

# The Helen Carswell Chair in Community Engaged Research in the Arts

Final Reports - 2019

## Data and stories for action: A multi-method evaluation strategy for RPSM programs for youth

Uzo Anucha, Ph.D.

### What is this research about?

This project developed an evaluation strategy for Regent Park School of Music (RPSM) to understand the impact of their music programs on youth.

RPSM is interested in conducting both a process and outcome evaluation of their Jane & Finch location to capture the critical aspects of their pedagogical model and to explore their participants' experiences of life skills transfer from music to everyday life. Evaluation is a powerful strategy for improving youth work practice, enhancing program delivery, addressing sustainability, and creating a culture of both equity and learning within organizations.

The evaluation strategy that was collaboratively developed with RPSM included a process evaluation that will focus on staff, teachers and facilitator conceptions of the RPSM's model, vision and objectives, as well as student and parent satisfaction. The outcome evaluation will use **a longitudinal integrated mixed- methods approach** to measure the extent to which their participants foster life skills in and through their music education at RPSM and later apply those life skills in their everyday life.

### What did the project accomplish?

Working collaboratively with RPSM, the project accomplished the following:

- Completed a comprehensive review of literature to “deepen the evidence base” of the areas that RPSM is focused on and to learn from evaluation of similar initiatives.

### What you need to know:

Regent Park School of Music (RPSM) is a community-based music school that provides more equitable access to a quality music education, instruments and once-in-a-lifetime performance opportunities for young people in the Regent Park & Jane & Finch communities. Currently, RPSM provides music education children and youth ages 3-18 after-school, on weekends and during school holidays.

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- An **Evidence Brief** was developed to summarize the findings from this review and outline recommendations for program design and evaluation. The Evidence Brief summarizes the promising/good/best practices for music education programs and the impacts/benefits of these practices for Black and/or racialized youth (see attached Evidence Brief).
- Developed a **Logic Model of RPSM** that describes the resources invested into the program, the activities and participants involved, and the intended short, medium and long-term outcomes of the program. Evaluations are better when they are grounded in a clear picture of the program.
- Offered a professional development workshop to RPSM staff titled: *Music as Method: Critical Positive Youth Development*.
- Offered a webinar to community stakeholders in collaboration with RPSM: *Striking A Chord: The Power of Music Programs for Young People* <https://youthrex.com/webinar/striking-a-chord-the-power-of-music-programs-for-young-people>.

### About the researcher

This project was led by Professor Uzo Anucha working with staff and students who are part of her project, the Youth Research and Evaluation eXchange (YouthREX) based at the School of Social Work, York University. YouthREX supports Ontario youth programs to track and measure their program's intended outcomes to understand how they are successful and see where there is room for improvement.

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### About the Helen Carswell Chair in Community Engaged Research in the Arts

The Helen Carswell Chair represents a partnership between York University and Regent Park School of Music (RPSM). All faculty and graduate students of the university are encouraged to collaborate with RPSM on special projects that are aimed at improving community music programming and curriculum for children in the Jane and Finch neighborhood and beyond.

<https://yorkspace.library.yorku.ca/xmlui/handle/10315/36357>