

AN EMERGING MODEL FOR MEANINGFUL COMMUNITY-UNIVERSITY PARTNERSHIP

EVALUATION OF THE KINGSTON-GALLOWAY/ORTON PARK-
UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO SCARBOROUGH PARTNERSHIP (2011-2014)



UNIVERSITY OF
TORONTO
SCARBOROUGH

EAST SCARBOROUGH
STOREFRONT

An Emerging Model for Meaningful: Community-University Partnership

Evaluation of the KGO-UTSC Partnership (2011-2014)

Executive Summary

The KGO-UTSC Partnership's Steering Committee ("the Steering Committee") has identified, through its program evaluation, that a confluence of events has resulted in a unique and effective partnership, to date, among:

- the East Scarborough Storefront ("The Storefront")--a backbone community organization, founded in 2001;
- other community organizations in the Kingston-Galloway/Orton Park (KGO) neighbourhood of Toronto;
- residents of the area; and
- the University of Toronto Scarborough (UTSC).

At the point when the new KGO-UTSC Partnership ("The Partnership") was established in 2011, The Storefront and other community organizations had been working assiduously for a decade to bring programming, services, and economic-development supports to local residents.

This cross-sectoral partnership between the community and the university began to emerge, informally, in 2004, when the City of Toronto and the United Way Toronto recognized the KGO region as one of the Greater Toronto Area's 13 priority neighbourhoods. The term highlights neighbourhoods with higher-than-city-average rates of poverty and lower-than-city-average provision of social services and programs. Given this reality and a growing commitment from The Storefront and UTSC (with its campus approximately three kilometres from The Storefront) to work together on programming that embedded mutual benefit, mutual contribution of expertise and experiential learning, jointly developed ad-hoc projects were conducted in the KGO community between 2006 and 2009.

Inspired by these successes and growing cross-relationships, in 2011, The Storefront and UTSC embarked on an approach to community/university collaboration that aimed for positive impact, with core objectives in innovation and community transformation. This KGO-UTSC Partnership was formalized in early 2011, when the Galin Foundation and the United Way Toronto agreed to fund a three-year pilot project that would allow for the full exploration of possible collaborative initiatives between KGO and UTSC. The Steering Committee's description of program elements, along with evaluation of pilot results over The Partnership's first two years, follow in more detail. They suggest the viability of The Partnership over a long term, a rarity in community-university partnerships (See Appendix A for more details), as demonstrated in Allahwala, and Bunce, et al, *Journal of Geography*, 2013. Therefore, the Steering Committee has established a W project facilitator role at The Storefront--one cornerstone of The Partnership's success that is not otherwise covered off in the steady-state operations of The Storefront. The new strategic plan also provides for outreach, training, professional development and sports activities, along with new coursework and an expanded research program in the shorter, five-year term--for what is intended to be a sustained initiative well beyond 2019.

As The Partnership and programming continue for the benefit of the KGO community, the Steering Committee is seeking financial support from those who share the KGO community's, The Storefront's and UTSC's value-based approach to community development.

KGO-UTSC Partnership Steering Committee: Evaluation Process and Overview Results

The leadership of this multifaceted partnership rests with The Steering Committee. In just two years, the KGO and UTSC communities have built a strong relationship that has yielded successes, opportunities and possibilities to date. Observing this anecdotally and experientially, the Steering Committee then embarked on a more formal analysis to confirm these impressions and, subsequently, to establish which aspects of The Partnership may have provided the foundation for these successes.

To this end, the Steering Committee engaged in a three-part analysis of The Partnership. In the first part, an independent researcher was retained to assess if/what “ecosystem” has developed out of the people and organizations of KGO and the people and structures of UTSC. The objective of The Partnership’s joining forces is to create positive impacts on the KGO community, by measures of transformation and innovation, as described above. The independent researcher then developed several further queries derived from this research. In part three of the analysis, key faculty and staff of The Partnership tested these queries in a self-evaluation process. In summary, the following findings emerged from this process:

Queries:

- Has the community-university partnership helped the participating stakeholders to acquire new skills and knowledge?
- Has the community-university partnership helped to build community partners’ capacities?
- Has the community-university partnership built social networks that can catalyze further collaborative projects?
- Has the community-university partnership model ensured mutually beneficial learning?
- What are the mechanisms that support students, faculty, staff, residents and community partners to participate in the partnership?
- What funding and administration supported the detailed work of community-university partnership-building?
- How has (or has not) the university culture supported the work that goes into community-university partnership?

The key ingredients that make up the KGO-UTSC Partnership model comprises of:

- Shared values of mutual benefit, collaboration and program co-creation, and experiential learning;
- Staff commitment, “on the ground,” through facilitation/coordination roles at both The Storefront and UTSC, to connecting goals and activities across the two entities;
- A shared governance model (the Steering Committee), jointly developed and consistently enacted;
- The Storefront’s facilitating role as a backbone organization among other local community organizations in KGO; and
- Active monitoring and use of practical mechanisms to identify and explore emerging trends and issues.

The impacts on residents, students, organizations, faculty, and staff involved in The Partnership have included:

- All stakeholders have learned from each other, due to a focus on a reciprocal learning framework;
- Building on existing knowledge and linking the work of The Partnership to community priorities has bolstered community capacity;
- The strong social networks, relationships among people, that have been built are already catalyzing additional, collaborative projects;
- Community-wide and university-wide lenses have been applied to The Partnership, thereby engaging diverse people in KGO (children, adults, seniors, youth, from a wide range of backgrounds and cultures) in learning programs and other initiatives; and
- The Partnership has carefully fused momentum and opportunity to create many diverse projects in which residents and students have had the opportunity to participate.

This three-part evaluation process has led the KGO-UTSC Steering Committee and its participant organizations and residents to a deeper understanding of just what is driving the success of this unique initiative, unique on the basis of its viable existence and impacts to date and its composition of community and university actors. Overall, the key revelation has been this:

It is not what we work on together, but how we work on these things together—sharing expertise and promising practices--that has enabled The Partnership to effect such positive change in such a short period of time.

The Partnership's Activities, Initiatives, and Participants

Initiative	Impact	Total # of Program Hours	# of KGO community members	# of UTSC students/staff/faculty
Learning in Community Service-for UTSC Students as part of the City Studies Program	Increased understanding of community development Reduced divide between students and residents	1312 placement hours (32 hours per student)	18	41 students 1 faculty
Community Development taught by local (The Storefront) practitioners to City Studies students	Increased knowledge of: Marginalized communities Resident organizing Social Change	72 hours of classroom instruction		48 students
Collaborative research course in which students collaborate with residents on a research project identified by community groups as being useful to KGO	Increased understanding of community based research through hands on experience Enhanced relationships between university students and residents	72 hours of classroom instruction	15	39 students
Understanding Your Environment - a free course for KGO residents	Increased knowledge of environmental issues and the application of university research Increased faculty knowledge of teaching in a community setting Reduced barriers between university and community culture	12	13	6 student volunteers 4 faculty
Telling Our Stories - a free course for KGO residents	Increased knowledge and skill in effective story telling/writing Increased faculty knowledge of teaching in a community setting Reduced barriers between university and community culture	12	12	3 faculty

Initiative	Impact	Total # of Program Hours	# of KGO community members	# of UTSC students/staff/faculty
Edible History - a free course for KGO residents	<p>Increased dissemination of university research</p> <p>Increased understanding of food as a as a carrier of culture and international trade</p> <p>Increased faculty knowledge of teaching in a community setting</p> <p>Reduced barriers between university and community culture</p>	10	18	2 faculty
Learn to Play Tennis in the UTSC Tennis Courts	<p>Increased access to sports programming and facilities</p> <p>Decreased barriers to the elite sport of tennis</p> <p>Increased knowledge of healthy lifestyles</p> <p>Increase comfort and familiarity with university facilities, coaches and staff</p> <p>Increased experience for student coaches</p>	76 hours of tennis instruction	185	6 UTSC staff/student coaches
KGO Kicks Soccer Club (a resident led soccer club supported by student coaches)	<p>Increased positive attitude toward physical health and well being</p> <p>Decreased barriers to access sports programming</p> <p>Increased leadership skills</p> <p>Increased experience for student coaches</p> <p>Increased understanding by student coaches of neighbourhood sports organizing</p>	300	20	4 students

The Partnership's Activities, Initiatives, and Participants cont...

Initiative	Impact	Total # of Program Hours	# of KGO community members	# of UTSC students/staff/faculty
Native Child and Family Services and the Basketball Program	<p>Increased capacity of a local organization to offer sports programming</p> <p>Increased access sports to programming</p> <p>Increased trust between university staff/students and local aboriginal community</p> <p>Increased leadership skills</p> <p>Increased experience for student coaches</p>	18	10	1 staff 2 students
Lacrosse Day	<p>Increased capacity of a local organization to offer sports programming</p> <p>Increased access sports to programming</p> <p>Increased trust between university staff/students and local aboriginal community</p> <p>Increased leadership skills</p> <p>Increased experience for student coaches</p>	4	26	1 staff
Let's Talk Science – UTSC Student Science Club	<p>Increased access to hands on science programming</p> <p>Increased community event organizing experience for students</p> <p>Increased science knowledge and experience for school children</p> <p>Introduction of children to university</p>		194 youth	17 students

Initiative	Impact	Total # of Program Hours	# of KGO community members	# of UTSC students/staff/faculty
Water Wise	<p>increase knowledge around local water issues</p> <p>Increased community event organizing experience for students</p>	3	202	25 students
Community Connections Leadership Forum	<p>Reduced barriers between the local community and the university</p> <p>Increased understanding by university faculty of the value of working with and in community</p>	4	24	60
Campus Tours for Youth	<p>Increased awareness of UTSC as a postsecondary option</p> <p>Reduced barriers between residents and the university</p> <p>Potential for increased enrolment from KGO (not yet measured)</p>	4	70	2 staff
Inclusive Local Economic Network	<p>Increased collaboration within the business community</p> <p>Increased potential for UTSC to affect the local economy</p>		3	1 staff
Community Archives	<p>Increased body of knowledge about the KGO community</p>			

Assessment of KGO-UTSC Partnership Pilot

Success Factors and Mechanisms

i) Governance Commitment to Co-Created Process/Programs of Mutual Benefit (Community and University)

Based on research conducted by UTSC Professors Susannah Bunce, Ph.D., urban and environmental geography (York University); and Ahmed Allawalah, Ph.D. political science, with a specialization in Canadian and comparative urban politics (York University)¹ evidence shows that the KGO-UTSC Partnership is different from many community-university partnerships in its overall philosophy. It is framed entirely on mutual benefit, contrasting markedly with typical community-university partnerships, in which the university is either studying or defining its own way of helping the community.

Through both independent research and careful analysis (parts one to three of this evaluation), the Steering Committee has further identified eight key ingredients that make The Partnership unique and make it thrive:

- 1 Mutual dedication (UTSC and East Scarborough Storefront senior staff) of time and energy to the project. The Steering Committee is made up of The Storefront Director; The Storefront Co-ordinator of Community/University initiatives; UTSC's Manager of Community Development and Engagement; UTSC's Dean of Student Life; UTSC's VP Research and UTSC's Chief Administrative Officer, as well as the VP External of the Student Union, among others. These individuals share the values of collaboration and goals/program co-creation, while having the ultimate authority to make decisions and the influence to affect cultures. This has proven critical to the work.
- 2 The commitment to undertake only activities that are beneficial to both the community and the university, including a careful exploration of aspirations and needs at multiple levels within both entities. This exploration has solidified the authenticity of the relationships, as well as providing for continual diffusion of any power imbalances that may arise.
- 3 The attention the Steering Committee pays to developing shared terms of reference and the understanding of the values and philosophies that underpin it. The Steering Committee took three meetings to ensure that the values and working principles laid out in the Terms of Reference reflected the intentions of both the community and the university. The process led to some foundational discussions that, over the past two years, have been cited numerous times as key to understanding the relationship and the dynamics that evolved and now exist between the community and the university. Fundamentally, all partners agree that The Partnership initiative is not a laboratory from which knowledge can be extracted for unilateral benefit, but a working model of interactive systems and people, aimed at benefits to both community and university.

¹ Allawalah, A; Bunce, S. Building and Sustaining Community-University Partnerships in Marginalized Urban Areas. *Journal of Geography*. 2013

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- 4** The value UTSC places on community relevance and experiential education by directly demonstrating these values through actions in the KGO community. UTSC's formal objectives include focusing on the power of place, diversity of perspective, and opening the campus doors to its neighbours. Further, UTSC seeks to identify research-partnership opportunities or work that is based on community needs, and that is relevant and necessary to both surrounding communities and the university's mandate as a research and teaching institution. This institutional commitment and understanding of power dynamics has played a significant role in ensuring an authentic and intentionally balanced relationship with the community.
 - 5** The value and commitment that The East Scarborough Storefront places on its role as a neighbourhood backbone organization, acting as facilitator, connector and catalyst in the KGO neighbourhood. The Storefront is structured differently from most social-service organizations. Its vision, mission and culture all focus on working collectively. As outlined in the book by Cathy Mann "The Little Community that Could," The Storefront's staff proactively broker relationships for the benefit of the neighbourhood—resulting in university connections being made with resident-led groups, city departments and non-profit service providers in the neighbourhood; and the result has been strong and varied initiatives that support resident participants throughout the neighbourhood.
 - 6** The co-creation of mechanisms, among The Storefront and UTSC, such as the safety research project, sports as a means of community and youth engagement and leadership development, and the youth friendly community initiative, among others, to identify and explore emerging trends and issues. The Partnership uses knowledge, both about momentum in the communities as well as opportunities to use The Storefront's emergent project and design model to create together initiatives that are timely and responsive.
 - 7** The role of The Storefront Co-ordinator of Community/University initiatives, whose first commitment is to actively and regularly connect residents and KGO community-organizational goals and aspirations to UTSC faculty, student and staff aspirations. The Coordinator helps KGO community organizations and residents identify objectives that UTSC can help them to meet. She sets up and attends the meetings that aim to foster solid relationships, designs mutually beneficial initiatives, and works with the community and university leads to design initiatives and programs. For most initiatives, the Co-ordinator stays involved, offering project-management support and connecting the new project to other projects in the neighbourhood or on the UTSC campus.
 - 8** The role of the UTSC Manager, Community Development and Engagement, whose first commitment is to connect UTSC faculty, students and staff--the academic enterprise--to the project and the KGO community. The university has invested in this position, which encourages staff and faculty to think in ways that include community partnership across academic disciplines and administrative portfolios, i.e. Athletics & Recreation, Office of Sustainability.
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Success Factors and Mechanisms cont...

ii) Reciprocal Learning

Skill and knowledge transfer has happened as a result of this project on four levels over the past two years:

- 1 Community organizations have gained knowledge and capacity to provide residents with opportunities. For example, East Scarborough Boys and Girls Club (ESBGC) is leading a community-wide initiative with a long-term goal of getting East Scarborough designated a Youth Friendly Community, through Play Works Partnerships. Through The KGO-UTSC Partnership, UTSC student research has itemized the spaces youth use and their barriers to accessing community centres, etc., in East Scarborough. This is knowledge that the youth-led steering committee, alongside the ESBGC and other community agencies, will use to advocate for increased access to public spaces for youth.
- 2 Residents have gained knowledge (courses) and skills (sports, participatory research etc). Examples of this can be found in any one of the myriad activities listed above, in which residents have articulated just how much they have learned; for instance, residents and students worked on a project in which they gathered safety data together. Residents learned data-collection methodology and learned how other residents view safety in KGO. They also gained tools to advocate for a safer community. UTSC student researchers, working with local residents, gained evidence-based knowledge about safety concerns and goals in the KGO community.
- 3 University faculty and staff have gained knowledge and skills. For example, those in the UTSC athletics department report “We have learned... that opportunity trumps popular sport in most cases for participation. We have also learned to understand community needs and barriers to participation. Providing experience and solutions to registration (to those without computers, cell phones, internet) travel to and from site and communication with each stakeholder...” Through faculty and students who have conducted community-based research, UTSC faculty, students and staff have learned new teaching/research skills, with a focus on popular education. The initiatives that students are involved in help them to realize how critical it is to be civically active within their communities; in essence this partnership has assisted in cultivating youth leaders. For students, new courses, taught by community practitioners, as well as faculty, have also created a rich experience. These courses also assist in debunking any stigmas/assumptions associated with KGO and its residents.
- 4 Steering committee members have learned from each other. For example, this was The Storefront’s first experience working in such close partnership with a large institution. The Storefront has learned a lot about the complexity of working in and with an institution such as a university, particularly around research projects and the organizational culture. This awareness has also allowed The Storefront staff to better understand the experience of students.

iii) Building Capacity

Building capacities in this context refers to the longer-term ability to meet community needs. Over the past two years, KGO community needs have increased (due to increases in unemployment and decrease in overall household income, violence in the community, as well as other systemic factors). At the same time, funding for neighbourhood-based initiatives has decreased. The partnership with UTSC has increased the capacity of community organizations to provide residents with programs, events, services and opportunities that otherwise would not exist.

The most obvious examples of this come from the work The Partnership has done in athletics. The Storefront has been able to leverage the relationship with UTSC to attract funders to provide bussing for children and youth to the state-of-the-art sports fields at UTSC. East Scarborough Boys and Girls Club has been able to register children and youth to participate in sports programming at UTSC facilities. UTSC students have gained valuable coaching experience. To date, more than 175 children and youth have benefited from tennis lessons at UTSC. East Scarborough Boys and Girls Club capacity was further developed as UTSC student coaches and teachers helped to embed tennis programs into the ESBGC program options in the club's gym during the winter.

iv) Establishing Trusted Social Networks

The extent of the KGO-UTSC network is growing rapidly as people are seeing the benefit of collaboration to meet their own goals. From year to year, the number of faculty involved in The Partnership has doubled. From these connections more collaborative projects have emerged. For example, a trend is emerging whereby students who have participated in one of the UTSC City Studies or other course-based programs supported by the community/university partnership are coming back to the community, either as students in another capacity or after graduation. These students are looking to do internships, volunteer work or paid work to support the KGO community.

A key component of this success over the past two years is the trust built between the community and the university. The relationship has grown and strengthened. Traditional paternalistic ideas of university-community partnerships are being broken down due to smart and honest relationship building, thereby encouraging different forms of collaboration i.e., UTSC community courses, athletics, community-led courses etc.

By having two key players of The Partnership--The Storefront Co-ordinator of Community/University Initiatives and the UTSC Manager, Community Development and Engagement rooted in the community and dedicated to brokering relationships, the university has been able to tap into the community's extensive networks, and the community has been able to leverage the university's partners. This cross-connection has allowed the community and the university to extend their reach to groups to which they may traditionally not have had access.

Success Factors and Mechanisms cont...

v) Commitment to Funding and Administrative Systems

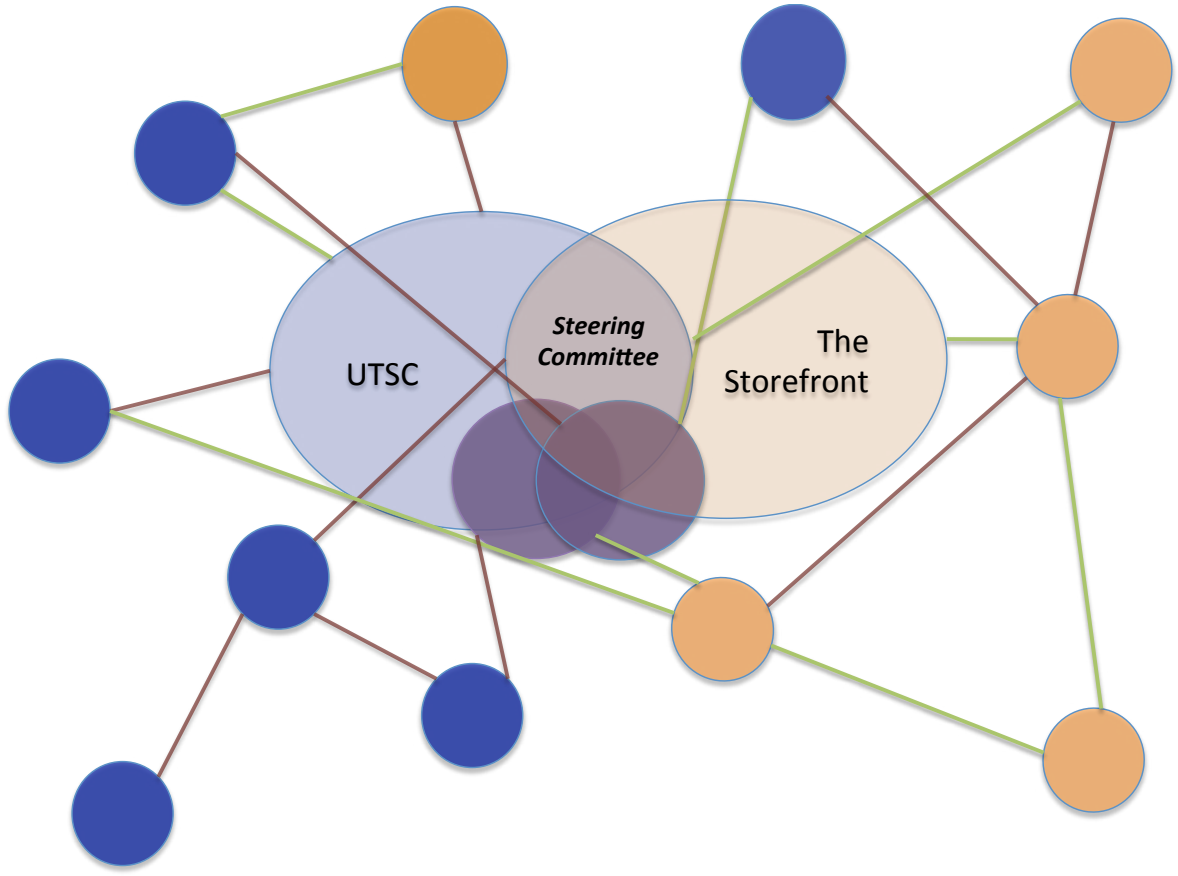
Having funding at the community level for a full-time Storefront Co-ordinator to focus on brokering and managing relationships has been critical to this initiative. Consequently, the Galin Foundation's initial investment, through the United Way Toronto, of \$50,000 per year over three years, has covered most of the Coordinator's salary, allowing us to seed all the initiatives articulated above. As the project evolves into 2014 and beyond, and as The Storefront and UTSC effect change in the KGO neighbourhood, both at the grassroots and systemic levels, The Partnership will need increased levels of funding to achieve expanded goals in innovation and transformation.

As noted earlier, the university's investment in a Manager, Community Development and Engagement has been equally critical to the success of The Partnership. The manager is in a position to move organizational systems and influence culture at the UTSC level that is critical to effect real change in the long term. This shifting of UTSC culture is resulting from internal university strategic planning, consultation and agreement, led by UTSC's Principal to increasingly embrace and act on: goals of experiential learning and community-based research necessary to both the surrounding communities and the university; diversity of perspective; opening campus doors to neighbours; and learning and studying in the context of the importance of place. Ongoing momentum in this, the university's community engagement strategy, has the potential to effect real change, in terms of increased engagement and opportunities, in KGO. The shifting of UTSC away from an ivory-tower approach to a more collaborative one is threaded throughout UTSC's Campus, Academic and Master plans.

UTSC also invests the time and expertise of executive leadership, consistently involved and at the Steering Committee table: VP, Research; Dean, Student Life; VP, Student Union; and CAO. Through the VP Research portfolio, faculty members are encouraged and supported to engage in community building and community-based research. UTSC faculty are increasingly willing to be involved in co-curricular courses or extra-curricular programs that engage directly with the community. As a result, there is greater understanding of and appreciation for the types of collaboration, knowledge and results that can be achieved through community-university partnership.

The support from the senior executive team is critical to the cultural shift at the university. Each UTSC portfolio involved in The Partnership (Research, Student Life, Student Union and Administration) has built or continues to build on community partnership within their respective areas.

KGO-UTSC Partnership Model



Circles

- University staff / faculty / student
- Community groups / organizations / leaders
- University of Toronto Scarborough
- The Storefront
- Symbiotic relationship between the Manager, Community Development & Engagement and Community / University Coordinator (community based)
- Steering Committee: made up of leaders and senior staff from community and senior staff / faculty / student leaders at the University of Toronto Scarborough

Lines

- Facilitated connections between community groups / organizations and university faculty / students/administration
- Connections that members of the steering committee have with community / university leaders

Conclusion

Barriers between communities and universities can often be profound. Universities themselves are very complex structures that tend to be inaccessible to community partners and residents. With the re-visioning of UTSC to include its role within its community context, UTSC has been actively trying to break down barriers and open its door in meaningful ways to its community partners. The genesis of the formalized partnership with The Storefront was the open and collaborative ethos of The Storefront, the awakening interest of administrators at UTSC, and especially the dedication of a particular faculty member at UTSC.

The Partnership and its Steering Committee are now clearly seeing that in order to sustain and advance the initiatives beyond year three, The Storefront community-based project co-ordinator will continue to be needed to manage the logistics (along with the role's counterpart at UTSC) for:

- three-plus City Studies courses in and with the community;
- a new curricular stream to add to the City Studies focus currently running under The Partnership in KGO;
- sports activities for more than 175 children and youth;
- the addition of an annual symposium, with a focus on community development and partnership, as well as outreach to faculty and community members for the purposes of encouraging collaboration;
- the promotion of programming development, science and environmental topics, in the public-school system (elementary and secondary); and
- development of particular opportunities for engagement, learning and access to resources for Aboriginal people in our community.

In addition, sufficient funds from external donors will effectively free up more Storefront senior staff time to work with senior UTSC staff on strategies to implement the plans generated out of the Steering Committee's business- planning process, now nearing conclusion.

These strategies include identifying means by which UTSC can have an economic impact on the KGO neighbourhood; developing ways to teach our KGO-UTSC Partnership's understanding of community/ institution partnerships; and expanding community-based research among KGO, The Storefront, other community organizations, and UTSC.

The first two years of the KGO-UTSC Partnership have certainly laid sufficient foundation to merit moving the project forward. If The Partnership is able to build on this foundation for another five years, as the immediate goal, the social networks that we nurture along the way will take root and act as catalysts in their own right for further and deeper work between UTSC and KGO. It is in particular the social networks, the building of trust and the establishment of common goals to be leveraged in the future-well beyond 2019-that The Partnership believes will improve, not only the social wellbeing of the KGO neighbourhood, but also its economic wellbeing.

A - Research Synthesis of the Challenges, and Opportunities Often Inherent in Building Community/University collaborations

B - Research paper on the KGO-UTSC Partnership by Heather McLean, Ph.D. – Executive Summary

APPENDIX A

Research Synthesis of the Challenges, and Opportunities often inherent in Building community/university collaborations:

Building and Sustaining Community –University Partnerships in Marginalized Urban Areas by Professors Susannah Bunce, Ph.D. and Ahmed Allawallah, Ph.D

INTRODUCTION

Ahmed Allahwala and Susannah Bunce, University of Toronto Scarborough

Critical urban geography has long been concerned with questions of poverty and social inequality and how these intrinsically geographic phenomena are produced and reproduced through social, political, and cultural practices in and across urban places. In their commitment to socially transformative research and action, critical geographers often work with marginalized communities, and as geography educators aim to transgress the boundary between research and teaching, university and community, as well as theory and practice (Castree 1999; Lees 1999; Heyman 2000, 2001, 2004; Hay 2001). Building partnerships between academic programs and community partners located in marginalized urban communities can be an effective strategy for creating ongoing opportunities for public scholarship, that is, scholarship that meets the civic, social, economic, and educational needs of the community (Cohen and Yapa 2003), and for teaching social justice (Merrett 2000).

In recent years, many universities have increased their support for partnership development and community-relevant forms of scholarship as a strategy to enhance their presence in and commitment to neighboring communities (Brisbin and Hunter 2003; Barker 2004; Muirhead and Woolcock 2008; Weerts and Sandmann 2008). In addition, growing administrative pressures to demonstrate tangible and quantifiable learning outcomes have led to the development of frameworks for enhancing experiential learning within program curricula as ways to foster and demonstrate student learning. Finally, the interest in partnership development has particular resonance in North American cities, where higher education institutions are some of the largest urban landowners and thus have economic objectives for securing town-gown relationships with neighboring communities (Sungu-Eryilmaz 2009).

APPENDIX A cont...

Yet, the increased interest of academic institutions and programs for this kind of collaboration has been—and rightly so—greeted with a dose of skepticism on the part of the communities involved. Universities have all too often been perceived as spatially and culturally disconnected and politically disengaged from the needs and concerns of the communities that surround them, unable, and sometimes quite unwilling, to develop meaningful and reciprocal relationships (Hart, with Maddison, and Wolff 2007; Peterson et al. 2006; Strand et al. 2003). In the context of socioeconomically marginalized communities in cities, where issues of systemic poverty and racialization, immigrant settlement, and housing need—among others—are experienced and visible, difficult associations between universities and communities can be particularly damaging. For instance, in relation to the increase in experiential learning outside of the university classroom, critical scholars have pointed to the limitations of traditional service-learning education, particularly when service is conceived of as passive volunteerism rather than a form of social activism designed to engage students in and educate them about societal problems and destabilize deeply held assumptions about poverty and the nature of social inequality (Bickford and Reynolds 2002; Jones 2002; Holdsworth and Quinn 2011).

Differences in institutional and community-based knowledge production and the movement of academic research and experiential education programming into low income neighborhoods raise important questions about privilege, authority, and decisions regarding the benefits of university-community partnerships. If not grounded in critical reflections about power, knowledge, and equity, student engagement in urban marginalized communities may in fact serve to reproduce the very power relations that critical urban geographers hope to challenge. The task for critical geography educators teaching in, with, and about marginalized communities in cities is to create learning environments that facilitate place-based encounters as contexts for critical reflection on the structural causes of marginalization and its perpetuation through socioeconomic practices and discourses. Building reciprocal community-university partnerships is not a simple task. Establishing trust among all partners and maintaining reciprocity in defining objectives is critical to sustaining community-university partnerships. The contributions in this symposium are the outcome of a panel discussion held at the 2011 Annual Meeting of the Association of American Geographers (AAG) in Seattle, Washington, USA. As educators in university settings, who are each involved in student programming in marginalized communities, the individual contributors highlight a number of real-world examples that illustrate different structures for and aspects of community university partnerships. Situated in lower income neighborhoods in New York City, Toronto, and Columbus, Ohio, the contributions address the diversity of issues of community-university partnership development in lower-income urban neighborhoods and explore ways by which to dismantle and transcend problematic relationships. The central theme that runs through all contributions is the question of reciprocity as the foundation of equitable and meaningful community-university collaboration. Reciprocity is defined here as the “ongoing process of exchange with the aim to establish and maintain equality between partners” (Maiter et al. 2008).

Research has demonstrated the positive outcomes of service-learning such as personal development and critical thinking, as well as enhanced civic awareness and responsibility (Weigert 1998; Eyer and Giles 1999; Rocheleau 2004; Stoecker and Tryon 2009). Our panel discussion was based on the notion that experiential learning outcomes in marginalized urban neighborhoods could only be fully realized if they are first allied with critical discussions about equality and reciprocity in the university-community collaboration. The focus of the following symposium is therefore on how reciprocity is achieved at the inter-organizational partnership level instead of on the learning outcomes at the student level. This was a deliberate choice, as we believe the way the partnerships are structured has an important impact on the way learning in them takes place. Ultimately, the question of reciprocity in community university partnerships is a question about who benefits from the partnership, which can encourage and propel discussions about power and knowledge and how to nurture and sustain equitable partnership development. All five essays highlight how successful partnerships require both institutional and community-based support and careful maintenance, and the commitment of community partners, students, faculty, and university administrators alike.

APPENDIX B

Research paper on the KGO-UTSC Partnership by Heather McLean, Ph.D. – Executive Summary

In 2011 UTSC and East Scarborough Storefront embarked on a groundbreaking approach to community/university initiatives. This approach led to a variety of community based projects and programs. The purpose of this report was to evaluate the effectiveness of the community-university partnership between the Kingston-Galloway/Orton Park (KGO) community and the University of Toronto Scarborough (UTSC). The KGO-UTSC Partnership (The Partnership) is intended to foster mutually beneficial collaboration with the overall goals of:

- 1 | Sharing insights gleaned through academic and community work
- 2 | Using knowledge, opportunities and facilities available through UTSC to build the capacities of the KGO community
- 3 | Using The Storefront's networks and collaborations to provide opportunities for meaningful engagement in the KGO community by UTSC students and staff.

The evaluation model used for this report borrows from the Developmental Evaluation Approach (Preskill and Beer 2012), as a way to assess new and emerging programs made up of multiple partners. Research for this evaluation included collection of evaluation surveys from six (6) key stakeholder groups participating in the community-university partnership – children/youth residents, adult residents, community partners, students, faculty, and administrators, as well as interviews and focus groups.

APPENDIX B cont...

The report presents seven key findings:

- 1 The KGO-UTSC partnership helped all the participating stakeholders to acquire new skills and knowledge.
- 2 The KGO-UTSC partnership helped build community partners' capacities.
- 3 KGO-UTSC partnership built social networks that can catalyze further collaborative projects.
- 4 In many ways, the KGO-UTSC partnership model ensures mutually beneficial learning.
- 5 Better mechanisms to support student and community partners need to be put in place and practiced.
- 6 The detailed work of community-university partnership-building requires better funding and administrative support.
- 7 Main stream university culture does not support the work that goes into community-university partnerships.

The research indicates that The Partnership does generate mutually beneficial initiatives for KGO residents and community partners, as well as UTSC faculty and students. A series of recommendations outline ways to improve the experience of participants in the future.

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