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# Jamii's Impact: A Self-Study Report

## Opportunities, Impact, and Next Steps

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Report written by: Tanjin Ashraf



Photo © Tanjin Ashraf

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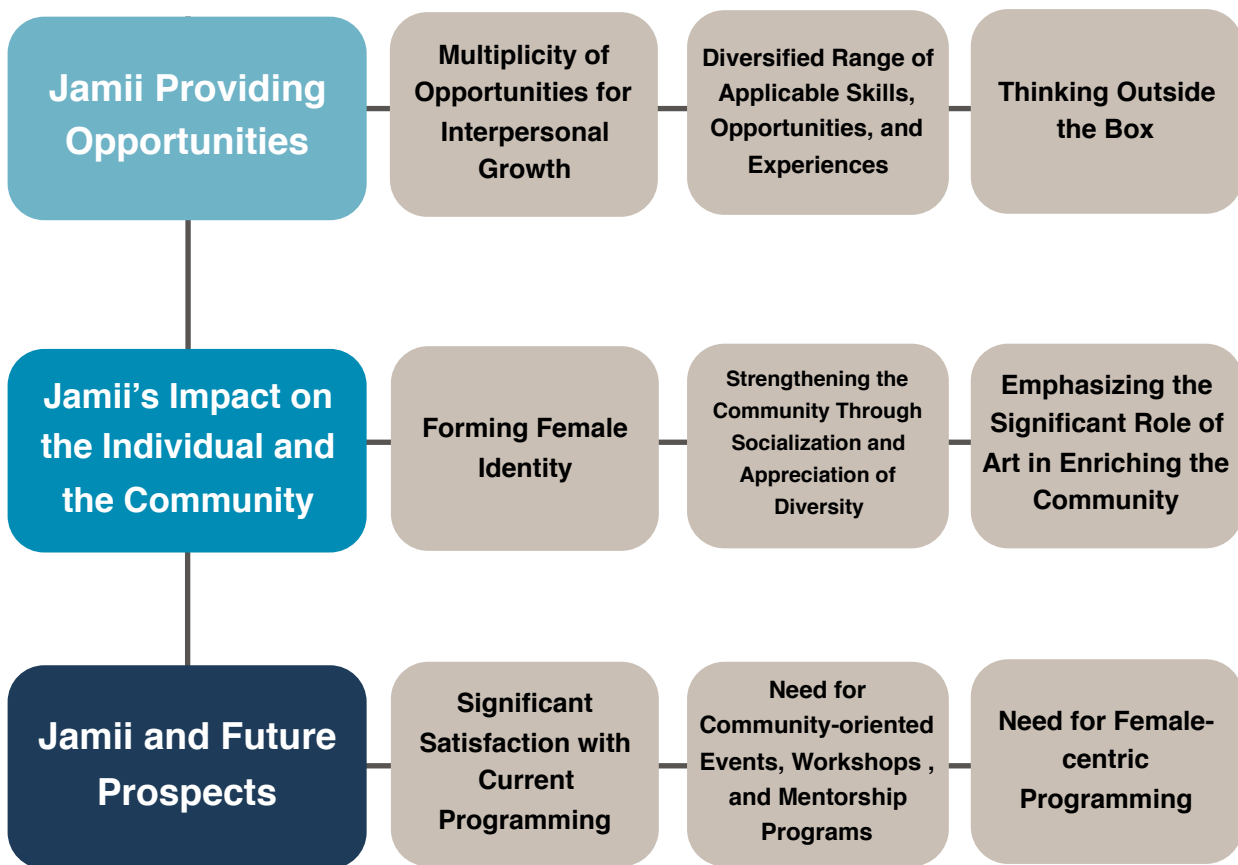
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## Executive Summary

As Jamii is nearing its 10th anniversary, it has become imperative to assess its impact on the Esplanade community. Building on previous findings, the purpose of this report is to capture the impact of Jamii and its programming in a more comprehensive manner. 20 interviews were conducted in 2019 to collect data on the impact of Jamii programming. The findings from this report will inform future programming such as *LAINI*, an initiative to encourage young women to affirm their capabilities to become tomorrow's creative leaders.

The introduction covers Jamii's mandate, information on The Esplanade community, and the Jamii's programming over the years. Next, this report outlines the findings from the qualitative study. The data for this report was collected through 20 one-on-one qualitative interviews which were conducted between July to September 2019. There were 3 categories and 9 themes that were extracted from the content analysis:



The report concludes with next steps which includes eight key needs Jamii will address, and imperative considerations based on participant input from the study.

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# Introduction

## Purpose and Contributors

As Jamii is nearing its 10th anniversary, it has become imperative to assess its impact on the Esplanade community. In the past, Jamie conducted a short survey in 2017 which yielded three themes: Jamii offers a unique opportunity to make arts; Jamii's programming is inclusive; and Jamii's programming is a catalyst for community-building.

Building on previous findings, the purpose of this report is to capture the impact of Jamii and its programming in a more comprehensive manner. 20 interviews were conducted in 2019 to collect data on the impact of Jamii programming. The findings from this report will inform future programming such as *LAINI*, an initiative to encourage young women to affirm their capabilities to become tomorrow's creative leaders.

The Principal Investigator of this project and report is Isorine Marc. Isorine is Jamii's Executive and Programming Director. Isorine obtained her Masters Degree in Performing Arts Management in France and has since acquired international work experience in arts organizations such as The Paris Conservatoire (France), L'École des Sables (Toubab Dialaw, Senegal), Le Centre National Chorégraphique Mathilde Monnier (France), Ausdance Queensland (Brisbane, Australia), and fFIDA-TIDF 06 (Toronto). Isorine was CORPUS' Artistic Producer from 2006 to 2018 and founded Jamii in 2011. The Esplanade neighbourhood is Isorine's home and she is a passionate advocate for her community.

This report was prepared and written by Tanjin Ashraf. Tanjin has been living in the Esplanade community for the past 22 years. She joined Jamii because she heard about its empowering programming and saw the beautiful art installations throughout the neighbourhood. Her involvement with Jamii includes being a camera assistant for the 'At-Heart' film project and being a member of the CanStage working committee. Tanjin completed her undergraduate degrees in psychology and education in 2015, and finished her Master of Education in Educational Leadership and Policy degree in November, 2019. She loves travelling and has taught in China, Taiwan, South Korea, and England. She is currently residing in Melbourne, Australia and pursuing a PhD degree in Teacher Accountability Policy.

## About Jamii

Jamii (Swahili for "community") is an arts organization with the intent of building community and nurturing young women in leadership. It has a charitable status and was founded in 2011 by Isorine Marc.

By creating shared memorable arts-based experiences, Jamii is on a mission to bring Esplanadians closer together to form greater social cohesion and bonded community. Since 2011, Jamii has produced over 100 events, engaged more than 1700 people in creative processes, worked with over 150 artists, and reached 15,000 audience members and 30,000

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exhibit viewers. Jamii receives the support of Canada Council for the Arts, Ontario Arts Council, Toronto Arts Council and Canadian Heritage.

In 2014, Jamii produced the Crombie Park Basketball Court Mural – now a Toronto landmark and one of the most photographed court in Canada.

In 2019, Jamii’s docu-film “At Heart, Citizens of The Esplanade” was presented the Public History Award by Toronto Heritage. More than 150 people participated in the creative process of this project.

Even though Jamii is based in The Esplanade community, downtown Toronto, the organization is connected to the world: Throughout the past ten years, we have offered international experiences to youths - Cambodia (2011), China (2015) and South Africa (2017).

Since 2018, Jamii’s projects have connected communities throughout the Province of Ontario, Canada, especially with “The Stories The Wind Carries”. In 2020, Jamii is initiating projects with artists and socially minded individuals and organizations in Kenya, expanding its connections to the African community.

## **About The Esplanade**

In 1976 The Esplanade - a downtown Toronto planned community - was created with a pioneering vision of diversity. Today it is home to a very diverse population - with Esplanadians of all ages, abilities, household incomes and cultural backgrounds living together. They come from distant horizons, and yet together we live a harmonious and friendly day-to-day life.

However, with such a wide diversity, how do we ensure that intercultural understanding prevails; that economical disparity does not build walls between families; that both people with special needs and seniors are engaged and connected; and that all young people have an opportunity to express their unique voices?

Jamii believes that part of the solution is to offer inter-generational programming that is free and accessible by all, along with an inclusive, accepting and welcoming environment where all people can connect, gather and create together. Jamii believes that offering both access and engagement opportunities in the arts contributes to a more cohesive, united and supportive community.

## **Jamii Programming Over the Years**

These are the Jamii programs that are cited in the interviews. You can find more info on each project on Jamii’s website: <https://www.jamiiesplanade.org/projects>

### **2011 – Dance on The Esplanade**

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Jamii partnered with dance/theatre company CORPUS to present 'Machina Nuptialis' in Crombie Park for a series of three evenings of performance. 300 people attended.

### **2012 – Transhumance**

Jamii partnered with dance/theatre company CORPUS to present "Transhumance" during Toronto Nuit Blanche 2012. The project invited eight people from the Esplanade community to learn the specific technique of "Les moutons", a CORPUS' show, and form a large flock of "sheep" along with professional performers. The show was then performed in Crombie park for an audience of 1000.

### **2013 – Catwalkers**

For four months, six committed women from The Esplanade worked with artist Anne Fauteux on the creation of a collection of wearable pieces. This unique collection pushes traditional boundaries of the fashion industry by creating outfits that are playful and stimulate interaction between people and urban space. Designers have used recycled material referring to sustainable and creative ways of living. The collection was presented to the public as part of the Catwalkers's Show, a choreographed site-specific performance featured during Nuit Blanche 2013. Choreographer Michael Caldwell worked with 30 diverse models - members of The Esplanade community - on the creation of this performance.

### **2014 – Crombie Park Basketball Court Mural**

Under the artistic leadership of artists Shalak Attack (lead), Julian Periquet, Bruno Smoky and Isorine Marc (curator/project director), a group of sixteen youth from The Esplanade designed and painted the Crombie Park Basketball Court Mural. To design the mural, the group of youth took into consideration the 100 design suggestions collected within the community. The mural has since gathered international recognition.

### **2015 - FORTY-ONE**

From our immediate neighbours to people living in neighbouring countries, there are unique, moving and beautiful stories to be discovered, to be shared, and to be enlivened. Each story is a component of an ensemble. Written by 53 students from The Esplanade, "FORTY-ONE Neighbours" is a portrait book of 41 people, each one currently living in one of the countries participating in the 2015 Toronto Pan Am/Parapan Am Games and having a personal link to The Esplanade neighbourhood. After its launch on April 14th, 2015, FORTY-ONE Neighbours became a source of inspiration for a visual arts installation, a dance performance and a mural project – all unveiled in Crombie Park park on July 4th 2015.

### **2015 – Queens of The Esplanade**

This project celebrated individuality and the power of imagination. Through dance, object theatre and storytelling 18 Queens and Princesses along with 12 Maestros transformed a simple premise into a magical and whimsical theatrical venue. Performed during Nuit Blanche 2015. This was a project in partnership with CORPUS and inspired by CORPUS' Camping Royal.

### **2016 – Patchwork Village**

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In the context of the 40th Anniversary of the site-plan approval of The Esplanade community, Jamii proposed to share the inspiring and moving stories of 40 fellow Esplanadians. Each of these stories were a component of an ensemble – a vital piece of a patchwork that composed the intangible cultural heritage of our Esplanadian community. These voices made up the social fabric of our community – a patchwork that connected people and tells the story of our collective memory.

### **2017 – FEETPRINT**

FEETPRINT is a multi-layered storytelling project that engaged artists and residents of The Esplanade community in a co-creative process to design over 150 shoes. This project offered participants an opportunity to share their personal stories to one another, and brought our diverse voices together: each participant were asked three questions as a source of inspiration for their design: Who am I? Where do I belong? How do I behave? This artist-led project is inspired by Markd't Celebrating Art on Sneakers.

### **2018 – At Heart, Citizens of The Esplanade**

More than 150 Esplanadians of all ages embarked, with filmmaker Ayelen Liberona and Joseph Johnson-Camí, on a co-creative process to produce a participatory community-engaged docu-film. "At Heart, Citizens of The Esplanade" shines a light on our neighbourhood, the St Lawrence, and invites people to reflect on the values that drive community development and city planning. 'At Heart' won the 2019 Public History Award from Heritage Toronto.

### **2019 - "I am me (Girl, I got you)"**

In 2018, a group of ten talented young women, under the artistic leadership of photographer Brianna Roye created a photography exhibition that was featured as an Open Exhibition in CONTACT, Photography Festival, and was displayed in May 2019 in Crombie Park. The exhibit, titled 'I am me (Girl, I got you)', invited viewers to push beyond the confines of society's image of women.

### **2019 – Kisanii Hub**

In 2019, Jamii launched the Kisanii Hub. 'Kisanii' in Swahili means "the one who makes arts". The Kisanii Hub is at once a mobile outdoor presenting venue, a creative lab that engages with locals, and a community hub in Crombie park.

## **Methodology**

The data for this report was collected through 20 one-on-one qualitative interviews. The principal investigator chose a qualitative approach because this method provided the participants with an opportunity to share detailed descriptions of their perspectives and experiences. The interview participants were chosen through convenience sampling. They all self-identify as female and have worked or been involved with Jamii on at least one project.

The interviews were held from July to September 2019 at public locations selected by the interviewer and interviewee. Interviewees provided written consent through email correspondence. They were provided with an interview protocol containing a list of open and



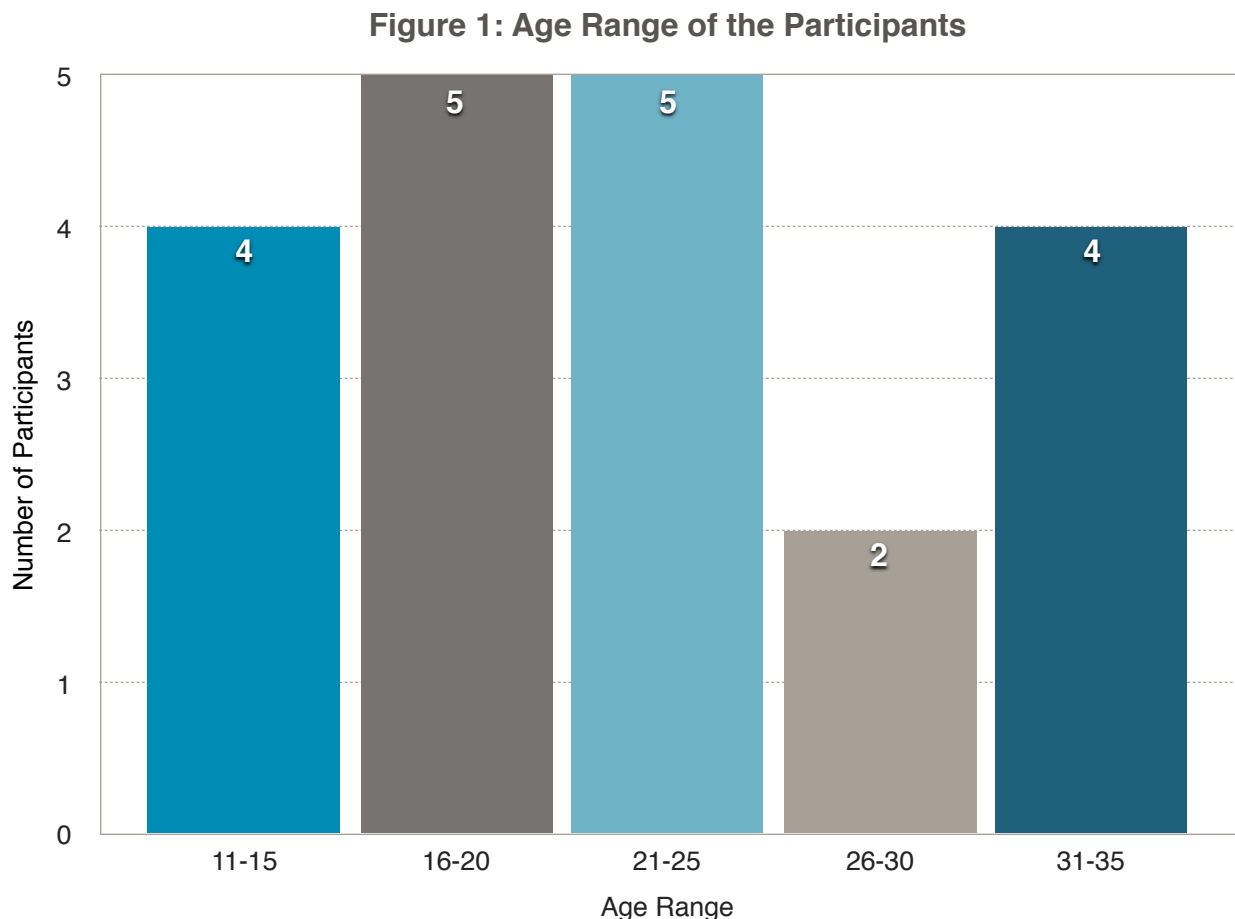
closed questions. The responses were recorded through written notes and audio recordings. Interviews spanned 30 to 60 minutes in length.

The 20 transcripts were manually coded and analyzed through conventional content analysis. Conventional content analysis is when codes and categories are extracted directly from the text. Content analysis itself is a widely used iterative technique in qualitative research to subjectively interpret the content of the text or data. The coded data was read thoroughly and repeatedly to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the data, and categories and themes were extracted accordingly.

Findings from this report were shared with the participants prior to disseminating them to the public. A focus group was held in November 2019 to discuss preliminary findings.

## Demographic Composition

Figure 1 illustrates the age range of the participants. They are between 10 to 35 years old with a relatively even distribution within that range.





Most of the participants grew up and live in the Esplanade neighbourhood as exhibited in Figures 2 and 3.

Figure 2: Do You Live in The Esplanade Neighbourhood?

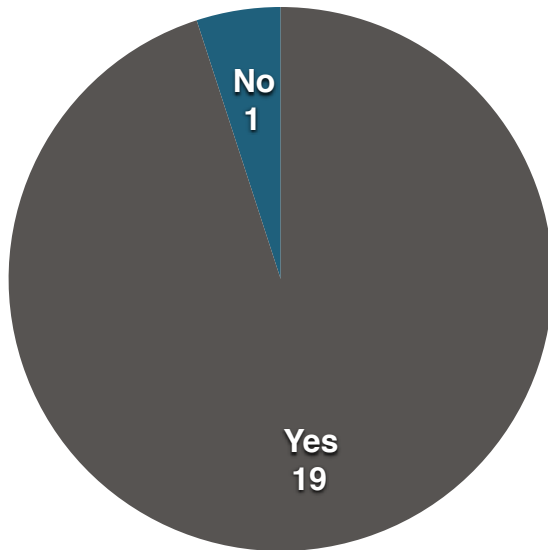
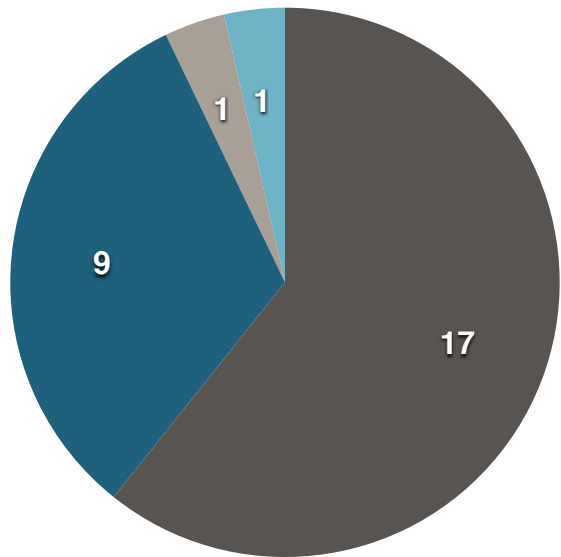


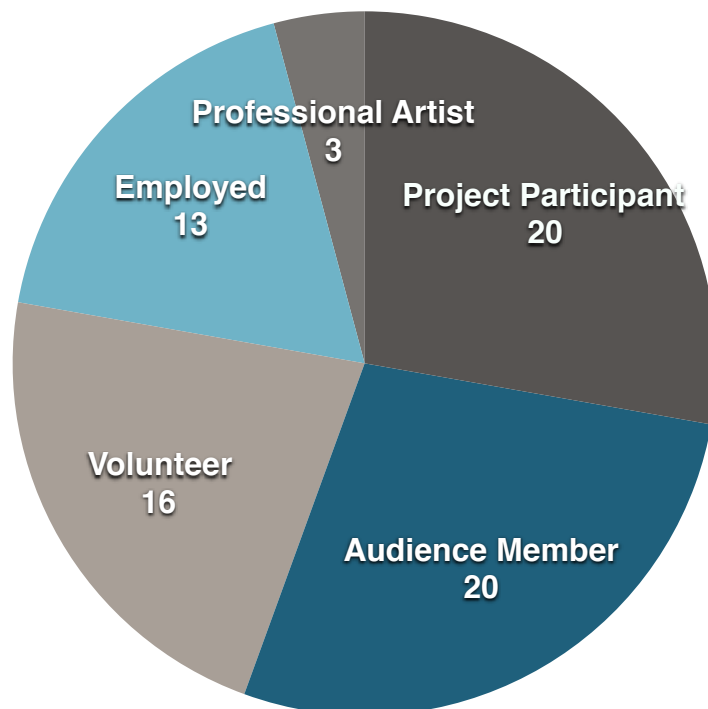
Figure 3: Connection to The Esplanade Neighbourhood



- Grew up in The Esplanade
- Born in The Esplanade
- Not from The Esplanade
- New resident in The Esplanade

Almost all of the participants had multiple types of involvement in Jamii (e.g., being an audience member and managing a project) as illuminated in Figure 4.

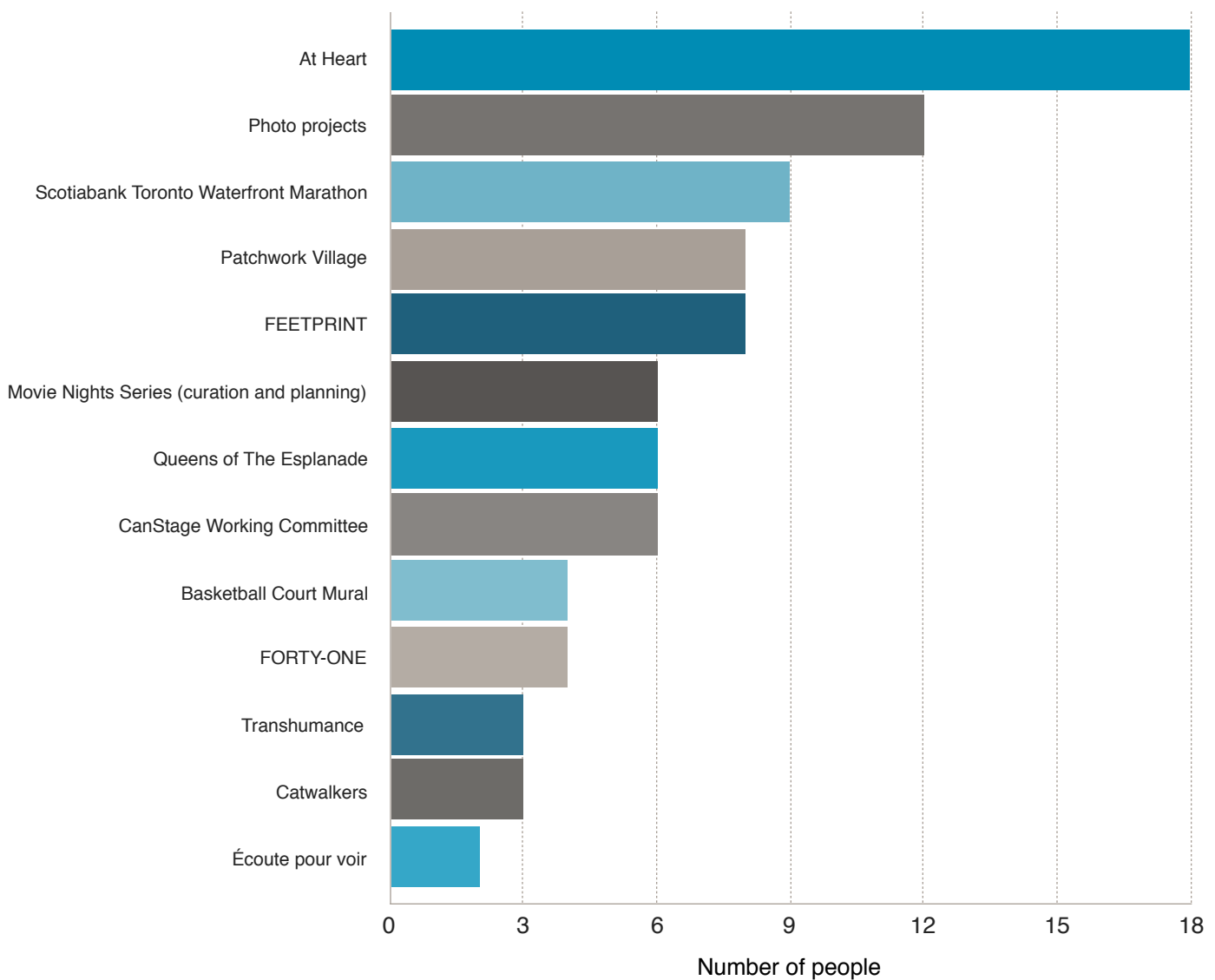
Figure 4: What is Your Connection to Jamii?



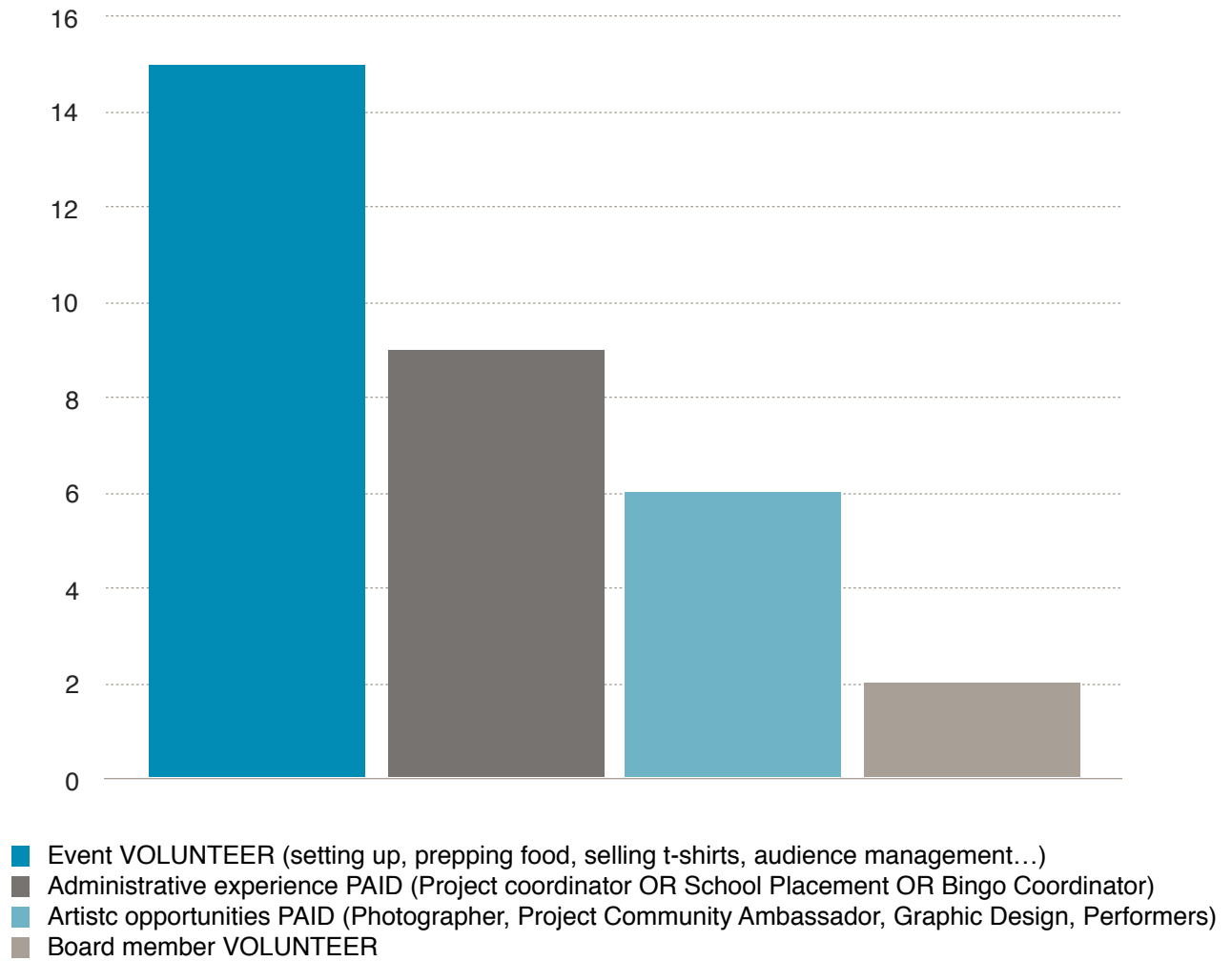
The participants come from a diverse range of ethnic backgrounds which include: Ghana, African descent; Palestinian and Syrian; Eritrean; Rwandan, Japanese and Bolivian; Bangladeshi; Caribbean, British; Canadian, Australian; Vietnamese, Chinese; Ghana, Native & Italian; Caucasian (British, Scottish); East Indian, Canadian; Caribbean; Somali; Nova Scotia ( Canadian); Caribbean; Trinidadian, Venezuelan, Greek, Macedonian, Chinese, Native, English ; Indigenous Canadian (Ojibway) / Scottish; and African-American/ African-Caribbean.

Figures 5 and 6 showcase the variety of Jamii events/projects and responsibilities participants were involved in.

**Figure 5: Projects/events Participants Were Involved In**



**Figure 6: Responsibilities of Participants in Projects/events**

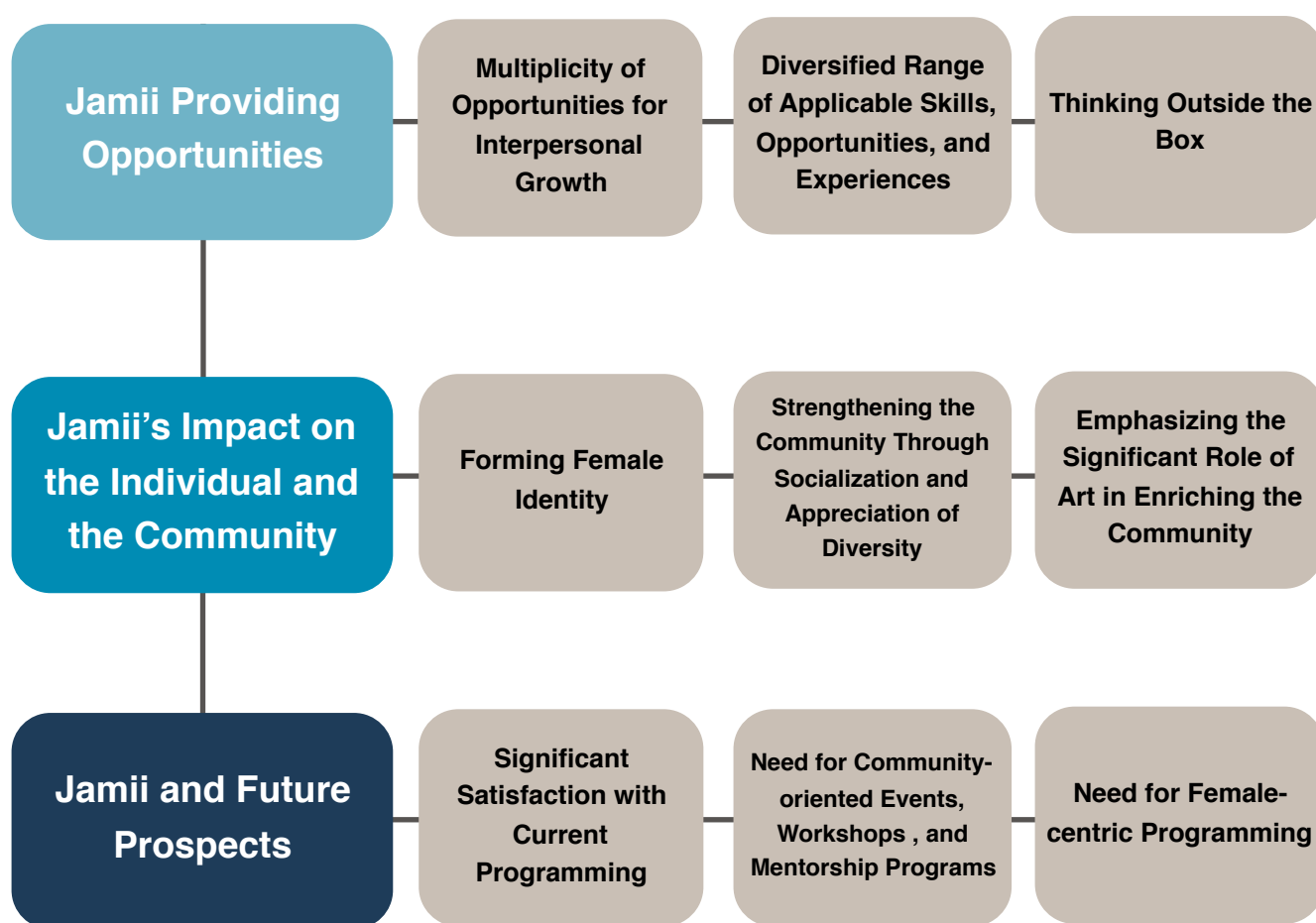


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## Findings

There were 3 categories and 9 themes that were extracted from the content analysis. The categories are based on the structure of the interview protocol and the participants' response which are discretely divided into the opportunities that Jamii has provided. All of these categories and associated themes are interrelated. There is no mention of participant numbers in regards to specific sentiments, because the emphasis is on the quality of the sentiments not the number of people, as this is one of the core tenets of a qualitative study. Figure 7 provides a visual summary of the categories and themes extrapolated from the data, followed by detailed descriptions of each theme.

Figure 7: Categories and Themes



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## Category 1: Jamii Providing Opportunities

### Multiplicity of Opportunities for Interpersonal Growth

Interview participants cited various Jamii programs and projects which contributed to their interpersonal growth. Some of the participants described how the Patchwork Village project provided opportunities for interpersonal growth, including gaining confidence to present in front of an audience, learning about the stories/narratives of fellow community members, and the chance to share their own stories with the community.

A few other participants emphasized how their knowledge and awareness of Indigenous cultures were enhanced through Jamii programming including Indigenous Week and Elder's Talk. One of them even mentioned how the experiential activities from Indigenous Week helped her connect with the Indigenous community in a way the education system has not been able to.

An important sub-theme is the opportunity for intimate (close-knitted) experiences. In addition to the programs /events mentioned, participants cited that Footprints, Écoute Pour Voir, At Heart and Jamii movie nights were programs that allowed them to have intimate experiences with the community.

### Developed a Diversified Range of Applicable Skills, Opportunities, and Experiences

The participants stated that they gained a wide range of skills, opportunities, and experiences. Table 1 below lists the skills the participants mentioned. They are divided four categories: (1) tangible skills and opportunities; (2) tangible professional skills; (3) intangible skills for socio-emotional wellbeing.

**Table 1: List of skills and opportunities that participants acquired through Jamii**

Tangible Skills and Opportunities	Tangible Professional Skills	Intangible Skills and Opportunities for Socioemotional Wellbeing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Travel opportunities</li> <li>• Creating graffiti</li> <li>• Photography</li> <li>• Film production</li> <li>• Discovering certain areas of the neighbourhood</li> <li>• Making new friends</li> <li>• Exposure to artists</li> <li>• Social capital</li> <li>• New working opportunities</li> <li>• How to organize events</li> <li>• Art skills (e.g., spray painting, acting skills),</li> <li>• Developing intrinsic interest in volunteering</li> <li>• Setting up a tent</li> <li>• Basic art theories</li> <li>• Getting volunteering opportunities</li> <li>• Exposure to the press</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grant writing</li> <li>• Project management</li> <li>• Problem solving</li> <li>• Public speaking</li> <li>• Setting up events,</li> <li>• Leadership skills</li> <li>• Administrative skills</li> <li>• How to art coordinate projects</li> <li>• Knowledge on arts funding and arts organizations</li> <li>• Being on a professional board (Jamii)</li> <li>• Branched out towards community projects and got out of comfort zone</li> <li>• Backstage experience</li> <li>• Arts management</li> <li>• Event coordination</li> <li>• Acting skills</li> <li>• Interviewing skills</li> <li>• Multitasking</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ‘Sense of belonging’</li> <li>• ‘Expressing herself’</li> <li>• Therapeutic</li> <li>• Being able to manage stressful situations</li> <li>• Healing</li> <li>• Independence</li> <li>• Self-confidence</li> <li>• Motivation to participate in arts-based activities</li> <li>• Pushed people out of their comfort zone to socialize</li> <li>• Helped with social anxiety</li> <li>• Handling stress</li> <li>• Patience</li> <li>• Persistence</li> <li>• Becoming openminded</li> <li>• Self-awareness</li> <li>• Becoming flexible</li> <li>• Becoming instinctive</li> <li>• Ability to connect with people</li> <li>• Helped create informed opinions</li> <li>• Made new friends</li> <li>• Built trust and confidence to share with others</li> <li>• Feeling empowered</li> </ul>

Not only did Jamii provide opportunities to develop diverse skills and gain experiences, participants also reported that they have been able to apply these experiences on a broad range of personal and professional aspects of their life including: schools settings; public speaking; independence in the workplace; youth committees; soliciting work references; customer service; managing other programs including karate classes; postsecondary admissions and programs such as forensic science and fashion design; networking; and project management in the workplace. One participant explained how her work with Jamii helped her in a career as a children and youth care practitioner (CYCP).

*As a CYCP you work with young people, children, as well as families. Jamii does all of that and so I feel that I have gained experience working with those groups of people. There is a lot of program planning that you have to do as a CYCP and Jamii has provided me with the opportunity to program plan events from start to finish which will be very beneficial experience for my future career.*

### Thinking Outside the Box

The participants commented on how Jamii programming helped them think ‘outside the box’ in addressing preconceived notions and redefining concepts and ideas. Below is a selection

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of excerpts to best represent the sentiments of the participants in relation to this theme. The excerpts touch upon the themes of reconceptualizing the notions of filmmaking, expression, being right or wrong, and creativity.

*[Participant] was able to share ideas, helped her create ideas outside the box that were important and meant something, able to work with diverse groups, she compared the diversity of the Young People's Theatre and Rosedale and with Jamii. She feels Jamii has more difference in opinion than the former.*

*[Participant] has been able to get the intrinsic value of volunteering. Because she works in education, thinking out of the box has helped her think beyond the confines of the classroom walls because education is going to look very different soon. She feels like she was able "to relay her ideas" and that is impactful.*

*[Jamii] opened me up to new art forms and I gained appreciation of the arts and better understanding of creative processes. Especially film, I used to have this misconception that filmmaking wasn't a real form of art somehow but now being part of a production team and working/watching the entire creative process, I can see that every part of film is artistic and creative.*

*Very left brained but with Jamii there's no right or wrong answer and she can do what she wants without worrying how it will turn out.*

*Definitely, when you transition to high school there is no time to do things you like doing so Jamii created a space for that and at a higher and professional level which pushed my capabilities further. It created a space to think critically about my own creativity.*

## **Category 2: Jamii's Impact on the Individual and the Community**

### **Forming Female Identity**

All 20 participants felt their voice, opinions, and creative ideas were heard during participatory projects, feedback sessions, and work and volunteer situations. Participants provided some powerful testimonials on how Jamii helped form their identity both personally and professionally, and helped empower them as females. This is one of the most impactful themes, especially given the age range of the participants (from adolescence to mid-adulthood) where they are at a pivotal stage for identity formation and empowerment. One participant commented on how Jamii helped cultivate her identity as a leader.

*Because of Jamii I am more confident when speaking to people I don't know. I have had a leadership role and I now feel like I can confidently be in charge and rely on myself. I have learnt to trust my judgement and not be afraid. I ask more questions now and I feel like I have become more open. I am usually very reserved but I feel that Jamii has broken my shell a little bit.*



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A few other participants explained how Jamii helped empower females in helping them solidify their identity formation.

*[Jamii helped me] blossom into the woman I am today.*

*I also realized that I don't need to rely on men to build things and lift heavy things. Us as women are fully capable of doing that and more importantly I am able to do that. I am more comfortable looking and following instructions and building things like a tent.*

*The photography project, "I am Me. Girl I Got You" highlighted female photographers which was good because they are under-represented.*

Lastly, Jamii has helped the participants with a variety of identity-related aspects. Figure 8 illustrates this finding.

Participants commented on how Jamii has helped bring the community together. 90% of the participants reported that they connected with new people through Jamii and have kept in touch with them ever since. The events are family-friendly so it helps bring families together. Below are a couple of excerpts illustrating how participants believe Jamii's programming has brought the community together.

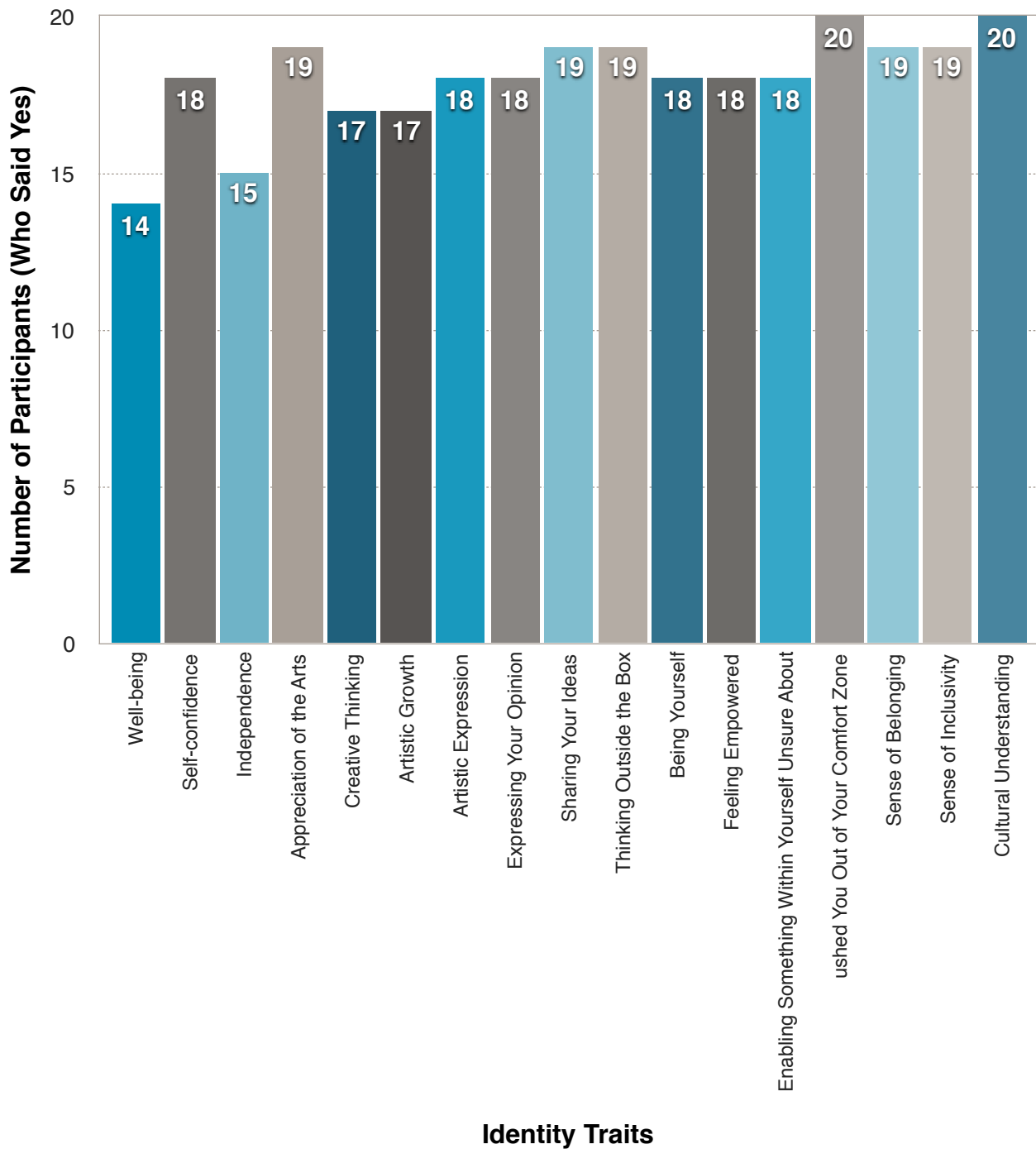
*Being with Jamii made me feel like I had a sense of belonging in the community, which i didn't feel like before, even though I grew up in the community. I felt more like an outcast, excluded, no fitting in. Jamii gave me another chance at being a part of the community.*

*Jamii is like the **heart of Esplanade**, always having good events that bring the community together.*

*I feel like Jamii has brought the community together in a positive way. All the Jamii events bring out a different audience from the community and it allows you to make new connections and gain new friends. Through going to Jamii events I personally have met so many different people and now when I walk down the Esplanade there are so many people I greet and people who greet me. Jamii really brings a sense of community and a sense of belonging to the Esplanade.*

*Jamii had a huge impact on the neighbourhood. [The participant] was going to move from the area because she felt unsafe but ever since Jamii started making events she feels that families are more comfortable and feel safer now and so does she.*

## Strengthening the Community Through Socialization and Appreciation of Diversity



*Built community, given the neighbourhood life, filled up the space The Esplanade lost in the past through events.*

A participant touched upon how Jamii has created a safe environment for families in the community.

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*Jamii had a huge impact on the neighbourhood. She was going to move from the area because she felt unsafe but ever since Jamii started making events she feels that families are more comfortable and feel safer now and so does she.*

A major sub-theme is how Jamii has helped the community become aware of the diversity of the neighbourhood and be appreciative of it. With the positives of diversity of the community, participants also commented on how Jamii helped them become aware of a diversity of issue in the neighbourhood including socioeconomic and accessibility barriers (including mental health and physical impediments), and racial discrimination. These findings have significant implications and relations to each other; **as the community gets stronger it can work together to eradicate these barriers in the neighbourhood.** As such, Jamii should continue creating programs and projects that help consolidate the community.

Here are a collection of excerpts which illustrate these themes.

*Strengthening the community through unity despite different backgrounds, we are stronger together. [Jamii has] created understanding, loving, supportive, non-judgemental space for talking as a woman, strength through sharing stories about exclusive women experiences.*

*Jamii is unique to The Esplanade something, so selflessly unique and committed to the community bringing out sides of people you wouldn't have known otherwise. I became more aware of mixed income homes and housing, racial issues, how to make art to look deeper into women's representation (especially through the curation process of the movie nights series).*

*[I became aware of] different cultures like Indigenous culture. I am also more open to learning about different cultures and the struggles they've gone through. I got to participate in a smudging ceremony and I learned about different plants and herbs Indigenous people use and what healing powers they have. Without Jamii I don't think I would have been able to become more aware of things like this.*

*Jamii focuses on people, differences in people, learn how to accept differences, and work together with the differences.*

*It has given people a voice, made the community welcoming and by showcasing how relaxed and peaceful it is there is an overall appreciation of the neighbourhood. It has brought people from all socio-economic classes together in one space and provided opportunities to mix and mingle which was not there before.*

### **Emphasizing the Significant Role of Art in Enriching the Community**

Participants reported that the arts-based programming significantly enriched the community. Seven participants believed the mural project in the basketball court impacted the community the most. One participant remarked how, "The mural at the basketball court has given us Esplanadians a sense of pride." Another participant said how the mural was a, "huge healing

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moment' because it helped fix the damages made to the court. The basketball court made one of the most significant impacts because it is a permanent installation which will made a long-term impact. This participant explains how Jamii opportunities exposed her to the arts:

*Through the theatre visits, I gained exposure to the world of arts I wouldn't have discovered on my own. It is a humbling experience especially as a person who grew up and lived on the Esplanade. Most of the time you would say how well you know your own neighbourhood but going to these theatres showed how I don't know everything and it was a highlight of my week. I'm proud to share what I know with my community. **It does create a [sense of] pride of the place where you live.***

Another participant commented on how exposure to Jamii's arts projects made her proud of her neighbourhood.

*I also have pride in the neighbourhood and spend time in it by being part of Jamii which I wasn't doing before.*

Some participants discussed how the 'At Heart' film project provided for community growth, including understanding new perspectives, explored important aspects including social construct and disability, brought forth voices that were usually underrepresented, and brought people together through the participatory filming process. Participants also commented on how the widespread recognition of the film helps bring the Esplanade community issues and values into the limelight.

## Category 3: Jamii and Future Prospects

### Significant Satisfaction with Current Programming

When asked what other programs participants would like to see happen in The Esplanade Neighbourhood, participants commented on how they want to see MORE of fashion and film projects, murals, LGTBQ2S+ programming, dance classes, photography projects. One participant also commented on Jamii should continue having a 'constant staple' such as the Kisanii Hub. The fact that participants want more of these projects implies they are satisfied with these projects already.

In addition to the satisfaction with programming, participants commented on how Jamii has also provided unique opportunities. 54% of participants commented on how they have not had the opportunity to participate on the projects they have been working with through Jamii outside of Jamii. Those who are new to the Esplanade commented on how there was no community engagement, opportunities to get to know their neighbours, or documentation of the history of the community (like Jamii did with 'At Heart'). One participant remarked,

*Jamii gave me a platform to practise, experiment, and gain confidence. Jamii helped me to "learn how to become in the creative process". I learned how to be satisfied with the journey rather than the end goal.*

### Need for Community-oriented Events, Mentorship Programs, and Workshops

Participants cited that they wanted to see more community-oriented programming, workshops and mentorships programs in Jamii’s future programming. This goes in line with how participants have been appreciative of Jamii’s efforts to increase socialization among the community, as these types of programs can further consolidate the community, and increases opportunities for people to meet and socialize with others, which is important because socialization mitigates social isolation. Table 2 explicates the specific types of programs and workshops participants anticipate in the future.

**Table 2: Workshops and mentorship programs participants wish to see**

Community-oriented Programming	Workshops	Mentorship Programs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community drives</li> <li>• Community garden</li> <li>• Sports activities (soccer tournaments, obstacle courses for adults)</li> <li>• Family-friendly block parties</li> <li>• Culturally-sensitive programming</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dance</li> <li>• Raising awareness of environmental sustainability</li> <li>• Meditation</li> <li>• Painting</li> <li>• Spoken word</li> <li>• Public speaking</li> <li>• Photography</li> <li>• Home economics</li> <li>• Guest speakers</li> <li>• Information sessions on how to obtain leadership positions</li> <li>• How to advocate for women and themselves</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tutoring programs</li> <li>• Connections with professionals and other leaders</li> <li>• Career mentorship</li> <li>• Female-oriented mentorship programs</li> </ul>

### Need for Female-centric Programming

All the participants emphasized how there needs to be female-centric programming. One aspect that was discussed during the interviews was the use of the David Crombie park space. Participants commented on how they use the park for casual activities including walks, spending time with friends, playing sports, reading, and relaxing. 85% of the participants said that Jamii enticed them to spend more time at the park and that it helped them feel more comfortable and safe. This is through Jamii’s art installations and even seeing a familiar face that participants met through Jamii.

Table 3 displays participants’ suggestions for female-centric programming in the park and in general.

**Table 3: Participants’ Suggestions and Support for Female Empowered Programs**

Programming in the Park	Programming in General
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community park cleanup</li> <li>• Nature projects</li> <li>• Culturally sensitive programming</li> <li>• Dance</li> <li>• Previous programming (Shakespeare in the Park, spoken word, drag queen story time)</li> <li>• Music activities</li> <li>• Pot luck</li> <li>• Reading clubs</li> <li>• STEAM-based programming – to address issue of female underrepresentation in STEAM, e..g, through Kisanii Hub</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Female mentorships</li> <li>• Girl groups</li> <li>• Female talking circles</li> <li>• Workshops on how to advocate for women and themselves</li> <li>• Trips to learn about each others’ cultures</li> <li>• Leadership opportunities for women</li> <li>• Projects where women are defying stereotypes./barriers (e.g., jobs that are thought to be male-dominated)</li> <li>• Guest speaker series</li> <li>• Showcasing female artists</li> <li>• Hands-on co-creative projects</li> <li>• Long-term accompaniment</li> <li>• Early-stage career support</li> <li>• More in-school programming</li> </ul>

## Next Steps and Conclusion

*To create leaders, you first have to foster community, then you bring on leadership skills and contribute shaping women as the leaders of tomorrow. Jamii has enabled The Esplanade's community's potential to be iconic: it has definitely raised the potential of our neighbourhood. Somehow, it brought its talents out. Excited to see what future programming of Jamii will be about.*

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This quote from one of the participants encapsulates the impact of Jamii, and also emphasizes two aspects that Jamii will focus on in its future programming: building leadership skills, female empowerment, and the nexus between the two. Figure 9 illustrates eight key needs Jamii will address in future programming.

#### **Figure 4: Needs Jamii Will Address**

In addition, Table 4 outlines key considerations in relations to next steps going forward.

An apt way to conclude is to point out an extraordinary aspect of Jamii - how it goes beyond arts-based programming and beyond community strengthening; it's about about humanity itself. Here are a few powerful testimonies showcasing just that.

*There is something pure and innocent to Jamii where you are shown that people want to bring value into their work and care about what they do.*

*Jamii is bringing a lot to youth growing up in dysfunctional homes. It raised me in ways my home couldn't.*





**Table 4: Key Considerations for Next Steps**

<b>Implementing Participant Feedback</b>	Jamii will consider the main ideas the participants contributed during the interviews (e.g., mentorship programs and more programming in the park).
<b>Creating Leadership Opportunities</b>	As emphasized in the findings, Jamii has established the tools required for networking by consolidating the relationships in the community. However, there were a dearth of mentions of getting opportunities to build leadership skills. Moving forward, Jamii will be building in leadership opportunities into its current and future programming.
<b>Addressing and Tackling Barriers for Women</b>	Jamii will be focusing significantly on programming that addresses and tackles barriers that females face. Violence and assault has increased in the St. Lawrence community (Toronto Police Service, 2019), there have been aggressive incidents against women including Indigenous women being verbally assaulted at David Crombie Park (Mauracher, 2019). Jamii believes it is essential to create a safe space for women as it is a rudimentary survival need.
<b>Inclusion of Males</b>	<i>As Jamii is moving forward with women in leadership, we should not forget to include young boys as it is important for them to see women in empowered roles so they can grow up respecting their position.</i> As mentioned in the participant excerpt above, it is important to respect all gender identities and Jamii will continue to build their programming while being inclusive of all races, genders, sexualities, etc.
<b>Working with Other Organizations and Communities</b>	The interview participants made some programming suggestions that are beyond Jamii's scope. If Jamii works with other organizations, then they would be able to collaborate to cover programming that is within Jamii's scope while the external organizations cover aspects that are out of scope (e.g., for a community cleanup, have an external organization facilitate the cleanup while Jamii implements an arts-based reflection activity).

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## References

Mauracher, J. (2019, June, 26). Indigenous drummers say they faced racist confrontation in Toronto park. *Global News*. Retrieved from <https://globalnews.ca/news/5433322/indigenous-drummers-confrontation-david-crombie-park/>

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