<u>Participatory Radio in Flemingdon Park</u>

Report of a Major Project submitted to the Faculty of Environmental Studies in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master in Environmental Studies, York University Ontario, Canada

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Submitted:

March 30th, 2015

Participatory Radio in Flemingdon Park
Major Project Report

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Foreword

1. Connection to Area of Concentration

This Major Project Report describes a project I developed and facilitated that explored participatory radio as process for engaging youth with critical thinking about the urban environment in the Flemingdon Park neighbourhood of Toronto.

The project provided an opportunity to synthesize and apply knowledge gained through my studies at FES. My Area of Concentration explored the intersections between municipal policy, participatory democracy, community development and youth engagement. The project allowed me to put this theoretical background into practice in the public sphere, and learn from the experience.

My FES coursework included studies of municipal politics, planning and policymaking, and exposed me to examples of participatory democracies around the world, notably Porto Alegre in Brazil (see Chapter 3). Background research on Toronto youth policy helped me to understand the socio-political context in which the project was carried out.

Developing and facilitating the workshops allowed me to test practical approaches to youth community engagement through radio. Adapting and iterating the workshops with input from participants gave me a deeper understanding of the participatory radio process.

In support of Learning Objective II.2, I explored a youth-directed, practical process for facilitating engagement with community through radio. My approach integrated aspects of popular education theory with workshop approaches developed at the Ontario Science Centre.

To support Learning Objective III.3, I explored a process that engaged youth in an exploration of the Flemingdon Park neighbourhood in a way that inspired reflection and action.

The Flemo Radio participatory radio process described in this report provides a basis for the development of future media-based, participatory youth programs.

2. Personal Context

My approach to participatory radio was influenced by my work at the Ontario Science Centre, which is adjacent to Flemingdon Park. I joined the OSC in 1997 as a summer educator. In this role, I worked with visitors, facilitating informal learning and leading

workshops and demonstrations. The OSC attracts a diverse group of visitors, and my experience working with the public increased my interest in facilitating public engagement with science, the environment and media.

I worked at the Ontario Science Centre until 2010, in roles including facilitator, program developer and multimedia producer. During the period 2006 to 2010, I also volunteered at Flemo Radio.

In 2006, I entered the MES Program at FES, registering in the program as a full-time and then as a part-time student until 2009. During my time in FES, I worked on the project at Flemo Radio that is described in this report.

In 2010, I was offered a fascinating, time-sensitive employment opportunity at the soon-to-open TELUS Spark Innovation Centre in Calgary. The opportunity to assist with the development of this new Centre, and the demands of my new position caused me to put the completion of my MES degree on-hold.

At TELUS Spark, I continued exploring the facilitation approach I had developed and tested at the Ontario Science Centre and at Flemo Radio. I trained staff to facilitate visitor engagement with the experimental, multimedia environment of TELUS Spark.

TELUS Spark encourages an interdisciplinary approach to learning that combines art, science and technology. For instance, stop motion animation stations, music making exhibits, and other digital media are provided to visitors as tools for exploring topics including the environment, the nature of being human, energy and the process of building and tinkering.

In July 2014, I resigned from Telus Spark and moved to Ottawa to live with my partner. This career intermission afforded me some time to re-connect with FES and complete the MES program.

Recently, I joined the Canadian Museum of Nature in Ottawa, where I am exploring new ways of building on my interdisciplinary education, gained at FES, Flemo Radio, the Ontario Science Centre and TELUS Spark.

Chapter 1: Introduction to the Participatory Radio Project

1.1 Community Radio Background

Community radio stations are radio stations that are owned, operated and directed by the communities they serve. Typically non-commercial, they broadcast content that is relevant to their local communities, and may be produced by community members.

Community radio stations broadcast from houses, schools, churches, union buildings and community centres. They usually have small broadcast ranges compared with commercial stations, but are nonetheless influential in the communities they serve, allowing people to make their voices heard, and to share ideas.

Participatory radio is community radio that involves input from the community at all levels. This includes involvement of the community members in the decision-making process, from initiation to management, financing, administration, program production and evaluation. The participatory approach can strengthen a community by fostering a sense of ownership and commitment to the station.

Worldwide, community radio has become an important medium for participatory communication, promoting grassroots engagement with issues including education, gender inequality, agriculture, and poverty.

Latin America has a strong community radio tradition, which began with isolated mining communities that began operating their own stations. Bolivia's community radio stations date from 1947 when a station called "Radio Sucre" was founded in the mining districts of Catavi and Siglo. "La Voz Del Minero", another mining community station, followed in 1949. Miners founded these community radio stations to resist the influence of an oppressive military government. [1]

The number of community radio stations in Latin America continued to grow though the 1950s and 1960s. In times of political upheaval, when the military captured newspapers and radio stations, community radio stations provided listeners with trustworthy sources of information. While the number of stations has declined since the 1980s, most Latin American countries still have community radio stations serving rural communities in the local language, addressing issues relevant to local culture and needs.[2]

In Africa, radio is the most widely used medium for providing information to rural audiences. For remote farming communities, radio is often the only connection with the rest of the world. Radio reaches communities without phones or electricity (through battery-powered sets), and people who haven't learned to read or write.

"Farm Radio" is an example of a participatory radio project in Africa that was very successful. The project involved radio stations in five African countries: Tanzania, Uganda, Mali, Ghana, and Malawi. Programs educated farmers on ways to improve their agricultural practices. The participatory radio model allowed farmers to participate at every level in the process. Farmers were surveyed about agricultural practices and needs, and helped design a series of radio programs aimed at improving food security through better farming practices. [3]

A community radio station can make important contributions to a community, even if it isn't highly participatory. A small station may start out by playing music from its community, strengthening cultural identity and community pride. Stations also carry news and announcements that strengthen social networks. Eventually, community produced programs may contribute to sharing information on issues of importance to the community. Community radio stations also provide access to media skills training, facilitating capacity building.

Figure 1

Flemingdon Park community members Umama (left) and DJ Silent (right) broadcasting at Flemo Radio in 2006

1.2 Participatory Radio at Flemo Radio

Flemingdon Park is a multicultural Toronto neighbourhood that is home to many first and second generation Canadians. At times the neighbourhood has attracted attention from the Toronto mainstream media on issues of crime, drugs, gang violence and poverty.[4] [5] Flemo Radio was founded In part to provide a way for community members to express an authentic local perspective on the neighbourhood.

Flemo Radio was founded in 2005, and has been guided by community members at every stage of its development, as described in Chapter 2.   The idea for the station originated in a collaboration between the Ontario Science Centre and Flemingdon Park community organizers. Hooley McLaughlin, a curator at the Ontario Science Centre, proposed the idea for a community radio station to a group of community organizers based at the Flemingdon Park Resource Centre. Together, they concluded that a community radio station would be a way for the community to have a voice of its own.

In 2006, the station received development funding from the Youth Challenge Fund. At the time, I was working at the Ontario Science Centre, and participated in the initial community consultations. As a self-taught recording engineer, I also began volunteering my time as a recording skills mentor for Flemo Radio's weekly evening broadcasts.

The project described in this report was the first time that workshops for youth were facilitated at Flemo Radio. The workshops ran once a week over 6 weeks between 2007 and 2008. In all, the participants and I spent approximately 25 hours collaborating on research, interviews and recording during this period.

In addition to being a means for exploring the concept of Participatory radio, the workshops supported Flemo Radio's mission to "promote the best interests of the residents of Flemingdon Park through media and provide youth with transferable skills that will create opportunities for future success."[6] Participants developed audio recording and production skills, and practiced interviewing and storytelling. In addition to activating Flemo Radio as a hub of creativity and critical thinking, the project increased community awareness of Flemo Radio, and encouraged community members to get involved with the station.

During the workshops, we first discussed and then actively explored Flemingdon Park, getting to know the neighbourhood, questioning our assumptions and the angles of Toronto media, and developing an original narrative. Along the way, the group interviewed community members including residents, politicians, artists and businesspeople, who contributed to this narrative. Then, based on this research, the group collaborated on a short audio production called "Flemo: Keep it Moving", which aired on the Flemo Radio "Edutainment Show" in 2009.

Chapter 2 of this report provides some context for the Participatory radio project. It describes the origins of Flemo Radio in more detail, starting with a brief review of the provincial / municipal policy environment that supported its emergence. It also discusses how Flemo Radio developed through a partnership between the Ontario Science Centre and the Flemingdon Park Community Centre, and my involvement in that process.

Chapter 3 outlines the process I developed for participatory radio, including my approach to facilitation. It incorporates elements of popular education theory, and lessons learned from facilitating workshops at the Ontario Science Centre. The process was also guided by input from participants.

Chapter 4 gives a description of the workshop model that was used, and how it developed with input and direction from workshop participants.

Chapter 5 contains my reflections on the participatory radio process, and conclusions.

Chapter 2: Flemo Radio: Municipal Context and Origins

2.1   Youth Policy in Post-Amalgamation Toronto

"The reason the city has named Priority Neighbourhoods is not because they're bad or they've got problems. It's because in the past, they haven't had the proper level of investment, like some other neighbourhoods. They don't have the programs, the libraries, the community centres, the facilities that every young person in Toronto should be entitled to."

> -David Miller, Mayor of Toronto, at a Youth Challenge Fund event, November 17, 2008

Building strong neighbourhoods requires collaboration between different orders of government, NGOs, community organizers and citizens. Local leaders need to be connected with government decision-makers. Historically, the Province of Ontario has tended to operate independently of local governments.[7] Since the "Common Sense Revolution" begun under Ontario premier Mike Harris in 1995, relationships between local and regional governments have been strained by downloading responsibilities for social programs to municipalities without providing sufficient resources to deliver them.[8]

As part of an effort to improve this situation, in February 2006, Ontario Premier Dalton McGuinty announced the creation of the "Youth Challenge Fund" (YCF).[9] The fund was chaired by former Toronto Argonaut coach Michael "Pinball" Clemons, and brought together policymakers from local and regional governments as well as corporations and NGOs. The YCF's mission was to "Achieve a lasting improvement in the lives of youth by mobilizing community resources, investing in effective programs, and promoting a sustained and coordinated response to youth development and violence prevention in Toronto."[10] In 2006, Flemo Radio was among the first community initiatives to obtain funding from the Youth Challenge Fund.

By the time Flemo Radio received funding in 2006, the City's youth policy development process had spanned two municipal governments, and had involved numerous working groups, strategies, and action plans. Two organizations, the United Way of Greater Toronto and the Toronto Youth Cabinet, were important, continuous influences throughout this process.

Figure 2

A Flemo Radio delegation at the official Youth Challenge Fund
funding announcement, 2006

The policies that supported the creation of the YCF can be traced back to the amalgamation of the City of Toronto in 1998. That year, the Government of Ontario amalgamated the six municipalities that had formerly been Metro Toronto into the new "City of Toronto" and Mel Lastman was elected mayor.

One of Lastman's first actions was to establish a "Task Force on Community Safety" (TFCS), chaired by Councillor Brad Duguid, to develop a safety plan for the new City of Toronto. 1998 also saw the founding of the "Toronto Youth Cabinet" (TYC), a youth-led civic engagement group championed by Olivia Chow. The TYC was created to provide a forum for youth to have input into the development of Toronto's youth policy.

The following year, the TFCS presented its report to city council. [11] Working groups were created to act on its recommendations, including the development of action plans to address youth violence and gangs. The committee tasked with developing the youth action plan was called the "Children and Youth Action Committee" (CYAC), and was chaired by Olivia Chow.

In 2002, Lastman announced the "Strategy to Promote a Safer Toronto for Youth" (SPSTY). Commenting on the SPSTY, Ryan Teschner, Director of Council Relations for the Toronto Youth Cabinet said, "These programs demonstrate that young people in Toronto have a voice in the decisions that will affect their lives."

The SPSTY recommended engaging youth through "skills development" and "innovative recreation programs". It also called for:

> "A holistic approach in leadership in which the City works with other senior levels of government, community agencies, school boards, the Toronto Police Service, the Toronto Transit Commission and other partners to develop and co-ordinate initiatives for a safer city." [12]

In November 2003, David Miller was elected mayor of Toronto, replacing Lastman. Miller transferred the mandate of the CYAC to one of six "Mayor's Roundtables", the "Roundtable on Children, Youth and Education" (RCYE), chaired by Olivia Chow. Its mandate was to address "the critical issues facing children and youth in our community". [13] Roundtable members included representatives from the three levels of government, school boards, the private sector and community organizations.

Two working groups managed the Roundtable. Councillor Janet Davis chaired the working group developing the children's services plan and Councillor Shelley Carroll chaired the youth working group. Kehinde Bah, former Chair of the TYC, was Co-Chair of the youth working group. He presented the first "Toronto Youth Strategy" to the Roundtable on January 25th, 2005.[14]

In March 2004, Miller put forward a "Toronto Community Safety Plan" (TCSP), which council adopted. The TCSP recommended that council should "develop neighbourhood action plans for key at-risk communities" and "target programs and services to designated at-risk neighbourhoods." The report identified three "priority neighbourhoods": Malvern, Jane-Finch and Jamestown. Four more, Kingston-Galloway, Lawrence Heights, Steeles-L'Amoureaux, and Eglinton East-Kennedy Park, were later added.[15] In 2005, the list was further expanded to 13 neighbourhoods.

The TCSP called for collaboration between different orders of government, communities, and the private sector to increase community safety. Council also approved the creation of the "Strong Neighbourhoods Task Force" (SNTF).[16] This task force included representatives from the City of Toronto, the United Way of Greater Toronto and the private sector, with financial support from the Government of Canada and the Province of Ontario. The SNTF began its work in May 2004, and released its final report, "Strong Neighbourhoods: a Call to Action," in June, 2005.[17]

Following the release of the report, council adopted the "Strong Neighbourhoods Strategy" (SNS). The strategy built on what had been learned through the TCSP, the RCYE, as well as the recommendations made by the SNTF. Council adopted the SNS in October 2005, following a summer of increased gun violence that became known as the "Summer of the Gun". The SNS proposed that investment be made in an expanded 13 "Priority Neighbourhoods" and that funding be sought from other orders of government.[18]

In February 2006, as noted earlier, Ontario Premiere Dalton McGuinty announced an intergovernmental initiative called "The Youth Challenge Fund" (YCF). Its board included policymakers from local and regional governments as well as representatives from corporations and the United Way of Greater Toronto. The mandate of the Youth Challenge Fund was: "To build community safety by encouraging youth leadership and youth community engagement."[19]

Funding from the YCF was invested in the 13 Priority Neighbourhoods that had been identified in the SNS. The City of Toronto representative to the YCF was Kehinde Bah, who had previously chaired the TYC, and co-chaired the youth working group of the RCYE.

The government of Ontario made a commitment of up to 30 million dollars to the YCF. 15 million of this was contingent on matching support from the private sector. The United Way of Greater Toronto acted as the YCF trustee. It reviewed applications received by the fund, and managed payment of grants.

Staff from the Ontario Science Centre and the Flemingdon Park Community Centre collaborated on a funding application, and Flemo Radio received $300,000 in funding in August 2006. The funds were designated for studio upgrades, coordinator salaries, equipment and programs, over 5 years.

An in-depth analysis of the youth policy context for Flemo Radio is outside the scope of this report. However, with regards to the development of Flemo Radio, it's worth noting the shift in the connotation of "youth policy" that occurred between 1998 and 2006. In the 1999 report, youth policy was part of an overall community safety strategy that focused on crime prevention. It was not until 2002 that the concept of investing in "skills development" was introduced into policy discussions.

Councillor Shelley Carroll was involved in the development process from its earliest stages. She argues that, "before 2003, Toronto really didn't have a youth policy."[20] It wasn't until 2005 that an official youth policy (presented by Kehinde Bah on behalf of the TYC) existed independently of community safety policy.

A key development that bridged policy and action was the identification of the 13 "Priority Neighbourhoods" to which funding would be directed, in 2005. This was a positive development for Flemingdon Park in the sense that it opened up funding for youth programming, but also came with the stigma of being "singled out for development".

This participatory radio project was a product of and a response to the tensions inherent in this policy.

2.2 The Origins of Flemo Radio

Figure 3

A music production session led by Mikey (right) at Flemo Radio, 2007

"It's reputed to be one of Toronto's Toughest Neighbourhoods, but for those who live in Flemingdon Park, it's home. In an attempt to improve the community's reputation, a group of young people is reaching out and finding their voice."

     -Global TV news report about Flemo Radio, January 2007

"We want to give them a voice, and let them know Flemingdon Park is not about guns and violence, like they see on TV. We want, at some point in time, to step away from it and let the youth take it over. That's our vision."

     -Robert Mais, Founding Member, Flemo Radio

Flemingdon Park ("Flemo" is a short form used by youth) is located near the intersection of Don Mills Road and Eglinton Avenue East in Toronto, in the riding of Don Valley West. Conceived as a master-planned suburb in the 1960s, Flemingdon Park is now a multicultural neighbourhood that is home to many first and second generation Canadians.

In 2005, Flemingdon Park was identified as one of the 13 "Priority Neighbourhoods" identified in the Strong Neighbourhoods Strategy by the City of Toronto. With funding from the Youth Challenge Fund, and assistance from the Ontario Science Centre, Flemo Radio was founded to provide youth with an opportunity to build skills through participation in a local, authentic media organization.

Flemo Radio originated through a partnership between the Ontario Science Centre and the Flemingdon Park Community Centre. The Ontario Science Centre is a science and technology museum that opened in 1969, adjacent to Flemingdon Park. The Flemingdon Park Community Centre is a community resource that offers a variety of resources including language workshops, computer skills workshops, recreational programs, a library, a daycare, a swimming pool and a gym.

The idea for a Flemingdon Park community radio station can be traced back to the development of a 1996 exhibition at the Ontario Science Centre entitled "A Question of Truth", which examined biases and prejudices in science. One of the curators, Hooley McLaughlin, realized that a community radio station would be a way for the local community to have a voice on some of the issues raised by the exhibition.

However, the idea did not move forward at that time, and remained unrealized for ten years, until it was revived by McLaughlin and proposed to a group of community organizers based at the Flemingdon Park Community Centre (FPCC). The idea resonated with the organizers, who had independently been exploring possibilities for engaging local youth through media.   From this partnership came a plan: Help Flemingdon Park youth to build a radio station from the ground up, beginning with the transmitter, and then operate and manage the station with direction from community members and a local board of directors.

During a series of workshops held at the Ontario Science Centre in 2005, a group of Flemingdon Park youth built a small, low power radio transmitter from a kit with the help of an OSC technician. Once the transmitter was built, the radio broadcasts started simply, in a multi-purpose room at the community centre. A microphone was hooked up to a mixer, which was hooked up to the transmitter. Initially, the transmitting antenna was positioned next to an outside window. This arrangement allowed the signal to reach across the street. As awareness of Flemo Radio grew, the antenna was moved to the roof of the community centre, modestly increasing the broadcast range to include the houses and apartments within a couple of blocks of the community centre. Broadcasts featured Flemo youth interviewing each other about community issues and current events and played music by local artists.

As recalled by Ayesha Rowe, who became the Flemo Radio Coordinator:

> "One day in 2005 they put the antenna up on the roof, went out to a car, turned the dial, and as the youth in the centre hosted a show, tuned in Flemo Radio. Everyone was just ecstatic when they caught the frequency and heard their voices over the air. That really was the birth of Flemo City Media and the cornerstone of what we are."[21]

The station's introductory broadcast schedule was once a week, on Wednesday evenings from 6:00 pm to 10:30 pm. Additional weekly sessions focused on recording and production of music by local artists, some of which was featured on Flemo Radio. The station expanded to use two different rooms in the community centre, one for a broadcast studio, and another for recording vocals ("the booth"). The booth was eventually upgraded using funds from the YCF to give it better sound isolation and acoustics. The community centre reserved these rooms for this purpose on Wednesday evenings, and also provided some storage space for the station's equipment.

Flemo Radio broadcast at the maximum power allowed by law for a station without a commercial broadcasting license. When the station was broadcasting, it could be heard at 92.1 FM for a radius of several blocks around the community centre. The station has been negotiating for an intermediate license that would allow it to increase its power and extend its range to cover all of Flemingdon Park. This has proved challenging to obtain, as the FM band in Toronto is very crowded, and existing stations are reluctant to agree to power increases that might interfere with their broadcasts. While the process plays out, Flemo Radio has addressed this challenge by expanding into podcasting, and by doing guest appearances at established radio stations.

Flemo Radio events were promoted by the community centre staff, and advertised with posters around the Centre. Youth from the community came to the community centre specifically to participate in Flemo Radio. They were featured as guests on live radio shows, or "hung out", listening to and discussing music as it was being recorded. They were also able to participate as part of the studio audience during broadcasts. Flemo Radio co-sponsored community events such as BBQs and basketball games, some of which were covered on-air by Flemo Radio.

After a year of broadcasting, the station applied for funding from the Youth Challenge Fund, which it received in 2006. Flemo Radio had its own community-based board of directors that guided the development of the station, in consultation with the community. In 2007, with YCF funding, the station hired a part-time coordinator, Ayesha Rowe, to help with this. Rowe continues to coordinate Flemo Radio programs as of 2015.

Figure 4

A banner at a basketball event at the Flemingdon Park Resource Centre in 2007. Flemo City Media is the umbrella organization that includes Flemo Radio as well as online initiatives.

2.3   My Involvement with Flemo Radio

I first became involved at Flemo Radio in October 2005, through my part-time work as an educator and facilitator at the Ontario Science Centre. By that time, the radio transmitter had been built, and members were beginning to explore how to go "on air", and develop programming. In this context, my background in workshop facilitation and in audio recording made me a useful resource person for the station.

Once the station was up and running, I began volunteering as a recording skills mentor. I visited the Flemingdon Park Community Centre every Wednesday to assist at Flemo City Radio. During production sessions and broadcasts I helped youth to solve recording challenges that came up. This involved being at the station for about 5 hours per week. I began volunteering in 2006, and continued until 2009.

Even after Flemo Radio received funding from YCF (and thus financial independence), the Ontario Science Centre remained an important partner and I continued in my role as recording skills mentor. As liaison between Flemo Radio and the OSC, I worked with the OSC's Public Programs Coordinators to coordinate interview opportunities for Flemo Radio at the OSC.

Figure 5

A Flemo Radio crew from the Sports Talk show with NBA
player Jamaal Magloire (centre) at the Ontario Science
Centre, 2006. The call sign on the shirts, "CFPK", i.e. **C**anada
– **F**lemo Pa**rK,** was adopted by the station, but is not yet
officially registered.

For instance, Jamaal Magloire, an NBA basketball player who grew up in Flemingdon
Park, came to the Ontario Science Centre to promote a "stay in school" message to the
Boys and Girls Club of Toronto. I coordinated a team from Flemo Radio who
interviewed Magloire at that event. I also coordinated the station's involvement with
"SciFri**"**, the OSC's ongoing Friday night program for youth, and provided regular
updates on Flemo Radio to OSC staff.

In early 2006, I suggested the possibility of running regular workshops on recording and
production skills. After making this suggestion, and not getting much uptake, one
participant suggested that it would be better if I helped participants with their projects,
such as tracks or albums. Participants would direct these projects and I would be there
as a resource person to help them achieve their vision.

Thereafter, my approach was to integrate learning experiences into the creative process
driven by the youth, rather than teaching skills through structured workshops.

More specifically, in terms of building engagement with the youth at Flemo Radio, I
aimed to:

- Make myself regularly available to assist with recording, at a known time and
  place

- When possible, offer my assistance at additional times as requested

- Support regular Flemo Radio participants by providing encouragement and assisting with their initiatives

- Welcome new participants, and create opportunities for their initiatives

- Focus on *facilitating*, allowing participants to lead their own projects

2.4   Some Flemo Radio Participant Profiles

The following participant profiles give some examples of the initiatives I assisted with:

a) Mikey aka Elaztic and Denston aka Jynx

Mikey and Denston were brothers in their late teens that became interested in Flemo Radio during early open houses in 2005. Many of the youth who participated in production sessions had been interested in rapping and not in music production. They saw themselves primarily as performing artists. Mikey and Denston were exceptions to this. Mikey, in particular, was interested in learning as much information about the recording and production process as possible.

I spent many hours working with Mikey, facilitating the production of what was initially his own rap music. Mikey had already produced a lot of his own backing tracks using a music-making program on his Sony Playstation. As a result, he was able to pick up the recording process very quickly. As Mikey gained expertise, I noticed that he was beginning to invite younger rappers into the studio to help them record their music.

At one production session, when I arrived, Mikey had already set up all the production equipment and was helping a young rapper to record his track. By the end of the evening, Mikey and the rapper had completed the track, and exported it to the rapper's MP3 player. The young rapper left, listening to the track and smiling. Later, as I was leaving, I passed him on the street, surrounded by his friends who were listening to the track and congratulating him on his performance.

b) Tarun Rajasekar

At 11 years old, Tarun Rajasekar was one of the youngest on-air hosts on Flemo Radio. He hosted a short current affairs show called "Infogate". At first I did my best to help him feel comfortable at Flemo Radio, where many participants were in their late teens and early twenties. I encouraged him to talk on the microphone as much as possible, and demonstrated how to take control of his show by showing him how to cue up music, sound effects and station IDs. His confidence on air grew over time and he mentioned to me that his classmates admired him for having his own show on Flemo Radio.

Figure 6

Author (left), with J (centre) and Robert Mais, Flemo Radio founding member (right) following the completion of Yulogy's album, 2007.

c) J, aka Yulogy

J came to Flemo Radio with the concept for an album that he had been working on for years but had never been able to record. He needed a way to turn his vision into a reality, and the Flemo Radio production sessions proved to be an ideal opportunity for this. Mikey and I worked with J over the course of several production sessions to produce the album that consists of 13 tracks based on his experiences in Flemingdon Park. When the album was complete, he said, "Without Flemo Radio, I could never have done this."

Chapter 3: Facilitation Framework for Participatory Radio Workshops

3.1   Introduction

My interest in a participatory approach to radio workshops was inspired by the case of Porto Alegre, Brazil, a city that has successfully involved its residents in allocating its budget through a participatory process. In Porto Alegre, residents hold neighbourhood meetings to discuss their needs, and to elect delegates to budget forums. Involving the residents in budgeting has had the side effect of dramatically increasing civic activity in general. Since Participatory Budgeting was introduced, the number of active neighborhood groups has grown significantly, especially in poorer districts of the city.

Another influence was Paolo Freire's <u>The Pedagogy of the Oppressed</u>, which caused me to reflect on the importance of critical thinking in the participatory radio process. Freire describes the nature of what he calls "problem-posing" education, which I recognized as a theory of education that should inform the participatory radio process. Freire contends that this approach to education "strives for the emergence of consciousness and critical intervention in reality."[22]

I recognized that, ideally, the process of facilitation for participatory radio should enable two processes: critical thinking about the local environment, and innovation in the development of a radio narrative.

From 2002-2006, I had been facilitating "Challenge Zone" workshops for visitors at the Ontario Science Centre, as part of the OSC/ Dupont Research Project on Innovation. These workshops aimed to create an environment in which innovation is encouraged. I saw potential for some of the facilitation techniques I had been using at the Ontario Science Centre to inform my process of facilitation for participatory radio.

During my MES studies at York, I discovered a field of popular education that had much in common with the facilitation approach I was developing. In particular, I found <u>Educating For A Change</u> (Arnold et al, 1991) very helpful. It seemed to me that the popular education strategies put forward in this book validated the approaches I had been using as a facilitator in the context of the Challenge Zone.

My starting point for my approach to the participatory radio workshops was a synthesis of these two influences. However, as it turned out, the most important influence ended up being input from participants, which was instrumental in iterating the participatory radio approach following the first workshop.

3.2   OSC – Dupont Education for Innovation Research Project

The OSC / Dupont Research Project on Innovation was carried out during 2002 at the Ontario Science Centre in Toronto, Ontario. [23]   Research focused on helping visitors to build behaviours, skills, and attitudes for innovation. Educational Consultants Barbara Soren and Ines Habara were the lead researchers for the Project. I facilitated or co-facilitated many of the workshops and collaborated with the lead researchers to collect and interpret findings.

The "Challenge Zone" was a workshop experience that was developed during that project. It is a team-based, collaborative workshop that aims to bring out the creativity and ingenuity of participants. Participants developed their problem-solving skills using unexpected materials in a collaborative, facilitated environment. Challenges presented to workshop participants were based on real world scenarios. For instance, one of the challenges was to build a comfortable, compact temporary shelter that could be easily deployed following a natural disaster. Another challenge was to build a device that could filter a cup of water in a minute. Sometimes, these challenges included time and resource constraints.

One particular experience I had while facilitating this collaborative learning process suggested its potential for application to the Flemo Radio project. In 2005, I facilitated a "Ravine Access Challenge" for grade 9 students from Marc Garneau high school. The students visited the Ontario Science Centre to do a workshop based on the challenge of increasing community accessibility to the park system in the Don Valley. For the first time with the Challenge Zone model, students were given video cameras to document their ideas. The successful integration of digital media into a Challenge Zone workshop suggested the potential of this model for radio workshops at Flemo Radio.

3.3   Ideas from *Educating for a Change*

Educating For A Change is a guidebook that presents both a theory of popular education and practical approaches to designing popular education workshops.[24] It includes strategies for facilitating group learning and ideas for warm-ups, activities, and presentations.

One of the major themes of the book is awareness of power relations. The authors describe how there are power relations within groups and organizations, as well as between facilitators and workshop participants. These dynamics result from cultural issues, gender issues, differing levels of education, and organizational seniority, among other factors. The authors show how ignorance of these dynamics can hinder collaboration and derail positive outcomes.

Educating For A Change presents a concept called the "Spiral Model" to illustrate its approach to education. The Spiral Model is a way of understanding the tensions that

are inherent in the facilitation process. It celebrates the experience of participants, and acknowledges the tension between theory and practice, reflection and action, and participant knowledge and new input.

In brief, the stages of the Spiral Model are as follows:

1.   Start with experience of participants
2.   Look for patterns
3.   Add new information and theory
4.   Practice skills and plan for action
5.   Apply in action

The spiral model resonated with my experience as a facilitator of the Challenge Zone workshop at the Ontario Science Centre, and validated the qualities I was looking for in a theory of facilitation for participatory radio. A more detailed version of the spiral model concept, as it was applied at Flemo Radio, is shown in Table 1 below.

3.4   A Facilitation Process for Participatory Radio

Synthesizing the above sources of knowledge and experience, as a facilitator of participatory radio, I therefore aimed to support the following qualities of the experience:

- Mutual respect
- A spirit of risk-taking and experimentation
- Sharing of knowledge
- Collaboration
- Respect for mistakes as part of the process of innovation
- Turning ideas into action

A more detailed outline of the workshop process, based on the two key influences discussed previously, is shown in the four-page Table 1 below. The table indicates how ideas from the Challenge Zone and Educating for a Change were applied in the context of participatory radio at Flemo Radio, and how the approach evolved from the first iteration of the experience to the second. It also contains notes on facilitation approaches that supported and undermined the process, based on my observations during the workshops.

In many cases, there were similarities between the approaches from the Challenge Zone and Educating for a Change, but each added unique nuances that were important to the participatory radio process. The Challenge Zone approach placed greater emphasis on

facilitating for innovation, while the Spiral Model of <u>Educating for A Change</u> emphasized consideration of identity and diversity.

Table 1: Inquiry-Based Participatory Radio Workshop Model

Challenge Zone Approach	Spiral Model	Participatory Radio First Iteration	Participatory Radio Second Iteration	Supported By	Undermined By
Encourage bonding with other team members through icebreaker	A variety of warm-ups are suggested in <u>Educating for Change</u>	Icebreaker: • Sharing our names and a favourite food while on-mic	Icebreaker: • Reintroducing ourselves on-mic, and sharing a favourite kind of music, hobby… • Suggestions for "favourites" came from participants	Facilitation during the icebreaker that: • Models respectful listening • Recognizes and celebrates the courage of participants for taking the risk of sharing on-mic, even if only a word or two • Supports "mistakes" as part of the process, and provides encouragement • Recognizes that not all participants may be ready to share on-mic right away	• Omitting the icebreaker • Being judgmental • Not modeling supportive behaviour
Everyone has a clear, shared understanding of the challenge	The goals of the workshop are clear	The "My Flemo" art activity was a relatively structured activity that I pitched to participants, "Challenge Zone" style	This approach was more flexible: • We shared a plan for the quadrant of Flemingdon Park we would be exploring • Participants collectively determined specific destinations and interview subjects	• Thinking through and practicing the stages of the challenge, and challenge delivery in advance to minimize confusion and increase clarity • Making time at the beginning of the session to define goals as a group	• Confusing or overly complicated structure or challenge wording • Failure to allow group input into goals

			spontaneously		
The group works collaboratively when solving problems, but also allows opportunities for individual learning		• Start with individuals expressing their opinions through art making • Then, collaborate on interviewing and radio spot recording, to spark exchange and reflection on these issues • In practice, this process didn't progress past the first stage.	• Decisions regarding destinations and interview strategies were collaborative • All participants had the chance to use equipment for themselves to build skills, and did interviews supported by the group	• Planning to include a balance between individual and group opportunities • Encouraging the group to support individual efforts, and also to recognize how they contribute to the group's success	• Itinerary / facilitation doesn't allow opportunity for individual expression, or doesn't include collaborative activities
Participants respect and value one another's ideas	The experience of all participants is valued and drawn upon	• Help individuals express ideas important to them, and then create a supportive forum for them to be shared and discussed	• Reflected in mutual support and active listening during interviews and during collaborative editing process • Sharing of the microtrak ("the mic") while wandering	• Facilitation that helps to establish this tone during the icebreaker, and reinforces it whenever ideas are being shared as a group	• A dominant individual alienates or marginalizes the rest of the group • There is a pre-existing power dynamic that inhibits open-

					mindedness
		• Facilitate "the mic" so that everyone has a chance (see reflections on the mic in section x)			
The group is flexible and adaptable to new ideas		• Not strongly enabled by the art making challenge	• Enabled through wandering/exploring, which inspired more idea generation, embraced the unexpected, and provided sense of ownership over outcomes	• Looking and listening for new ideas being offered and how they are being received. • Celebrating unexpected, unconventional, challenging ideas	• There are participants who are not open to receiving input from the group • The group is focused on "doing it right", to the exclusion of new ideas and approaches
Participants listen to each other	Participants feel respected / listened to	• Sharing ideas on-mic encouraged this	• Sharing on mic, discussing / debating destinations for wandering sessions encouraged this	• Modeling active listening, supporting ideas. • Creating space for people who are being marginalized, if necessary	• Certain group members feel excluded
The group is open to trial-and-error	Participants feel comfortable making mistakes	• Recording while brainstorming helped encourage	• The group gravitated towards this approach – more exciting, generated more ideas	• Challenging the participants to test new approaches, not all of which will succeed • Awareness of personal comfort	• Facilitator fails to encourage unexpected or risky ideas / approaches

				level with trying new approaches • Active management of any tendency to reduce the possibility of failure by directing participants towards safe, predetermined, solutions	• Rigid adherence to a predetermined approach
The group is inspired by the provided materials		• The art materials were more limiting than inspiring for this group	• The Microtrak recorder proved to be a much more useful tool for brainstorming and drawing out opinions and ideas	• Testing materials with awareness that some may be inspiring and others may not • Inviting group input into material choice	• Lack of space or access to materials inhibits collaboration • The materials are distracting, irrelevant or uninspiring
The challenge is relevant and authentic	Participants see what they are learning as valuable	• Art making challenge didn't prove to be relevant	• The exploration approach, suggested by participants, proved to be relevant	• Balancing providing structure with surrendering control, allowing participants to define the challenge and lead	• The workshop is not interesting or relevant to participants, due to lack of input
Trust enables different ways of thinking and articulating ideas	People share / debate / discuss what they are learning with others	• Limited by constraints of first activity	• Reinforced through sharing leadership, allowing autonomy, putting technology in participants hands • Active facilitation of the mic, so it remained a positive	• Being open to allowing participants to redefine the nature of the workshop • Having the courage to explore unfamiliar approaches with the group	• Dismissive or judgmental facilitation or commentary from other participants

			space		
The facilitator is responsive to group members needs	Participants get direct and frequent feedback	• The art making activity showed the need to share leadership with the group, and invite input on direction.	• I focused on facilitating use of the mic, and encouraging debate and discussion • Participants got ongoing feedback and commentary from other participants.	• Encouraging and challenging participants • Allowing space for participants to struggle with a challenge to have an "Aha" moment. • Guiding and supporting direction finding rather than providing solutions • Take a balanced, aware approach to facilitation, including awareness of when the workshop / facilitation approach needs input from participants	• Indifferent facilitation • Rigid adherence to a predetermined strategy
Aha! Moments are recognized and celebrated		• First iteration did not generate many Aha! moments, but inspired an Aha! moment as far a change in approach	• A breakthrough moment happened when participants suggested the use of the portable recorder (Microtrak) as a way of taking the experience out into the neighbourhood • This allowed much more of the "unexpected" into our process which in turn inspired more	• Looking and listening for signs of new ideas, e.g. "what if we…" or "it would be awesome if we could.." • Being open to exploring these ideas, even (especially) if they are unexpected for the facilitator	• Indifferent facilitation • Focusing on "curriculum" rather than process

			new ideas		
	New facts and insights are connected to what participants already know	• First iteration aimed to achieve this, but was weak in practice	• We visited familiar locations, but also surprised ourselves with what we knew and what we learned from interviewing	• Ensuring workshop structure and facilitation allows participants the opportunity to connect with what they know • Providing participants with opportunities to express what they know in their way	• Assuming what participants know, or how they want to express it
	Participants have input into how teaching and learning happens	• Invited after first workshop	• Second iteration approach designed by participants • Participants suggested the approach and had an aha moment with technology	• Inviting input and feedback from participants on what is working and what is not • Recognizing and acknowledging when an approach isn't working and getting input on that approach	• Sticking with an approach that does not give participants input
	Differences in identity and experience are acknowledged	• First version was based on reaction to existing narratives, and so was limited in this sense.	• Second version allowed a variety of perspectives on a given aspect or feature to emerge • Variety of approach led to variety of reflections	• Allowing everyone to have input into the process • Celebrating diverse viewpoints • Actively questioning assumptions	• Assuming the existence of a homogenous "community" • Failing to question, assumptions, existing narratives, clichés

My approach to addressing situations that threatened to undermine collaboration was based on awareness of power relations, as described in <u>Educating for a Change</u>.

In particular, I aimed to be aware of following throughout the workshops:

- Are all participants being heard?
- Is there ongoing, respectful exchange of ideas between group members?
- Does the process allow for participant input?
- Is my facilitation approach enabling collaboration?

3.5   Pilot Testing the Facilitation Process

In May 2007, I pilot tested this process with the Ontario Science Centre Science School, which offers high school students the opportunity to study math and science at the Ontario Science Centre for a semester. Although the workshop was based on video, not audio, I felt that I would get useful feedback, prior to beginning the workshops at Flemo Radio.

The video-making workshop allowed me to explore the use of digital media in concert with brainstorming in a challenge-based workshop.

I wanted to learn the following from the pilot test:

- Does the challenge stimulate collaboration and communication amongst group members?
- Is the video camera a useful tool for the process of creative problem solving and innovation?
- Did group members build confidence with appearing / speaking on camera?

My observations during the workshop provided an initial validation of the approach:

- During filming, the camera changed hands frequently, and ongoing discussion and debate suggested that multiple members were contributing to the creative direction of the group. In addition, I noticed that the groups shared leadership. One group made sure to include equal screen time for all members, even though we had not stipulated that this was necessary. Although there was only one camera per group, most of the group members remained involved throughout the process, either in the "huddles" that happened before shooting began, or acting during a scene.

- The students easily handled the learning curve for the camera. They had little confusion about how to use it and were quickly able to focus on the creative process without getting mired in technical issues. They also quickly grasped the idea of in-camera editing. The cameras worked well, stopping and starting cleanly. There were no issues with the lack of tripods or microphones.

- On a number of occasions, the students paused to chat with curious visitors about what they were working on. In a way, the process seemed to put them into a "community" mindset, with the students sharing their excitement and inspiration with the visitors.

- When we announced the end of shooting several of the groups wanted to stay out on the floor to finish a shot. The groups showed a willingness to struggle with the creative challenge, particularly when they first started filming and were trying to get the germ of an idea going. One group member said, "It took us a while to get going, but we have a great idea now." Many of the students stayed around afterwards to talk about their films and the process.

Based on these indicators, I felt I could carry the facilitation approach forward, with the expectation that it would need to be adapted and iterated for participatory radio.

Chapter 4: Workshop Model

4.1   Workshop Description

Taking the process of facilitation described in the preceding chapter as a starting point, I facilitated a series of participatory radio workshops to engage youth with the process of developing their own Flemingdon Park narrative. The challenge was to create a short radio documentary about Flemingdon Park. The process was open to youth between the ages of 13 and 18.

My hope was that the participatory process of developing the documentary would stimulate dialogue, critical thinking and the articulation of a vision for the community. Participants would be encouraged to share their viewpoints and opinions on issues that felt important during group discussions and as part of recordings for the final radio documentary.

The documentary was planned, recorded and edited through a series of weekly workshops at the Community Centre over the course of 4 months. The Community Centre provided a safe and secure, familiar environment, with constant staff presence and supervision.

The workshops were advertised by the Centre on posters and on an information sheet that noted the option of anonymity for participants.

4.2   Recording Equipment

As part of the Ontario Science Centre's contribution to the Flemo Radio partnership, I put together an equipment setup that would work well for recording, editing, and broadcasting, and would allow participants to build transferrable skills. We used this equipment setup for the participatory radio workshops.

From previous experience with this equipment, I was comfortable using it, and could help the participants learn it themselves. During the workshops, I noticed that participants were sometimes rough with equipment as they were learning to use it, so I did some coaching on safe equipment handling technique*.*

The following recording equipment and software were used in the workshops:

a) Computer and Software

The recording setup was based around a desktop PC computer with the necessary hardware to run Steinberg Cubase SX, the audio production software. This is a professional level software package in use in many studios. While not the easiest software to learn, once you have developed proficiency with this software, your skills should be transferrable to any of the major audio editing programs that would be encountered in a studio, radio station, or anywhere else audio is being recorded and edited. The software also has a good MIDI editor, which allows for creation of instrumentals and backing tracks. An Ontario Science Centre A/V technician built the PC, and bought the software from Long and McQuade.

b) Mixer

An 8-channel Mackie mixer was used for recording and playback. The mixer had a built in digital audio interface, allowing it to be directly connected to the computer using a "firewire" cable. This simplified the setup, allowing audio to be recorded and played back without the need for an additional audio interface. The mixer was purchased from Long and McQuade.

c) Speakers

For listening to audio playback, we used a set of Behringer studio speakers that I donated to the station.

d) Condenser microphones

This kind of microphone usually gives the best quality for studio vocal recordings. It has the disadvantage of being more fragile than dynamic microphones, which are commonly used for live sound / PA purposes, so some coaching on proper technique (i.e. careful handling, not tapping it to test if it's live, using a pop filter) was necessary. We used inexpensive (approximately $50) condenser microphones purchased from Long and McQuade.

e) M-Audio Microtrack II portable recorder

Flemo Radio purchased this handy portable digital recorder. We started using this for interviews once we decided that spending time exploring the neighbourhood would be more useful that staying in the studio at the community centre. We imported the audio files from this portable recorder into the PC for editing when we got back to the studio.

4.3   Workshop Process and Structure

The approach I used for the first workshop is described in Table 1, in the "First Iteration" column. I used the basic itinerary of the Challenge Zone as my starting point for the itinerary of the first radio workshop:

Table 2: First Itinerary

Activity	Approx. Duration
a) Icebreaker	5 min
b) Challenge	30 min
c) Group Sharing	10 min
d) Group Feedback	5 min
e) Clean-up	5 min

a)   Icebreaker

The icebreaker is a warm-up to prepare participants for collaboration and idea generation and innovation. From previous experience at the Ontario Science Centre, I had learned that when the icebreaker was skipped, or participants arrived after the icebreaker had happened, there tended to be less collaboration.

The icebreaker can be as simple as having participants introduce themselves and share something with the group such as a favourite kind of music or food. They could also choose an object from a random selection of objects that somehow represents them, or a theme, to serve as a talking point. The desired outcome is for participants to get to know each other, express themselves and for each participant to be heard by the group.

For the radio workshop icebreaker, participants introduced themselves "on-mic" and shared their favourite kind of music, food, hobby, etc. In subsequent workshops, participants chose categories for favourites. By building positive, supportive moments around being on-mic, my goal was to demystify the mic and build confidence.

This was also a chance for me to observe group dynamics, and think about the kind of facilitation that might be needed.   It was also an opportunity to model supportive behavior by celebrating courage, and listening to and respecting different ideas and voices.

b) Challenge

- Communicating the workshop challenge clearly at the beginning of the workshop limits confusion that can drain energy from the creative process.

- Creativity can be blocked if the challenge is: Irrelevant to participants; Too hard or too easy; Presented in a way that is judgmental; Facilitated ineffectively

  As I discuss below, the first workshop iteration failed on several of the above counts.

- The workspace, including materials and layout should help create a positive atmosphere for collaboration. For the first workshop I made sure everyone had easy and equal access to art materials, and that there was a microphone available for each group.

- Once the challenge has been delivered, the participants collaborate on a solution. The facilitator facilitates exchange of ideas, discussion and debate.

- In addition to facilitating communication and collaboration, the facilitator watches and listens for 'Aha!' moments – that is, moments of insight or group discovery - and celebrates those moments when they occur. Often, these moments come after testing and 'failure,' when a group realizes that an approach doesn't work exactly as planned. This 'failure' becomes a stepping-stone to success as groups build on such moments to reach a solution.

- For the radio workshops, my first approach was to record everything, even during brainstorming, so it would never feel like a "one-take" process. This allowed for improvisation and experimentation with tone and delivery style.

c) Group sharing and feedback

Once the challenge is complete, participants need reflection time to articulate what they have done. This reinforces the experience they have just had.

For the initial approach to the workshop, I envisioned this happening through groups presenting on the microphone, sharing stories and interviewing each other. During this process, the facilitator acts as an "interviewer", asking questions of the groups to help the group reflect on and understand their process, and express how everybody's ideas contributed to making the solution better.

Group feedback is an opportunity for the facilitator to get input on the challenge, the workshop process, and his/her facilitation style. The facilitator aims to learn how the experience can be improved in the future. Was the challenge relevant? Was there anything about the environment / facilitation that was hindering the process? This may be done through a short questionnaire, or informally through chatting with participants. At the end of the first workshop, feedback from participants during this time proved very valuable to the development of the participatory radio process.

Clean-up was a collaborative effort, and involved putting away the art supplies, and carefully and securely storing the production equipment in its designated storage locker at the Community Centre. This was another opportunity to model safe handling of the equipment.

4.4   The Open House

To raise awareness about the upcoming workshops, I publicized and hosted an Open House at the Community Centre on June 17th, 2008. I hoped this would be a good way to introduce the idea of participatory radio, get feedback, and gauge community interest.

I scheduled the Open House for 7:00 pm, on the advice of Flemo City Media board member Robert Mais. He pointed out that this is a busy time at the Centre, when young people come to play pick-up basketball, participate in programs, and hang out.

Flemo City:
Her story
His story
Your story
Our story...
On the radio!

Want to be on the radio?

Tired of mainstream media telling you about your neighbourhood?

Time to make your voice heard and tell it like it is!

Register and join us to:

Make history as we create the first radio documentary about Flemo by Flemo youth!

Learn to use broadcast and production equipment as we edit the documentary

Hear yourself on the radio when we broadcast on CFPK!

Tuesdays 6:30 to 8:30 beginning June 17th!

Where? The Centre, 2nd Floor
(Dennis R. Timbrell Resource Centre)

How? Register now for free! Send an email to:
registration@flemocity.com or call **(416) 556-2268**

FLEMO CITY MEDIA

Food provided!

Figure 7

The promotional flyer for the first round of participatory radio workshops

a) Publicizing the Open House

The Open House was publicized a week in advance with posters, and by word of mouth. Flemo Media coordinator Ayesha Rowe helped design a poster, and the graphic design team at the Ontario Science Centre laid it out and printed it. Both Ayesha and Robert helped raise awareness through word-of mouth.

b) Snacks at the Open House

In advance of the Open House, I bought snacks, including fruit and Halal hummus and pitas, which were choices recommended by Ayesha. As it turned out, the snacks were a very important part of the Open House.

c) Demonstration of Recording Equipment

I used the equipment setup described above, minus the microtrak. I set the equipment up so that visitors to the open house would be able to try recording and editing sound. Each table had a microphone available for the group at that table. I arrived early to set up and test the equipment, so I could give my full attention to visitors when they arrived.

d) Observations at the Open House

It was helpful having community contacts to raise awareness by word of mouth. Most people who attended said that they hadn't seen the posters but had heard about it through word of mouth.

When buying food for the event, I was glad to be aware of cultural dietary requirements, based on Ayesha's recommendations, including Halal options, such as hummus and pitas.

Over the course of the evening, I interacted with about 20 youth, although often not specifically about the radio project. Many of them tried out the microphone, and most had some food.

I was glad that there was a steady flow of visitors dropping in, but many of the youth didn't really want to chat about the radio documentary, and were more interested in the food and trying the equipment.

I remembered that there had been a similar dynamic at the early Flemo Radio Open Houses. Young people had dropped in with friends to hang out and sample experiences, but didn't necessarily want to commit to structured activities. They hung out for a bit, and came and went.

I noticed that many of the visitors arrived with preconceptions, based on previous experiences with Flemo Radio. They assumed that I was there for a regular broadcast or an "open-mic" session, and were surprised when I mentioned the idea of a creating a participatory documentary about Flemingdon Park. On reflection, I should have been clearer about differentiating this Open House experience from the regular Flemo Radio schedule.
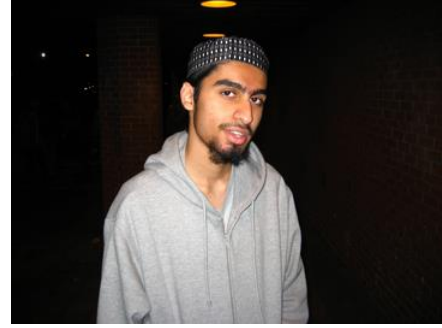
The snacks definitely became the focus of the event. I set the food and drink out at the back of the room. Many youth came, ate and left without chatting about the documentary idea. Ayesha pointed out that some youth who come to the Centre don't normally get snacks.

At the other end of the room from the food table, I set up the recording equipment. The microphone was a real draw for visitors. People approached the microphone to talk, rap, pretend they were "on air", sing, interview each other and sometimes just scream at the top of their lungs. At the time, I started to worry that the microphone was a distraction. On reflection, I think that visitors were trying out the technology and expressing themselves, sometimes in ways that challenged my assumptions about the process.

As the session progressed, I began to accept that many of the youth who dropped in were not particularly interested in working on a radio program. Only a small group of youth seemed to be genuinely interested. These were the individuals who ended up returning for the following workshops. I realized that there would be a small but dedicated group acting as leaders on the proposed radio documentary. However, I also realized that over the course of the production, there would likely be opportunities for other young people to get involved and contribute through drop-in interviews and other forms of audience participation.

4.5 The First Version of the Participatory Radio Process

Table 3: The Core "Flemo: Keep it Moving" Group

Abdullah	"CLK"
"DJ Silent"	Umama
Wardah	

I facilitated the first participatory radio workshop on June 24th, 2008. My starting point was the process of facilitation outlined in the previous Chapter, and the activity I had pilot tested with the Ontario Science Centre Science School (described earlier). My goal was for this process to stimulate idea generation, discussion and debate about the proposed radio documentary.

a)   **Workshop 1 Process**

The process I used for the first workshop consisted of the following activities:

Table 4: First Workshop Detailed Itinerary

Time	Activity
6:00 pm	Arrive to get equipment and materials set up
7:00 pm	Participants arrive, music by Flemo artists playing
7:10 pm	Welcome everyone, introduce myself, and give an overview: *-This is the first time a group of youth from Flemo has created a radio show about Flemo* *-I don't know what the show is going to be about yet – we're going to figure that out together* *-At different times during the workshop you'll be welcome to share your thoughts on-mic* *-It's totally fine to mess up when you're on the mic* *-Let's support each other – encouragement and support after people have shared ideas whether on or off the mic is appreciated*
7:20 pm	Icebreaker activity to help participants to get to know each other, and ready to think on their feet

7:30 pm	Brainstorm some ground rules for the workshop together
7:40 pm	Challenge: "My Flemo" 1. Participants use a collection of print media and art supplies to create artwork that expresses what Flemo means to them. 2. Participants add their individual works to a mural that will be on display and continuously evolving throughout future sessions. 3. These art pieces will be talking points for sharing ideas on the microphone.
8:00 – 8:10 pm	Break and snacks I brought snacks, including Halal options
8:10 – 8:20 pm	Sharing On-Mic Participants use their creations as talking points for sharing their ideas about Flemo on the mic. Two mics will be set up and participants will do short interviews with each other.
8:20 – 8:40 pm	Working in groups, participants collaborate on a 1-2 minute radio clip about Flemingdon Park, with people their age as the imagined audience
8:40 – 9:00 pm	Groups present their spots "on air", and these are recorded

a) Approach to the Workshop Process

For this first workshop, when thinking about how to implement the workshop process, I reminded myself of the Spiral Model of *Educating For A Change*. As a facilitator, my goal for the first workshop was to:

- Start with the experience of participants and encourage them to share this with the group

- Hear about issues of importance to the youth

- Create a respectful space for dialogue on these issues

Heading into the first workshop, I wasn't entirely sure how to do this. How could I help to create an environment for exchange between young people of different backgrounds, genders, religions, ethnicities, and interests?

My first attempt was the art making exercise, "My Flemo". My intention was that participants would create art to represent their vision of Flemingdon Park. Once they were done, my plan was that the participants would take turns interviewing each other on the microphone about what they had created, sharing the ideas with the group and getting feedback.

I hoped that this activity would:

- Help the participants to identify and express issues of importance to them

- Generate discussion

- Introduce the recording process

- Demystify the microphone

- Build confidence with being "on-mic"

I had collected a range of image-rich print media including pop culture, nature and architecture magazines. My intention was to provide a diverse collection of images from which the group could draw. I deliberately excluded news publications. By using unfamiliar publications as source material, I hoped to challenge participants to think beyond established media narratives, and create an innovative, authentic vision for Flemingdon Park with the images they chose.

I also made a variety of art supplies available including markers, tape, colourful paper and paint. These were available for free-form artistic expression.

Once the participants had finished their art, my plan was that they would present the ideas that were represented in the art "on air". I hoped this approach would blur the lines between brainstorming and being on air, and that this would encourage experimentation, and build confidence.

b) Comments on Workshop 1 Outcomes

Since the timing of the workshop had been publicized, I expected participants would be there for 7 pm. In fact, by 7 pm, no one had arrived. At about 7:10, youth began drifting in and out of the studio. I began to think that the structured approach I had planned might not be in line with the interest of participants.

By 7:20 I felt enough participants had arrived for us to begin. For the icebreaker we took turns saying our name and our favourite kind of food on the mic. Then I explained the challenge.

Once we began the art making activity, I observed that the youth were having difficulty identifying images that spoke to them. I sensed that they didn't really "get" the challenge, and weren't connecting with it. I wasn't hearing as many personal perspectives being expressed as I had hoped for.

During this activity, other youth occasionally dropped in to see what was going on. Some of them approached the mics in the room to rap, sing, and scream. At the time, I worried that this was distracting from the process we were working on. On reflection, I think this was a missed opportunity to involve more youth in the process, especially if additional facilitators had been involved. It took me a while to be open to what I could learn from the energy in the room, rather than reacting against it.

By the end of the session, we had produced several collage-like collections of images, and each participant had shared some thoughts on the microphone. Still, I could see that the process lacked relevance for the participants. Therefore, I decided to encourage participant input on the process during the "Group Feedback" time at the end.

I asked the participants how they would like to approach the challenge. They suggested that getting out of the studio, into the community to actually experience it and interview people would be more exciting, and more relevant to them.

4.6   The Second Version of the Workshop Process

The Keep it Moving group interviews the owner of a local Laundromat
using the microtrak recorder

a) Approach

Based on the experience of the first workshop and the feedback I received, I realized the workshops needed to be reimagined. The first iteration, based on the use of print media, did not provide a relevant way for participants to express their relationship with their neighbourhood.

One of the factors I had considered when I envisioned the workshops at the Community Centre was the ability to closely integrate the recording equipment into the process. However, some of the participants suggested a breakthrough solution that I hadn't considered: They pointed out that we could take the experience outside the Centre, using a portable digital recorder the station had just purchased called a "microtrak".

Based on this approach, we took to the streets of Flemingdon Park. For the next four weeks we covered the north, south, east and west areas of the neighbourhood, exploring one area per week. The participants led the way. As facilitator, I did my best to ensure that everyone had a chance to be the interviewer and interviewee, and that everyone had a chance to take pictures with the camera we brought along.

b) Safety

While the group was excited to explore the neighbourhood, we also needed to ensure that we remained safe while doing so. We took the following precautions:

- The Flemo Radio coordinator was always aware of the area of Flemingdon Park we would be exploring, and joined us whenever possible
- I always had a cell phone in case of emergency
- We limited our exploring to well-travelled public spaces, and never entered onto private property
- We always travelled as a group, and remained as a group throughout activities

c) Results

In contrast to the relatively structured, limiting approach of the first workshop, the remaining workshops became flexible, inquiry-based and open ended. We explored Flemingdon Park and stopped whenever someone had something to say about where we happened to be, thought of a story that they wanted to share, or had a question to pose to the group.

We stopped to think critically about parks, apartment buildings, churches, and shopping centres, among other sites. I noticed that the participants began expressing their community pride, noting that Flemingdon Park includes the Ontario Science Centre, the Community Centre (now with a radio station!), a hockey arena, playing fields, parks, and several schools.

Often our discussions took surprising turns, and we ended up talking about something unexpected. For instance, on one occasion we stopped across from the Food Basics grocery store, expecting to talk about the quality of produce, price and accessibility. Instead we ended up discussing the Mormon missionaries from the local Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter Day Saints, and how persistent they could be when approaching residents.

In keeping with the goal of developing skills, the participants took turns recording interviews with the microtrak.

This new free-form approach stimulated discussion and new idea generation in a way that sitting in the room at the community centre making art hadn't.

d) Interviews

Our exploration / critical engagement with the neighbourhood included stops at different businesses and organizations to interview those who were willing. For instance, we stopped at the coin laundry, several convenience stores, the campaign office of then NDP MP candidate David Sparrow, and several restaurants. We also interviewed some Flemo residents we met on the street, and people at the community centre, including local performing artists.

When the Don Valley West candidates for the 2008 federal by-election had a debate at the community centre, we took this as an opportunity to practice our interviewing skills. Members of the group interviewed politicians about local issues. Some also had a chance to practice public speaking when they had a chance to ask questions of the candidates in front of the assembled constituency.

In the weeks following the debate, both Liberal candidate Rob Oliphant and NDP candidate David Sparrow visited Flemo Radio to express their support for the station. Both candidates did live, on-air interviews during which community members in the studio audience asked questions about issues of importance to them and the community.

e) Synthesizing: Creating the Image Poster

Once we had finished our exploration of the neighbourhood, we still needed a way of pulling our ideas together into a collective product. We returned to working with imagery, but this time, rather than using print media, we used the images we took with a still camera while we were wandering. We arranged these into thematic areas on large posters. As we reviewed, sorted and arranged them, we recorded our thoughts and reminiscences about why we had chosen to highlight those things. This generated a fresh round of discussion about Flemingdon Park, and our relationship with the neighbourhood. It also generated a visual "storyboard" which we able to use as a shared reference for editing together the audio.

f) Collective Editing of the Radio Documentary

Each group member had a chance to edit an interview they had done using the Flemo Radio equipment. This remained a collective process, as we listened to the audio play back together and discussed decisions about what was important to keep and what we could leave out.

Audio editing is a challenging thing to do collectively. However, I still wanted to allow the group to have as much input as possible into the form of the final documentary. A great advantage of "non-linear editor" audio software like Cubase is that blocks of audio can be labeled, moved, erased and restored very fluidly. As a result we were able to collectively create a rough structure for the finished product, which I helped them to polish.

This proved to be a slow, but rewarding learning experience for the group. Ultimately we did not have time to complete a full "documentary" in the time we had available for the project. Rather we completed a short "travelogue" that we called "Flemo: Keep it Moving". The work uses participants' words, music by local artists, and interviews to represent a portrait of the neighbourhood through participatory radio. "Flemo: Keep it Moving" aired on the Flemo Radio "Edutainment Show" in 2009.

Chapter 5: Reflections and Conclusions

5.1   The Open House

- It turned out that not many of the visitors had seen the posters, so raising awareness by word of mouth with the help of Flemo Radio members and Community Centre staff was important. Some of the youth who attended the open house arrived thinking it was a regular broadcast or recording session for Flemo Radio. In future, if a workshop could be confused with an existing similar offering, I would do more to differentiate it.

- Awareness of existing, popular programs at the Centre was important in terms of when I scheduled the Open House. The timing of the Open House coincided with drop-in basketball, so there was a large group of youth at the Centre, many of whom visited the Open House.

- In future similar workshops, I would prepare equipment and promotional materials to accommodate a constant flow of drop-in visitors. I had expected to have a critical mass of youth to whom I could pitch the idea. Instead, youth showed up throughout the session, hung out for a bit, and moved on. I would allow for unstructured time to hang out, listen, and allow interests, talents, skills and personalities to emerge.

- I would double check to make sure the equipment I chose to put out was durable, in anticipation of occasional rough handling by participants as they try it out.

- I would plan to have a co-facilitator to assist if possible. During the Open House and first workshop, I realized that it would have been helpful to have second facilitator there.

5.2   The First Version of the Workshop

What I learned from the first workshop caused me to rethink my facilitation approach, and the workshop structure.

When we started working with the print media, I realized that the participants were having difficulty connecting with the activity. They struggled to find images that represented their vision of Flemingdon Park. When they did choose images, my impression was that they were defaulting to established media narratives, rather than expressing their own ideas. I didn't hear many personal perspectives being shared.

Figure 9

Some images chosen during the first iteration of the workshop, 2008

On reflection, using print media as a starting point for generating discussion was at odds with the principle of "starting with the experience of participants". It imposed a particular filter and also limitations. I assumed that the participants would be able to represent what was meaningful to them through a medium that I had chosen. I believe the unintended result was to distance participants from their personal experience, words, and points of view, and subtly underscore established narratives, rather than facilitating the development of a new, authentic narrative. Further, in calling for abstract representation of ideas, the activity was biased towards an intellectual approach, rather than individual expression.

My intention was that the art-making activity would help develop the critical consciousness of the group. On reflection, I realized that I was constrained by the narratives I was hoping we would redefine. This only changed when I listened and learned from the participants, and when they set the direction for the workshops.

By the end of the first workshop, I realized that the workshops needed to be rethought. Despite its shortcomings, the first iteration of the workshop was valuable in the sense that it:

- Helped identify a core group of committed participants

- Showed that the art-making approach lacked relevance for participants

- Suggested the need for input from participants on how to make the workshops more relevant

- Gave participants a chance to get to know me, as facilitator, a bit better

- Gave participants a chance to get to know each other a bit better

5.3   The Second Version of the Workshop Process: Wandering and Story Telling

Once I realized that the art-making approach wasn't helping us in the way that I had intended, I decided to get the group's input on how the process could be more relevant. The group suggested the idea of doing some wandering – actually getting out into the community and talking about it with a recorder and a still camera. This approach proved to be much more engaging and thought provoking:

- It gave the participants the chance to share their personal stories about the neighbourhood, and get feedback and comments from other participants.

- The wandering process contributed to the camaraderie of the group. We shared the common purpose of exploring, learning, and recording our immediate thoughts and reactions. One afternoon we were surprised by a rainstorm and had to run as fast as we could to a bus shelter to stay dry and protect the equipment. This unexpected, amusing event became a moment to share and record. The microtrak recorder changed hands often, allowing all members to contribute to the narrative.

- Wandering and storytelling freed us from existing editorial angles and media-driven narratives. It helped us to build a sense of our place in the community and to appreciate Flemingdon Park as a strong, diverse neighbourhood with a bright future.

- In letting the participants lead the way and make personal connections to our group experience, I built credibility as a facilitator. I also felt a stronger connection to the neighbourhood myself. In stepping out of my comfort zone, I was challenged to experience Flemingdon Park for myself, with fresh eyes.

- Wandering also inspired critical thinking and generated questions, which had not been generated in the first workshop. Participants brought up such questions such as:

  o What is "Flemingdon Park?"

  o Where are the borders of Flemingdon Park?

- o Does everyone who lives and works in Flemingdon Park consider himself or herself to be part of Flemingdon Park?

- o Is Flemingdon Park a "community"?

- o How well do we know the neighbourhood?

- o What kinds of changes do we notice going on around us? Do we feel they are Positive? Negative? Both? Neither?

- o Is this a place we see ourselves in the future?

- o What would we like to see Flemingdon Park become?

- We ended up doing many interviews. We started by interviewing each other, and expanded to interviewing people in and around the Centre. Eventually, we interviewed local business people, Flemingdon Park residents and politicians. The interviewing process proved to be valuable in a number of different ways:

a) It allowed us to hear a variety of new perspectives on Flemingdon Park

b) Participants saw themselves as community ambassadors

c) We met and interviewed local politicians

d) We built the confidence to persevere in the face of rejection, for instance when people declined an interview request.

- For example, during one of our wandering sessions, the subject of possible discrimination at the local 7-11 corner store was raised. The participants had heard that the owner might be discriminating against certain youth.   We decided to go to the local 7-11 to interview staff about whether there was any basis for this impression. The staff at the 7-11 declined to be interviewed.

  However, later in the week, one of the participants went back to conduct his own research on whether kids were being discriminated against. He asked the staff again, and was refused again. Then he came up with the idea of interviewing youth who were shopping at the 7-11 about whether they had ever experienced discrimination at that store. He then brought his findings back to share with the group for the next workshop session.

e) It showed us that some people in Flemingdon Park are distrustful of "the media"

f) It caused us to think critically about how we present ourselves as representatives of Flemingdon Community Media

g) We developed our interviewing skills

5.4   Self Esteem and the Microphone

The effective use of a microphone was important part of youth participation in Flemo Radio. One of my goals for the workshops was to try to build ownership and comfort with "the mic".   I felt that this would be an important part of building our own narrative. One idea I had was to try to blur the lines between brainstorming and being "on-mic". As the workshops progressed, I began observing and reflecting on how the microphone influenced the democratic space of the workshops.

I noticed parallels between the experience of using the microphone as a tool for innovation and facilitating innovation in the Challenge Zone. I began watching for behavioural considerations such as: Who is getting to speak on the microphone? Ensuring that the microphone became a tool to enrich the workshops was an important aspect of my facilitation process.

During the first workshop, I noticed that several participants were quite assertive and seemed to be intimidating the other participants to the point that they weren't getting equal opportunity on the microphone. When I noticed this happening, I tried to shift this dynamic by saying, "Let's give someone else a chance to say what's on their mind".

As the workshop progressed, I watched closely for those who were being marginalized, and tried to create space for them to use the microphone. If they had the courage to try out the microphone, even if it was just saying their name, or a few words, I made sure to celebrate that.

Observing the interactions around the microphone also led me to observe how participants were expressing themselves.

These cues suggested forms of expression that were meaningful for participants, including rapping and singing. We ended up including several of these in the documentary.

My observations on the influence of the microphone on the workshop space included:

- Other participants were more likely to listen closely to what the person with the mic had to say. Speaking on the microphone conferred authority.

- Holding the mic motivated the participants to try to express themselves clearly, persuasively and passionately

- Speaking on the microphone in a space in which people can react and respond to your point of view strengthens the feeling of community. It reinforces the feeling that your ideas have the potential to be heard by a wider audience.

- Because of its association with "media", anyone speaking on the microphone is seen to be in a position of privilege.

- Speaking on the microphone builds self-esteem.

- Speaking on the microphone takes courage. As a facilitator, I encouraged the group to develop and celebrate this courage, even if was just to say a few words, or introduce themselves.

- Speaking on the mic was a chance for participants to discover a new side of themselves through the "alter ego" of an "on-air" personality.

- Holding the mic can encourage playfulness, risk-taking, and roleplaying.

- The mic can motivate you to work to improve your voice, which has carryover to performance of many kinds

- It did occur to me that for some people, the microphone might actually inhibit true expression.

5.5   Lessons Learned

During the first workshop, I struggled to find a balance between providing structure and allowing participants to direct the process. Many of the youth seemed uninterested in the project. Their focus was on the free food and experimenting with the equipment, rather than exchanging ideas. After about an hour, I realized that rather than resisting the unstructured way the Open House was unfolding, I should take the opportunity to listen, observe and absorb what was being expressed by participants.

My intention was to approach the radio documentary project as a facilitator of a process. I discovered I constantly needed to remind myself to avoid thinking of it as a "project", in the sense of a pre-structured activity geared towards a particular goal. I entered into the first workshop with a "plan", and I quickly realized that if I failed to be flexible, alert and responsive to participant input, the program would end up being irrelevant to the participants.

It took me some time to understand that the workshops were a process, not a project. Once I realized this, I was able to accept and observe what was happening, and learn from this, rather than react against it.

Once I invited input from participants, I recognized that the wandering approach was a more effective and authentic way to develop our critical consciousness than sitting in the studio making art. It helped us to question our understanding of Flemingdon Park, and pushed us to see the neighbourhood with fresh eyes.

With this shift, the workshops became more democratic and there was better equilibrium in power relations between facilitator and participants. Facilitator and participants all learned, questioned, reflected and participated in the creation of the narrative.

By accepting the freedom to explore, we developed a sense of responsibility for our actions, and learned at our own pace, by doing. In this sense, the workshops evolved to become a more engaging and participatory process.

In retrospect, I question whether I could have engaged more people from the community in the participatory radio process. Following the Open House I observed that only a small group of youth were seriously committed to the radio documentary project. Further, these were youth who had previously connected with Flemo Radio in some way. This time around, the process didn't engage anyone who hadn't already been reached by Flemo Radio. I wonder how the process might have included a broader range of participants.

On one hand it was great to connect with a group of youth that was particularly interested in radio, and in making a documentary. On the other hand, the process would have been stronger if it had included some youth that didn't realize they could have a voice on the radio.

However, the process did include a more diverse group of Flemingdon Park voices than just the core group of youth.   During our exploration of the neighbourhood, we interviewed residents, business people, artists and politicians. These were men and women, adults and youth. Some of these interviews were included in the documentary. In this way, the process engaged community members outside of the core group.

5.6 Questionnaire Feedback from Participants

Table 5: Participant Feedback

Feedback Question	Responses
1. What do you feel you have learned from the process of making the documentary, if anything? Did you have any "Aha!" moments that have stuck with you?	-I learned how to interview people and also to gather information. -My biggest Aha! Was looking at newspaper articles differently after we worked on the Flemo documentary -Interviewing and editing, my Aha! was hearing my interview played back -I learned a lot from the others in the group about Flemo
2. Were you surprised by anything during the making of the documentary? If so, what surprised you?	-I didn't realize how long some people have lived in Flemo -Surprised by some people not wanting to be interviewed -I was surprised that there were lots of areas of Flemo I didn't know about -I was surprised by how much better we got at interviews
3. Do you feel you have gained any new skills as a result of making the documentary? If so, which new skills have you gained?	-Radio Skill (being comfortable with every step) -More confidence for radio -Being able to interview someone, using the microtrak -Interviews, using the recording computer (still need more practice through)
4. How comfortable are you with being on	-Very comfortable, yes my comfort level went

the radio today? Has your comfort level changed since we began making the documentary?	up -Sometimes I'm still nervous to do interviews but not as much as before -I am comfortable, and I always have been -I'm more comfortable using the microtrak for interviews, and I'm confortable talking on the radio
5. Do you see Flemingdon Park differently now that we have finished the documentary? If so, how has your viewpoint changed?	-Yes I do see Flemingdon Park differently. I realized that there have been changes happening without us knowing for a while and now I am more aware -I don't see Flemingdon Park differently but I have more confidence in my point of view -I like that we made our own view of Flemo, so it's not just the regular media view -It's awesome we have a radio station in Flemo where we can have our own opinion and views
6. What would you change about the workshop for the future?	-Next time it would be cool to try video -More time for editing -More snacks -It was sometimes hard to edit all together, so maybe add some more individual editing time

5.7 Conclusions

This project was one outcome of Toronto's first major inter-jurisdictional effort to invest in community development through funding youth programs. It was also the first project of its kind at Flemo Radio. Thus, while I was working from a solid basis in educational theory, it was certainly an exploratory process.

Success came only through understanding that the process was as much a learning process for me as it was for the participants. Through this realization, the project evolved into a participatory, inquiry-based process.

The process allowed for the exchange of ideas and debate. As a group, we developed our critical consciousness through independent exploration, asking questions, challenging the status quo, and rejecting pervasive media narratives. Feedback from participants suggests this process helped them think differently about the neighbourhood, and to recognize their own ability to influence it through media.

This approach provides guidelines for how future media-based youth programs could be developed in a way that promotes change, invests youth with a sense of ownership over outcomes, and encourages engagement with community development.

However, it is not a blueprint for youth community engagement through media. The most valuable part of the participatory radio process came through youth direction of the process to what was relevant to them, within the broad framework of the project.

For future initiatives, it would be important to avoid assumptions about what is relevant to participants, and focus on ensuring the process is truly participatory. Facilitators need to be open to the process evolving in unexpected and empowering directions with input from participants.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Participant Release

Engaging Youth Through Participatory Radio in Flemingdon Park

You are invited to participate in the creation of a radio documentary about Flemingdon Park, beginning July 9th, 2008.   Alex Macdonald, a volunteer at Flemo Radio, and an MES candidate at the Faculty of Environmental Studies at York University, will be facilitating the production of the documentary as part of the requirements for his degree. The focus of his research is assessing the ability of the "participatory radio" process to stimulate dialogue, critical thinking and the articulation of visions for the future of the neighbourhood. You will be encouraged to share your viewpoints and opinions on issues that you feel are important in group discussions, and as part of recordings for the final radio documentary. You and your viewpoints will not be the subject of study; Alex's focus is on critically assessing the effectiveness of the participatory radio process itself. You will have final say over use of recording of your voice, and any recordings that include your voice or make reference you will be deleted upon request. You will have the option to participate anonymously in the project.

The creation of the documentary will be accomplished through a series of weekly workshops at the Dennis R. Timbrell community centre over the course of 4 months. The Community Centre is a safe and secure environment, which has constant staff presence and supervision. During the course of the project, should you decide to cease participation, you may do so freely, and any recordings that include your voice or refer to you will be deleted upon request.

If you choose to participate, you will have the opportunity to meet other youth from Flemingdon Park and exchange ideas in an open, accepting and respectful environment. You will also have the opportunity to gain skills in the area of recording and editing audio, radio production, interviewing and potentially hear yourself broadcast on the radio! Snacks and drinks, including kosher and halal options will be provided at each workshop.

The project will proceed under the direct supervision of Ayesha Rowe, the coordinator of Flemo City Media. If you have any questions about the project, do not hesitate to contact Alex Macdonald or Ayesha Rowe for more information.

Note that participants under 16 years of age will need the proof of consent from their parent or guardian to participate.

Thank you for your interest!

_____
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Appendix 2: Flemo Radio Documentary Follow-up Questionnaire

Questionnaire

1. What do you feel you have learned from the process of making the documentary, if anything? Did you have any "Aha!" moments that have stuck with you?

2. Were you surprised by anything during the making of the documentary? If so, what surprised you?

3. Do you feel you have gained any new skills as a result of making the documentary? If so, which new skills have you gained?

4. How comfortable are you with being on the radio today? Has your comfort level changed since we began making the documentary?

5. Do you see Flemingdon Park differently now that we have finished the documentary?
If so, how has your viewpoint changed?

Thanks for your feedback on the participatory radio process!

Alex Macdonald

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