



Community Summary Report #20

Location: St. James Town in Toronto, Ontario

Partner Name: St. James Town Community Co-op



Green Resilience Project Community Summary Report

Community Partner name: ST. Jamestown Community C-op, Toronto
Conversation date: March 19th and 23rd 2022

1. Introduction

A. Summary

Over decades, the St. James Town community has firsthand experienced the effects of Climate Change. The experience of the effects of climate change, food insecurity, income insecurity, and job insecurity among its approximately 20,000 residents has become acute even more in the last few years. This lowers the threshold of resilience among its residents considerably.

The Green Resilience Project (GRP) conversations served as one more evidence of the urgency of building a St. James Town community that is climate resilient, income secure, food secure, and job secure. The projects of St. James Town Community Coop (SJT Co-op), particularly, OASIS are one such initiative in that direction.

While the community does not have a voice, being poor, marginalized and under-recognized, there is a deep aspiration among the community members to be perceived, heard and recognized at the same proportion as other more secure and resilient communities. This is because the community has a diverse population of highly qualified, highly skilled and highly qualified workforce with global experience.

The GRP conversations demonstrate the primary support that the SJT Co-op receives from the community in which it operates and engages its climate resilience and food security initiatives and projects. Feeling invigorated, one conversation member says in the evaluation, "such conversations must take place more often".

The next step that the Co-op has planned is a meeting with its MP to further advocate for Climate resilience, food security, income security and job security for St. James Town.

B. About the Green Resilience Project

This community conversation was part of the Green Resilience Project, a Canada-wide series of conversations exploring and documenting the links between community resilience, income security and the shift to a low-carbon economy. Working with a designated partner organization from each community, the Green Resilience Project aims to create spaces in which a wide range of participants can talk through the links between climate change and income security, and identify possible next steps to build or maintain community resilience in the face of these challenges.

This Community Summary Report reflects what we heard and learned in our community's conversation. Each Project partner organization across Canada will be producing a similar report. In March 2022, the Green Resilience Project will produce a final report summarizing findings across conversations, which will be available to the public and shared with Environment and Climate Change Canada.

Funding for the Green Resilience Project is generously provided by Environment and Climate Change Canada's Climate Action and Awareness Fund. The Project is managed and delivered by Energy Mix Productions, Basic Income Canada Network, Coalition Canada Basic Income - Revenu de base, Basic Income Canada Youth Network, national experts and local partners.

C. About the Community Partner organization

The resident-owned and operated St. James Town Community Co-operative (SJT Co-op) is committed to engaging Toronto's underrepresented voices including those of new Canadians, minority groups, youth, seniors, and women within the St. James Town neighbourhood. We use a Human Rights framework to work cooperatively across our differences.

St. James Town is one of the most culturally diverse urban pockets in the world, with an estimated 140 languages spoken in the 20,000+ person neighbourhood. Home to majority newcomers, this densely populated high-rise, low-income neighbourhood has, unfortunately, remained overlooked and underserved for several decades. The St. James Town Community Co-operative was created by residents to address the growing need for food security, capacity building, and emergency preparation.

With the support of our partners, the SJT Co-op cultivates capacity and employment opportunities for resident members through three key projects: The OASIS Food Hub, Resident Capacity Building, and Climate & Emergency Resilience.

D. Why this community was selected to have a conversation

St. James Town is a neighborhood in downtown Toronto (Ontario, Canada) that is one of the most diverse communities in the world. It contains 19 high-rise buildings on 32.1 acres between Bloor and Parliament Streets and Sherbourne and Wellesley Avenues, with at least four more high-rises currently being proposed for construction. It is surrounded by Rosedale Valley to the North, Cabbage Town to the East and South, and the neighborhoods of Upper Jarvis and Church & Wellesley to the West and South.

Photo 1: St. James Town Neighbourhood Boundaries - St. James Town is a unique neighborhood



I. ASSETS

St. James Town has a wealth of potential, both in the characteristics of its build and social environment.

- **Unused Below-Grade Space:** St. James Town has extensive unused basement and sub-basement space, and underused underground garages. Unused space includes a closed underground YMCA with a gymnasium, change rooms, squash courts, and offices. There are also at least 4 unused underground pools in the neighborhood, prime for aquaponics retrofitting. Retrofitting these spaces for public use regularly comes up in public consultations as these spaces provide ideal opportunities for building retrofits and could house aquaponics growing, mushroom farms, compost systems, food, and water storage, and more.

An assessment of the underground garage was undertaken by Toronto Community Housing Corporation in 2019. Repair of underground garage space on TCHC property started in 2018 in a phased manner.

- **High Walkability:** Being downtown, St. James Town has a high walkability score with access to schools, churches, public transit, the Sherbourne Health Centre,

community organizations, and commercial stores. It also borders two high-income neighbourhoods – Cabbagetown and Rosedale, who could be high-end clients of the Food Hub.

- **Highly Educated and Skilled Newcomer Population:** St. James Town is a landing strip for newcomers from around the world; many of whom arrive with high levels of post-secondary education and relevant skills. During the feasibility study, we found residents supportive and eager to engage in OASIS with master's degrees or higher in agronomy, composting, mechanical engineering, architecture, business, public relations, post-secondary researchers, and human resources. We also connected with life-long farmers, foragers, and chefs. St. James Town is filled with experts ready to run OASIS.
- **Cultural and Age Diversity:** Over 65% of St. James Town's residents are recent immigrants from over 100 countries (City of Toronto, 2018), including the Philippines, Sri Lanka, China, Pakistan, Korea, Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Ethiopia, Somalia, Eastern European nation-states (Barnes, 2011), Syria and Venezuela. 66% of residents are of working age (between the ages of 25-64 years old), 12% are children (0-14 years old), 12 % are youth (15-24 years old), and 9 % are seniors (65 years old and over) (City of Toronto, 2018).

Cultural diversity is an asset for an OASIS Food Hub. It means we get to work with knowledge and examples – and recipes! – from around the world. Diversity is also a key feature of resilience, especially for community and climate change resilience. As Canada becomes home to more climate refugees and climatic changes, OASIS in St. James Town could provide a key site for learning and training in cross-cultural exchange and co-operation for self-sustaining community-planet benefits. The world is in need of positive examples of climate resilience that facilitates cooperation among diverse people – St. James Town could be that example; and could translate its best practices into over 140 languages.

II. NEEDS

- **Underserved and Unrecognised:** St. James Town has been obscured in census data, which takes a wider geographic tract than the small boundaries of the neighbourhood including a “stretch of affluent housing on Jarvis Street”; and, as a result, has never been listed as a Neighbourhood Improvement Area. The Service Providers' Network is currently petitioning for a change in designation, which would bring an “increase [in] funding and support services for the neighbourhood that is 'highly overlooked and highly neglected'”, said Robb Johannes, co-chair of the St. James Town Service Providers' Network (Elsayed, CBC, 2019). The OASIS Food Hub could significantly increase the amount of attention, funding, and community capacity for a better served neighbourhood.
- **Low-Income and Underemployed:** The percentage of the population categorised as low-income in St. James Town is 36%, compared to the City of Toronto average of 20%. The median household income is just over \$35,000 per family, compared to

the average income of \$112,000 Cabbagetown bordering St. James Town (City of Toronto, 2018; Canadian Urban Institute, 2016). These numbers are also skewed by inaccurate population figures and geographic boundaries.

Highly qualified persons immigrate to Canada and land in St. James Town; but struggle with the state requirements for recertification, which often require re-doing 6+ years of postsecondary education. Thus, St. James Town is filled with doctors driving cabs, and engineers working in Tim Hortons. The Toronto Centre for Community Learning and Development asked, “If you are currently employed, what level of education is required to perform your job?” 47% of St. James Town respondents said they need less than a high school education (Dhungana, 2012). When compared to residents’ actual qualifications, it’s clear many St. James Town residents are overqualified for their income-generating positions. This has a dampening effect on the economy and undervalues people’s potential. OASIS can provide avenues for skilled newcomers to apply their knowledge for the benefit of their community.

- **High Density, Low Public / Green Space:** St. James Town’s population density is more than 18 times that of the City of Toronto. Estimates of the population vary between 18,000 to 23,000 residents. Building managers and school staff say the number is higher than census counts due to newly landed/undocumented residents and others such as domestic workers who live here part time. With over 20,000 people in less than a quarter square kilometre, St. James Town has been described as the most densely populated community in the country (Kwan, 2018; D’Souza, Hassen, Grey, & Pinto, 2017). Currently, four of nineteen high-rise buildings are TCHC social housing for low-income vulnerable tenants; mostly disabled people, single parent families and seniors. New townhouses and high-rises were recently added to the neighbourhood, with more development being proposed to the city.

III. CLIMATE CHANGE AND FOOD SECURITY: EMERGENCY AND SYSTEMIC FOOD INSECURITY

- **Climate Change is happening now:** Climate change is affecting billions of people globally, Canada included. The last few decades have brought dangerous changes to Canada’s climate and weather (The Climate Reality Project, 2018). For our food, it means growing seasons are shifting, climates and their plants are changing, microorganisms essential for healthy soils are dying, droughts and floods are becoming increasingly frequent and severe, and extreme weather events leave communities and farmlands increasingly devastated. Vulnerable populations become more vulnerable with climate change; but also, offer key lessons of resilience and survival that should be empowered.

In informal dialogue in this study, we learned that before colonisation, Indigenous nations had a 10-30-year food store in Tkaronto, the meeting place for any nation who had experienced food supply shortages. Now in Toronto, nearly all food comes

in through a single food terminal that sits on a floodplain; and, as in other cities, researchers estimate that most food retail stores may only have three days of fresh food and up to 17 days of all food products in stock (Zeuli, Nijhuis, & Gerson-Nieder, 2018).

- **Emergencies and Climate Change effects in St. James Town:** In St. James Town, emergencies and changing climates threaten to exacerbate food insecurity. The Lighthouse Project – a pilot hub for emergency preparedness in St. James Town 2017-2019 – notes on their website that food security as a central concern for residents, and a central component of community resilience, noting among other things that it's hard to keep food in reserve for emergencies when you're managing a low income. And, as extreme weather continues to affect the global agricultural industry, food prices will increase. (The Lighthouse Project, n.d).
- St. James Town has already seen the effects of climate change and extreme weather. Many residents migrated to Canada as climate refugees, or because of human conflict aggravated by climate change. The neighbourhood is itself becoming more vulnerable as well. As a high-rise neighbourhood St. James Town faces unique and increased food insecurity in extreme weather. Food and water access is reduced, especially for those with mobility issues, when the elevators are out of service. Food storage is shortened without electric refrigeration, and food preparation may not be safe without electricity to produce heat or pump water to upper floors. Older and disabled people with mobility issues are most at risk, as they become trapped in upper floors.
- The 2013 ice storm demonstrated exactly this, as vulnerable and senior citizens were stuck in their high-rise apartments, and residents were left to organise shelter, food and water in parks with no established communication channels, according to resident testimonials. As nearly all social service organisation staff in the neighbourhood live outside St. James Town, the service channels available during normal everyday life were unavailable in an emergency. During the 650 Parliament fire in August 2018, the vulnerability of residents in emergencies was again painfully clear; and, even established organisations such as neighbourhood churches were unable to provide available assistance because, as was made clear by the Office of Emergency Management, there are no established lists or channels for support during emergencies (CREW event, 2018). On the positive side, in each emergency St. James Town has faced, residents have come together to support their neighbours and have demonstrated strong capacity and desire for community resilience; they are just missing the spaces, channels and organisational structures through which to execute it.

IV. OASIS

In 2019, St. James Town did a feasibility study on OASIS, a community-managed climate-resilient healthy food hub in St. James Town. The OASIS Project, which is based on several years of observation, surveys, feasibility studies and community work in St. James Town meets key needs that come with such a dense community, including:

- **Few Public and Green Spaces:** Being a concrete neighbourhood, St. James Town lacks sufficient usable, safe and accessible green spaces and community spaces for residents to engage in leisure activities and informal socialisation (Barnes, 2011; Montesanti & Gardner, 2010). Available green spaces are poorly maintained with uncollected garbage left in the open (Montesanti & Gardner, 2010). While there are recent efforts to improve these spaces through community planning and new murals in conjunction with Tower Renewal, it is a challenging area for programming, maintenance, and safety. More green space has been proposed by a new development, which would also add hundreds more people who would need to access them. Residents need climate-controlled green and community space to be accessible all-year round.
- **Poor Maintenance:** St. James Town has ageing high-rise rental apartment buildings, many of which lack basic hygienic utilities such as exhaust fans, and all of which are in need of major repairs (Barnes, 2011). Recent fires and electrical issues across buildings in 2018 and 2019 have stressed the immediate need for maintenance and building upgrades.
- **Limited Recycling, no Green Waste Management:** The survey conducted by Toronto Centre for Community Learning and Development found 66.67% of St. James Town respondents feel the provision for recycling and organic waste diversion is not adequate in the community (Dhungana, 2012). Residents have been envisioning and planning the OASIS food hub in part to provide opportunity for meaningful waste management, and a green culture of reducing, reusing, and recycling; waste is a resource when it is treated as such.
- **Low Social Cohesion / Belonging:** The time-banking feasibility study by LIFT highlighted the need for social cohesion in St. James Town due to its extreme diversity. Many residents avoid bonding with neighbours due to safety concerns and lack of leisure time from paid work (D'Souza, Hassen, Grey, & Pinto, 2017). The need for stronger community cohesion was further reinforced by the city councillor Kristyn Wong-Tam in her speech to the gathering of the third design charette organised by OASIS. OASIS is a project of social inclusion and food, and provides keyways to meet this need.

A project like OASIS become additionally significant considering that in 2018-2019, the Red Cross was called in twice to support residents – particularly with food - in building-wide emergencies. Local churches and neighbours were keen to help, but the channels did not exist, and were unable to support. St. James Town is emergency food insecure, alongside being equitably and systemically insecure due to economic, immigration status, language, race, family status, cultural, and structural-institutional barriers. The chronic lack of safe hygienic viable space is a major barrier to local food programming.

The OASIS Food Hub aims to holistically address these three food insecurities by creating a full-cycle food system that creates social cohesion and equitable access through its human rights values, co-operative governance, tools and structures for inclusion. Through OASIS, food security will be increased directly and will also through its impacts on social determinants of health (sense of belonging, employment, access to green space, and more).

E. About the conversation participants

of conversation participants: 20

- **Participants Demographics:**

his conversation was hosted by St. James Town Community Co-op. The co-op sent an invitation to our community list of members and neighbours, the resulting selection of participants represented a wide range of people who participated in the community conversation.

Participants' Number: A total of 20 community members participated in the two conversations. Each conversations had ten participants. However the survey forms were filled by 12 participants only.

Age:

Table 1: Participants by age

Age	Under 20	21-40	41-60	Over 60
Number of participants	2	2	4	4

Race: Nine participants identified themselves as persons of colour, two responded with a no and one preferred not to say. It shows that the community is a mixed community but it consists of people of colour predominantly.

Only one of 12 participants identified themselves as indigenous, but not living on a reserve. These conversations were conducted by SJT Co-op in the geography of St. James Town. All participants resided in the community when the conversations were held.

Status in Canada: Two participants identified themselves as recent immigrants, seven did not, and three preferred not to say. This shows that majority of the participants of these conversations were immigrants which speaks about the composition of the community on a large scale as well. The most recent census demonstrates this fact as well. It was important to note that three participants preferred not to say if they identified themselves as recent immigrants or not. This could be because they may be preferring not to be stigmatized as imigrants which is known to have sometimes negative consequences for jobs and other services.

Language: Eight (67%) participants of 12 spoke English at home and the remaining spoke another language.

Gender: Eight (67%) participants were women and 33 percent were men. None identified themselves as members of 2SLGBTQ+ community.

Income: Nine (75%) participants identified themselves as low income and 3 (25%) as middle income. This is a general composition of the community.

Ability: 75% (9/12) of participants identified themselves as people without disability, and 25% (3/12) were people with disability.

Job Sector: Participants belonged are or were in diverse paid labour force. Their job sectors are mentioned in table 2 below. It shows that only one participant was retired. The other participants are or were belonging to several job sectors.

Union: Only one of 12 participants belonged to a union but was currently retired. This also goes to show the precariousness of the participants in their jobs. This was reflective of their community's composition.

Table 2: Job Sector

Job sector	Number of Participants
Non-profit, charitable or grassroots organizing work	2
Community and government services, Education	2
Education	2
Essential and/or service work, Non-profit, charitable or grassroots organizing work, Construction, trades, transport and equipment operation	2
Agricultural and natural resources, Arts, culture, recreation and sport, Business, finance and administration, Non-profit, charitable or grassroots organizing work, Data	1
Arts, culture, recreation and sport, Education	1
Student	1
Education, Media and publishing, Non-profit, charitable or grassroots organizing work	1
Retired	1

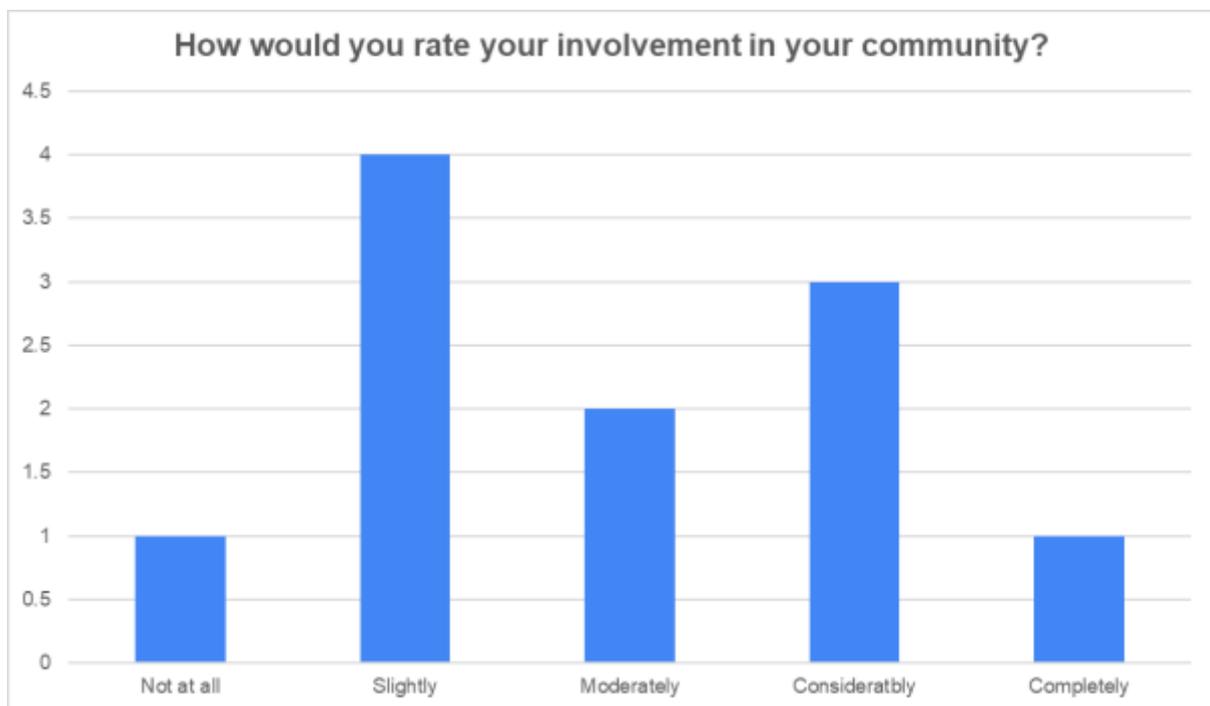
Community Involvement: The table 3 and figure 1 shows that most of the participants were neither most involved nor least involved in the community. What is significant is CI 2 which depicts the number of participants that are just somewhat involved in the community. The reason is what the conversation participants point out that it is difficult to involve themselves

in the community since they are busy meeting ends meet for their families, some doing many jobs in a day for the purpose of paying their rents and other expenses. This leaves very less time to involve themselves in the community. Basic income makes sense in this regards. With basic income people will be more able to involve themselves in community development and to participate in crucial issues such as climate change and income security. The second highest number is of those participants who are more involved in the community. This demonstrates an aspiration to get involved in community building activities.

Table 3: Community Involvement

Level of Community Involvement	Not at all	Slightly	Moderately	Considerably	Completely
Number of Participants	1	4	2	3	1

Figure 1: Community Involvement



Experiences related to climate change, income security and community resilience:

Participants were asked to select as many experiences of climate change, income security, and community resilience as they had experience from a list given to them in the questionnaire.

Figure 2 below shows that eight of 12 participants mentioned that their livelihood was or is seriously impacted by covid-19 pandemic. Only 2 said that their livelihood has not been

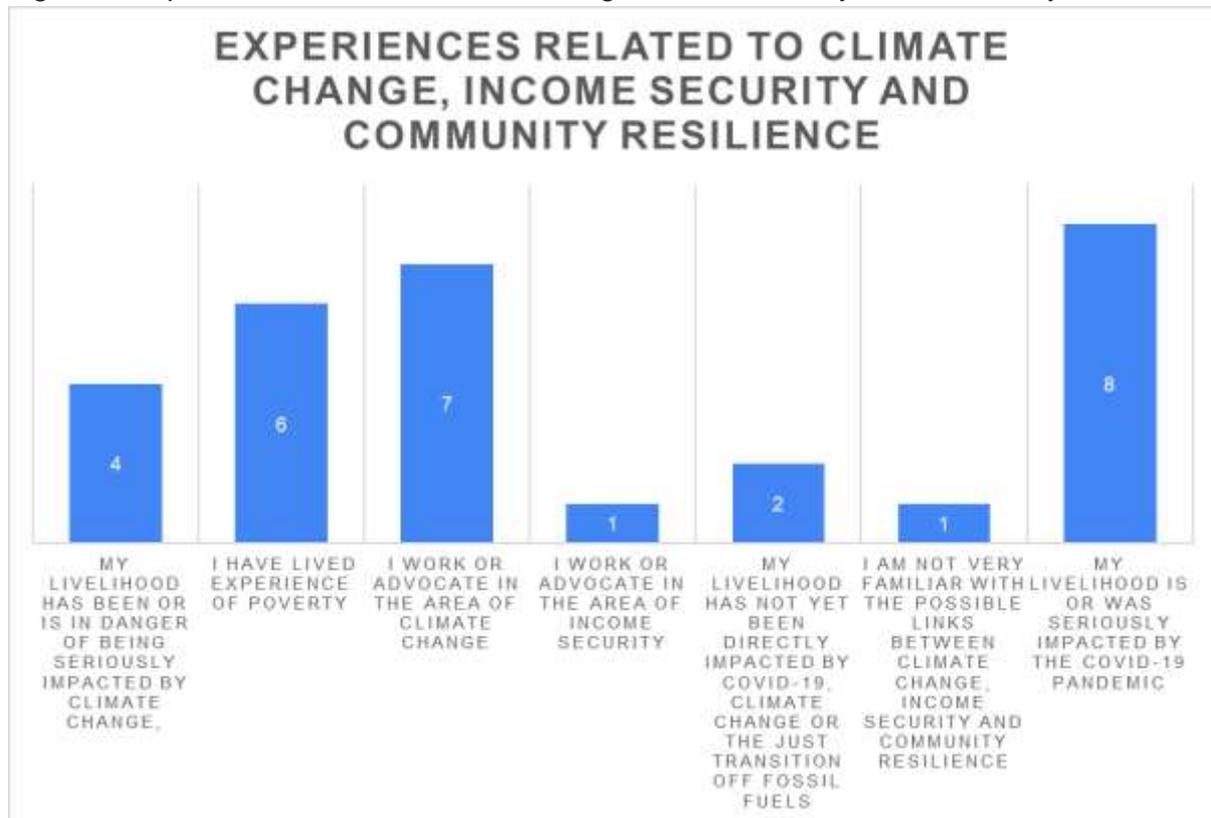
directly impacted by Covid-19. In the conversations, the pandemic was spoken of as an issue that had affected participants causing joblessness, homelessness and even deaths in some cases.

Six participants said that they had a lived experience of poverty. In SJT, poverty was a serious issue also spoken of in the conversations.

Seven participants said that they worked or advocated in the area of climate change. This shows that there is high interest in working for this issue probably because this community has directly experienced the effects of climate change and income security to a large extent while living in this community.

While there were seven who said that they work or advocate in the area of climate change, only one said that they work or advocate in the area of income security. This being despite SJT being an area where income security is a major issue.

Figure 2: Experiences related to climate change, income security and community resilience



F. The Community Conversation

The conversations were held online on zoom because of the pandemic and social distancing restrictions. All participants had a stable internet connection in the course of the conversations. The conversations were held on March 19th and 23rd 2022 during afternoons

(1 to 3 pm). 10 community members participated in each conversation. The zoom link was sent to the participants in advance by email.

The conversations followed the structure suggested by the GRP. No changes were made to the questions as they were thought to be appropriate. The questions provided by GRP were sent a day ahead of the conversation date to the facilitators with suggestions on how the conversations can be facilitated in the zoom breakout rooms.

On the day of the conversations, the participants were welcomed followed by Josephine Grey, the co-founder of STC Co-op, initiating the discussions with a brief presentation on climate change and income insecurity. Two breakout rooms consisting of five people in each discussed the questions given by the GRP. Each questions followed the timing indicated on the questions and had a facilitator for each breakout room. At the end of the breakout room discussions, the participants met again in the main room and added any final remarks before the conversations were closed by Josephine Grey. The breakout room discussions were recorded by the facilitators which were then transcribed by GRP. The scripts were sent back to SJT Co-op and after analysis the report was written.

A committee of four conversation participants was made to write the report. The committee met twice, once to reflect on the conversations and second time to reflect and discuss the draft report. Regular email and google meet discussions were carried out to maintain communication during the course of writing the report.

- **Participants Evaluation:**

The evaluation form was sent by email to all 20 participants. 10 of them responded by sending the filled form.

Level of Satisfaction with the conversation: According to the responses from the evaluation questionnaire, seven of 12 participants said that they were very satisfied, two said that they were moderately satisfied and one said that they were neither satisfied or dissatisfied.

Anything to add: Participants were asked if they would like to add anything more to the conversations. The following were the responses:

- More solution discussions
- I enjoyed the conversation
- The speaker was easy to understand.
- I was sad that more people weren't there
- Prefer more of such community conversations
- Educate residents on proper recycling

Linkages: Participants were asked if they were familiar with the links between climate change, income security and/or community resilience. Eight of 10 said yes, One said no and one did not answer indicating that participants were aware of the impact that climate change, income security and/or community resilience were having on each other.

Participants were also asked if they felt that they learned something about climate change, income security, community resilience and the links between them? Some participants responded with what they found interesting as follows:

- | |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The correlation with the weather and increase in bills |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowing about the participants interest in climate change and the role of community towards adapting to the present climatic condition was really amazing. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I learned how our skills could be used to develop green jobs. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The concept of 'just transition' was new to me. I am also more aware of what a crucial role 'basic income' plays at the cross section of climate change and community resilience. It would allow people the space to think outside of our survival bubbles towards And inside climate change and community resilience. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spread the word about healthy accessible food is important |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I got to know about initiatives of local markets being held in the neighbouring communities that I did not know |

What was missed: Participants were asked if there was anything that did not come up in the conversations and wished it had. The following were the responses.

- | |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The <u>responsibilities of big corporations</u> to the affecting change in climate change and the economy. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I would like to hear more about the <u>climate adaptation at community level</u> and how Canadians are prepared for it. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I think there must be a clear path and estimated time about how we are going to <u>get the training or any specific service, workshop</u> that we discussed during the conversation. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I would like to say that <u>spreading the information on available resources to get the healthy affordable food</u> is very important |

Groups missing the conversation: Participants felt groups such as RSI, St. James Town Community Corner, Trinity Life, Farmers residing in the community, persons with disabilities should have been present in the conversations.

What could be done differently about the conversations: To this question, participants suggested:

- Answer the questions by using tools such as blackboard, jam board etc.
- Provide a draft of what are the plans of the "Host" regarding the income security and climate change so that laypeople can add their ideas.

2. What We Heard

A. How are the changes to our community's environment and economy discussed in the introduction affecting you, your family or the community as a whole?

The changes occurring in the St. James Town community's environment and economy are affecting individuals, their families and the community as a whole for over some decades now, but particularly over the last couple of years.

Firstly, there is a social upheaval created by several factors impacting the community such as the follows:

i. Pandemic:

- The most immediate cause of social upheaval in the community is the covid-19 pandemic.
- The pandemic has resulted in the closure of businesses leading to loss of jobs in the community.
- The loss of jobs has restricted the flow of regular income to families leading. This has diminished the choices of families about "what to buy, what to eat". Such a situation is further exacerbated by the obligations to pay bills such as rent and other utilities

"We can't afford the better choices. We can't afford the food that was grown sustainably."

- The pandemic in tandem with joblessness has also caused homelessness among some people in the community in the last two years.

ii. Immigrants and New comers

- St. James Town is predominantly a community of immigrants and newcomers. They form the bulk of the community. But we, people of colour, face discrimination in workplaces resulting in rejections for jobs.

“I’m a senior, even if I go look for a job---who’s hiring me? Other than cultural--other than spaces that want a cultural knowledge Elder---who’s hiring me? I’m a disabled woman in a scooter. And the color of my skin does not give me protection”.

- Poverty is an unvarying faction in the lives of newcomers residing in St. James Town.
- They have to juggle between three or four jobs a day, in some cases, to meet financial obligations.

“You do not have the means sufficient to take care of your family, which means you have to go to work, sometimes two or three jobs...you do not have any free time. So how are you going to even help in anything related to climate change?”

- As a result, they are unable to devote time for themselves and the community. Their primary preoccupation is earning.

“That’s their first priority, their own sustenance. So, because of that, they don’t really have time to think beyond their own sustenance. And that is, they don’t have time for the community. They are busy just working for a living.”

- Being fully immersed in jobs, their choices for a comfortable and healthy life are restricted owing to the fact their incomes are meagre, a bulk of which goes into paying bills leaving them with nothing for their own personal and family wellbeing.

“When it’s winter, your heat bill increases. And when it’s summer, because of the humidity, your air conditioning bill increases, If you do have air conditioning. So it does affect us economically, in terms of how we have to decide what to do with our money. How are we to determine our life? And do we choose to pay the bill? Or do we go hungry? And yes, what choice in food do we have if 90% of your salary is going towards paying bills, paying the rent, and there is no support within the system.”

- The immigrants in St. James Town are part of the middle class that is disappearing from other parts of Canada or from different other countries and appearing in the SJT community. These are the 'new poor', particularly whom SJT community is characterized with.
- People of colour or people with accent experience are known to experience subtle aggressiveness from the larger community. e.g. being asked "from where are you 'really' from?"

iii. Safety

- There is a deep concern among residents about being able to move safely in the community. This perception is formed due to various incidents of murder, robbery, drug peddling, prostitution and crime over the years.
- Young people in this community sometimes feel stigmatized with the assumption of criminality

iv. Information deficit

- There is a lack of awareness about services available in the community what may be of use to them.

v. Lack of connections

- Residents who are mostly immigrants, for most part, do not know each other. Locals, even if they have lived in the community for a long period of time, are not aware of the surroundings they reside in. As a result, they do not feel a sense of belongingness to the community.

"People do not know each other even though they are living in the community for 20-30 years."

Secondly, the phenomenon of Climate Chaos (the randomness of incidents of climate upheavals and its effects) has increasingly impacted the community.

- i. The community has experienced several effects of Climate chaos such as extreme heat conditions during summers, water pipe bursts during winters, and power cuts due to snow storms.

“So, climate change is a very big, is having very big impact. And what with climate change to cut down on the planting season, because if we have longer winters, then you're not able to start the growing season as early as you need to, and then during the summer there's drought.”

“It's getting worse. It's getting longer and worse and more comfortable. I am grateful there is a pool next door to me. And I will be living there next summer. I'll just take a chair and I will live there.”

ii. Senior, children and those with disabilities were put most at risk, suffering and discomfort. They have found themselves locked in the confines of their rooms, sometimes even facing lack of food, lack of exercise, and feelings of suffocation due to heat and humidity. People with mobility issues faced most amount of suffering in these situations. St. James Town Community Coop delivered food to more than 200 families caught in situations.

“In summers, the apartments get very hot and seniors with disability cannot easily go out (they have to prepare themselves to go out e.g. take water and other requirements, because outside also it is hot). But at least there is fresh air.”

“In the winter, you have to keep your windows closed and the heat may cause suffocation for the seniors.”

“During snowstorms, how do those who are not able bodied get around to where they want to go e.g. doctor, pharmacy, grocery.”

“Seniors go hungry since they cannot feed themselves especially in bad weather.”

Thirdly, poor and neglected private infrastructure in majority of the of apartment buildings that the residents live in in St. James Town, have resulted in fires (e.g. 650 Parliament) and extreme heating and cooling effects in apartments due to open or leaking windows.

Finally, the insufficient and inaccessible community infrastructure adds to further depression among residents

- Library and Community Centre is insufficient for a community of approximately 25,000 residents.
- The library and community centre is closed due to the pandemic for the last two years
- Residents sometimes used the community centre showers, recreations rooms for personal hygiene and relaxation. Closure of this resource further put residents on the hook when they did not have these resources working at home.

B. How are these environmental and economic changes related to each other? (How climate change and income security are connected to each other and to our community's resilience)

i. Resilience increases with Involvement in the community.

- It is known that those who are connected to the community experience greater agency owing to their connectedness. Such people tend to develop more resilience. But the residents of SJT are marked with poverty. Poverty prevents residents from involvement in the community. e.g. people from SJT going to drop-in centres for food

“If I'm hungry, I don't care about the environment. Simple as that.”

- Poverty also decreases resilience to the effects of climate chaos.
- Poverty decreases physical, personal and mental resilience

“Increase in bills creates an economic strain on you.”

ii. Resilience increases when one has a job

- SJT is a community with very highly skilled workforce even though their credentials are not valued in the Canadian. This can be a positive force in the emergence of green jobs and just transition. There is an opportunity for re-training of their skills.

“BI allows you to retrain yourself.”

iii. Climate change is impacted by the inscrutable control of earth’s resources by the elite.

- In SJT this is visible in large percentage of land owned by the real estate corporations and developers. Resilience decreases when residents are prevented from using available green spaces such as lawns for green initiatives such as planting and growing food or vegetables

“Because of the ways in which the elite control all of the resources on the earth, that is why we have climate change.”

“Developers to understand that they need to play more of a part in the solution and not be a part of the problem in allocating green space/lawns to do some planting of food, something, vegetables. But they have put up a monstrosity in front of me right here. And that was a wonderful green space that should have been used for the community. And they put up a monstrosity, an enormous monstrosity, two buildings”

“There is construction without planning about the sewers, schools, sewers, traffic, smog.”

iv. Resilience increases with income security (basic income)

- It allows options to residents to involve themselves in climate-related projects in the community such as OASIS, the community managed healthy food hub by SJTCC

“Basic income would give people the option to support climate change project e.g. oasis/events in the community.”

“Basic income frees people’s time for community participation to demand changes and development in their neighbourhoods just as in wealthier neighbourhoods. People are kept in poverty so they don’t get involved in the community.”

- It lessens worry about meeting basic needs such as food and shelter (rent)
- It protects seniors and disabled from bias in the workplace and in job selection. When they face discrimination, they have options to look for jobs where they are comfortable to work, not in those places where they are forced to fit themselves and suffer discrimination silently.

“I remember listening to an economist who was against it against, basic income. And then I started listening to other people. And that's when I realized, wait a minute, if I had a basic income, I wouldn't have to worry about whether or not I can pay this month's rent. And I'm a senior, even if I go look for a job---who's hiring me? Other than cultural---other than spaces that want a cultural knowledge Elder---who's hiring me? I'm a disabled woman in a scooter. And the color of my skin does not give me protection. You know what I mean? So that's why I've changed my mind around basic income.”

C. What are some possible solutions to the challenges we’ve discussed that will help the community respond to climate change and create income security for all community members?

i. Solutions to help respond to Climate Chaos

- Financial aid or resources by the government should be in place for non-profits in the community to support affected people during emergencies in the community. This is because governmental agencies and outsiders are not the first responders during emergencies in a community as was seen in SJT.
- Make partnerships and relationships that can help get something off the ground.
- Study insurance in the event of emergencies. Community insurance models like a co-op insurance project started in other countries. Toronto Community Housing, landlords, private companies cannot be relied upon to respond to emergencies in the community,
- Developers need to address the problems of the residents and around the environment as well as giving more services to people and especially the vulnerable people and to kids, along with the safety and safe environment, for all the residents.
- Build a Giant Greenhouse

ii. Solutions to create income security for all community members

- Make BI known among young people
- Make reports accessible not like the Manitoba report
- Increase knowledge and information sharing in the community
- Have multicultural events on food sharing
- Organize soup sharing, healthy meals together, community dinners
- Have more diversity in these dialogues around how to eat affordably and stuff.
- Have a certified kitchen in this community
- Have a place to donate and get donated clothing as well especially good working clothes
- Re-establish a sense of dignity and agency by building capacity. For e.g. seniors can do courses on ageing, independence, preparation for the future.
- Increase childcare centres in St. James town. Currently there are no spaces for childcare even if Ontario strikes a deal with Trudeau. BI is useful for mothers who want to take care of their children.

- Create a Basic Income program that allows low-income families, low-income mothers, single, single people to be able to access it. This will create a level of ease, for them on what they can focus on in terms of how they can rally around the community around climate change, and what they need to do to help to mitigate certain factors against climate change.”

iii. Solutions that are common to both 1 and 2

- Study models: In Europe, they have whole villages dedicated to senior living with an intergenerational component
- Reduce hourly work week like in some European countries, so people can enjoy their life and not just be in that rat race of running after money to pay a mortgage for a place that they don't even get to enjoy
- Basic Income is gaining traction among politicians. Support advocacy for it.
- Support the Food Hub model to tackle affordability (so that healthy, affordable food is within our reach) which is an issue for this community and thus to have a better option available to the community of SJT
- Build relationships intergenerationally to support each other
- SJTCC has a new micro farms network project, to bring growing systems, aquaponics growing systems into people's apartments, and then having a central growing zone hub, which is in our office, which can then provide seedlings and this and that to the little micro farms

D. How do you think these solutions can be achieved to build, maintain or strengthen community resilience? Who is responsible for these changes—individuals, community groups, governments or a mix?

I. Strategies for use of spaces

- Redefine spaces, so that neighbourhoods aren't stigmatized, so that people take pride in that space
- Establish specific initiatives in our neighbourhoods that redefine them from being zoned as dangerous
- Organize events to redefine spaces

ii. Safety strategies

- Have a quasi-community watch
- Ensure safety in community spaces
- Look for funding (to make spaces safe and clean – retrofits)

iii. Green strategies

- Start community gardens in the backyards
- Initiatives such as food buying club, working groups in SJTcoop offer opportunities to get involved and engaged
- Do land acknowledgement before starting anything, avoid junk food, refreeze leftovers
- Use bioenergy technology to produce energy from food waste, you can actually produce electricity, heat and fuel from current modern bio energy technologies
- Advocate for space for a green garden
- Study the role that Alan Gardens has in growing healthy, affordable food
- Educate people about recycling

iv. Funding Strategy

- Look for Funding alternatives: it's becoming more possible to fund and support alternatives than it was before
- Investors are going green. Investors are going green and people want to go into green investments and defund the oil investments.

V. Community strategy

- Community cooking
- Welcome people to a welcoming community and to a green community
- Share information to the community
- Asset map food programs in SJT
- People brought into Canada promising decent living but not treated well when they start living here. Form welcome groups.

Vi. Skill appreciation strategy

- Use the highly skilled workforce in the community to create green jobs

Vii. Social Justice strategy

- Advocate for people to be decently compensated for their skills so that they get time to be involved in the community to raise awareness and advocate for climate change
- Be aware of attempts to gentrify St. James Town to bring upper income people to take up more space and more room here
- Heroes are coming forward to peak up about systemic change

Viii. Political strategy

- Push the political class to make right solution for the community
- Advocate a government that supports green environment
- Make sure that section 17 money is being used wisely to help the existing residents to have a stronger, better community
- There is a challenge in making a policy level change even for those who have a lot of connections and resources
- As a community, we need to build capacity about how to put pressure on the political class

Ix. Empowerment strategy

- Educate and train residents to raise their voice

X. Construction strategy

- Get developers to understand that they need to play more of a part in the solution and not be a part of the problem
- Ask developers to allocate green space/lawns to do some planting of food, vegetables.

Xi. Basic Income strategy

- Difficult to get grants and funding. Basic income is so important especially for our community, because even the best grants in the world are not going to pay enough people for enough time to make serious changes

“for the people to have enough time to do something meaningful, you know, it would take millions of dollars in a community this size to have enough people doing enough things to make sure that for instance, everybody had healthy food. And I'm not afraid to go for millions of dollars. But it would be such a huge leap forward if at least the residents and our members had basic income to support them making choices to continue to work on this stuff together.”

“A Basic Income brings, far offsets the cost to the government and the fact that you're taking all this complex system policing out of the equation. And you're making it a very simple system that isn't, you know, all sorts of means testing and stuff makes it so much cheaper to deliver that between them the ripple effects on the economy, and the reduced delivery costs of basic income is a huge boost to oppose COVID economy, if they only take that step and it would be a huge boost to our community being able to cope and manage with all the changes and all the repairs and you know, retrofitting and opening up and field spaces, like who's going to do all that work, it should be our residents able to do all that work. We should be able to get paid to fix up our community so that it functions properly like any city or town should.”

- The community is stuck supporting unhealthy, unsustainable products because they can't afford better products.

“we know that what we buy will make a big difference on what corporations do. So it's horrible to be stuck supporting unhealthy, unsustainable products, or activities because of poverty.”

- Have arguments counteracting any attack on liveable wage.
- BI pilot showed people going back to school. BI can enable people to go back to school for green jobs

“BI enables you when you have enough money to make good choices, then you have enough money to put your dollars where your conscience is, and you can buy the green products, you can buy the non-toxic.”

Xii. Communications strategy

- Use social media to get the word out. (Carrie19_1_q3)

3. What We Learned

There a strong consensus the following key points

I .Different groups but similar experiences: SJT has diverse population but a common experience and perspective on the effect of climate chaos, food insecurity, basic income, community resilience, and food insecurity in St. James Town. In these conversations we had people from various age groups, abilities, educational backgrounds, and level of community involvement, there was shared understanding the issues affecting the community related to climate chaos and individual, familial and community resilience

li. Peoples desire and willingness to engage in solutions: The residents have realized that they are the only ones whom they can depend on in emergencies, whether natural or arising out of human neglect. The community also recognizes that residents are filled with highly skilled but underutilized assets. However, they realize that they need to build connections among themselves, and enhance their capacity to raise their voice particularly about issues related to the adverse effects of emergencies created by human neglect and climate chaos.

lii. Poor and newcomer immigrants: The residents being poor and newcomer immigrants is a major factor of them being neglected by the larger community including the agencies of the City and political establishments. These factors also leave them feeling excluded from development and discriminated against in their pursuit for progress. Poverty keeps them from having options of living a comfortable life or get involve in the community. Basic Income is a policy that will grant them the freedom to lead happy meaningful lives short of anxiety and productive to society.

Iv. Our community's burden exacerbated by the pandemic which caused job loses, homelessness, and severe mental issues in the community resulting in an increase in safety concerns in this sparsely interconnected neighbourhood.

V. For more than two decades now, climate chaos and human neglect has been showing up its ugly head causing severe disturbances and suffering to the residents of St. James Town. This particularly affects more vulnerable populations of the seniors, the disabled, the children, parents particularly women. Despite several such tragic events the community continues falling prey to such catastrophic event and the resident keep holding on to the hope that such they will not see such suffering just as the wealthier neighbourhoods don't.

Vi. Basic income is an antidote to several of the issues that the community is facing over a period of year such as poverty, income insecurity, non-participation in community development, personal and family progress.

- To what extent do you think your conversation built wider and deeper understanding of the links and synergies between community resilience, livelihoods, income security and the low-carbon transition? Please explain your response.
 - 1 - Not at all
 - 2
 - 3
 - 4
 - 5 - Very much so

- To what extent did participants demonstrate increased awareness of climate change and their own capacity for climate action? Please explain your response.
 - 1 - Not at all
 - 2
 - 3
 - 4
 - 5 - Very much so

- To what extent were new relationships between community partners and conversation participants created and fostered? Please explain your response.
 - 1 - Not at all
 - 2
 - 3
 - 4
 - 5 - Very much so

- To what extent did your conversation create opportunities to foster ongoing discussion of solutions related to climate change, income insecurity and community resilience? Please explain your response.
 - 1 - Not at all
 - 2
 - 3
 - 4
 - 5 - Very much so

- In your opinion, what does the community need to do next in order to build or maintain resilience in the face of climate change and rising income insecurity?

Based on our conversations, we have identified the strategies mentioned in section D.

4. Next steps

Based on our conversations, we have identified the strategies mentioned in section D.

But overall, St. Jamestown Community Co-op has a healthy food strategy for the community called OASIS, a community managed and climate resilient health food hub. These conversations further strengthen our strategy further emphasizing basic income as a lifeline that the community aspires for to become a vibrant and fulfilled community.

Further to this, we need to develop a St. Jamestown Strategy for food and income security. So we include in our co-op strategic plans a St. Jamestown food and income security strategy.

St. Jamestown Co-op Food and Income security strategy

- Continue this conversation in the community in terms of what would be like a St. James Town strategy? How would we want to move forward on the things that we want to see happen around climate resilience and income security, whether it's a combination of jobs, basic income.
- The strategy can be like a mix of individuals, community groups, and governments because I just feel like it's just not going to work out unless we create a system where we're all working together because this problem is affecting all of us.
- As the next step that the Co-op has planned is a meeting with its MP to further advocate for climate resilience, food security, income security and job security for St. James Town with the evidence of the GRP conversations.

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