

## About the Project

**Engaging Girls, Changing Communities: Examining Girls' Processes of Civic Engagement and Leadership (EGCC).** EGCC investigates how young women and girls engage in leadership and civic activities in new urban environments.

Armed with questions crafted to unearth a unique perspective on the lives of girls in the X generation, our interviewers have been addressing issues that specifically identify enhancers and barriers to community participation girls face in their everyday lives.

EGCC strives to respond to concerns that girls' potential for civic engagement and leadership positions will remain untapped if new ways of nurturing girls' leadership are not pursued. EGCC promotes the development of girls and future leaders and invites girls to re-define leadership in their own terms. Read more about EGCC at the Jean Augustine website:

»<http://edu.apps01.yorku.ca/jeanaugustinechairs/projects-research/egcc>

"EGCC invites girls to re-define leadership in their own terms."

Dr. Nombuso Dlamini  
Associate Professor and Jean Augustine Chair  
Faculty of Education, York University

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## Summer 2013 Activities

### Youth-Led Initiatives Project Symposium

On July 6, 2013, EGCC held a symposium to celebrate the youth-led initiatives project (YIP). Held at Metro Hall, 55 John Street, Toronto, the youth presented on their projects, to a full house. Their parents and friends, the Honourable Jean Augustine as well as members of the York University community, were invited to attend. Toronto-based music group Revived performed at the Symposium.

Girls between the ages of 16 to 24 were invited to re-define leadership in their own terms by providing them the space and resources to create and execute their own youth-led initiative or community project.



Dr. Dlamini (far left) with some of the youth, their family members, and two of the project's research assistants, Lashauna Gordon (third from left) and Flavia Genovese (sixth from left)

Dr. Nombuso Dlamini  
Associate Professor and Jean Augustine Chair  
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The Honourable Jean Augustine talking about the importance of supporting women's involvement in leadership and community life.

### Camp Wallflower

Project Leader: Vanessa Evangelista

*Project Summary:* *Camp Wallflower* entailed a two-day camp at a community centre in Toronto for young girls age 11 to 13. Different guest speakers presented on different topics, aimed at helping girls discover their interests and what they would like to pursue in the future. The objective of this project was to empower young girls, help them gain confidence and motivate them to take on leadership roles.

### The Mural Project

Project Leaders: Maheen Fatima, Khadeejah Muzammil

*Project Summary:* This project took place in the Thorncliffe Park community. The main objective was to educate residents about recycling, waste management and about the importance of beautifying the community. This beautification was achieved by painting a mural on the entrance of a garage wall of one of the high-rise buildings in the community.

### **Ink Veins**

Project Leader: Rashmi Logasriskandaraj,

*Project Summary: Pandora's Writ* consisted of a group of young female writers who came together twice a month to celebrate the fine art of writing while creating a forum where women are able to develop their ideas around certain issues and delve into their deeper thoughts.

### **Empower Young Mothers**

Project Leader: Toyosi Molinari

*Project Summary: Empower Young Mother's* main purpose was to support young mothers and provide pragmatic solutions to address some of the many barriers they face, while ultimately motivating them to pursue higher education. Various seminars were held with community leaders, local mothers and health educators who have expertise in addressing teen pregnancy.

### **Black Women in Motion**

Project Leader: Monica Samuel

*Project Summary: Black Women in Motion (BWIM)* sought to increase civic engagement and inspire positive change by giving young women the tools and support to achieve their personal and professional goals. The program strived to positively shape the lives of young women by providing programming and mentoring, to help develop character, leadership and self-confidence.

### **Together We Are Able**

Project Leader: Sojourner San Vincente

*Project Summary: Together We Are Able* sought to find meaningful ways of engaging students with special needs with the larger student population. It aimed to join the abilities of both groups, to work on a collaborative initiative that comes out of a shared experience, and to change the current thinking of how persons with special needs are seen.

### **Leadership Training for Girls**

Project Leader: Chantel Espinola

*Project Summary:* Consisted of a 6-week long training, the project provided girls between 16 to 24 years of age with the opportunity to explore issues and concepts relevant to their community participation and volunteerism. Training focused in the use of workshop and explorative learning. Participants strengthened and developed their understanding around various issues.

## What's Coming Up? Fall 2013 Activities

### Post-Project Activities

We will be publishing a booklet on the EGCC YIP, which will be available for purchase in early October 2013. To order please e-mail [jaugustinechair@edu.yorku.ca](mailto:jaugustinechair@edu.yorku.ca).

### Data Analysis

We are currently conducting data analysis on the stage 1 project data, and drafting a number of papers for publication.

### Windsor Project Symposium

A Symposium for the Windsor youth projects is scheduled for early October 2013. The youth involved in the Windsor-based projects, will be invited to present their work to family, friends and community members.

### Engaging Young Muslim Women of Windsor

Project Leader: Sarah Mushtaq

*Project Summary:* This project provides young Muslim women the opportunity to volunteer with different women who are high profile community organizers in Windsor. The project aimed to expose young women to leaders, and encourage them to get involved within the Muslim community as well as within the Windsor community at large.

### Together We Flourish

Project Leaders: Lina Chaker, Somayeh Rasouli, Mahdie Najafi, Pavarthi Ravisanakar, Seher Ali

*Project Summary:* The project objective was to unite communities through social activities, while instilling a strong mosaic of Canadian culture. A community garden was started in Windsor. Students from local schools have taken field trips to tend the garden, and any interested community member can start and tend to a plot.

## A Word from our Partners



Skills for Change is a Toronto-based non-profit agency servicing newcomers, committed to improving the lives of immigrant women in Ontario. Our next exciting step towards making change happen for newcomer women is the launch of 2013/2014 Leaders in Residence. Congratulations to Teodosia Dindin Villarino, Fozia Tanveer, Daniella Davila Aquije and Dr. Sunitha Kshatriya who along with Skills for Change are committed to improving the lives of immigrant women in Ontario.

Our Leaders in Residence, through their socially innovated spirits have created impactful, unique programs designed to provide solutions for overcoming the 8 barriers to leadership impeding immigrant women. Leaders in Residence will work with Skills for Change over the coming year, acting as ambassadors for immigrant women in the community while launching their projects, offering services to immigrant women.

### *Meet SfC's Leaders in Residence*

1. **Fozia Tanveer** has a Master's degree in Development Studies from the University of London and a post-graduate diploma from the University of Toronto in Social Services Administration.

Fozia will be leading the *Immigrant Women's Information (I-WIN)* project. Through a monthly television series South East Asian immigrant women will receive key information they require to succeed in Canada. The series will be broadcast in their own languages ensuring the first barrier impeding immigrant women, language and communication is circumvented.

2. **Dindin Villarino** She currently works as Immigration Portal Coordinator of Northumberland County. Dindin is a published poet and fictionist in Cebuano-Visayan, a regional language in the Philippines. Dindin is finishing her PhD in Anthropology at the University of Toronto.

Dindin will be leading the *Newcomers Welcome Circle* in Northumberland County. Newly arrived immigrant women will be mentor-matched with settled newcomers in the community, providing valuable advice and support. Aside from providing social and settlement support to newcomers, the group also aims to raise the level of community awareness on the value of diversity and immigration by speaking at government agencies, schools and community organizations.

3. **Daniella Dávila Aquije** is a Master of Public Policy student at the School of Public Policy and Governance, University of Toronto.

Daniella will be leading the *Fellowship on Emerging Immigrant Women Leaders* project. Through this program, young immigrant women will be provided with several leadership and networking opportunities, while creating forums of discussion that will encourage participants to take active roles in triggering positive change in their communities.

4. **Dr. Sunitha Kshatriya** is self-motivated, research-oriented, and results-driven educator with a PhD in HR and MBA.

Sunitha will be leading the *Empowerment* project, which will provide support for 3-5 unemployed or underemployed immigrant women (35 to 55 years) who are at risk of violence.





The Thorncliffe Neighbourhood Office organizes a number of events every year, some of which are geared specifically toward girls and youth.

**Something for the Girlz (SFTG)** is a program for 9-11 & 11-14 year-old girls from Thorncliffe Park and Flemingdon Park that aims to foster the personal development of girls in these communities. SFTG includes four recurring themes: Health and Physical Activity, Media Literacy, Women in Science and Technology, and Community action. The program provides a safe space and supports girls in building self-esteem, critical thinking and leadership skills.

**Voices** - The TNO Youth Centre will be teaming up with the TNO Youth HOST Program to bring Thorncliffe a new and exciting young women's program for ages 15–24 called Voices. We have four main recurring themes: hot topics, trips, recreation and creative writing/blogging. The goal of this program is to engage some of our mature female youth and provide a safe female only environment for them to have their voices heard while learning about community engagement.

**Martial Arts for Girls** - The Thorncliffe Neighbourhood Office Youth Centre is offering free Martial Arts Classes for Girls. IMPACT Martial Arts will be presenting this program for girls, ages 15-24 years old.

**Girls' Soccer** - Registration for the 10 week soccer program, for girls aged 9-14 years, has started.

## Funding

SSHRC (Funder)

»[www.sshrc-crsh.gc.ca](http://www.sshrc-crsh.gc.ca)

Jean Augustine Chair (Funder)

»<http://edu.apps01.yorku.ca/jeanaugustinechair/>

Multicultural Council of Windsor and Essex County (Partner)

»<http://www.themcc.com/>

## Community Partners

Skills for Change

»<http://www.skillsforchange.org/>

Thorncliffe Neighbourhood Office

»<http://www.thorncliffe.org/>

Working Women Community Centre

»<http://www.workingwomencc.org/>