

## Case study five: Canada: National Arts & Youth Demonstration Project, Mc Gill

### University

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### Aims

To explore art programmes as an alternative pathway to enhancing the life chances of children and youth in lower income communities in the country.

### Project outline

The *National Arts and Youth Demonstration Project (NAYDP)* was a three-year demonstration study, initiated in 2001 and implemented in five sites across Canada, in which the aim was to explore art programmes as an alternative pathway to enhancing the life chances of children and youth in lower income communities in the country.

Areas for exploration were based around the questions:

- Can community-based organizations successfully recruit, engage and sustain the participation of children and youth in structured art programs?
- Does involvement in art programs demonstrate positive outcomes with respect to child and youth psychosocial functioning?
- Are there spill over effects of children's participation in programs on families, schools, and communities?

### **Research methods**

Case study, interview, action research, focus groups and stories and narrative

### **Results**

The profile of drama has been raised significantly as Ministry of Education and Government bodies have shown greater interests and willingness to accept drama as part of the education process.

### **Main Impact**

This project has had a very positive regenerative impact at the local level, extending from student to family to community. Within the children it has been observed that there is increased confidence, pride, self awareness, interest in the arts, respect for others, and engagement in the community. Parents and the community interviewed also reported similar changes. For the artists who were partners in this project, their participation acted as a catalyst, expanding and infusing their existing arts practices, developing additional skills and making stronger connection to their community.

## **Main Challenges**

Lack of finances, resources, student issues and assessment and evaluation issues.

Although the project was highly successful, how much of this success was due to the arts component or due to the structure of the program. Could the same results be derived with an after school sports or science or other programs that provided, transportation to and from, snacks, and caring interested adult supervision in a safe environment?