

# Final Report: Issues, Challenges and Barriers Faced by Immigrant and Culturally Diverse Artists in Toronto and Scarborough



A Scarborough Arts & Culture Initiative

*Creative Mosaics: Mentoring in Community Arts & Culture  
A Needs & Capacity Assessment, 2010*

**Produced by:**

**Cian Knights, Creative Mosaics Project Coordinator  
Zehra Kizilbash, Research Assistant**

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## Section 1: Background and Context

### The Creative Mosaics Project

In 2010, Scarborough Arts Council (SAC) collaborated with a range of organizations including Children's Aid Society of Toronto (CAS), Catholic Crosscultural Services (CCS) and Cultural Pluralism in Performing Arts Movement Ontario (CPPAMO) to work on a new project entitled *Creative Mosaics: Mentoring in Community Arts and Culture – A Needs and Capacity Assessment*. Creative Mosaics was a one-year initiative funded by the Ontario Trillium Foundation, which aimed to identify and respond to the lack of culturally diverse arts and cultural programs in Scarborough, Ontario.

Creative Mosaics involved a series of elementary school focus group discussions, key informant interviews, roundtable discussions, an online survey and a literature review. The online survey, which focused on gathering information on the interest and needs of culturally diverse arts and culture programs in Scarborough, revealed that there are a number of barriers and challenges that immigrant and culturally diverse artists face: racial and ethnic discrimination, language barriers, lack of networking opportunities and unknown or limited funding opportunities. Six key informant interviews were conducted to explore these issues further.

## Method

### Identifying and Recruiting Participants

A 'call-for-artists' was solicited by email to arts organizations, community groups and individual artists in November 2010. Key informants were recruited on the basis of their artistic background, experience and interest. The participants involved in the research were from a range of artistic backgrounds, levels of experiences, gender, ethnic and cultural backgrounds and age groups. From November – December 2010, the interviews were conducted face-to-face, by phone and by email correspondence. Interviews were approximately thirty to forty-five minutes in length and were audio recorded. The interviews were then transcribed and a complete analysis of the information was conducted. Please refer to the appendices for the key informant interview questions and consent form.

### Key Informant Interviews

The main goal of the six key informant interviews was to explore the personal experiences, both positive and negative, of culturally diverse artists in order to gain a better understanding of the key issues, challenges and barriers they face. Information gathered reflects the artists' work as individuals and within the community, specifically in the areas of Toronto and Scarborough.

This anecdotal evidence provides further understanding of relevant issues surrounding diversity in the arts, including racism, discrimination, social isolation, accessibility, and lack of support. The findings identify a number of barriers to the inclusion of artists from diverse cultural backgrounds and establish ways in which arts organizations can best support these artists. The

research may be of assistance to organizations seeking to respond to the needs of immigrant and culturally diverse artists and the lack of arts and cultural programming.

## Limitations

The limitation to this research is that the findings presented cannot be generalized to the larger population of ethno-racial and immigrant artists in Toronto and Scarborough based on this study alone. The research used a small sample size of individuals and cannot illustrate the complete picture of the issues that ethno-racial and immigrant artists encounter. In spite of this, the research provides insight into the lived experiences of artist from diverse cultural backgrounds and provides a foundation on which to further draw parallels to the experiences of ethno-racial and immigrant artists.

## Section 2: Key Informant Profiles and Findings

The issues and challenges faced by artists of colour and immigrant artists are not homogenous. Experiences of the key informants varied with gender, racial, cultural, ethnic, social background and artistic practice. Even so, many of the key informants expressed similar experiences they faced as artists working in the arts and culture sector.

### Key Informant Profiles

1. **Archibald Alleyne (aka Archie)** is a pioneering black entrepreneur and cultural impresario. Born and raised in Toronto, he has made legendary contributions to the Canadian Jazz scene as a professional musician for over 60 years. His commitment to youth is exemplified through his scholarship fund to support young musicians.
2. **Aisha Farah** is an emerging East African Muslim artist, rapper, entrepreneur and high school student. She was born and raised in Scarborough, Ontario. She is currently completing a placement with the Scarborough Arts Council and plans to pursue further studies in Community Arts and Culture at York University.
3. **Charles Smith** is an African Canadian Lecturer at the University of Toronto – Scarborough Campus, a published poet, playwright, essayist, a member of the Canadian Court Challenges Program/Equality Rights Panel, and a Research Associate with the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives. He has been practicing his art since the 80's in Toronto, Ontario. He founded 'Black Perspectives', a youth theatre program for artists of colour.
4. **Marjorie Chan** is an actor, writer, and facilitator of Chinese descent and works in the Community Arts sector. She currently works as the Associate Artistic Director for a youth based program called, 'Crossing Gibraltar,' which provides specialized arts training for refugee and newcomer youth from communities in the Toronto and Scarborough areas. She also mentors emerging artists and playwrights from culturally diverse backgrounds.

5. **Jimmy Sun** is a professional visual artist of Chinese descent, who has been practicing his art for over ten years in Toronto. He specializes in oil painting. Jimmy graduated from ICS, a Canadian arts program in 2008 and is interested in working in the Community Arts sector.
6. **Name withheld.** This key informant wishes to remain anonymous and will be referred to in this report under the pseudo name, Ray. This key informant is a South Asian theatre artist, who has worked as an actor, Director and Stage Manager. He currently works at a theatre for emerging theatre artists in Toronto.

## Key Findings

From the six interviews eight distinct themes were identified:

### *1. Lack of Ethno-Racial Representation*

The lack of representation of artists of colour in the performing arts, theatre and poetry was a core issue raised in the interviews with participants who work in these sectors. Three of the key informants indicated that while there is a strong presence of white actors represented in the professional arts scene in Toronto, there is an absence of artists of colour. The informants involved in theatre suggested this is mainly due to the common practice of professional art theatres, institutions and companies hiring mainly white actors and, thus, creating an ensemble that is predominantly white.

Ray, a South Asian theatre artist, spoke about challenges an actor of colour may face attempting to join groups and/or perform on stages/spaces that have been predominately occupied by white actors:

“...it was very difficult to break in [the theatre sector in Kingston] until you knew the right people... a tiny little community in a tiny town and as far as acting goes, most stages are white. At least at that point in time, they didn't have colour... there are places I worked where I would never be seen as an actor because they hire only white people. I mean their actors at that point were all white... [my] argument was why aren't there more companies that embrace a diverse cultural perspective as much as the talent or training? Where is the sensitivity? For example this one time in Kingston, we were doing a reading about Rwanda... so two of the characters were black and they found one black character [to play one of the roles] and so [the Director] this Canadian icon turns around and says something to the effect of “it's good that you didn't go through the trouble of getting a black actor for this particular role”. Which I thought was interesting, because if it were a white role, they would have never cast a black actor in that role, but for a black character they're quite fine casting a white actor in that role. I talked to people afterwards who said there are a lot of black actors doing TV work so they're never available and so it's difficult to get them across so they are not interested in doing a workshop, which I think is a lot of bullshit. Because when I came to Toronto I saw hundreds of black actors searching for work, none of them getting any.”

Ray continued by speaking on the current productions on main stages across the City of Toronto which still remain ‘pretty much all white’. However he noted that more diverse Canadian theatre

work is being encouraged and slight shifts are taking place as funding bodies are requesting to see diverse stories and representations on stage:

“More and more people are trying to produce non-white work and trying to develop writers. We’re hoping that by developing more writers, they can hire more actors, more directors and more people designing their own body of work, ones that are not white... But right now the main stage work that’s being produced is all white. Pretty much all white.”

Marjorie, Associate Artistic Director of Crossing Gibraltar, also shared her experience in the theatre world:

“...I found myself not having a voice as an artist of colour. I was not performing in roles that necessarily spoke to me culturally, specifically Chinese but even as a young woman. So I was doing things that were the next job but not addressing my voice...”

## *2. Feelings of Discrimination*

Experiences of discrimination and isolation were raised by the informants. Two informants relayed feelings of being typecast for specific, usually limited, roles and their range of ability was usually not considered.

Aisha, a young Black African Muslim Spoken Word artist and Conscious female Rapper who wears a headscarf, expressed that she is often stereotyped as being “shy, quiet, and repressed,” which she feels is a complete misrepresentation of her identity. Due to the present day representation of muslim women in media and society, she is confronted with the stereotypes that people set associated with her cultural practices.

Marjorie indicated that she has mainly been confronted with stereotypes as an Asian person. In particular she recalls an incident at an audition for a Toronto-based theatre. Although she went on to explain that she is at a point in her career where she can stand up to racist or discriminatory comments, for a young and emerging immigrant artist, who is more dependent on each and every opportunity, this would be more difficult:

“[At an audition] I was sitting there and I was much shorter than the person they paired me with, and they said, ‘oh Marjorie you’re much shorter than whomever’ and I was like ‘yeah’ and the joke was ‘maybe we need to match you with another Asian’... that person just equated being short with being Asian, which is not necessarily true... that kind of lazy comment happens all the time and so that’s a situation where you say, ‘did you really say that?’... I’m at a point in my career where I do call people out on that stuff. But it’s a different story when you’re just coming out of school... it happens to others all the time and there’s not much it seems you can do. So it definitely exists and it’s certainly not going to go away soon.”

Additionally, Marjorie discussed the challenge as an actor in finding roles that are not stereotypical of certain ethnic and racial groups:

“...the barriers are such that the roles for people of colour are few and far between, they tend to be stereotypical... it’s hard for people to see you as a person, as a contemporary person of colour that would be a performer in a play and that’s a continuing struggle... When I talk to my youth, they say, ‘Well, I can’t find a role for me out there. Every black character that I see is a stereotype and I don’t want to play that bad guy.’ And I tell them, ‘so you need to not knock on doors that aren’t open. Those doors aren’t open so stop knocking on them and go somewhere else.’

The Creative Mosaics online survey also echoed the above sentiments. The following quotes are drawn from online survey responses:

“Systemic racism seen in hiring practices, pay-scale, and promotions. Many artists and arts workers come from a common comfortably middle-class white background. Communications and social interactions within organizations, within the arts, share these implicit middle-class values and mores.” - *Well Established Art Professional, South Asian heritage*

“Sometimes the art doesn't go with the perceived culture ... if one identifies as a specific culture, people tend to expect stereotypical imaging and you can't stay the same forever.” – *Re-emerging Artist, North American heritage*

“In my humble opinion, I feel that sometimes we aren't treated the same way other Caucasian artists are treated, in that we are not taken as seriously. We don't get the same opportunities, but we get a different set of opportunities, that the general public don't take as seriously.” – *Emerging Artist, Pakistani heritage*

“Being pigeonholed as an ethnic artist with the expectation of producing ethnically rich or forward art, usually in a controversial way.” – *Mid-Career Artist, Caribbean heritage*

### **3. Difficulty in Gaining Recognition and Exposure**

During discussions of discrimination, informants remarked on the challenge in gaining recognition and exposure due to the lack of inclusivity. Three key informants shared their experiences of doors being closed to them and a lack of exposure, in spite of continued discourse in the arts community surrounding diversity.

Ray shared his experience as an artist of colour trying to find roles in the Canadian arts industry:

“As a stage manager the reception is different, as an actor, dramaturge which I was trying to be, I just wasn’t under their radar. It was hard as an artist of colour, so I focused my attention on stage management. But again, it was the non-white companies that were seeking my skills not the white dominant ones.”

Archie, legendary Jazz musician, spoke about the challenges that present black artists face due to a lack of appreciation and support in the community:

“There is a lack of appreciation... we have artists in this country that need support... we have artists out there who are our best ambassadors for this city. We don't have the support within the community to support black musicians. We have a lot of artistic talent – actors, dancers, musicians, but there isn't enough acknowledgment and support... that's one of the reasons why I have the group called Evolution of Jazz Ensemble and I have this scholarship to help youth in the community because it can be expensive and challenging without support.”

As an emerging artist, Aisha expressed the need for young artists to have more opportunities to showcase their talent and gain exposure, especially in different communities:

“I think having new artists perform for a crowd is a great thing. If [communities] don't experience emerging artists and their fresh new talent, then all they're going to be use to is the same old artists they hear twenty four-seven”.

#### *4. Language as a Barrier*

For Jimmy, a Chinese immigrant and visual artist, his challenges were not racial or ethnic discrimination but overcoming feelings of isolation due to language and cultural barriers as he settled in Canada:

“At the time my English was poor, communication with people was difficult. I attended some art group activities, but I couldn't express my idea clearly... I couldn't understand totally what other people say because my language barrier. I have given up some chances to attending art group or community gatherings. This resulted in some kind of isolation... and missing some information.”

Language as a barrier was also one of the core issues raised in the online survey, as is evidenced with these excerpts.

“Language barriers: knowing where and how to get connected to resources.” – *Respondent from Child, Youth and Family Organization, Agency or Group*

“Language is a barrier: most of the immigrant artists do not speak good English; and access is a barrier: "Mr./Ms. nobody" in Canada, unable to start their "art life/performing life.” – *Respondent from Immigration and Settlement Organization, Agency or Group*

“Language barriers and cultural norms may lead to participants being less vocal and take less ownership in the program.” – *Respondent from Arts and Culture Organization, Agency or Group*

“Their language barrier and lack of Canadian experience may hinder them from entering the main stream industry.” - *Respondent from an Immigration and Settlement Organization*

### 5. Limited Funding and Lack of Information about Available Funding

The issue of funding being inaccessible or limited was a recurring theme throughout the interviews. Two of the informants, Aisha and Jimmy, were unaware whether or not there was any funding available to them. Even though Jimmy has been living in Toronto for the past ten years, he has little knowledge on who to approach for funding or how to gain access and information of funding opportunities for immigrant and culturally diverse artists.

From the online survey:

“Inaccessibility to public funding or grants for music recording/production and distribution, rehearsal facility, entertainment production and artistic development.” – *Mid-career Artist, West African heritage*

“Funding, being a lack thereof! Someone needs to help the artist get more funding not to mention the lack of resources in Scarborough. I right now am working with six low income women in a program called FLY to help them throw events. Getting to the point, art needs funding to make these types of things happen.” – *Well Established Artist, Scottish French Canadian heritage*

When asked about funding, Archie remarked that funding opportunities are available with some grants for certain ethnic groups. He felt that funding still remains a major issue because it is limited. However according to Charles, the bigger issue is the great discrepancy in funding which favors traditional and entrenched arts companies and institutions rather than community arts programs and non-traditional artistic expression:

“...if you look at any funding programs, Toronto Arts Council, Canada Arts Council, Ontario Arts Council and you look at what’s in Community [arts] funding... it doesn’t fit properly. The money’s not there. Not the same as in the Visual Arts or Literature... So Community Arts, I would suspect is in a very intense battle... The arts funders, I think, are sometimes very much weighted towards the social biases in support of the arts... look at the money the National Ballet School gets compared to the funding that artists of colour get... [the] ballet is seen as the pinnacle of Western dance, and Western dance is seen as the pinnacle of dance the way the funding is set up. So of course the National Ballet is always going to get more than South Asian dance, African-based dance... I think that the current model doesn’t help us shift to recognize how to actually support the importance of diverse artistic expression.”

### 6. Challenges with Networking

Three of the key informants identified networking opportunities as a challenge. Aisha expressed that one of her biggest challenges as a young emerging artist of colour has been networking. Although she feels that she does not lack the confidence necessary to approach people to market herself, the opportunities to network and the ‘art’ of networking can often be a difficult process:

“The challenges or barriers I have faced as an artist of color in Toronto I think would have to be networking. I believe I have the appropriate skills to be able to put myself out there,

but sometimes it isn't as easy as it seems. The people or person you are networking with need to be very interested in what you have to offer. I think sometimes I'm not taken as seriously as I want people to take me. I have a very strong passion for what I do and I want to get myself out there as much as I can, and show people how determined I really am about my art forms."

Ray found that as an immigrant wanting to build a career in the arts and cultural sector, a major challenge is the lack of networking opportunities to make connections and seek out available resources to integrate or establish himself as an artist. He remarked that immigrant artists have no or limited knowledge of networking, where to go for information, and how to access the available resources in the arts sector.

"When I came to Toronto I was trying to position myself as a stage manager. I had no idea how to go about setting myself up as an actor. Finding a proper agent, basically I got nowhere. Then again, I did not know how to go about it. What to do, how to go about it. I had no connections in the community... Networking was difficult because I had no contacts... Understanding the way the system worked I had no clue. I was not prepared for that... [H]ow the system works that it's through contacts you have to go out there. You have to be seen, spend money even if you don't have it. You have to be at the shows, opening nights, just being present. The problem was that I didn't know that I had to do that... And networking is vital and its consistent networking as well it's not just meeting someone but it's following up and unless you have something to offer it becomes dubious for people to help."

Without proper resources and knowledge being easily available and accessible to immigrant and culturally diverse artists within their community, artists of colour are unable to build their networks and establish themselves in an arts profession. This can also create feelings of discouragement and the feeling that the work of immigrant and culturally diverse artists is of lesser value in the Canadian context.

### *7. Need for Meaningful Intercultural Interactions and Dialogue*

Issues surrounding the need for meaningful interactions and intercultural dialogue were raised by five of the informants both in the academic and community arts context. Specifically, Charles, Lecturer for Cultural Pluralism in the Arts (CPA) at the University of Toronto – Scarborough Campus, saw the lack of intercultural stories and histories being shared in classrooms as a barrier that must be overcome:

"...one time I quoted Daphne Odjig, the Aboriginal artist who's compared readily to Picasso and it's that not just by critics. I am not an art historian but I did bring a DVD about her work into class. Half of the class was studying art history and they never heard of her. She is one of the most profound Canadian artists and they never heard of her... we know about the Canadian group of seven, why don't we know about Norval Morrisseau or Daphne Odjig? So it really becomes a dilemma that folks in the arts are not familiar with. Every year in my class I ask my students and I've been teaching for eight years. I ask [students] in their formal education who have they read? Have they read aboriginal authors, maybe one or two hands go up. African descent, same thing. South Asian, same

thing. Middle Eastern same thing. Asians, same thing. Gay and lesbian that they know about, same thing. White women, same thing. White men, all hands... So when we go through this exercise, they realize how narrow their education has been... when you think of it at the academic level, some of these and not just my campus but imagine a lot of the literary magazines will likely have people from university on there and if they're not teaching it and they're clearly not, they don't see the value and they don't get the reference points... why don't you diversify a bit of what you're doing so that you can show that there's wealth in other cultures "

Charles went on to discuss an Aboriginal arts presentation he attended where several organizations spoke about the need in creating art that reflects the lived experiences of Aboriginal communities:

"There were these artists who were saying we are going to bring back the spirit of Aboriginal people through the arts and so we're challenging all this stuff that surrounds us all the time... the notion of social transformation was integral to each of them, and this was Harbourfront, SoundScreens and the Ottawa Art Gallery. It was amazing that those three venues had taken the principles that Sarah Roque talked about and put that into their programming with Aboriginal people. We should have that everywhere. We can't tell Aboriginal people, you can't talk about Canada's past with racism. That shapes Aboriginal art. How do you write about stories on reserves if you're not making any reference to residential schooling, or tax laws or self determination? So it's about the lens of how we see Canada, what lens we see it through and sharing the cultural factors that shape our meanings."

Through this example of Aboriginal art, Charles expresses a need for space to be created within the arts community to develop artistic works that is sincere and true to the stories of the diverse communities in Canada.

Similarly, Archie addressed the need for diverse histories to be taught in school. He shared his story of dropping out of school at an early age because of not learning about and hearing stories that reflected his community:

"...I was tired of opening up a book when it was a history program and when they talk about Africa they show black Africans with a bone in their nose, a plate in their lip and a fig leaf... I have never seen anyone on College, or Dundas, or Spadina that ever looked like that... I just had to get out into the world and start creating... the biggest issue is that the history is not documented and not taught in the schools."

Archie continued by expressing the current need for students in school today to have educational and arts programming that reflects diverse cultural backgrounds:

"It is so important for other students to also understand the contributions of Black artists. Black history is not enough. The other communities need to be made aware of our history. And I think generations today are pretty much aware of what's happening but they still have to search for it. They have go out and discover it for themselves at the library. I think

all the communities need to be exposed. They all need help. We need to figure out a way to bring all of them together...”

Aisha spoke about the importance of arts and cultural programming reflecting the diverse cultural backgrounds that exists in the communities of Toronto and Scarborough. “You can’t have arts without culture. Every culture has an art, whether it is dance, music, paintings, clothing... having programming that portrays cultural arts and diverse backgrounds brings everyone in, allows everyone to enjoy the cultures of the world.”

From the informants’ responses, it is clear that creating and fostering opportunities for meaningful dialogue across cultures would be instrumental in cultivating the intercultural openness necessary in the arts and community-arts sector. Sharing cross-cultural stories and experiences is considered significant, as this approach is seen as way to create space for dialogue across cultures.

### *8. Importance of Youth Opportunities in the Arts*

Some positive experiences shared by the informants illustrated the importance of providing opportunities for youth to develop themselves as artists and pursue career oriented growth within the arts and culture sector. Arts programming can provide experiential learning opportunities for youth to explore their options, interests and build upon their strengths. Marjorie described the growth of an immigrant youth who was hired to be part of her staff:

“That particular facilitator started in our first year at Parkdale and couldn’t speak at all. She was so terrified and I’m happy that in our last program, I put her on pay scale on par with my other assistants and she had grown into that role. Her skills had grown so much, her confidence had grown so much and her contribution was as equal to the others. And the beauty of it is that my professional assistant facilitators also recognized that.”

Archie spoke of the importance in providing creative outlets for youth through music and the challenges that inner city schools face that have no or limited music programs:

“They have no instruments. They need a clarinet. They need a piano. They need a set of drums. All these instruments are important. I go to other schools, like a school up in Rosedale and they have all these new instruments. But the inner city schools have nothing. As a matter of fact, I went to one school and the teacher had to give his students money for lunch. Imagine? Some students don’t even have money to eat. The families don’t have and they are struggling. And they wonder why kids are running around the streets and doing drugs. It’s because they have too much idle time. If they had instruments where they can create music that would give them some incentive instead of leaving school and having nothing to do.”

Charles addressed the benefits youth experienced in the Black Perspective community youth program he established in Regent Park, which involved working with professional artists experienced in a variety of disciplines including visual arts, writing, poetry, popular music and

theatre. The benefit to the youth was that they were given the opportunity to learn and adapt their knowledge to create their own work and share it with the community. Charles describes:

“What was really enjoyable was giving the youth a creative outlet at a community level and watching them produce work that they wrote and then to bring people in to hear them perform was so wonderful. So we had professional artists like, Lillian Allen do a workshop and Dionne Brand. So it was that, here were these writers who are writing very seriously coming in and working with the youth and their community around writing. “Call me coloured” was a film produced that featured Lillian Allen reading one of her poems. What was so great about it was that the creative outlet gave the youth an opportunity to hear work by professional artists working in poetry, visual arts and creative music components, but sincerely allowed an open ground where they created their own stuff. That was brilliant.”

The benefit of creating programs that allow youth to delve into a range of disciplines along the arts spectrum is that they are given that accessibility and freedom to broaden their skills and choose an avenue they want to pursue, thus, being given the chance to discover where their interests and passion lies. Charles referred to this process:

“We did not base it on the notion that professional artists would come in and tutor folks to be artists. We really went out and said we anticipate that the individuals who join the program will be creative in their own respect and yes we’ll have workshops for them and yes we’ll bring in writers and musicians to help them, but it’s not about those names it’s really about what those individuals in the program can do with that inspiration.”

Ray described the importance of young artists being knowledgeable in all areas of theatre if they are hoping to have a sustainable career in the field:

“Its not enough to just be an actor, I would say you have to be multifaceted, you have to be an actor, you have to be a writer, just be able to do all kinds of things if you want to continue working in theatre and then you can get the work.”

Marjorie also spoke of how this process of experiential learning allows youth to explore different career options. This is seen as broadening their experience as they can learn about all aspects of arts training in a theater context rather than merely taking on an actor’s role. One of her youth identified that she wanted to take on the role of director which allowed for a challenging, but valuable, opportunity to grow. As Marjorie puts it, “it’s good to remember we’re offering the youth an opportunity to learn.”

## Conclusion and Recommendations

### *Conclusion*

The interviews conducted with the key informants illuminate some of the challenges and barriers that immigrant and culturally diverse artists face as they build careers in the arts and culture sector in Toronto and Scarborough. The interviews reveal the need for an open discourse and in-depth analysis of the current racial, ethnic and linguistic landscape present in the arts sector that affects the lived experiences of artists, art professionals and cultural workers. Such discourse could start with issues such as: the lack of ethno-racial representation, stereotyping, difficulty gaining recognition, language barriers, funding and networking opportunities, and the need for arts and cultural programming for children and youth that facilitate intercultural dialogue.

Toronto remains the most ethno-culturally diverse city in Canada and one of the most diverse cities in the world. According to Statistics Canada, visible minorities will form more than half the population of the GTA by 2017. Given the increasing diversity of our population, the need to better understand the experiences of immigrant and culturally diverse artists, art professionals and cultural workers is clearer than ever. In identifying and effectively addressing these artists' needs, barriers to inclusion can be identified and dismantled, inclusive arts practices and programming can be established, and better strategies to connect artists of diverse cultural backgrounds with existing services and opportunities can be provided.

### *Recommendations*

The following are recommendations based on the key issues, challenges and barriers expressed during the interviews:

- Continue to request, encourage and support diverse stories, representations and artistic forms that reflect the diverse cultural voices of Canada's artists to challenge current stereotypes and race-related representations.
- Review current practices in the selection processes of funding arts programs and the recruitment of artists in performing arts.
- Encourage arts institutions and organizations to be more inclusive of the particular needs of newcomer artists.
- Establish a platform for immigrant and culturally diverse artists to showcase their arts within the public sphere and receive recognition for their work, creating equal opportunities for emerging and existing artists from diverse cultural backgrounds.
- Provide mentorships, skill development, and events for emerging and existing artists from diverse cultural backgrounds to communicate and share their needs, experiences, and ideas of establishing a career.

- Explore the overt and subtle language issues that can often impair the interaction between immigrant artists and their new community.
- Increase financial support to organizations and artists that support non-traditional art forms and arts programming that foster intercultural dialogue and artistic expression to help address ‘the undervaluing of arts and culture’.
- Create networking events that offer opportunities for immigrant artists of diverse cultural backgrounds to build connections in the arts community.
- Find better strategies to outreach to immigrant artists and artists from diverse cultural backgrounds with information about existing and available funding sources, services and opportunities.
- Establish opportunities for meaningful intercultural dialogue where non-immigrant artists and audiences can learn about diverse artistic practices and build intercultural understanding through the arts across cultures.
- Increase funding in the community arts sector to provide youth, specifically those in underserved areas, opportunities for growth through arts and cultural programming.

## Appendix A: Key Informant Interview Question Guide

Your narrative will help us:

- Identify barriers and challenges to inclusion of newcomer and artists from diverse cultural backgrounds in the community-arts and arts and cultural sector in Toronto and Scarborough.
- Discover ways arts organizations can best support and work with newcomer artists and artists from diverse ethno-cultural and racial backgrounds.
- Learn the importance of recognizing traditional and non-traditional artistic and cultural practices that reflect diverse ethno-cultural and ethno-racial experiences.

### Questions:

1. Please tell me your name, age and cultural background.
2. Describe the type of arts and culture you practice?
3. How long have you been practicing this art or cultural form? (in general and in Canada)
4. In your opinion, what challenges or barriers have you faced as an artist of color/ immigrant artist in Canada? Scarborough? Toronto?
  - a. Do feel that you have experienced discriminatory practices from institutions? (explain)
  - b. What are some of the problems or negative experiences you've had in working with organizations/institutions outside of your community?
5. What are some of the positive experiences?
6. What has to be in place for these experiences to be positive?
7. What are some of the barriers or negative experiences you've had in accessing funding?
  - a. Are there funding programs or services not being offered that would be useful to you, your organization and/or your community?
8. How do you think your artistic practice has been shaped by living in Scarborough/Toronto and in Canada general?
9. What can and should established arts organizations, like the Scarborough Arts Council, be doing to support artists-of-color, newcomer artists, and Aboriginal artists and their organizations?
10. How do you feel your work and your organization can better contribute to the arts and culture sector in Ontario or in Canada general?
11. In your opinion, why is it important for arts and cultural programming to reflect diverse cultural backgrounds for children and youth?
  - a. Do you work on community-based arts initiatives or events?
  - b. Are you interested in working in the community-arts sector?

## Appendix B: Key Informant Interview Consent Form

### Key Informant Interview Consent Form

#### *Creative Mosaics: Mentoring in Community Arts & Cultures – A Needs & Capacity Assessment*

*Creative Mosaics: Mentoring in Community Arts and Culture – A Needs and Capacity Assessment* is a one-year collaborative initiative, funded by the Ontario Trillium Foundation. This assessment was created to identify the need for and respond to the lack of culturally inclusive arts and culture programming available to newcomers, children, youth and culturally diverse communities in Scarborough. The goal of the assessment is to achieve a fully developed proposal with the capacity for arts and cultural programming that will involve mentorship and intergenerational components, provide learning opportunities in the arts and the exploration of diverse cultural identities and practices; and also to discover how arts organizations can best support artists from diverse cultural backgrounds.

I am inviting you to participate in this key informant interview to better understand the experiences of artists from diverse cultural backgrounds and immigrant artists living and working in Scarborough and Toronto. Your story will help us:

- Identify the barriers to inclusion of artists of diverse cultural backgrounds.
- Discover ways arts organizations can best support and work with artists of diverse cultural backgrounds.

**If you consent in this study, the interview will take about 30-45 minutes and the session will be audio-taped. Your participation is completely voluntary. You may withdraw from this study at any time, you may refuse to answer any question(s) but remain in the study and you may exercise the option of removing your data from the study.**

All information obtained in this study will be kept **confidential and anonymous**. Names will be replaced with a made-up name in the final report, **unless you would like to be identified**. Records of participation and information gathered from this research project will be stored in a secure place. The Program Coordinator, Research Assistant and the project Steering Committee will be the only people who will have access to this information.

Please understand that your words may be quoted directly. With regards to being quoted, please initial next to any of the statements that you agree with:

	I agree to be quoted directly, with my name.
	I agree to be quoted directly if my name is not published (I remain anonymous).
	I agree to be quoted directly if a made-up name (pseudonym) is used.
	I do not agree to be quoted directly.

**By signing this consent form, you are indicating that you fully understand the above information and agree to participate in this study.**

Participant's signature \_\_\_\_\_  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Interviewer's signature: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_