and working class community residents. One particularly affected local business owner placed a sign in his window that read, "Weston BIA killed my business". His shop has since closed down. Such instances raise important questions about who benefits from "priority neighbourhood" designation, and who suffers as a result.

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Economic development organizations such as the BIA have been examined by many scholars. Maia Green argues throughout her work "Representing Poverty and Attacking Representations" that development institutions emphasize the relative powerlessness of impoverished communities and by implication, the power of various groups over them "to recognize and define them, and to determine when poverty matters" (2006). In the case of Weston-Mt Dennis, most businesses interviewed as part of the Commercial Gentrification project were not aware of current development efforts in the neighbourhood, the activities of the Weston BIA, or even that Mt. Dennis has been designated as a "priority neighbourhood". As Green discusses throughout her work, "Making poverty the object of analysis abstracts poverty from people and obscures the processes that make certain people subject to its effects" (2006). Within this framing, the rich and processes of wealth creation remain safely out of focus, with the agenda focusing instead on eliminating what has been labelled as deviant. For example, safely out of focus is the discussion of how poverty is highly racialized in Toronto, and how the racialization of poverty is tied to discriminatory immigration polices and demands for a low-wage work force in Canada. Particularly in Toronto, communities of colour experience ongoing, disproportionate levels of poverty and are more likely to have related problems such as poor health, lower education, and fewer job opportunities than those from European backgrounds. Racialized communities experience individual and systemic racism which means that they are less likely get jobs when equally qualified and are likely to earn less than those with white skin privilege. Systemic racism also means that communities of colour are more likely to live and work in poor conditions, have less access to healthcare and social services, and be victims of police violence. A few statistics from the Colour of Poverty (2007) point to how poverty disproportionately affects communities of colour:

- Racialized (non-European) families in Toronto make up 37% of all families, but account for 59% of poor families;
- Between 1980 and 2000, while the poverty rate for non-racialized (European heritage) communities in Toronto fell by 28%, the poverty among racialized communities rose by 361%; and
- 32% of children in racialized families and 47% of children in recent immigrant families in Ontario live in poverty.

It is evident that poverty in Toronto is racialized and that the dominant discourse shaping economic development policy does not address this in a productive way. For Weston – Mt Dennis, this has led to the creation of spaces for resistance and collective action, particularly under the name of WE LED. The Mt Dennis Network is another community driven organization in the area to have developed its own strategy for local economic development. For the Mt Dennis Network, such a strategy involves negotiating for a "community benefits agreement" with the industrially zoned Kodak lands of Weston – Mt Dennis which would guarantee jobs for local residents at the soon to be constructed Metrolinx maintenance and storage facility for the Eglinton light rail transit system. If the labelling of a priority neighbourhood indicates that its residents

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must be a priority in economic development efforts, and not merely displaced for wealthier residents to move into the neighbourhood, then such construction projects must create jobs that prioritize hiring local residents. Similarly, the locally situated Irving Tissue manufacturing plant – which currently employs not a single local resident – must prioritize hiring local labour if economic development in Weston – Mt Dennis is to truly benefit existing local residents.

b. Summary of initial data analysis;

Throughout the APCOL interviews with community organizers and residents there was a recurring theme of rejecting the label "anti-poverty activist". Specifically, discussions often touched on the idea that the WE LED campaign must start from building capacities and relationships locally, rather than following a model-driven approach. An interview with one community organizer addressed the role of various social actors involved in poverty discourse and the political positions of these actors.

> *I think actually I should say from the get-go that when I see anti-poverty I see it in a large lens and hardly ever use the term 'anti-poverty'. I like to see the work that we're doing more in a narrow, issue-specific kind of way. We look at housing and tackle that issue, we look at employment and tackle that issue, and they all could fit under anti-poverty issues, right? The piece about the anti-poverty… when we first engaged in APCOL, I wasn't sure about the anti-poverty piece. It didn't sit well. Just growing up with not a lot of money you're not going around telling people that you're involved in anti-poverty activism. My frustration was that there were people too committed to a particular ideology rather than doing whatever it takes to get people to do the work. When I saw APCOL, I thought, this is just going to be more of the same. I think it's important, from the get-go, to see it in the larger frame and to be willing to work within that.*

An interview with another local community organizer explored the power of naming her activities in the community and how this naming underpins her practice as a youth outreach worker.

> *I have a problem with categorizations and titles. People would identify me as an activist but I don't identify myself as an activist. I just identify as a person who's doing my work. And what I can do, I will do to the best of my ability. I'm a believer that we weren't brought to this earth to just live, but to actually do something. It's part of existence; you're healthy, you're well, you have a roof on top of your head, what more could you ask for? It's to do something. And that doing of something, whether that's building community, or working 9-5, whatever that is, doing the best with what you have. And continuously challenging yourself. I love challenging myself. This is just a path that personally I'm walking on. I don't know where I'm going to end up, I could start all over from scratch, start all over again.*

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> *God knows where we're heading, and so, to me, I stay away from titles. I just do the work that I can do.*

The importance of building community capacity and relationships locally also resonated with a community resident and youth:

> *I don't think of it as anti-poverty or anything like that, right? You can look at it in that frame. But I never see it as a poverty movement. I just see it as community coming together and uniting and becoming a stronger community. Because you really have to know each other and be like family in order for a community to be strong. I don't see it as, oh we're trying to bridge a gap that's happening here. It's just people getting to know each other. And in the end, obviously, it's going to help eliminate poverty, right?*

A common theme in each of the above responses is that individuals resist restricting themselves to a particular model to direct their work as community organizers, and are instead more focused on relationship and capacity building, and developing trust among community members. With interview responses including such active verbs and phrases as "tackling issues", "challenging yourself", "doing whatever it takes", and "building community" to describe how engaged residents have been organizing, this positions community members as the ones who have the ability to make change. As Sandra Jeppesen addresses throughout *From the 'War on Poverty' to the 'War on the Poor': Knowledge, Power, and Subject Positions in Anti-Poverty Discourses* in her analysis of media created by the Ontario Coalition Against Poverty:

> *These words are part of a discursive formation of civic action (by citizens and non-citizens alike) that locates power in the ordinary person engaged in community-based grass-roots politics rather than in government bureaucracy. Social transformation, in this discursive formation, comes through collective action, political struggle, mobilization, challenging the status quo, and fighting for one's rights (502).*

Research conducted by Carroll and Ratner provides further insight into how various social movements employ cross-networking master narratives to frame the issues underlining their activism (1996). Whereas the dominant poverty discourse is hegemonic in its production and framing of social issues, the heterogeneous discourse of community organizers and residents often moves beyond single-issue activism to include an analytical perspective that emphasizes the systemic nature of poverty. For example, as one resident of Weston – Mt Dennis emphasized in the interview, "I think it's important, from the get-go, to see it in the larger frame and to be willing to work within that." Such framing is essential in creating a counter-hegemonic discourse that will challenge the legitimacy of poverty-related policy which positions the government and powerful businesses as the only ones with power to make change. In point of fact,

one of the central findings of the APCOL research has been that some ways of thinking and talking about the many issues related to poverty (types of poverty/anti-poverty discourses) clearly limit participant's/activist's (and potential participant's/activist's) freedom to act in their own interests.

The full freedom to act and respond creatively to urgent issues – i.e. people's "agency" – is limited severely if the framing and discourse of an initiative(s) is not just right. To complicate matters further: This agency is also limited when the framing and discourse of an initiative(s) do not match where people are on their unique "trajectories" of thinking and learning, both as individuals and as a group. In this case study, "anti-poverty organizing" and its inherent link for Weston-Mt Dennis activists to poverty-related policy specifically is an example of these types of important limitations that can undermine success. Building a base of learning together by taking seriously the ways of speaking and thinking in the course of successful initiatives (both large and small) is an essential component for moving forward. The creation and/or embedding of a unique language of community action and community building, tailored to the particular community in terms of its unique composition and history of achievements, we argue, are foundational components of success according to the APCOL analysis. The creation of the distinctive "WE LED campaign" summarizes and contains within it, we argue, the makings of just this type of unique discourse: not simply a program of action but a very particular way of thinking, talking and engaging with others (including local businesses). Building on what interviewee's said, our case study research underlines the fact that this aspect of "activist learning work" is likely particularly important prior to effectively taking on the challenges of policy-makers, planners and related interest groups in terms of *their* preferred frames of reference and approaches to problem-solving. We note that this issue is not always given the attention it deserves. It is a challenging practice to embed within initiatives, especially amidst the practical realities of organizing. And, it represents a capacity and a resource that only comes from the hands-on experience of having tried to explicitly build a locally specific approach. One final question that emerges from the APCOL research in this sense is as follows: What are the best ways to retain the learning (good and bad) and the gains of such experience over time and across a changing set of participants. Is it adequate that so much of this learning rests within key activists and organizations that may be tenuously supported financially? How can this experience be effectively shared, and shared more widely, should individuals move or organizational support wane? Certainly this type of research has a role to play. However, it is clearly not sufficient on its own.

    c. Summary of three contributions the research has or may potentially make to the academic and/or policy research literature.

- Detailed study of how individual and collective experiences link to activist learning to shape local economic development

- How relationship and capacity building contribute to community development campaigns in Weston – Mt Dennis specifically
- Qualitative study of how learning processes develop within community organizing with special attention to the importance of constructing particular discourses of organizing and action and potential collaboration between community and local business

7. Lessons for Improving Learning for Anti-poverty Organizing (4pp)
   a. Summary of key applied information for use by organizers and community residents to facilitate improvements in various forms of anti-poverty action

Throughout this case study it has become evident that core to the development of the West End Local Economic Development campaign is the belief that the needs of existing community members and local business owners must be prioritized over any other interests. As was indicated earlier in the report, if the labelling of a priority neighbourhood indicates that its residents are to be a priority in economic development efforts, and not merely displaced for wealthier residents to move into the neighbourhood, then economic development efforts must create jobs that prioritize hiring local residents. Furthermore, the case study also found that when community residents and business owners work collectively to organize under the formal name of WE LED, and that when this campaign is complemented with a website and magazine, further legitimacy and recognition is gained from elected officials. On an individual basis, the ability of community residents to influence economic development is minimal, however as a collective with a clear message and communication strategy, the group gains political and social leverage. Mobilizing individuals and then a group of individuals flows from the establishment of locally-made "discourse" of action, thinking and communicating, but this discourse must be retained over time somehow if it is to be developed. On this latter issue in particular, the APCOL research raises more questions than it provides answers.

8. Appendices

{Appendices not included in Condensed Final Report}