Insights on Methods from the Anti-Poverty Community Organizing and Learning Community University Research Alliance

Research Questions

1. What is the nature and effectiveness of community-based anti-poverty organizing in the GTA?

2. What is the nature and effectiveness of popular education/informal learning in supporting community-based anti-poverty organizing in the GTA?

3. How can community-based anti-poverty organizing efforts in the GTA engage with, support and learn from one another?
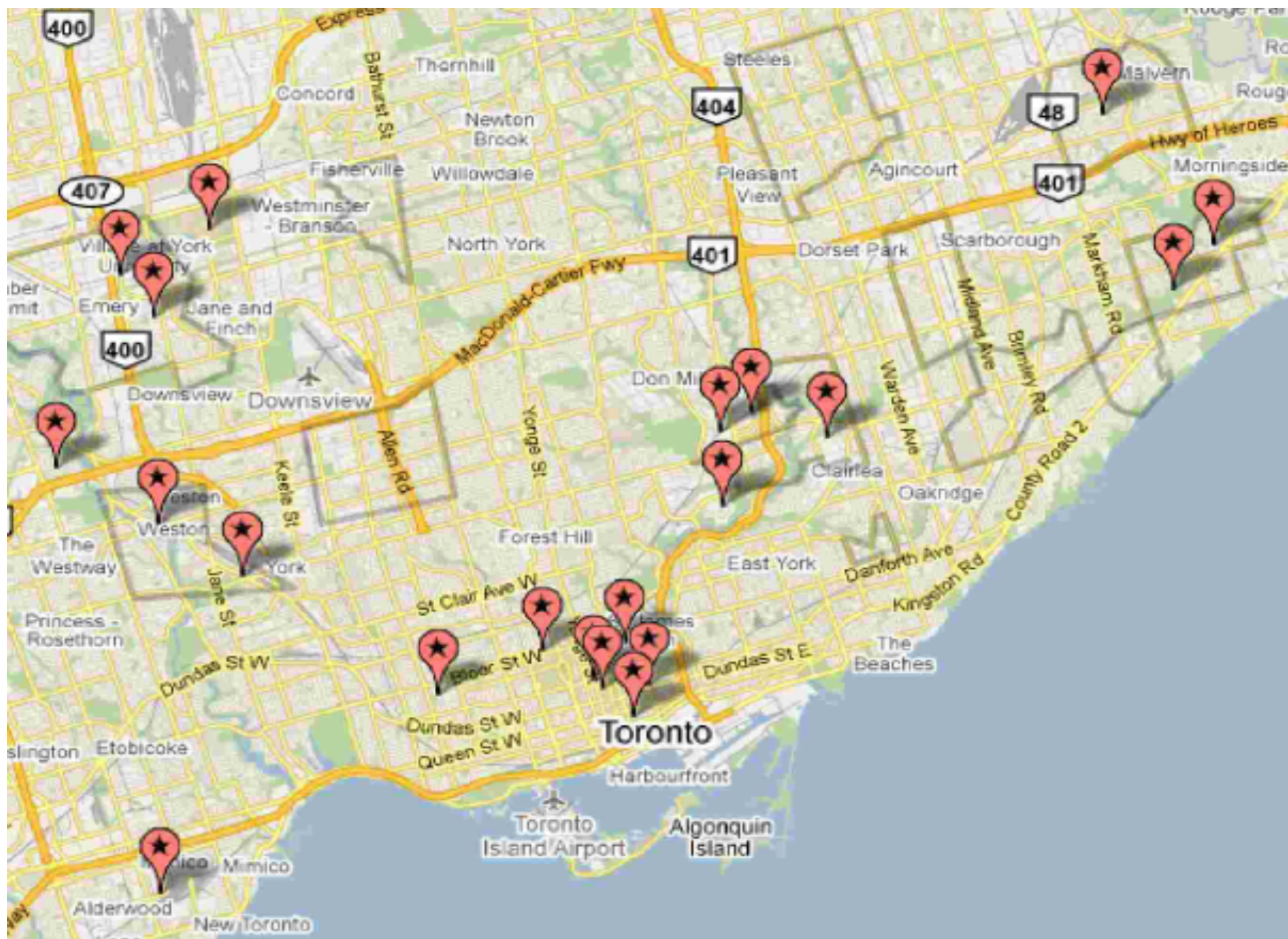
General Methodology: Participation Action Research as Community based research
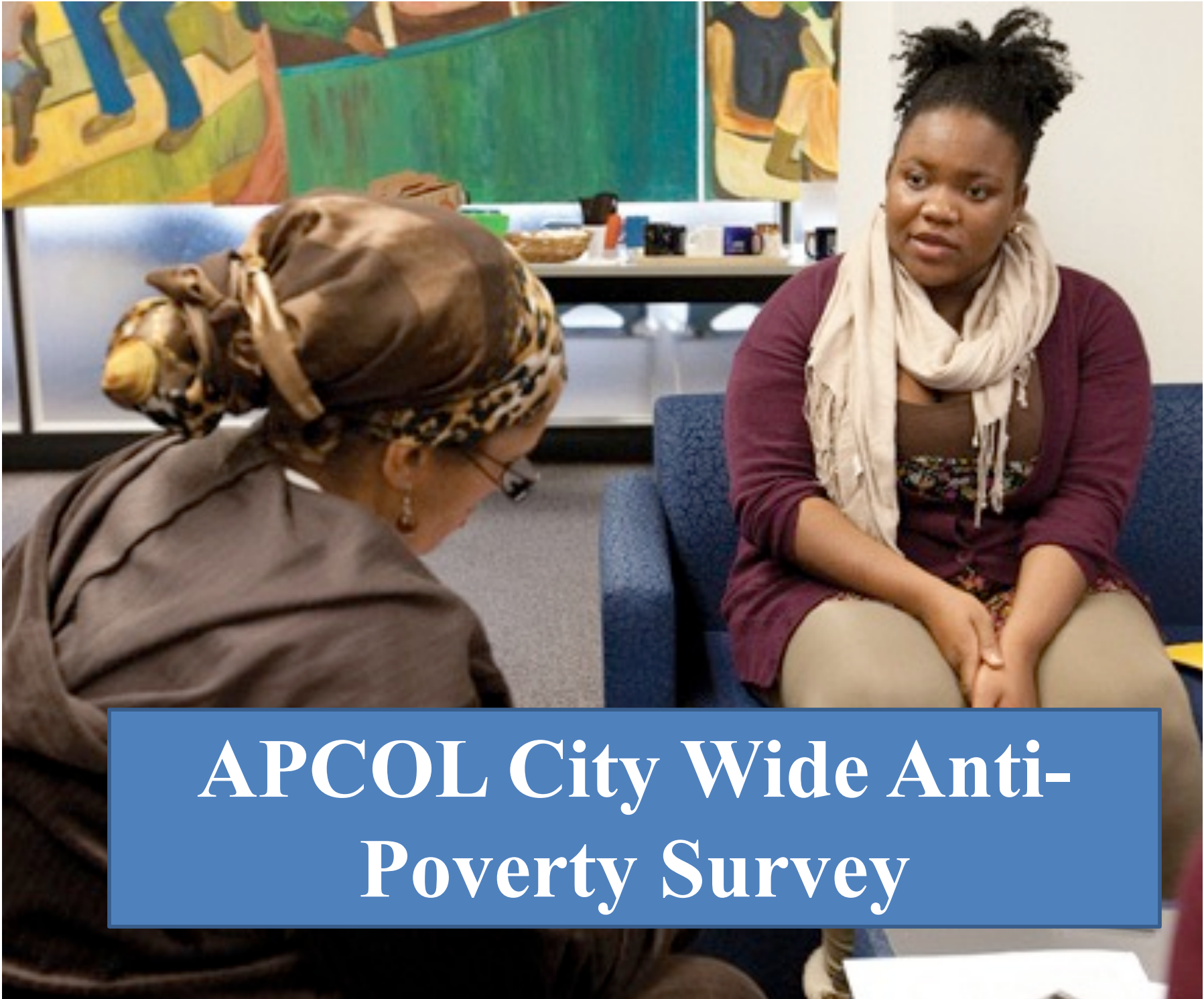
- "as a collaborative approach to research that equitably involves all partners in the research process and recognizes the unique strengths that each brings."

- "…begins with a research topic of importance to the community with the aim of combining knowledge and action for social change"

Israel et al, 1998

Table 1: Basic Sequence of Research Activity

Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Case Study #1	Case Study #3	Case Study #4	Case Study #6	Case Study #8
Case Study #2	First Survey	Case Study #5	Case Study #7	Second Survey

APCOL City Wide Anti-Poverty Survey

Low Income in Toronto, 2001

% Low Income Toronto

17.3	17.6	26.3	44.6	54.2	34.9	31.4
Cdn-born	Imm <1986	Imm 1986-95	Imm 1996-01	Non Perm Res.	Aborig.	People of Colour
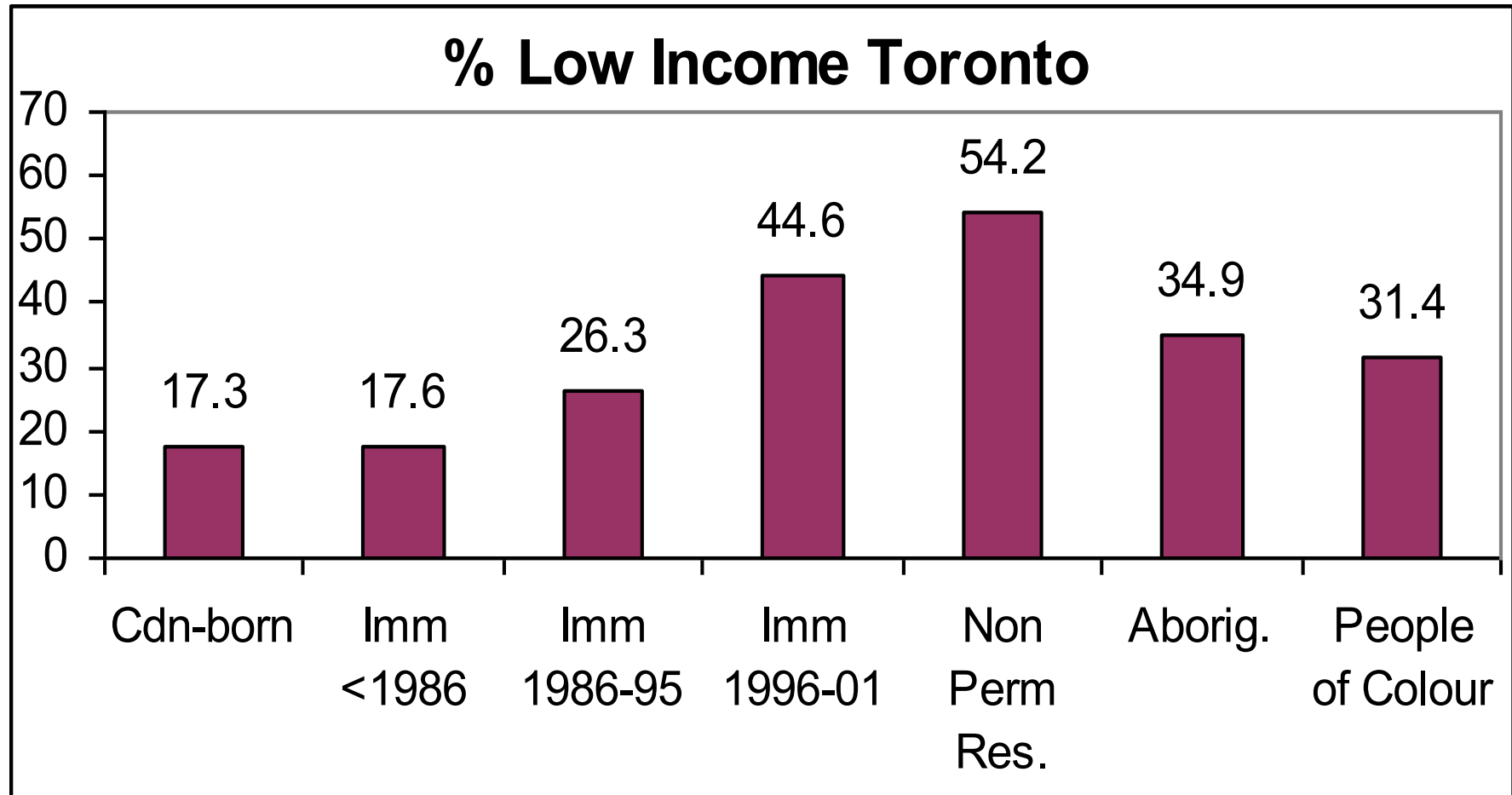
City Wide Survey

- APCOL has undertaken a two-phase face-to-face survey, in Years 2 (2010-2011) and repeated in 5 (2013-2014).

- The survey is based on purposive sampling in identified neighbourhoods in the City of Toronto.

- These samples (n = 8x50 = 400 people) draw from some (but not exclusively) case study neighbourhoods

Survey sample

- Sample of respondents 18 years and over and not less than 50 respondents in each of the eight select neighbourhood for a total of 400 Citywide

- The survey sample was developed through contacts from partner anti-poverty campaign organizations.

- To address equity issues relating to differential experiences of poverty, we sought to have a proportion of the surveys in the first languages of **Spanish, Chinese, Urdu and Arabic** speaking residents

- Non-participants and past participants were randomly drawn from the respective neighbourhoods using 'snowballing'.
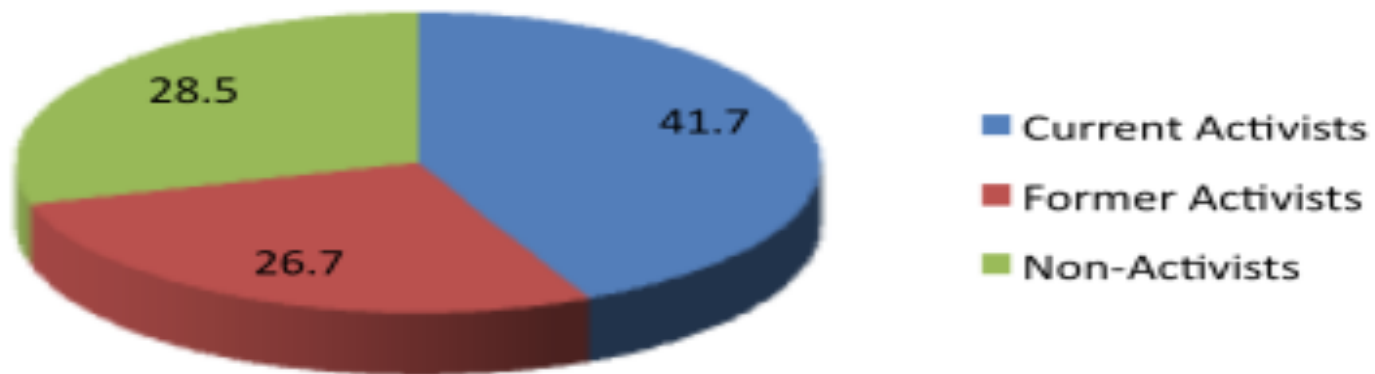
Community Researcher Training Program

- Training includes:
  - General introductions and scan of neighbourhood issues
  - Overview of the APCOL project
  - Review interview guide
  - Overview of the Questionnaire
  - Practicing interviewing
  - Discussion of questions arising
  - Review specific sections of the
  - Planning
  - Workplan development

Benefits: Policy implications
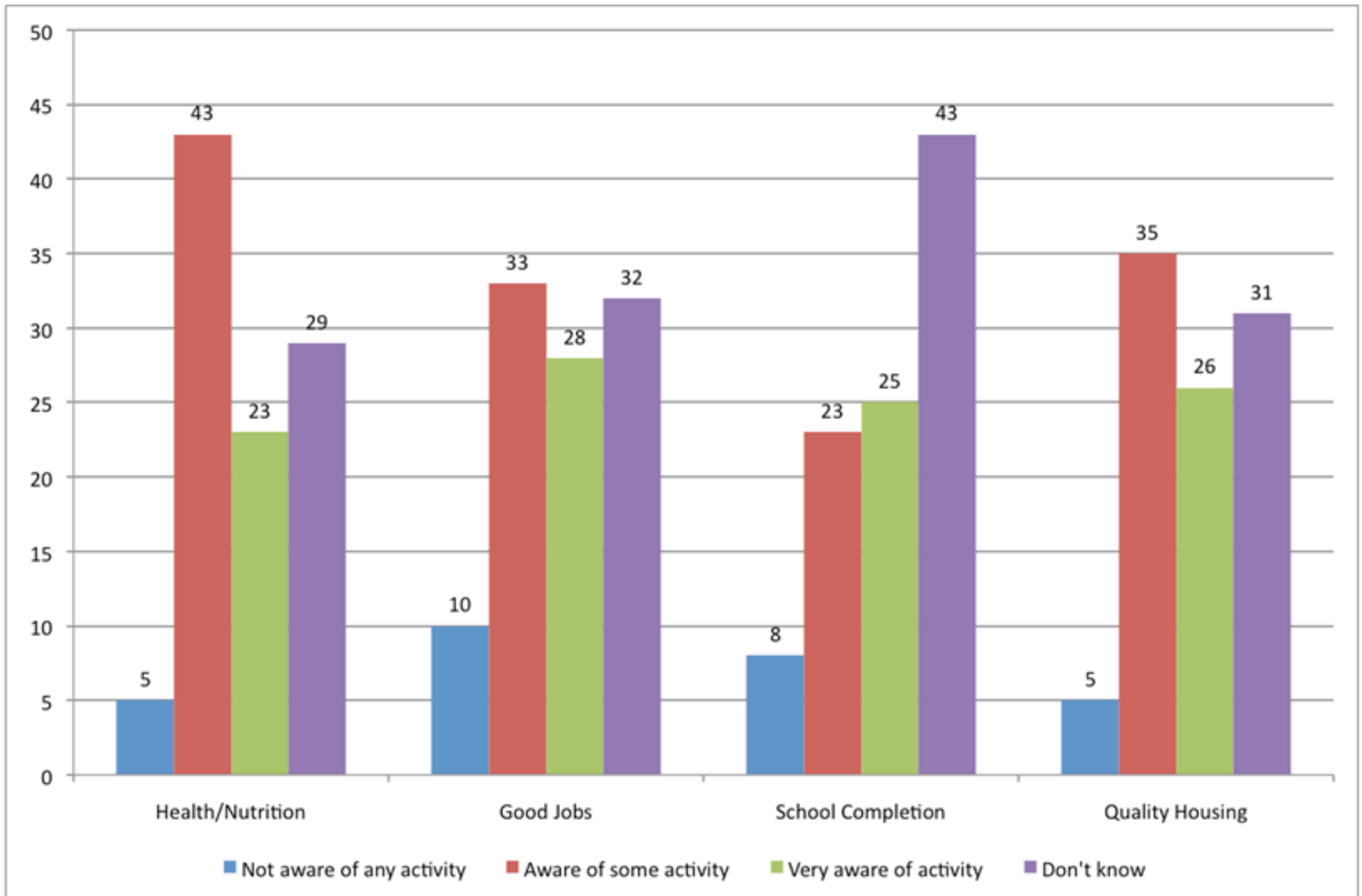
- The resulting data will establish benchmarks for estimating:
  - changes in poverty conditions
  - community-based anti-poverty organizing
  - popular education/informal learning activity
- Policy and advocacy relevant research
- Building research capacity in communities

Survey Sample by Activist Status

- Current Activists — 41.7
- Former Activists — 26.7
- Non-Activists — 28.5

Issues and activism

	Health/Nutrition	Good Jobs	School Completion	Quality Housing
Not aware of any activity	5	10	8	5
Aware of some activity	43	33	23	35
Very aware of activity	23	28	25	26
Don't know	29	32	43	31

Some Initial Findings: Areas of activism, past and present
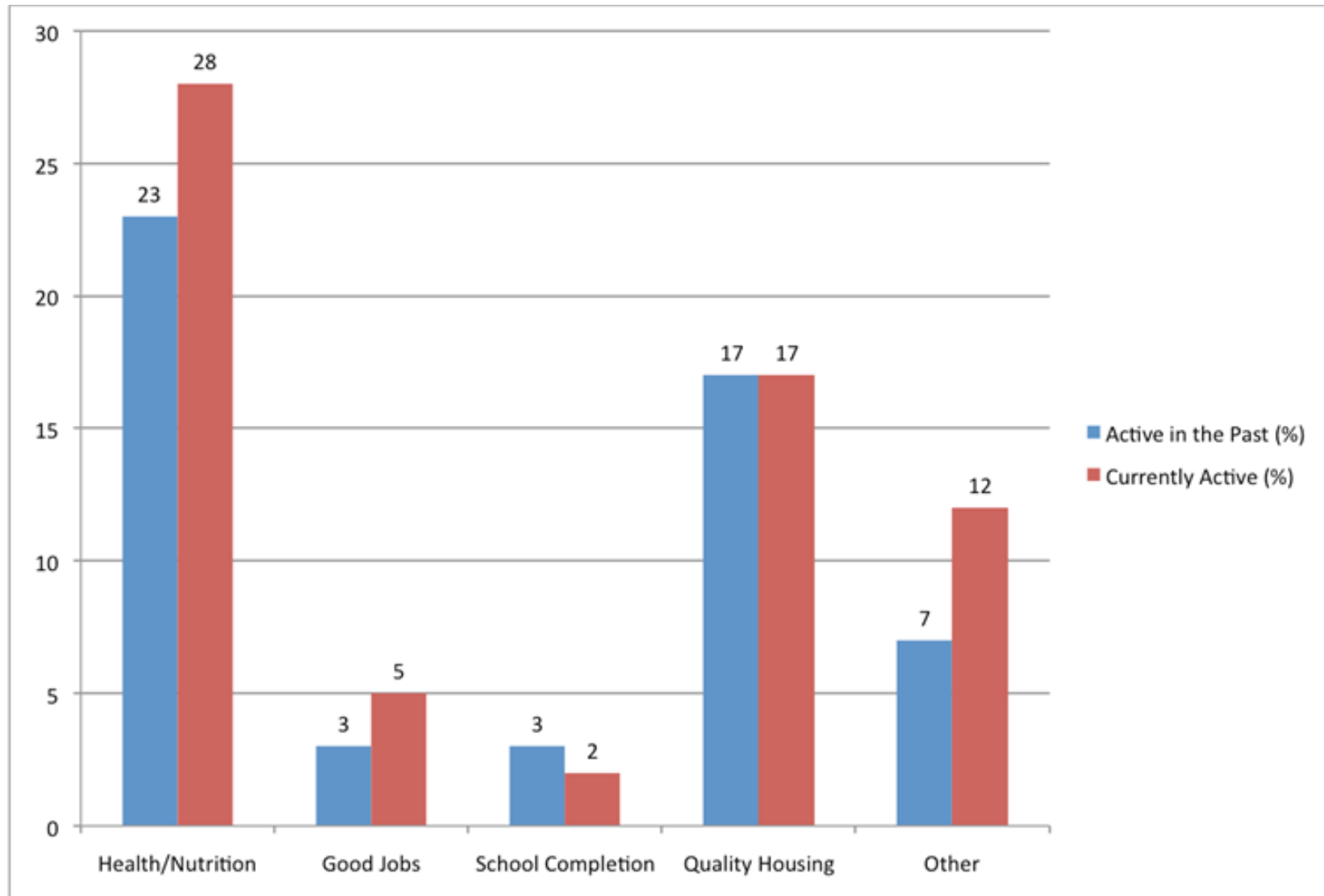
Some Initial Findings: Active participation

Active Participation (Current or Past)

Group	Active Participation (Current or Past)
Other Civic/Community Group	22
Women's Group	2
Sports Club	7
Social Club	15
Voluntary Service Group	27
Religious Organization	5
Neighborhood Watch Group	0
Tenants/Residents Association	8
Parent/School Association	3
Other Issue-based Pressure Group	0
Environmental Group	3
Political Party	2
Trade Union	2

Some initial findings: Point of entry into activism

Activists: How did you first come to be involved in your activism? (%)

Category	Value
Other	15
Another community campaign/ organization	7
Phone call	0
A School	0
Online	0
Television/Radio	0
A Flyer or Poster	0
A Neighbor	3
A Family Member	3
A Friend	17

■ How did you first come to be involved in your activism? (%)
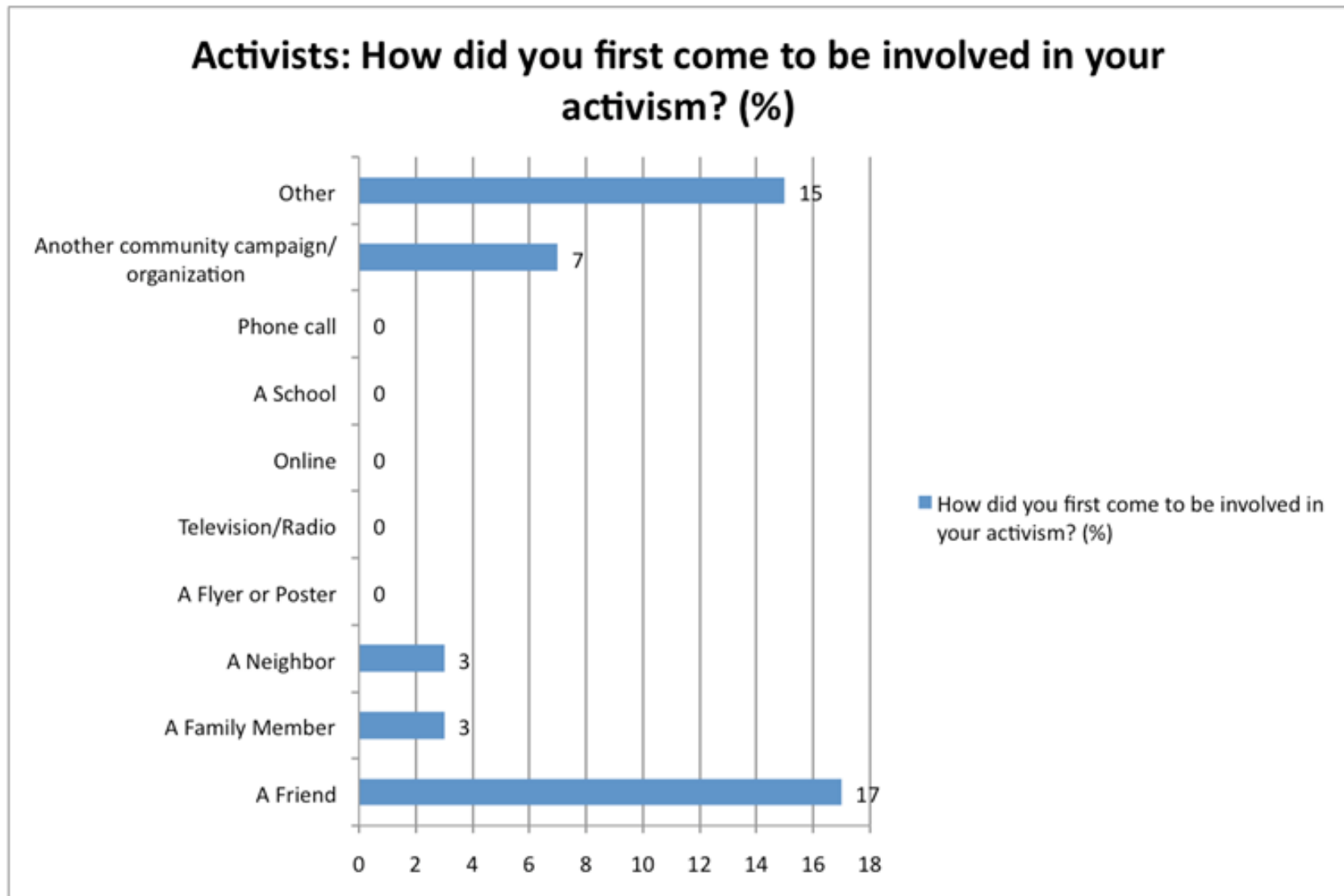
Some Initial Findings : Motivation for participants

Activists: What Motivated you to become involved in your Activism (%)

- Other: 8
- Helps me develop experience, skills and knowledge: 0
- Campaign provides resources and funding: 0
- Campaign's vision give me hope that change is possible: 0
- We can only make change if we organize: 2
- Have skills to lead other residents: 0
- Have knowledge/experience to contribute: 2
- Want to make change in my community: 33
- Personally Affected by the Issue: 2

Legend: ■ What Motivated you to become involved in your Activism (%)

Community-Based Case Studies

- Two Year 1 Case Studies Complete
- One Year 2 Case Study Completed
- Two Year 3 Case Studies In-Process

What are we learning about anti-poverty activist development?

Theme Area (Year)	Case Study	Coordinating Community Organization Co-Leads
Housing (Year 1)	**Case 1**: KGO Community Housing Campaign	Community Social Planning Council of Toronto
Health/Nutrition (Year 1)	**Case 2**: Multi-Neighborhood Health/Nutrition Campaign	Food Share Toronto
Good Jobs (Year 2)	**Case 3**: St. Jamestown Pre-Apprenticeship Initiative	George Brown College
Housing (Year 3)	**Case 4**: Weston Neighbourhood Housing Campaign	Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now (ACORN)
Education & Economy (Year 3)	**Case 7**: Mount Dennis Neighbourhood Youth Campaign	Community Social Planning Council of Toronto
Good Jobs (Year 4)	**Case 5**: Multi-Neighborhood Living Wage Campaign	Toronto and York Region Labour Council
Education & Economy (Year 4)	**Case 6**: Regent Park Neighbourhood 'First Generation' Educational Completion Initiative	Downtown East Community Coalition & George Brown College
Health/Nutrition (Year 5)	**Case 8**: Black Creek Neighbourhood Health/Nutrition Campaign	York University Community Outreach Centre

Conditions of Relative or Absolute Deprivation
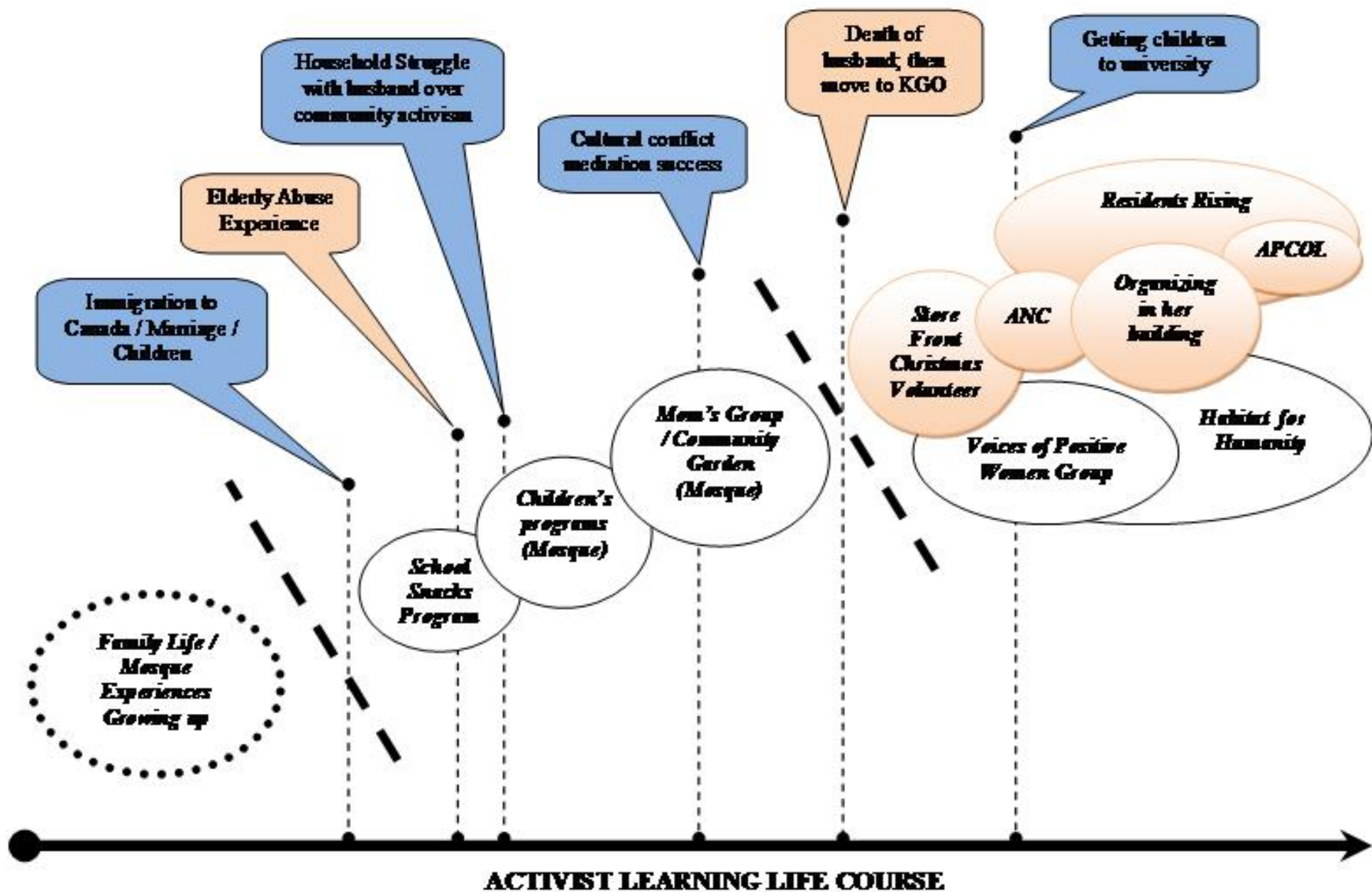
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Grievance Construction Process

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Individual/Collective Action

"Need becomes a motive capable of directing actions only when it finds its object"

(A Cultural Historical Activity Approach)

FACTORS that allow us to constitute this complex situation...

- *GENERAL:*
  - o *Learning Life Course Approach*
- *SPECIFIC:*
  - o *Social Networks (& Networks of Networks)*
  - o *Spaces & Places*
  - o *Grievance Formation & Framing Processes*
  - o *Broader Resources (cultural/material)*
  - o *Everyday or Informal Learning Experiences*
  - o *Popular Education Experiences*
- *DEMOGRAPHICS & RELATED INFORMATION:*
  - o *Age, Race, Class, Gender, Disability/Health, Citizenship Status, Language, Religion, Educational Attainment, Employment, Income*
  - o *Marital & Family Status, Division of Household Responsibilities*
  - o *Locale, Length of time / Plans for Staying or Leaving*

Immigration to Canada / Marriage / Children

Elderly Abuse Experience

Household Struggle with husband over community activism

Cultural conflict mediation success

Death of husband; then move to KGO

Getting children to university

Residents Rising

APCOL

Organizing in her building

Store Front Christmas Volunteers

ANC

Mom's Group / Community Garden (Mosque)

Children's programs (Mosque)

School Snacks Program

Voices of Positive Women Group

Habitat for Humanity

Family Life / Mosque Experiences Growing up

ACTIVIST LEARNING LIFE COURSE

The Anti-Poverty Community Organizing and Learning CURA Project

www.apcol.ca