

**United Way South Niagara and United Way of Greater Fort Erie  
Community Visioning Project Final Report**

**This project is supported by the Ontario Trillium Foundation**



**Brock MBA Business Consulting Service**

*We Are in Business to Help Your Business*

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## Executive Summary

The Brock MBA Business Consulting Service (BCS) which, through the Faculty of Business at Brock University provides consulting services to a diverse range of clients, was contracted by United Way South Niagara and United Way of Greater Fort Erie, made possible with the support of The Ontario Trillium Foundation, to conduct research in the communities they respectively serve and this report represents the detailed findings of the research. The overarching goals of this research, which was conducted using telephone and in-person surveys throughout South Niagara and Greater Fort Erie as well as townhall-style meetings in the communities of Pelham, Port Colborne, Welland, and Fort Erie, were to develop an appreciation of the views and perceptions of residents of South Niagara and Greater Fort Erie concerning their communities and the roles of United Way South Niagara and United Way of Greater Fort Erie in them.

To achieve these goals, 474 telephone and in-person surveys were conducted by the BCS with residents of South Niagara and Greater Fort Erie; the survey population spanned many generations, social and cultural backgrounds, and socioeconomic situations. The results of these surveys have been analyzed extensively by the BCS and critical findings are communicated clearly to readers; from our analysis, it is clear that communities in South Niagara and Greater Fort Erie are diverse in the backgrounds of their residents and, to a degree, in their views of a range of community issues. Survey respondents were, however, very consensual in their support and acknowledgement of the vital roles that United Way South Niagara and United Way of Greater Fort Erie play in their communities as well as the needs for prioritizing community issues (relative to other concerns) and a collaborative approach for their effective resolution. The BCS is most grateful to the 474 residents of South Niagara and Greater Fort Erie who willingly participated in this study.

The views and perceptions of survey respondents, as reported herein, are complemented by fruitful discussions which occurred during four townhall sessions conducted by the BCS. These discussions were most useful in that they helped to uncover additional areas of community interest (for example, public transportation offerings in some of the areas included in this research) and to further define the roles of United Way

South Niagara and United Way of Greater Fort Erie play in the communities they serve. The BCS is additionally grateful to the many citizens who attended the townhall sessions and offered their most insightful views.

The findings reported herein have important implications for United Way South Niagara and United Way of Greater Fort Erie. Readers will notice, based on the ensuing analysis of the results of both surveys and townhall sessions, that community issues are highly complex and interconnected. It is apparent that, moving into the future, true collaborative approaches which incorporate and leverage the resources and capabilities of a range of interested stakeholders (including, though not limited to, all levels of government, private sector organizations, not-for-profit organizations, agencies funded by United Way South Niagara and United Way of Greater Fort Erie, religious and other community organizations, and individual citizens acting in a volunteer or some other capacity) are needed to bring about positive change throughout South Niagara and Greater Fort Erie.

## ***Brock MBA Business Consulting Service***

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## **Introduction**

With the support of The Ontario Trillium Foundation, United Way South Niagara and United Way of Greater Fort Erie contracted the Brock MBA Business Consulting Service to conduct research on their behalves and this report represents the culmination of their collective efforts. Through an effective blending of telephone and in-person surveys as well as highly participative townhall sessions, the findings presented in this report represent the views and perceptions of a wide range of community members from Pelham, Port Colborne, Welland, and Greater Fort Erie (including their outlying areas); in total, 474 surveys were conducted with residents and there responses are complemented by numerous participants at four townhall sessions.

The purpose of this report is to communicate to interested stakeholders the perceptions of need within the communities surveyed. In addition, this research was concerned with perceptions of the role of United Way South Niagara and United Way of Greater Fort Erie in the communities they serve and how the term “community” is understood by residents of the surveyed areas (which are generally referred to as South Niagara and Greater Fort Erie). This research was conducted to enable United Way South Niagara and United Way of Greater Fort Erie to continue their respective efforts of allocating resources on the basis of need and to provide interested stakeholders with a keen understanding of the ways in which perceptions may, in fact, differ from reality.

This report was written with the importance of user friendliness and easy comprehension in mind and, as such, readers will notice the prolific use of illustrations, detailed discussions, and insightful commentary based on the views and perceptions of a heterogeneous survey population. This report commences with a description of the goals of the research and the methodology employed toward their achievement which is then followed by detailed discussions of the specific findings of this research. Following these discussions, an analysis of the implications of the findings for United Way South Niagara and United Way of Greater Fort Erie is provided. Readers will find all appended documentation very useful in understanding the specific views and perceptions of the survey population.

It is expected that a diverse range of stakeholders will, because of a vested interest, find considerable value in this report. In particular, this report is directed toward residents of South Niagara and Greater Fort Erie, agencies supported by United Way South Niagara and United Way of Greater Fort Erie, all levels of government, local private sector organizations, local religious organizations, local community groups, local educational institutions, and the local policing authority. Readers will notice, based on views and perceptions, that social issues require collaborative remedies and, as such, reviewing this document in detail will be an important step.

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## **Statement of Goals, Objectives, and Planning**

As a community-focused organization, United Way South Niagara (UWSN), in conjunction with United Way of Greater Fort Erie (UWGFE), enlisted the Brock MBA Business Consulting Service (BCS) to conduct primary research on communities in their respective jurisdictions concerning the needs and perceptions of residents. With the support of The Ontario Trillium Foundation, UWSN and UWGFE instructed the BCS to contact citizens by telephone and in person using a standardized survey instrument (Appendix A) in order to achieve the broad and overarching goal of establishing a current and comprehensive inventory of community needs according to which allocations of donated resources could be made.

The UWSN and UWGFE organizations are recognized in their respective communities for playing a vital role in ensuring that the needs of residents are satisfied. To facilitate continued effectiveness, the goal of building a current inventory of community needs was set and communicated to the BCS; it is intended that, through the successful development of this needs inventory, UWSN and UWGFE will be particularly well suited to continue to meet the needs of their communities as a result of highly-targeted allocations of donated resources.

The need for an up-to-date inventory of community needs is important and emerges from both dynamism in the communities served by UWSN and UWGFE and the nature of the role of these organizations. Needs change over time as a result of a broad range of exogenous forces such as: changes in local economic conditions, the efforts of governments, not-for-profit organizations, the private sector, and individual citizens. The complementary role of UWSN and UWGFE (to governments, the private sector, etc.) means that these organizations need to be diligent in keeping abreast of change and it is evident that the leaders of these organizations are keenly interested in doing so.

To support this overarching goal, a number of objectives were identified which are evident in the survey instrument and the resulting analysis as well as in the planning of “townhall” sessions in communities served by UWSN and UWGFE. Critical to the development of a needs inventory is an assessment of community needs as they exist

currently. This assessment covers a broad range of topical issues (including, for example, local economic conditions, support for people fleeing violent home situations, and the extent to which the basic physiological needs of people are being satisfied) and which is compared with an assessment of the perceptions of people as to the status of these issues at the end of a five year period. This comparison allows UWSN and UWGFE to establish trajectories of change for each of these issues such that these organizations will know the specific issues expected to deteriorate (and, necessarily, increase in importance) and be able to focus resources accordingly.

In addition, it is necessary that UWSN and UWGFE update their understandings of the meaning of “community” as the term relates to residents of the communities they serve. As community-focused organizations, UWSN and UWGFE are interested in how residents regard “community” in terms of diversity, mutuality and commonality, security, and scope. Moreover, the BCS was requested to inquire with local residents as to their perceptions of the role, transparency, importance, and effectiveness of UWSN and UWGFE. The knowledge gained from these components of the primary research conducted by the BCS will enable UWSN and UWGFE to remedy any instances of misinformation and uncertainty that may exist amongst members of the communities they respectively serve.

## **Primary Research Methodology**

To contribute toward the achievement of the goal and related objectives discussed above, a survey of the communities served by UWSN and UNGFE (Fort Erie, Pelham, Port Colborne, and Welland) was conducted by telephone and in-person in which 478 residents participated. Surveys were carried out over a period of approximately six weeks in December 2006 and March 2007 and, to achieve a reasonable degree of external validity, in accordance with the relative population sizes of individual communities as a proportion of the overall population of South Niagara and Greater Fort Erie (please see the appendix section for an analysis of survey population characteristics).

Before the full-scale implementation of the survey, the survey instrument underwent a series of iterative revisions and testing. To ensure that all questions were both easy to read and understand and that the actual mechanics of the survey instrument worked well, 55 surveys were carried out on a test basis. This round of testing did not reveal any significant problems or areas for improvement and, as such, all 55 surveys are included in the total survey population of 478 responses.

As can be observed in this document, results to individual sections and questions of the survey instrument have been analyzed both aggregately and at the individual community level. The separation of results according to community is a necessary component of the analysis in order that UWSN and UWGFE can identify important differences in views between communities which can be helpful in allocating resources on the basis of “felt” need. The analysis of survey results carried out by the BCS focuses largely on the individual community level and, as such, discussions of differences in results are included in this report for readers’ information.

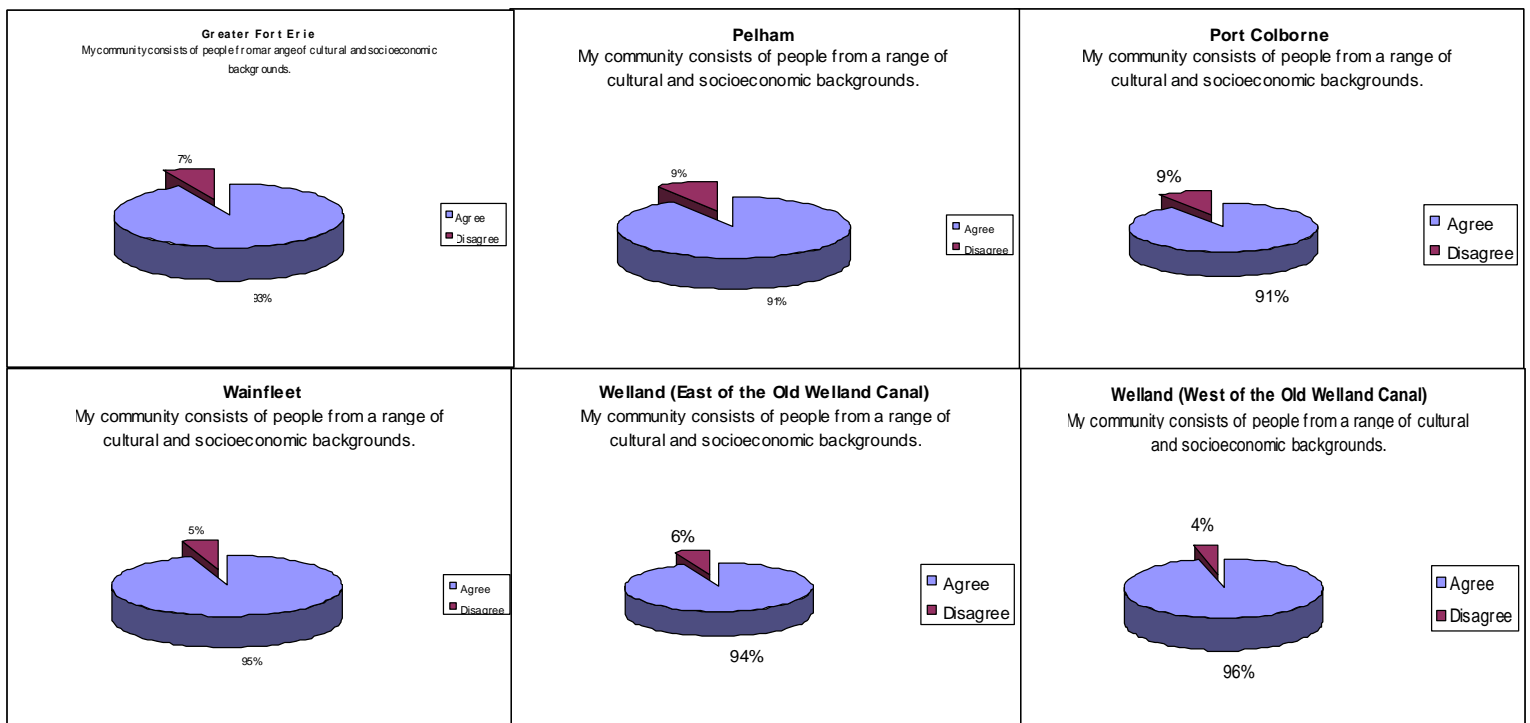
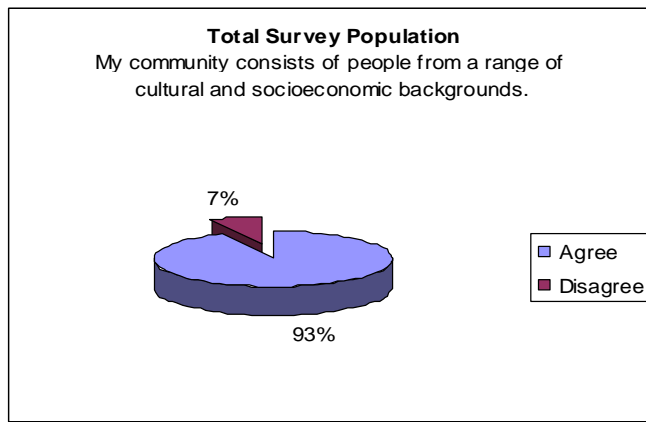
To complement these findings, research was additionally conducted at a series of “townhall” meetings in Fort Erie, Pelham, Port Colborne, and Welland held in February and March, 2007 at which participants were requested to comment on the preliminary and aggregate results presented by the BCS. These townhall sessions were conducted both on weekdays and on weekends and during both the daytime and evening and they were reasonably well attended. As explained below, attendees at these sessions were asked a

series of questions concerning the findings and their perceptions of the role of UWSN and UWGFE in their communities and their responses are provided herein.

## **Analysis of Survey Findings – Section 1**

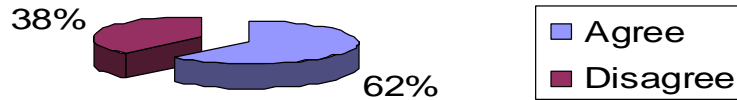
For each question of the survey instrument, the following are qualitative comparative analyses which examine how the communities of Pelham, Port Colborne, Welland, and Greater Fort Erie (including their outlying areas) are both homogeneous and heterogeneous with regard to their views and perceptions. Readers will notice graphics arranged conveniently so that visual comparisons can be made as to how, for example, residents of Port Colborne differ generally from the total survey population and specifically from residents of Greater Fort Erie.

Below these illustrations, we provide a discussion of interesting findings that emerged from the data. These discussions should appeal to a range of audiences; planners of social services at the regional level, for instance, may find value in learning about intra-region differences (i.e., within South Niagara and Greater Fort Erie) to guide budgeting initiatives whilst residents of specific communities may be interested in how views and perceptions in their communities compare to those outside their immediate communities.



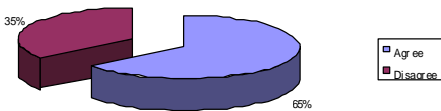
To gauge an understanding of how individual's viewed their community, respondents were asked whether they agreed or disagreed with the statement: My community consists of people from a range of cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds, of the total population 93% agreed with this statement while only 7% did not. All of the individual communities surveyed shared a general consensus with at least 90% of respondents indicating that they agree with the visible diversity of members in their community.

**Total Survey Population**  
**Members of my community share common goals and a vision for the future.**



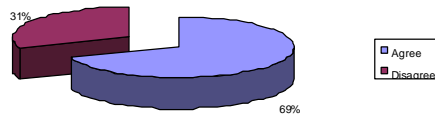
**Greater Fort Erie**

Members of my community share common goals and a vision for the future.



**Pelham**

Members of my community share common goals and a vision for the future.



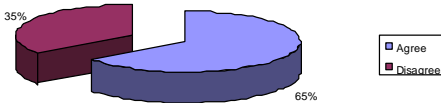
**Port Colborne**

Members of my community share common goals and a vision for the future.



**Wainfleet**

Members of my community share common goals and a vision for the future.



**Welland (East of the Old Welland Canal)**

Members of my community share common goals and a vision for the future.

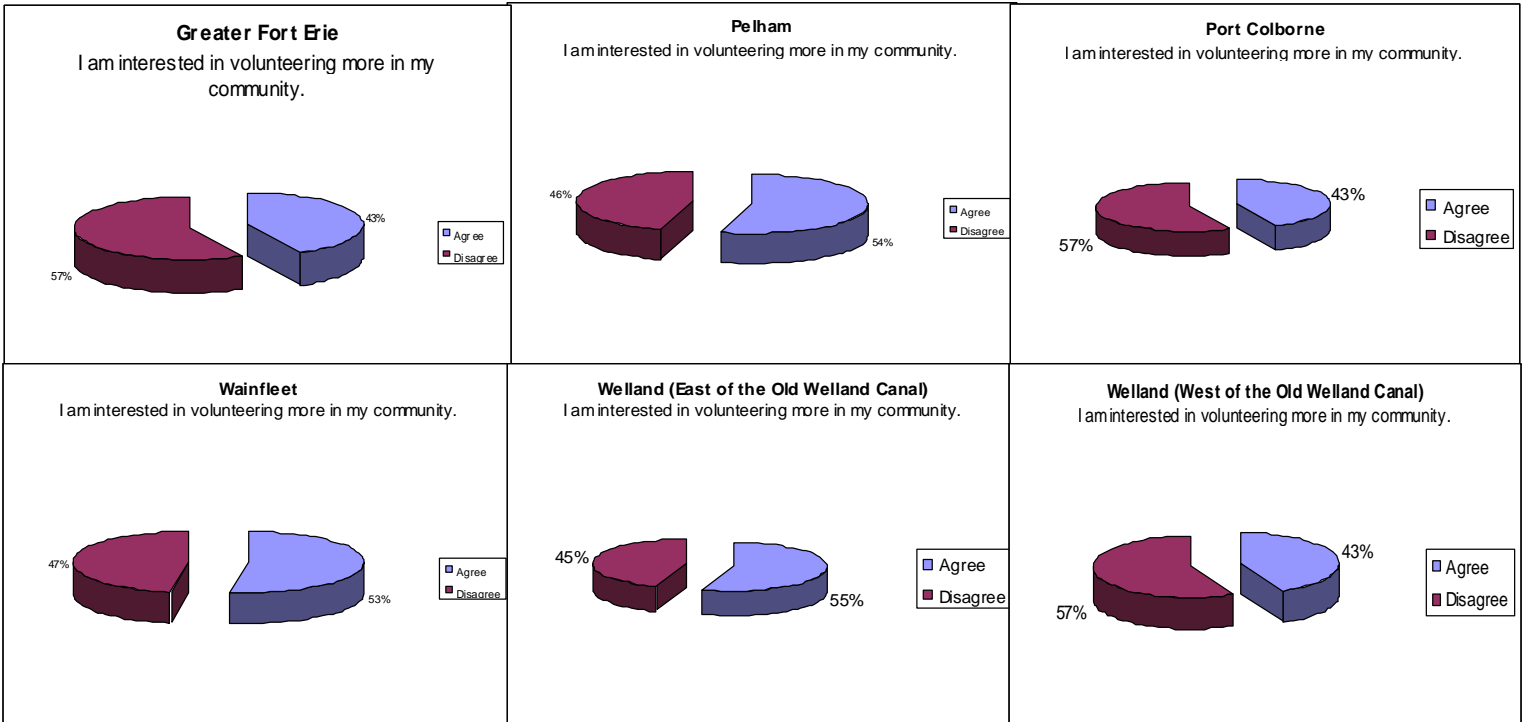
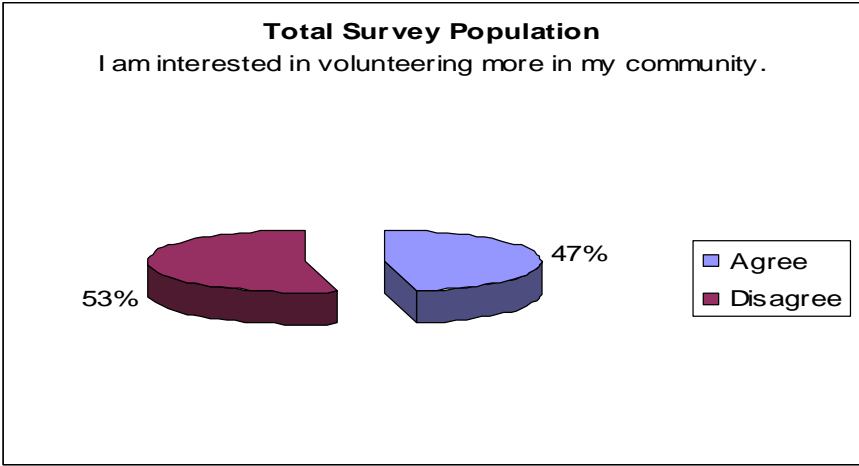


**Welland (West of the Old Welland Canal)**

Members of my community share common goals and a vision for the future.

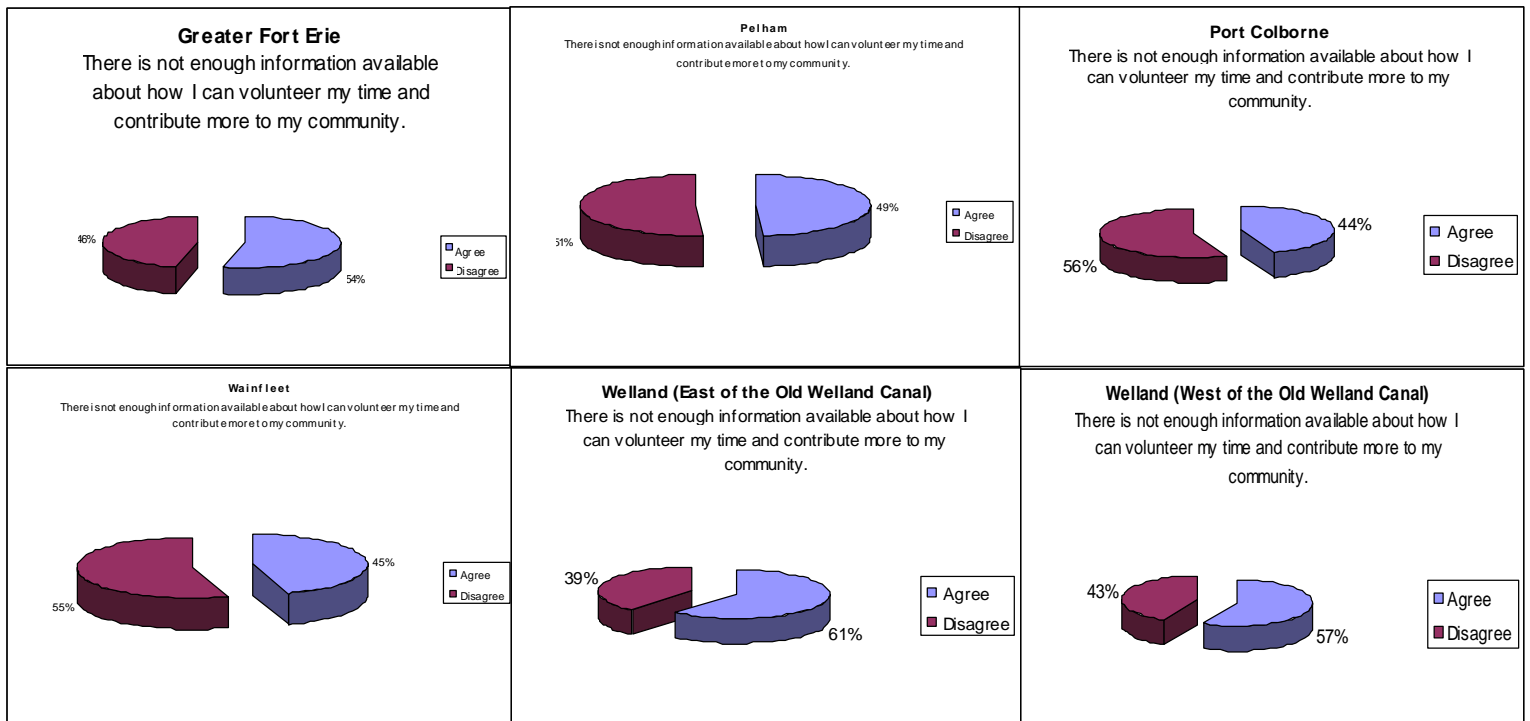
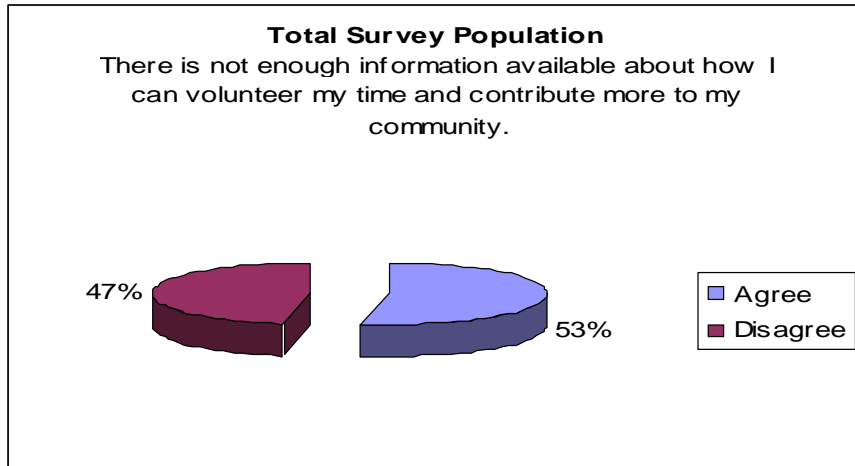


In an attempt to measure individual's perception surrounding the commonality of goals between the members of the community, respondents were asked to indicate whether they agree or disagree with the statement: Members of my community share common goals and a vision for the future. Of the total population surveyed 62% agreed while 38% felt otherwise. Although all communities were within generally the same range, the greatest difference was in Port Colborne where 55% expressed that they agreed, while 45% said they felt their were differing goals amongst members of their community.

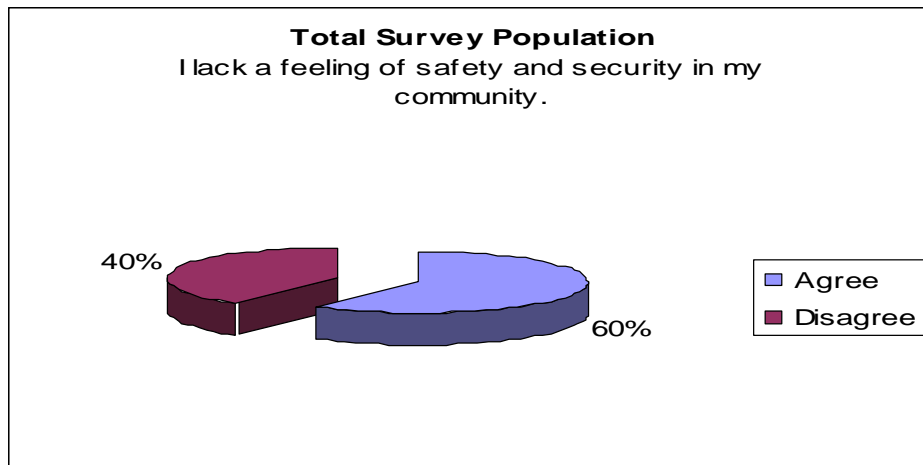


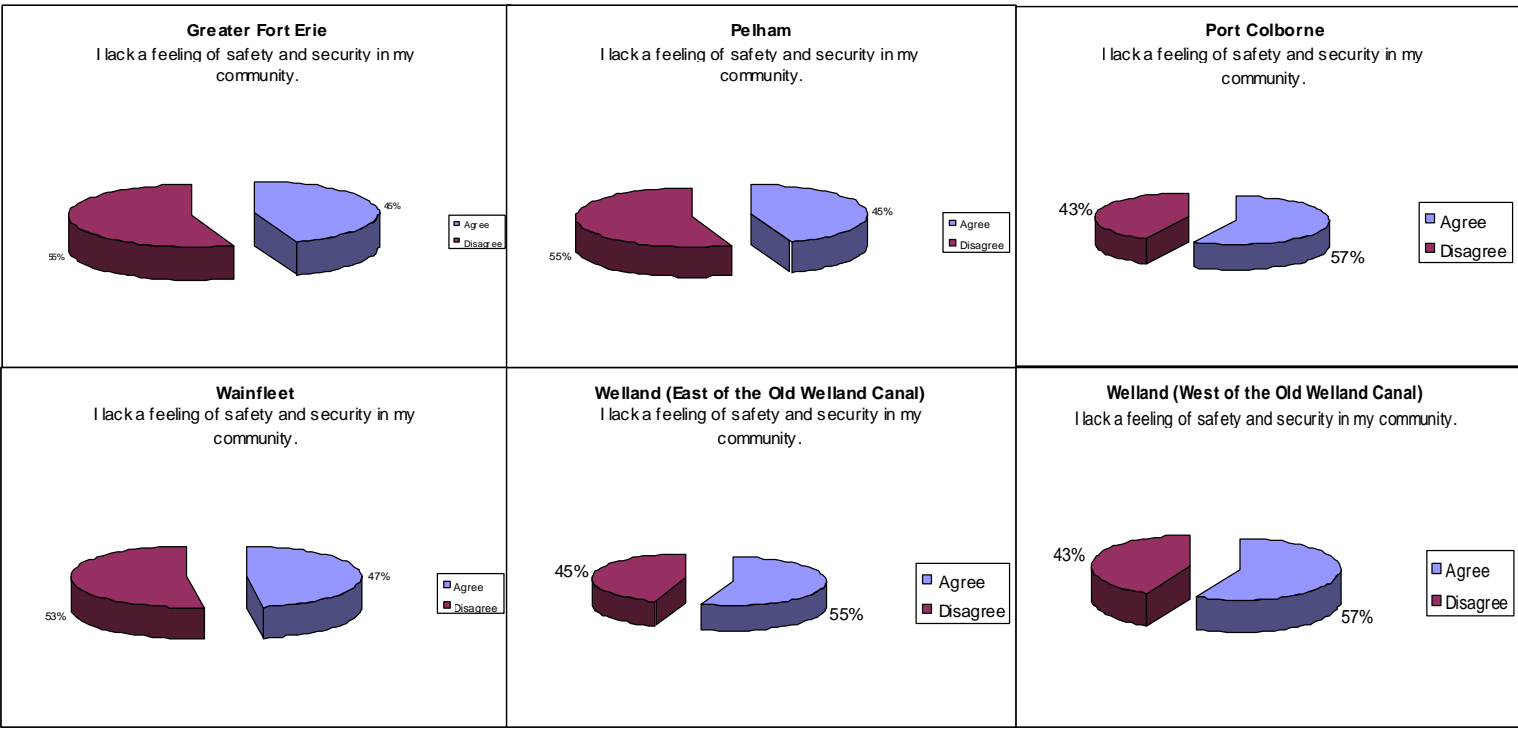
To assess the desire of individual's to volunteer more in their community, respondents were asked to indicate whether they agree or disagree with the statement: I am interested in volunteering more in my community. More than half of the total population disagreed with this statement, while 47% expressed an interest in doing so. The communities that expressed a greater interest in volunteering more in their community were found in

Wainfleet, Pelham, and the East end of Welland who agreed with this statement 53-55% respectively. This can indicate that communities with a greater desire to volunteer sense a greater need for volunteers, while other communities where the majority of respondents indicated they do not wish to volunteer may be a result of higher current volunteer participation.

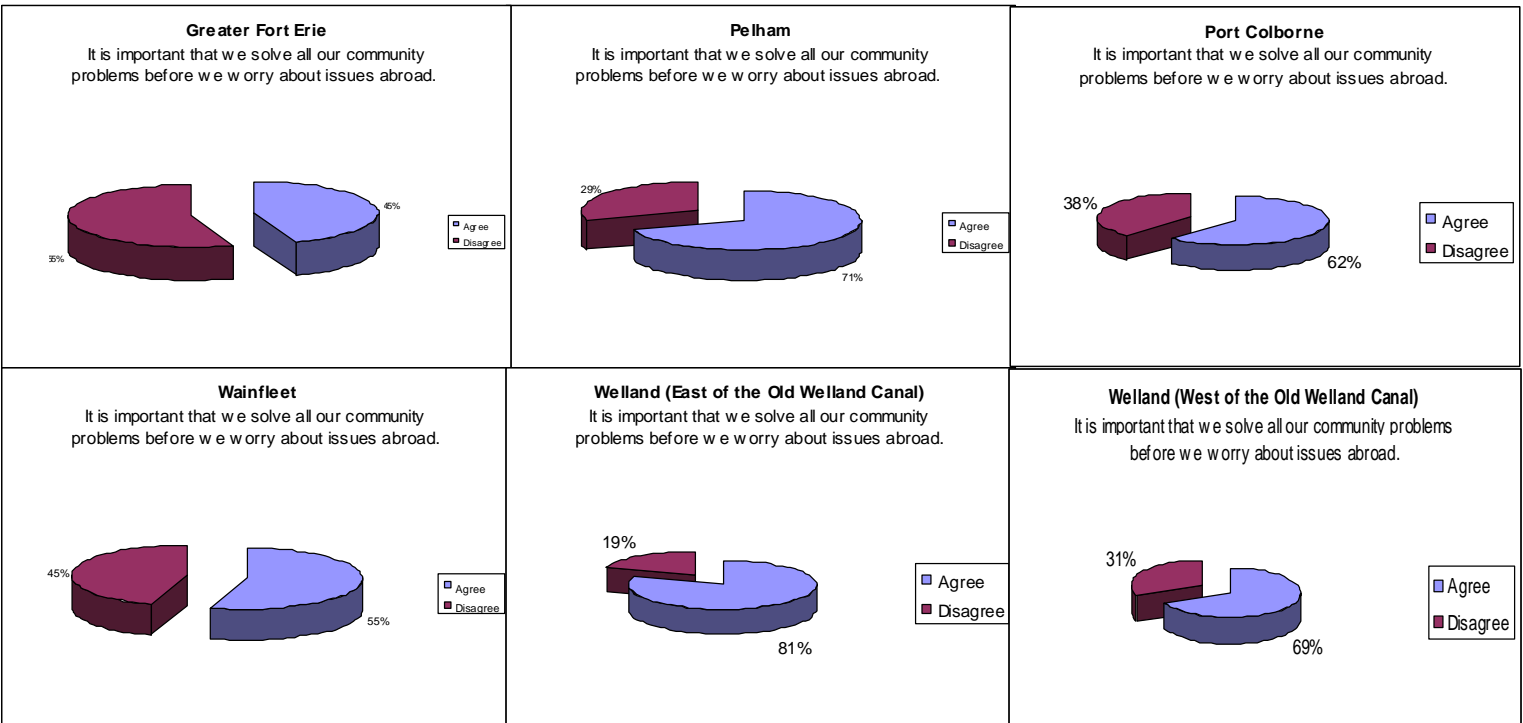
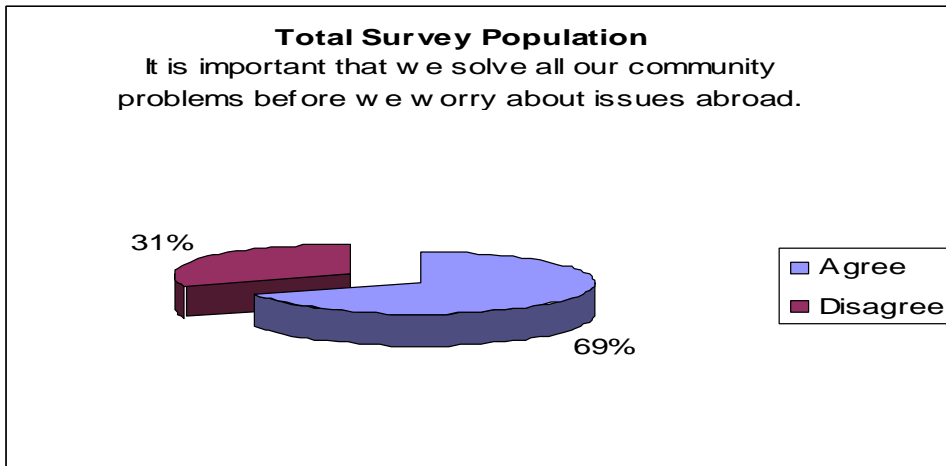


To follow up with the preceding question, which attempts to measure the desire to volunteer more in their community, it was deemed useful to determine whether this sentiment was reflective of the ease of information available about volunteering. Respondents were asked to express whether they agreed or disagreed with the statement: There is not enough information available about how I can volunteer my time and contribute more to my community. Of the total population, 53% indicated that they agreed, while 47% felt there is enough information available. Interestingly, there is consistency that in the East end of Welland where there was a greater desire to volunteer more in the community, 61% of respondents felt that there was not enough information available about how they can get involved with volunteering in their community.



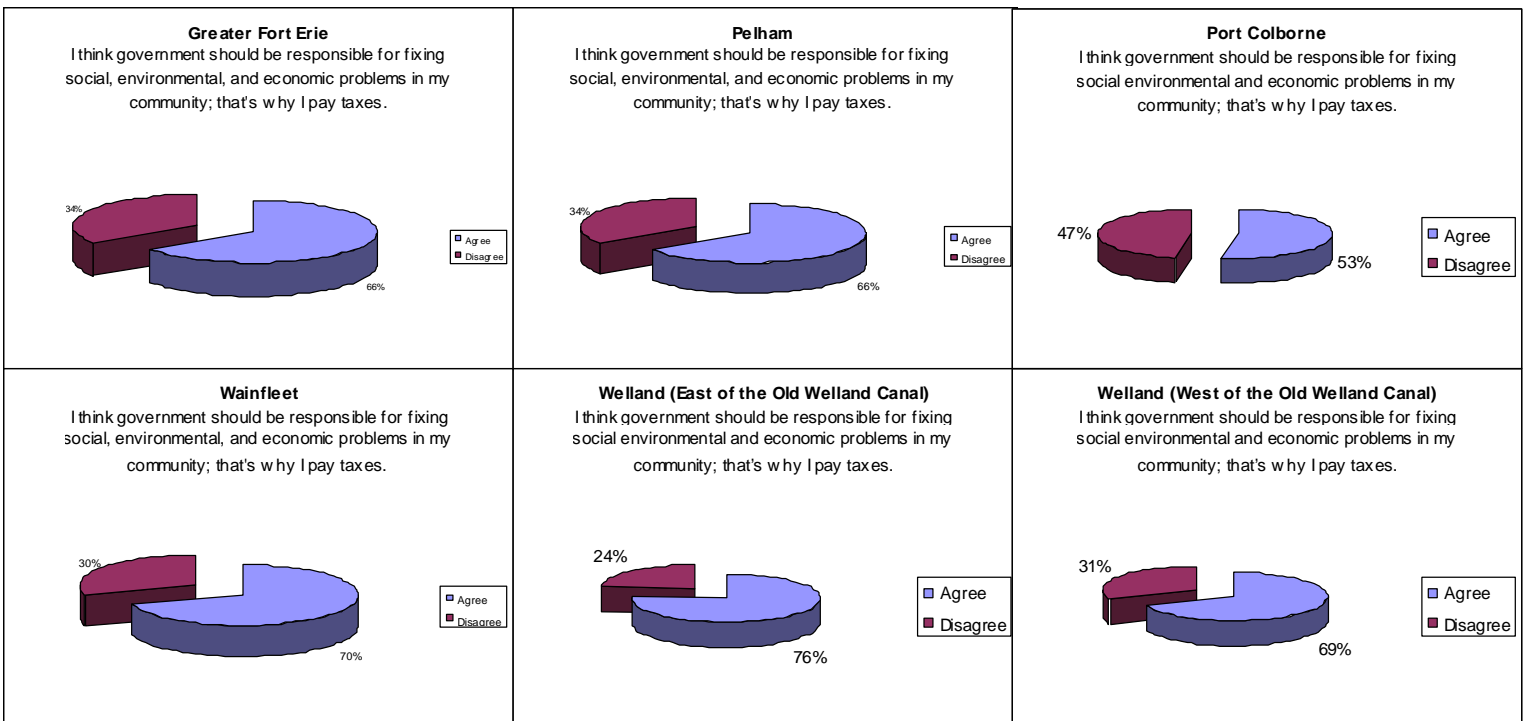
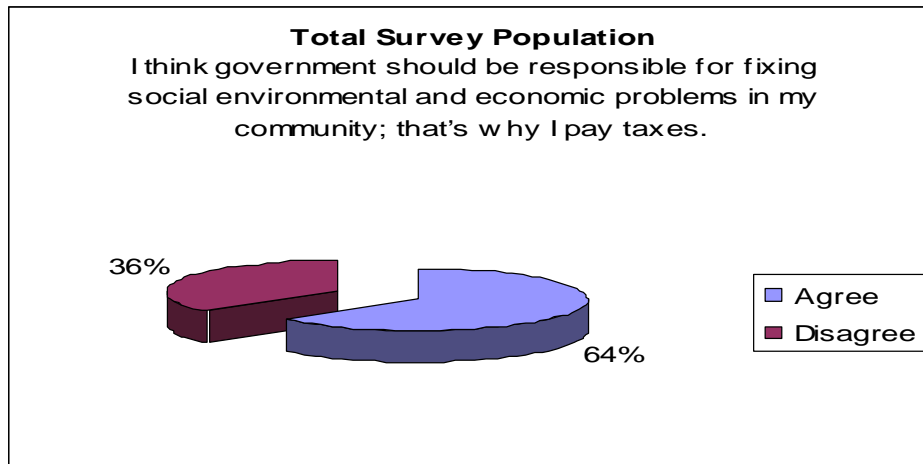


To gauge the level of safety and security that individuals feel in their community, respondents were asked whether they agree or disagree with the statement: I lack a feeling of safety and security in my community. Of the total population surveyed 60% indicated that they agreed with this statement demonstrating that the majority of people have concerns about this issue. In terms of the individual communities surveyed responses varied within a small margin. Port Colborne and Welland had the highest responses (53-57%) agreeing with lacking a sense of safety and security, in comparison to Greater Fort Erie and Pelham that had the largest amount of people (55%) who disagreed.



Respondents were asked to indicate the priority in which issues are addressed, in comparison to the proximity in which it affects them. To gauge this, respondents were asked whether they agree or disagree with the statement: It is important to solve all our community problems before we worry about issues abroad. This question received a large amount of variance amongst the communities surveyed. Of the total population 69% indicated that they agreed that community issues should be a priority, while 31% felt otherwise. The greatest differences were found in the east end of Welland, where 81%

agreed and only 19% disagreed; and on the other end of the spectrum respondents in Greater Fort Erie expressed the highest percent with 55% holding a dissenting opinion, indicating that they have a broader view of community that perhaps extends beyond geography.



To understand the role that individuals feel the government plays in being held responsible for solving community issues, respondents were asked whether they agree or disagree with the statement: I think government should be responsible for fixing social, environmental, and economic problems in my community; that's why I pay taxes. Of the total population surveyed 64% agreed while 36% felt otherwise. In all of the communities the majority of people agreed with this statement however responses varied from a low of 53% in Port Colborne to a high of 76% in the east end of Welland. This indicates that members of the community place the onus on the government to address key social and economic problems in their community.

## **Sections 2 and 3 – Current and expected future states of eight community issues**

Much of the survey instrument, to which readers are directed in the appendices, revolves around eight community issues that, through a series of roundtable discussions held before the commencement of work by the BCS, were determined as particularly salient. For each of these issues, survey respondents were asked to comment on them based on their perceptions of both their current and expected future states (i.e., in five years). The community issues are:

- Meeting the basic needs of people for food, shelter, clothing, and literacy
- Access for women and children who have fled violent home situations with security, support, and resources for economic independence
- Access to support services for children and youth at-risk and for families coping with problems
- Unemployment and underemployment in my community
- Access to support services for people with physical or developmental disabilities
- Provision of health support services including rehabilitation and home healthcare
- Access to community services including counseling, referrals, volunteer development, and community capacity building
- The availability of opportunities for recreation to all members of my community

For each community surveyed, below is a table which reports average ratings based on, for the current state, the strength of the issue (issues that are rated as strong are perceived to be less problematic in the community) and, for the expected future state, the direction of its change. Readers are directed to the following legend as it explains the colour-coding scheme that has been used to quickly convey the results of this section of the survey.

Legend					
<b>Current state</b>	<b>Very weak (1.00-2.00)</b>	<b>Somewhat weak (2.01-2.89)</b>	<b>Neither weak nor strong (2.90 – 3.10)</b>	<b>Somewhat strong (3.11–4.00)</b>	<b>Very strong (4.01-5.00)</b>
<b>Future state</b>	<b>Better than today (1.00-1.89)</b>		<b>About the same as today (1.90-2.10)</b>	<b>Worse than today (2.11-3.00)</b>	

The following table yields some interesting results. A visual inspection reveals that most community issues, in their current state, are somewhat strong which is, generally, a positive finding. Readers will notice that the local employment situation and access to community services are areas of perceived concern across most communities. Additionally, readers will notice that the communities of Pelham, Port Colborne, and Fort Erie (including their outlying areas) rated the community issues fairly strongly (with some exceptions) whereas respondents in Welland were somewhat more negative.

It appears that a fair level of optimism exists in the communities surveyed in this research, though pockets of negativism do exist. Generally, respondents are optimistic with regard to the expected future state of the satisfaction of meeting basic needs, providing access to resources to women and children who have fled violent home situations, providing access to support services for children, youth, and families coping with problems, and the employment situation.

More negatively, however, many respondents (across the whole survey population) expressed some degree of concern with the expected future states of the provision of access to support services for people with disabilities, as well as the provision of health support and community services. Citizens of Welland expressed considerable pessimism (or believe matters to remain unchanged) regarding these community issues whereas as did many communities, as can be observed below.

Summary of community results for community issue questions											
Questions	Crystal Beach	Fort Erie	Pelham (Rural)	Pelham (Urban)	Port Colborne	Ridgeway	S & D	Wain.	Welland (L3B)	Welland (L3C)	Overall average
The current state											
1. Meeting the basic needs of people for food, shelter, clothing, and literacy	3.74	3.12	3.78	3.48	3.37	3.94	3.54	3.45	3.09	3.12	3.46
2. Access for women and children who have fled violent home situations with security, support, and resources for economic independence	3.89	3.24	3.55	3.53	3.22	3.22	3.64	3.40	3.23	3.14	3.41
3. Access to support services for children and youth at-risk and for families coping with problems	3.37	3.22	3.72	3.57	3.26	3.11	3.50	3.47	3.24	2.97	3.34
4. Unemployment and underemployment in my community	2.47	3.19	3.00	2.93	3.33	2.35	2.29	2.70	2.35	2.44	2.71
5. Access to support services for people with physical or developmental disabilities	3.22	3.12	3.44	3.53	3.12	3.61	3.25	3.58	2.91	3.17	3.30
6. Provision of health support services including rehabilitation and	3.33	3.14	2.94	3.52	3.14	3.11	3.36	3.60	3.06	3.12	3.23

Summary of community results for community issue questions											
Questions	Crystal Beach	Fort Erie	Pelham (Rural)	Pelham (Urban)	Port Colborne	Ridgeway	S & D	Wain.	Welland (L3B)	Welland (L3C)	Overall average
home healthcare											
7. Access to community services including counseling, referrals, volunteer development and community capacity building	3.00	3.03	3.11	3.25	3.14	3.06	3.07	3.3	2.88	3.13	3.10
8. The availability of opportunities for recreation to all members of my community	3.68	3.28	2.78	3.64	3.00	3.39	3.50	3.75	3.14	3.36	3.35
<b>Expected future state</b>											
1. Meeting the basic needs of people for food, shelter, clothing, and literacy	1.63	1.29	1.72	1.41	1.32	1.56	1.57	1.4	1.35	1.37	1.46
2. Access for women and children who have fled violent home situations with security, support, and resources for economic independence	1.68	1.46	1.61	1.57	1.31	1.83	1.46	1.55	1.44	1.32	1.52
3. Access to support services for children and youth at-risk and for families coping with problems	1.94	1.65	1.82	1.77	1.79	1.94	1.71	2.00	1.79	1.79	1.82

<b>Summary of community results for community issue questions</b>											
<b>Questions</b>	<b>Crystal Beach</b>	<b>Fort Erie</b>	<b>Pelham (Rural)</b>	<b>Pelham (Urban)</b>	<b>Port Colborne</b>	<b>Ridgeway</b>	<b>S &amp; D</b>	<b>Wain.</b>	<b>Welland (L3B)</b>	<b>Welland (L3C)</b>	<b>Overall average</b>
4. Unemployment and underemployment in my community	1.83	1.49	1.44	1.51	1.32	1.61	1.57	1.4	2.24	2.04	1.65
5. Access to support services for people with physical or developmental disabilities	2.05	1.91	2.18	1.93	2.03	2.18	2.07	2.15	2.05	1.99	2.05
6. Provision of health support services including rehabilitation and home healthcare	1.89	1.97	2.17	1.96	2.21	2.39	2.14	2.26	2.24	2.11	2.13
7. Access to community services including counseling, referrals, volunteer development and community capacity building	1.89	1.86	2.06	1.65	2.10	2.12	2.15	1.8	2.17	1.99	1.98
8. The availability of opportunities for recreation to all members of my community	1.58	1.49	1.61	1.55	1.49	1.78	1.50	1.6	1.70	1.75	1.61

Summary of community results for community issue questions										
Questions	Crystal Beach	Fort Erie	Pelham (Rural)	Pelham (Urban)	Port Colborne	Ridgeway	S & D	Wain.	Welland (L3B)	Welland (L3C)
The current state										
1. Meeting the basic needs of people for food, shelter, clothing, and literacy	Stronger than average	Weaker than average	Stronger than average	Stronger than average	Weaker than average	Stronger than average	Stronger than average	Weaker than average	Weaker than average	Weaker than average
2. Access for women and children who have fled violent home situations with security, support, and resources for economic independence	Stronger than average	Weaker than average	Stronger than average	Stronger than average	Weaker than average	Weaker than average	Stronger than average	Weaker than average	Weaker than average	Weaker than average
3. Access to support services for children and youth at-risk and for families coping with problems	Stronger than average	Weaker than average	Stronger than average	Stronger than average	Weaker than average	Weaker than average	Stronger than average	Stronger than average	Weaker than average	Weaker than average
4. Unemployment and underemployment in my community	Weaker than average	Stronger than average	Stronger than average	Stronger than average	Stronger than average	Weaker than average	Weaker than average	Weaker than average	Weaker than average	Weaker than average
5. Access to support services for people with physical or developmental disabilities	Weaker than average	Weaker than average	Stronger than average	Stronger than average	Weaker than average	Stronger than average	Weaker than average	Stronger than average	Weaker than average	Weaker than average
6. Provision of health support	Stronger	Weaker	Weaker	Stronger	Weaker	Weaker	Stronger	Stronger	Weaker	Weaker

Summary of community results for community issue questions										
Questions	Crystal Beach	Fort Erie	Pelham (Rural)	Pelham (Urban)	Port Colborne	Ridgeway	S & D	Wain.	Welland (L3B)	Welland (L3C)
services including rehabilitation and home healthcare	than average	than average	than average	than average	than average	than average	than average	than average	than average	than average
7. Access to community services including counseling, referrals, volunteer development and community capacity building	Weaker than average	Weaker than average	Stronger than average	Stronger than average	Stronger than average	Weaker than average	Weaker than average	Stronger than average	Weaker than average	Stronger than average
8. The availability of opportunities for recreation to all members of my community	Stronger than average	Weaker than average	Weaker than average	Stronger than average	Weaker than average	Stronger than average	Stronger than average	Stronger than average	Weaker than average	Stronger than average
<b>Expected future state</b>										
1. Meeting the basic needs of people for food, shelter, clothing, and literacy	Worse than average	Better than average	Worse than average	Better than average	Better than average	Worse than average	Worse than average	Better than average	Better than average	Better than average
2. Access for women and children who have fled violent home situations with security, support, and resources for economic independence	Worse than average	Better than average	Worse than average	Worse than average	Better than average	Worse than average	Better than average	Worse than average	Better than average	Better than average
3. Access to support services for children and youth at-risk and for	Worse than	Better than	Better than	Better than	Better than	Worse than	Better than	Worse than	Better than	Better than

Summary of community results for community issue questions										
Questions	Crystal Beach	Fort Erie	Pelham (Rural)	Pelham (Urban)	Port Colborne	Ridgeway	S & D	Wain.	Welland (L3B)	Welland (L3C)
families coping with problems	average	average	average	average	average	average	average	average	average	average
4. Unemployment and underemployment in my community	Worse than average	Better than average	Better than average	Better than average	Better than average	Better than average	Better than average	Better than average	Worse than average	Worse than average
5. Access to support services for people with physical or developmental disabilities	Better than average	Better than average	Worse than average	Better than average	Better than average	Worse than average	Worse than average	Worse than average	Better than average	Better than average
6. Provision of health support services including rehabilitation and home healthcare	Better than average	Better than average	Worse than average	Better than average	Worse than average	Worse than average	Worse than average	Worse than average	Worse than average	Better than average
7. Access to community services including counseling, referrals, volunteer development and community capacity building	Better than average	Better than average	Worse than average	Better than average	Worse than average	Worse than average	Worse than average	Better than average	Worse than average	Worse than average
8. The availability of opportunities for recreation to all members of my community	Better than average	Better than average	Better than average	Better than average	Better than average	Worse than average	Better than average	Better than average	Worse than average	Worse than average

## **Abbreviations**

S & D = Stevensville and Douglastown

Wain. = Wainfleet

## **Scales**

The current state (Section 2) – Very weak, weak, neither weak nor strong, strong, very strong

Expected future state (Section 3) – Better than average than today, about the same as today, Worse than average than today

The above colour-coded table readily yields some interesting results. In terms of the current state of the eight community issues, it appears that (loosely) three groups emerge: communities which perceive the issues more positively than the average respondent, communities which perceive the issues more negative than the average respondent and communities which have varied views. Cells shaded green are those in which the average result was more positive than that for the entire survey population whilst cells shaded blue represent the opposite. It is clear from a cursory view of the table that Fort Erie, Port Colborne, Ridgeway, and Welland view the issues somewhat more negatively than the average respondent, whilst Pelham (both urban and rural) views them more positively. Lastly, the communities of Crystal Beach, Ridgeway, Stevensville, Douglastown, and Wainfleet all have mixed views.

For expected future states, three groups appear to emerge in a similar fashion to those described above. Interestingly, the communities of Fort Erie, Pelham, and (somewhat) Welland perceive more positive change than average respondents from the entire survey population. Crystal Beach, Ridgeway, Stevensville, and Douglastown, however, all appear to share opposite views (in that their outlooks for the future seems more pessimistic than residents of other communities). These findings are important in that, particularly in the communities of Ridgeway, Stevensville, and Douglastown, respondents loosely feel that both a number of issues are weaker than average and that they are likely to deteriorate further over a five year period.

### **Analysis of statistical differences**

The ensuing table illustrates results, for the communities surveyed in this research, of a comparative analysis which examined the extent to which our findings in specific communities differ from the remaining communities (for instance, whether differences between results in Pelham and results in Greater Fort Erie, Port Colborne, and Welland are statistically significant). As is commonplace, a one-tail test for examining differences between two means (of independent samples) was used and the probability of a type I error was 5% ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ). Differences determined to be statistically significant (i.e., there exists a less than five percent chance that the finding occurred by chance) are marked in the following table with an asterisk (\*); for readers' information, all variables approximate the normal distribution (except for one, whose Kurtosis result was -1.1) and sample sizes, in all cases, exceed minimum requirements.

In interpreting the results illustrated below, it is important to recognize that community specific results were analyzed against results from remaining communities to determine the existence of the statistically significant difference. This approach, which is methodologically sound, yields some interesting results; expectations of the future state of employment and underemployment, for examples, were very diverse, as can be observed below.

Community-specific results compared against remaining communities (* denotes statistical significance, $\alpha = 0.05$ , one-tailed test)						
Questions	Greater Fort Erie	Pelham	Port Colborne	Welland (L3B)	Welland (L3C)	Welland (L3B & L3C)
The current state (Section 2)						
1. Meeting the basic needs of people for food, shelter, clothing, and literacy	3.38	3.54 (*)	3.37	3.09	3.12	3.11 (*)
2. Access for women and children who have fled violent home situations with security, support, and resources for economic independence	3.41	3.54 (*)	3.22	3.23	3.14	3.18 (*)
3. Access to support services for children and youth at-risk and for families coping with problems	3.28	3.60 (*)	3.26	3.24	2.97 (*)	3.10 (*)
4. Unemployment and underemployment in my community	2.82	2.95	3.33 (*)	2.35 (*)	2.44 (*)	2.40 (*)
5. Access to support services for people with physical or developmental disabilities	3.22	3.51 (*)	3.12	2.91 (*)	3.17	3.05 (*)
6. Provision of health support services including rehabilitation and home healthcare	3.20	3.41 (*)	3.14	3.06	3.12	3.09
7. Access to community services including counseling, referrals, volunteer development and	3.03	3.23	3.14	2.88	3.13	3.01

Community-specific results compared against remaining communities (* denotes statistical significance, $\alpha = 0.05$ , one-tailed test)						
Questions	Greater Fort Erie	Pelham	Port Colborne	Welland (L3B)	Welland	Welland (L3B & L3C)
community capacity building						
8. The availability of opportunities for recreation to all members of my community	3.39	3.47 (*)	3.00 (*)	3.14	3.36	3.26
<b>The future state (Section 3)</b>						
1. Meeting the basic needs of people for food, shelter, clothing, and literacy	1.43	1.47 (*)	1.32	1.35	1.37	1.36
2. Access for women and children who have fled violent home situations with security, support, and resources for economic independence	1.54	1.58 (*)	1.31 (*)	1.44	1.32 (*)	1.37
3. Access to support services for children and youth at-risk and for families coping with problems	1.74	1.78	1.79	1.79	1.79	1.79
4. Unemployment and underemployment in my community	1.58 (*)	1.50 (*)	1.32 (*)	2.24 (*)	2.04 (*)	2.13 (*)
5. Access to support services for people with physical or developmental disabilities	1.99	1.98	2.03	2.05	1.99	2.01
6. Provision of health support services including rehabilitation and	2.05	2.00	2.21	2.24	2.11	2.17

Community-specific results compared against remaining communities (* denotes statistical significance, $\alpha = 0.05$ , one-tailed test)						
Questions	Greater Fort Erie	Pelham	Port Colborne	Welland (L3B)	Welland	Welland (L3B & L3C)
home healthcare						
7. Access to community services including counseling, referrals, volunteer development and community capacity building	1.95	1.73 (*)	2.10 (*)	2.17 (*)	1.99	2.07
8. The availability of opportunities for recreation to all members of my community	1.54	1.56	1.49	1.70	1.75 (*)	1.73 (*)

### **Discussion of statistical comparative analysis**

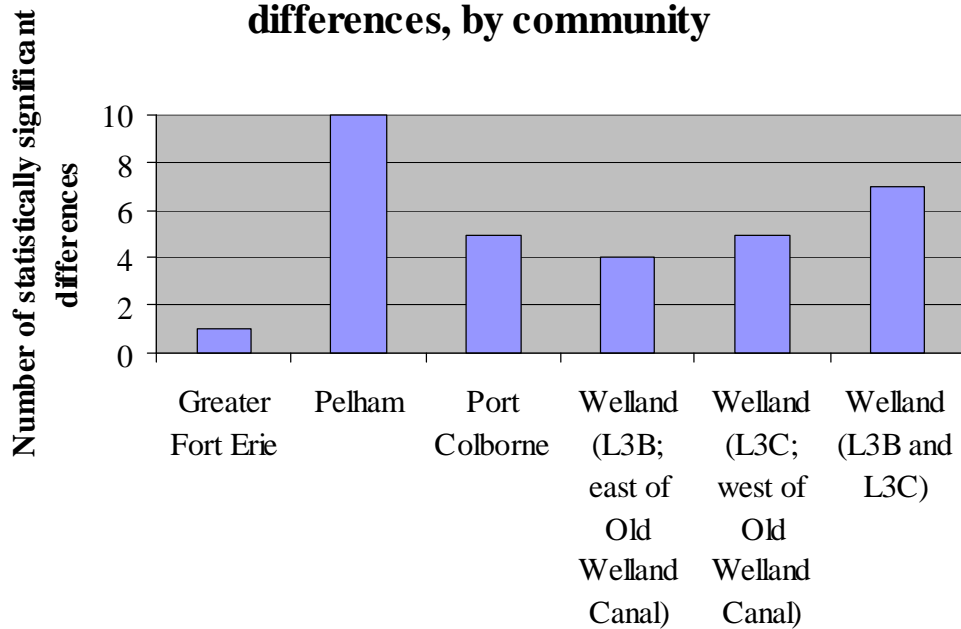
From the preceding table, it is clear that a fair level of heterogeneity exists amongst community results. As can be observed, 17+ statistically significant differences emerged from the data, as are listed below:

- Greater Fort Erie: Unemployment and underemployment in my community (future state)
- Pelham: Meeting the basic needs of people for food, shelter, clothing, and literacy (current state); access for women and children who have fled violent home situations with security, support, and resources for economic independence (current state); access to support services for children and youth at-risk and for families coping with problems (current state); access to support services for people with physical or developmental disabilities (current state); provision of health support services including rehabilitation and home healthcare (current state); the availability of opportunities for recreation to all members of my community (current state); meeting the basic needs of people for food, shelter, clothing, and literacy (future state); access for women and children who have fled violent home situations with security, support, and resources for economic independence (future state); unemployment and underemployment in my community (future state); access to community services including counseling, referrals, volunteer development and community capacity building (future state).
- Port Colborne: Unemployment and underemployment in my community (current state); the availability of opportunities for recreation to all members of my community (current state); access for women and children who have fled violent home situations with security, support, and resources for economic independence (future state); unemployment and underemployment in my community (future state); access to community services including counseling, referrals, volunteer development and community capacity building (future state).
- Welland (east of the Old Welland Canal; L3B): Unemployment and underemployment in my community (current state); access to support services for people with physical or developmental disabilities (current state); unemployment

- and underemployment in my community (future state); access to community services including counseling, referrals, volunteer development and community capacity building (future state).
- Welland (west of the Old Welland Canal; L3C): Access to support services for children and youth at-risk and for families coping with problems (current state); unemployment and underemployment in my community (current state); access for women and children who have fled violent home situations with security, support, and resources for economic independence (future state); unemployment and underemployment in my community (future state); the availability of opportunities for recreation to all members of my community (future state).
  - Welland (L3B and L3C): Meeting the basic needs of people for food, shelter, clothing, and literacy (current state); access for women and children who have fled violent home situations with security, support, and resources for economic independence (current state); access to support services for children and youth at-risk and for families coping with problems (current state); unemployment and underemployment in my community (current state); access to support services for people with physical or developmental disabilities (current state); unemployment and underemployment in my community (future state); the availability of opportunities for recreation to all members of my community (future state).

To capture this information, readers are directed to the following graph which reflects, in aggregate and general terms, the extent to which responses in individual communities differed significantly from average responses (of the remaining communities). As can be seen, though all communities possess unique in views and perceptions, Pelham and Welland (as a whole) seem distinct from other areas surveyed.

## Number of statistically significant differences, by community



### **Greater Fort Erie**

Greater Fort Erie, which encompasses the Town of Fort Erie and the areas of Crystal Beach, Ridgeway, Stevensville, and Douglastown, appears not significantly differently from the remaining areas included in this research. Survey results concerning the future state of unemployment and underemployment in Greater Fort Erie, however, were significantly lower than the average result for all other communities, at a 95% level of confidence.

### **Pelham**

Pelham (including its more rural areas) differs widely from the rest of the communities included in our research. For the current state, Pelham differs on *all* questions except those which concern access to community services including counseling, referrals, volunteer development and community capacity building and unemployment and underemployment.

In terms of the expected future state of community issues in Pelham, residents responded differently for the ability to meet basic needs, the level of access to resources for women and children fleeing violent home situations, the local employment situation, and access to community services from other respondents. People living in more rural areas of Pelham appear to have a more optimistic view of the future than those living in more urban settings with regard to the local employment situation and the satisfaction of basic needs. Pelham residents who live in more rural settings, however, are more pessimistic with regard to the future state of the level of access to support services to women and children fleeing violent home situations.

### **Port Colborne**

Port Colborne, in a similar fashion to Greater Fort Erie, differs significantly in its views of the current states of unemployment and the availability of opportunities for recreation. Respondents in Port Colborne reported the strength of the employment situation in the city more highly than did respondents in other areas though they rated the availability of opportunities for recreation lower than other respondents.

Respondents in Port Colborne rated the future states of the local employment situation and access to community services differently than other respondents. Over time, the local employment situation is expected to improve in Port Colborne (relative to other communities surveyed) while access to community services is, comparatively, expected to worsen.

### **Welland (East of the Old Welland Canal)**

On the east side of Welland, respondents reported the strength of the eight community issues is somewhat of the same fashion, as did other respondents, though results for the local employment situation and access to support services for people with physical or developmental disabilities were statistically different. In both cases, residents

of Welland who live east of the Old Welland Canal viewed these issues more negatively than other respondents.

Residents living on the east side of Welland rated the local employment situation and access to community services differently from other respondents. These respondents expect that both the local employment situation and access to community services to worsen to a greater extent than do other respondents over a five year period.

### **Welland (West of the Old Welland Canal)**

On the west side of Welland, respondents provided similar results (in terms of statistical significance) as other respondents on all but two issues in their current states. Residents who live on the west of the Old Welland Canal rated both access to support services for children and youth at-risk as well as for families coping with problems and the local employment situation more negatively than respondents from other areas.

Residents living west of the Old Welland Canal responded differently from other respondents concerning the future states of access for women and children who have fled violent home situations with security, support, and resources for economic independence, the local employment situation, as well as the availability of opportunities for recreation to all members of my community. These respondents are more optimistic than those from other communities with regard to access to support services for people fleeing violent home situations though are more pessimistic about the future states of opportunities for recreation and the local employment situation.

### **Correlative Analysis**

Since the community issues were metric (non-categorical) variables, a two-tailed analysis was conducted to determine the existence of statistically significant correlations. Of the 256 bivariate relationships (16 variables x 16 variables) present in the data, 126 were found to be statistically significant ( $\alpha$  less than 0.05); of these 126, nearly all were

positive which means that movement in one variable accompanies (though does not necessarily cause) movement in another.

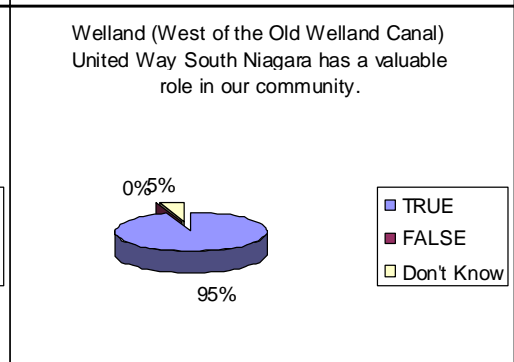
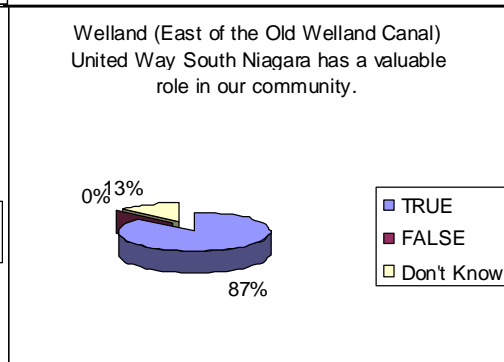
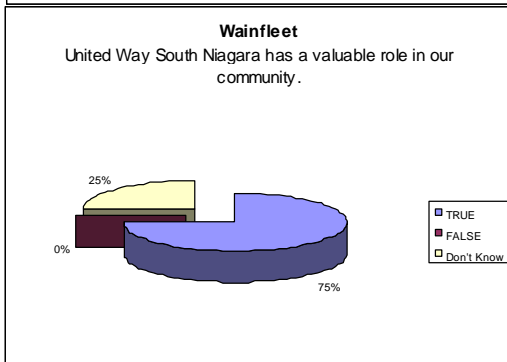
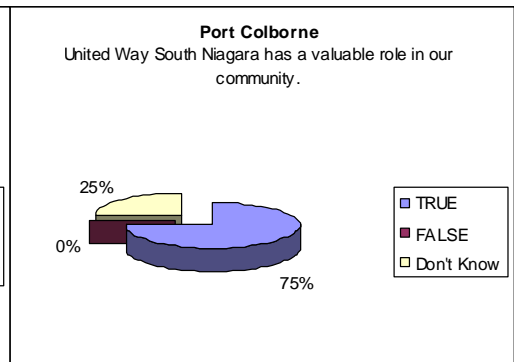
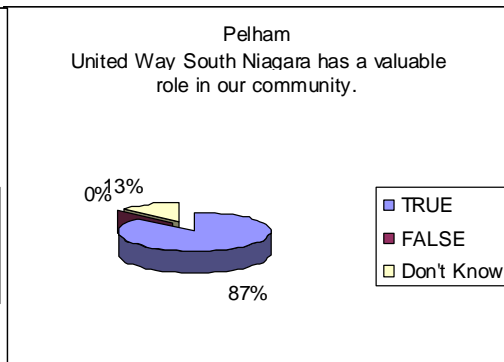
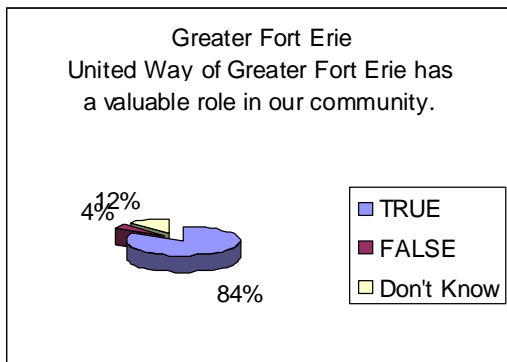
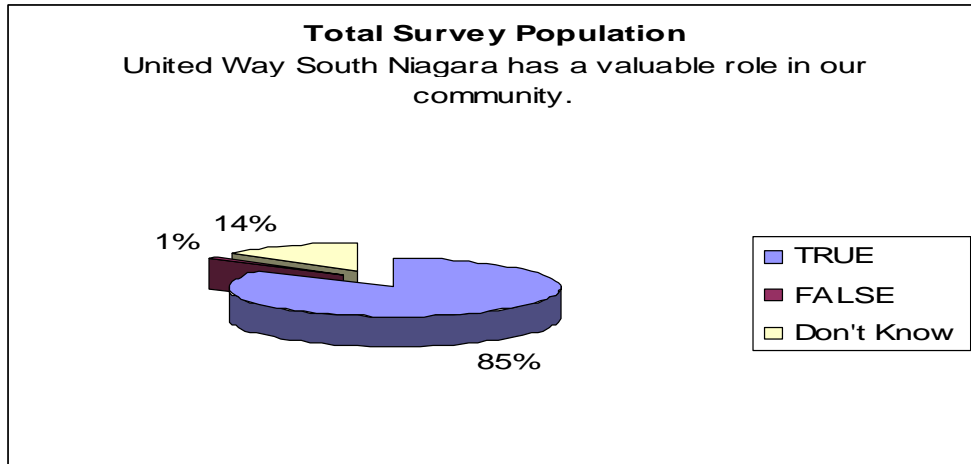
Though readers are referred to Appendix C which shows all bivariate correlations, below the most statistically significant (and insightful) bivariate relationships are highlighted:

<b>Correlation (r)</b>	<b>Bivariate relationship</b>
0.648 (**) (Positive co-movement)	Meeting the basic needs of people for food, shelter, clothing, and literacy AND access for women and children who have fled violent home situations with security, support, and resources for economic independence
0.573 (**) (Positive co-movement)	Access to support services for children and youth at-risk and for families coping with problems AND access for women and children who have fled violent home situations with security, support, and resources for economic independence
.546(**) (Positive co-movement)	Provision of health support services including rehabilitation and home healthcare AND access to community services including counseling, referrals, volunteer development and community capacity building
.512(**) (Positive co-movement)	Access to support services for people with physical or developmental disabilities AND provision of health support services including rehabilitation and home healthcare.
.436(**) (Positive co-movement)	Access to community services including counseling, referrals, volunteer development and community capacity building AND provision of health support services including rehabilitation and home healthcare
.416(**) (Positive co-movement)	Meeting the basic needs of people for food, shelter, clothing, and literacy AND access to support services for children and youth at-risk and for families coping with problems
.329(**) (Positive co-movement)	Access to community services including counseling, referrals, volunteer development and community capacity building AND access to support services for people with physical or developmental disabilities

Correlation (r)	Bivariate relationship
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).	

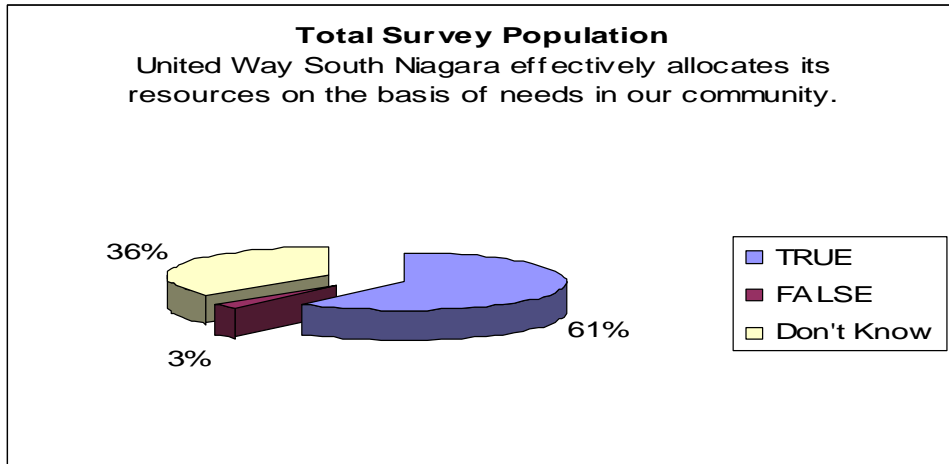
These statistically significant positive correlations are important because they confirm that which, while largely intuitive, is necessary for the effective planning of social services and allocation of donated resources. The community issues considered in this research are quite multicollinear and interrelated which presents both an opportunity and a problem for the communities of Pelham, Port Colborne, Welland, and Greater Fort Erie. While it may be possible to allocate resources that effectively address a range of needs simultaneously, their interconnected nature means that identifying sources (rather than symptoms) of social problems in these communities is a most challenging task.

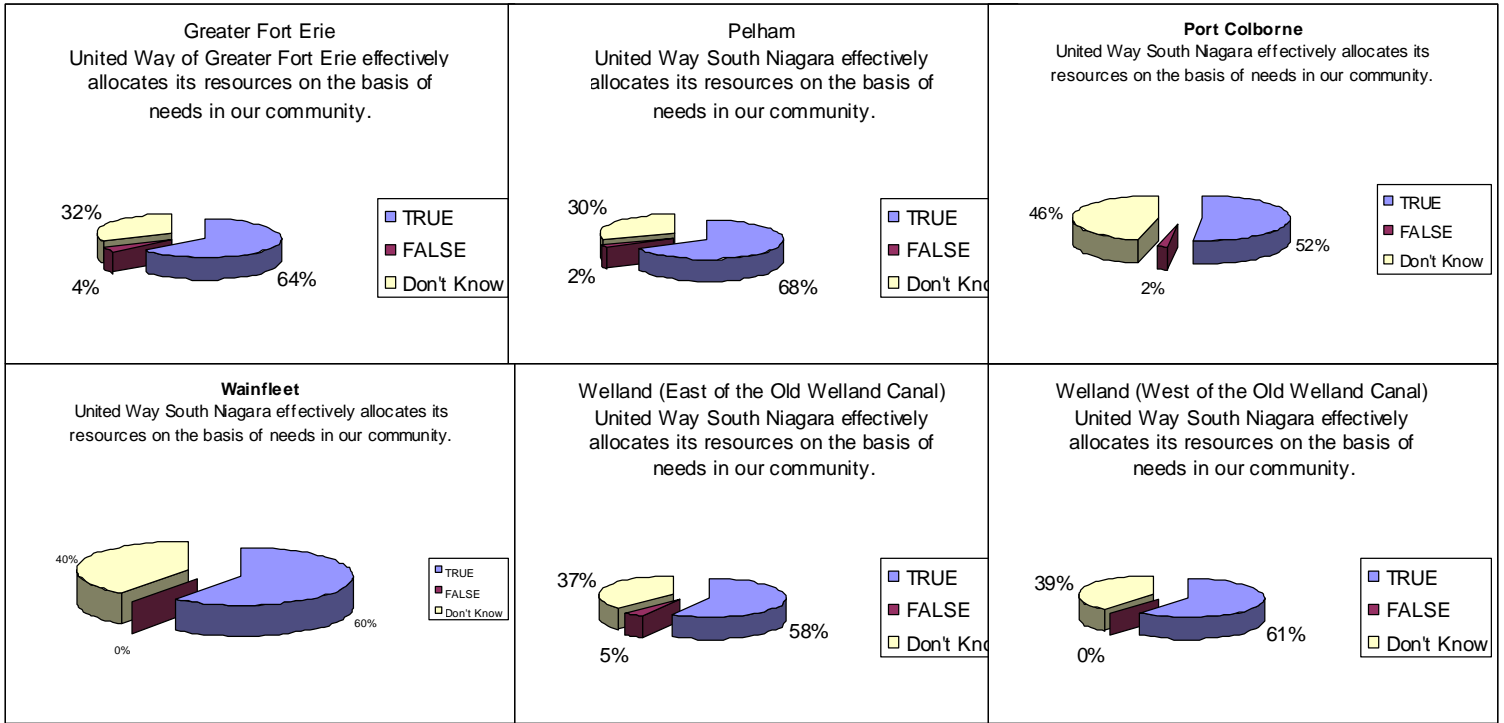
**Analysis of Survey Results – Section 4**



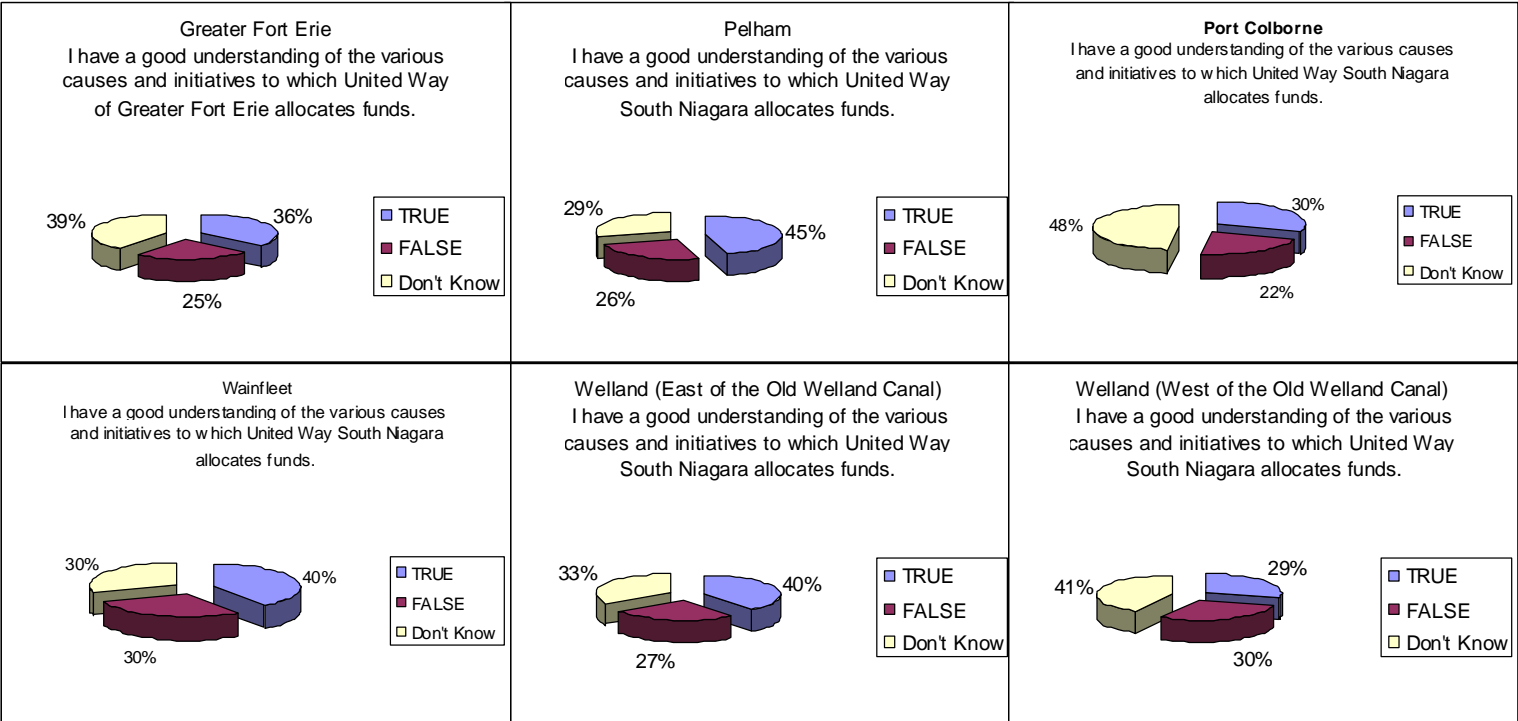
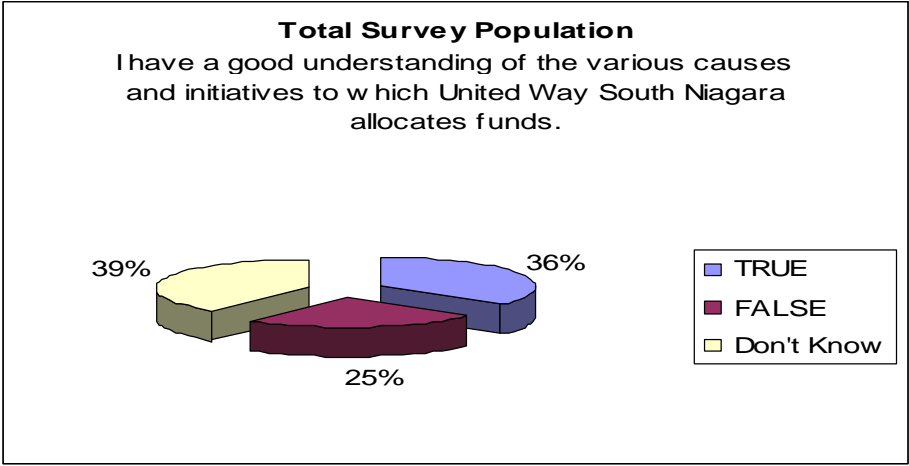
To gauge the perceived level of importance that individuals have concerning the United Way’s role in the community, respondents were asked whether they felt the above statement was true, false or they did not know. The overall responses indicated a very positive reaction to the United Way’s valuable role in the community as 87% of the total population survey agreed, and only 1% who disagreed. The remaining 14% was people who indicated that they did not know. All more than 75% of people in all communities shared this positive view, the respondents in the west end of Welland had the highest rate

in agreement with 95% and 0% who disagreed. Also noteworthy is that the communities in Port Colborne and Wainfleet expressed the highest percentage of people who indicated “Don’t Know” with 25% responding such. On the negative side, Greater Fort Erie had the highest comparative rate between all communities, with 4% indicating they disagreed with the statement.



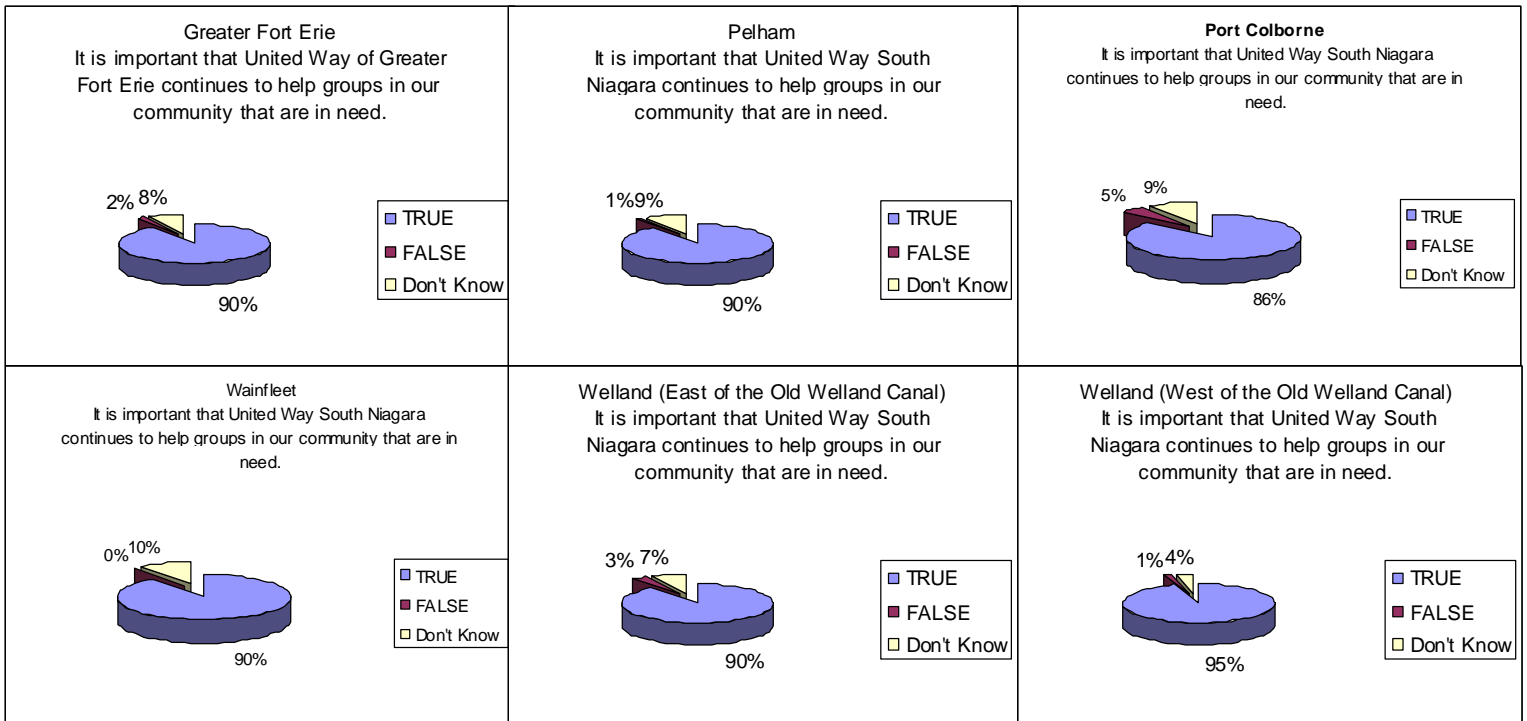
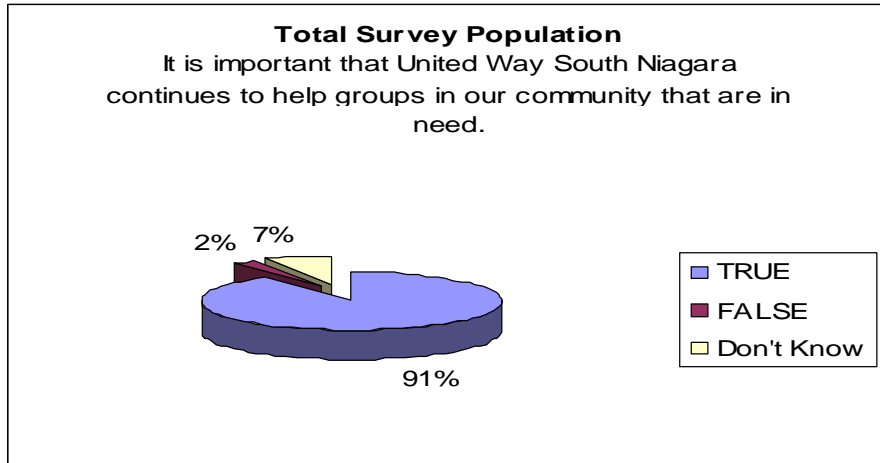


To determine whether community members felt that resources are being allocated appropriately, respondents were asked to respond to the statement: United Way effectively allocated its resources on the basis of needs in our community. Of the total population surveyed 61% agreed, 3% disagreed and 36% indicated that they don't know. All of the communities expressed a general consensus, with the exception of Port Colborne who expressed the lowest number in agreement with 52%, and the highest percentage (47%) of "Don't Know" responses. The greatest level of disagreement was found in the east end of Welland with 5% indicating that they felt the statement was false.



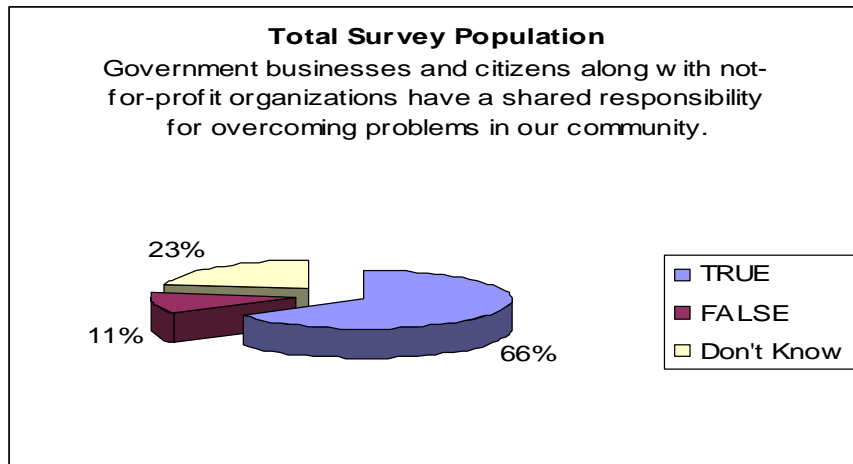
To inquire as to the level of awareness of that community members have concerning the allocation of funds and causes in which the United Way supports, respondents were asked to indicate true, false or don't know to the statement: I have a good understanding of the various causes and initiatives to which the United Way allocates funds. This question was distributed across the board and all communities. More than 39% of the total population said they "Don't Know". Similarly, 22% to 30% of individual community respondents admitted they did not have a good understanding. Combined, this strongly indicates a low level of detailed awareness in the community concerning the various causes that the

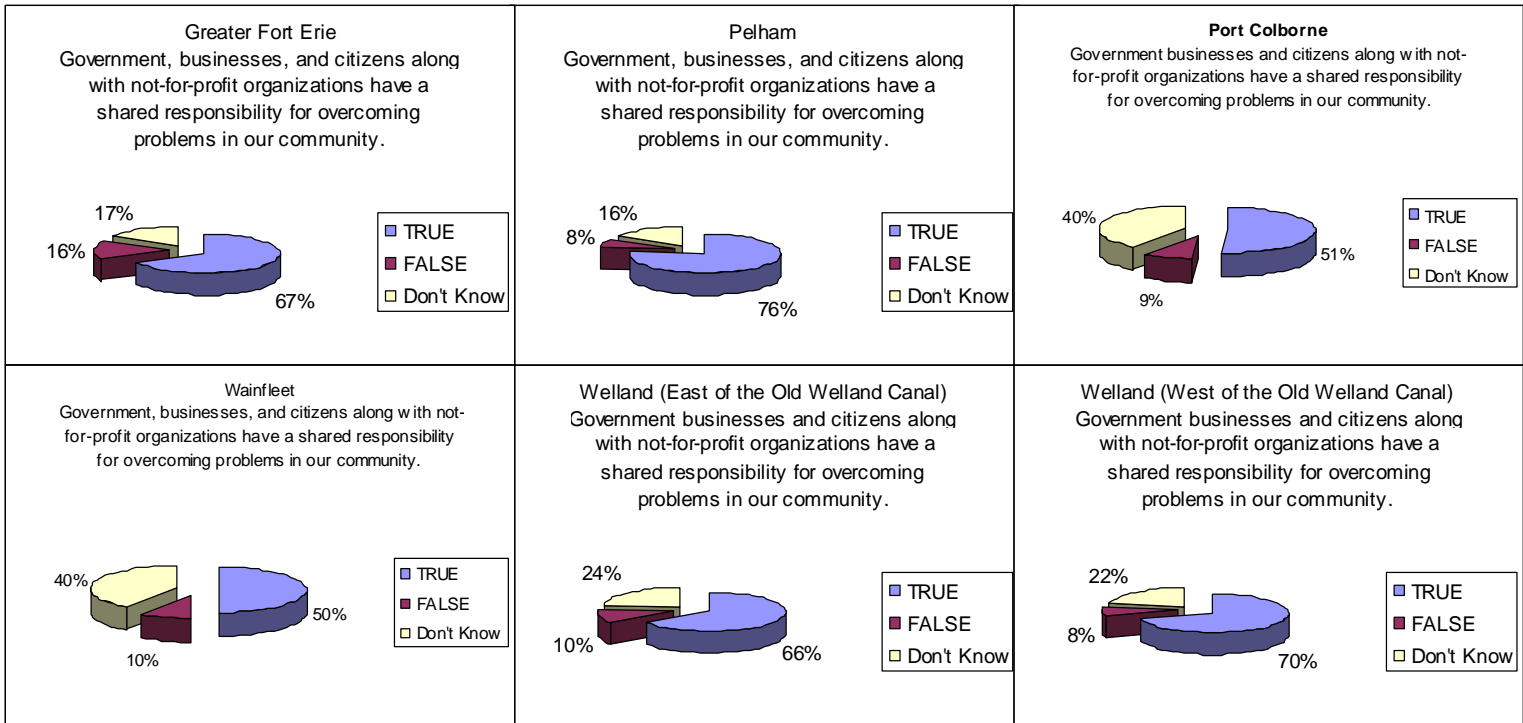
United Way supports. Of those who felt they had a good understanding ranged from a low of 29% in the west end of Welland to a high of 45% in Pelham.



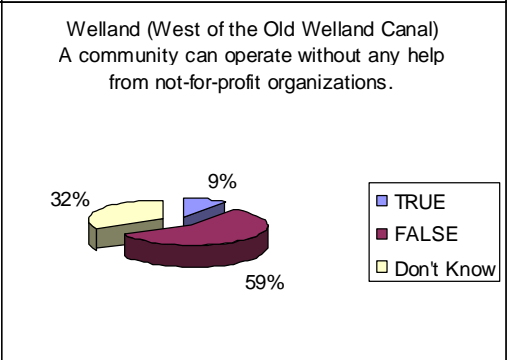
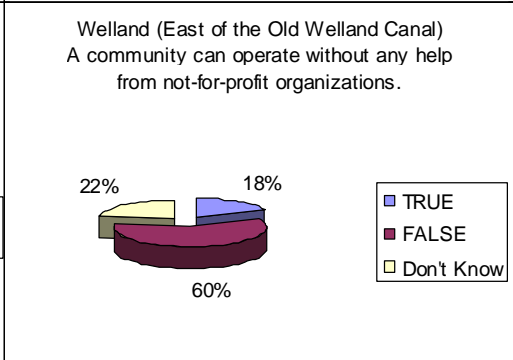
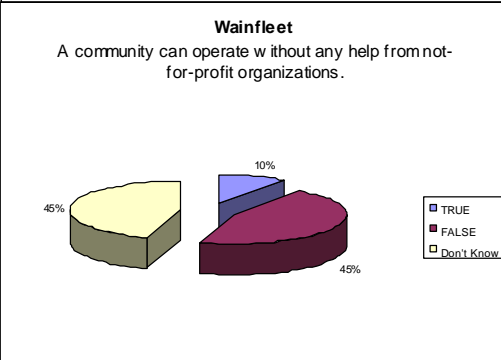
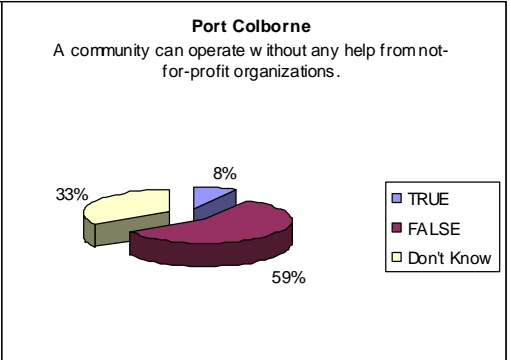
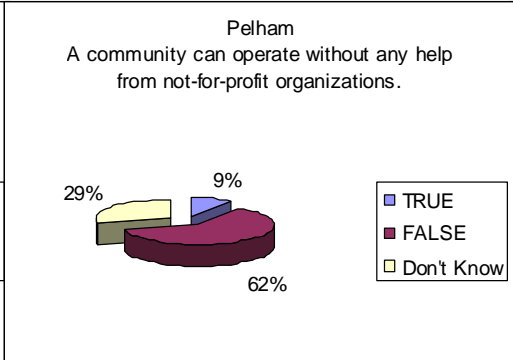
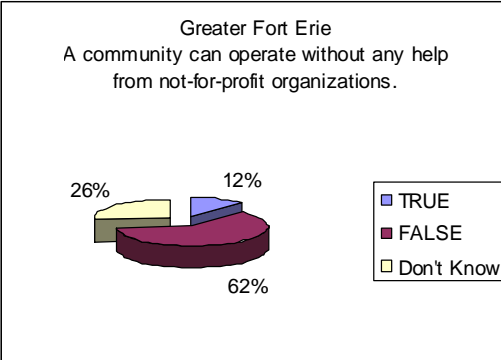
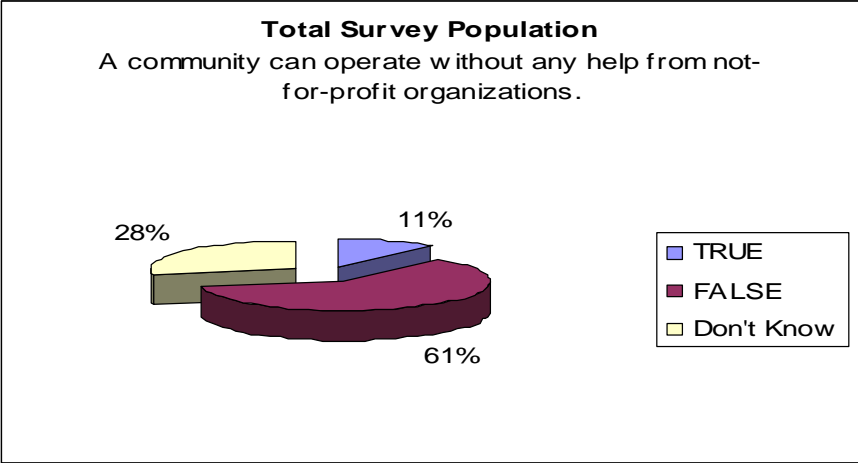
To develop an understanding of the perceptions that community members hold concerning the United Way's level of importance in the community, respondents were asked to indicate true, false or don't know to the statement: It is important that the United

Way continues to help groups in our community that are in need. More than 90% of the total population agreed, while 7% did not know and only 2% disagreed. Across all of the communities surveyed there was a general consensus (above 86%) that it is important for the United Way to help those in our community that are in need. The highest level of disagreement was found in Port Colborne with 5% of its respondents dissenting in opinion. Of those who indicated “Don’t Know” the lowest rate was in the west end of Welland with 4% and the high being in Wainfleet with 10%, all other communities fell within the 7%-9% range.





To develop an understanding of how individual's in the community allocate responsibility for solving community issues, participants were asked to respond to the statement: Government, businesses, and citizens along with not-for-profit organizations have a shared responsibility for overcoming problems in the community. Of the total survey population 66% responded true, while 23% indicated they do not know and 11% responded false. All of the communities surveyed had a majority of respondents in agreement with this statement, however, responses ranged from a low of 50% in Wainfleet to a high of 76% in Pelham. Of the respondents who did not know, the highest rates were found in Wainfleet and Port Colborne, with 40% each. Those who felt the statement to be false ranged from a low of 8% in Pelham and the west end of Welland and a high of 16% in Greater Fort Erie. Overall, the high level of agreement indicates that the strong majority of respondents felt all stakeholders have a shared level of responsibility in overcoming community issues.



To examine the general perception that people hold concerning the need for not-for-profit organizations to assist communities, respondents were asked to express their beliefs about the statement: A community can operate without any help from not-for profit organizations. 61% of the total population survey said this statement is false, while only 11% believed it to be true. The remaining 28% of respondents did not know. There was a fair amount of dispersion in responses between the individual communities. Of those who felt the statement to be false, Wainfleet expressed the lowest rate with 45% and Greater Fort Erie and Pelham had the highest rate, each with 62%. On the other end, of those who responded true, that a community is capable of operating without any help from not-for-profit organizations, the highest rate was found in the east end of Welland with 18%, Port Colborne had the lowest at 8%. Wainfleet expressed the highest rate of don't knows with 45%, other communities ranged between 22%-32%.

## **Cross Tabulation of Key Issues**

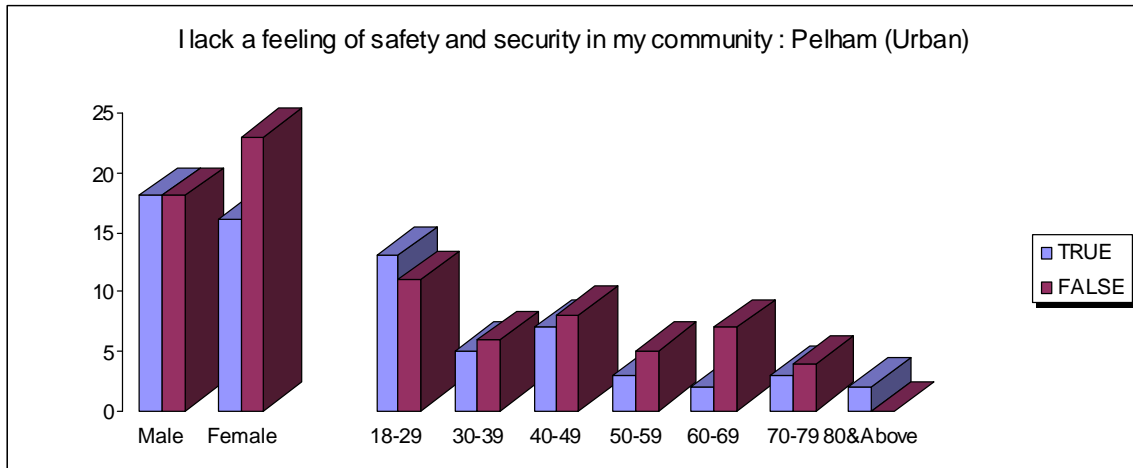
To attain a greater depth of understanding on certain key issues, the Brock MBA Business Consulting Service (BCS) chose to cross tabulate these issues with associated information that would allow for greater depth of analysis. These key issues were:

- The feeling of safety and security in their respective community,
- Access for women and children who have fled violent home situations with security, support, and resources for economic independence (Current and Future),
- Access to support services for people with physical or developmental disabilities (Current and Future),
- Access to support services for children and youth at-risk and for families coping with problems (Current and Future),
- Employment prospects in their community(Future},
- Negative or uncertain views towards role of United Way,
- The effective allocation of resources on the basis of needs in their community,
- People who have formal relationship with United Way; and,
- A picture of those who want to volunteer more in their community.

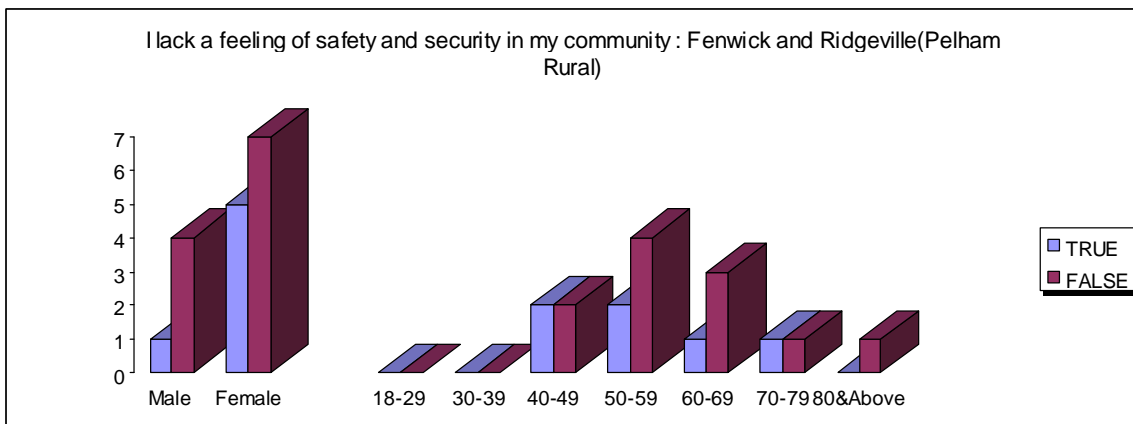
The following is based on a cross tabulation of the key issues with the most pertinent associated data.

## The feeling of safety and security in their respective community

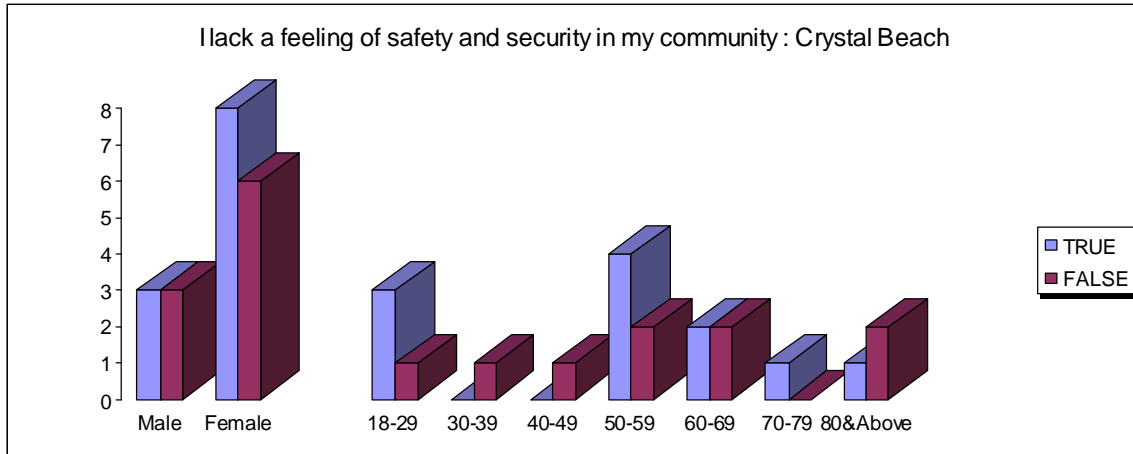
This issue was cross tabulate by region with age and gender of the respondents. The following are the results per region.



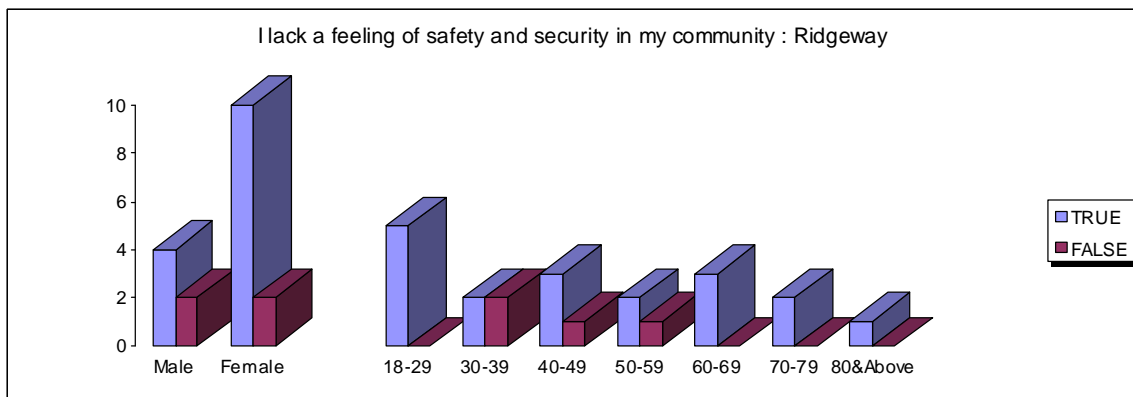
As is seen above, females were most likely to state their feeling of safety in Pelham (Urban) and males were evenly divided in terms of feeling safe. Amongst those feeling unsafe, more younger or senior respondents lacked a feeling of safety and security while respondents in the mid range, 30-79, felt safe.



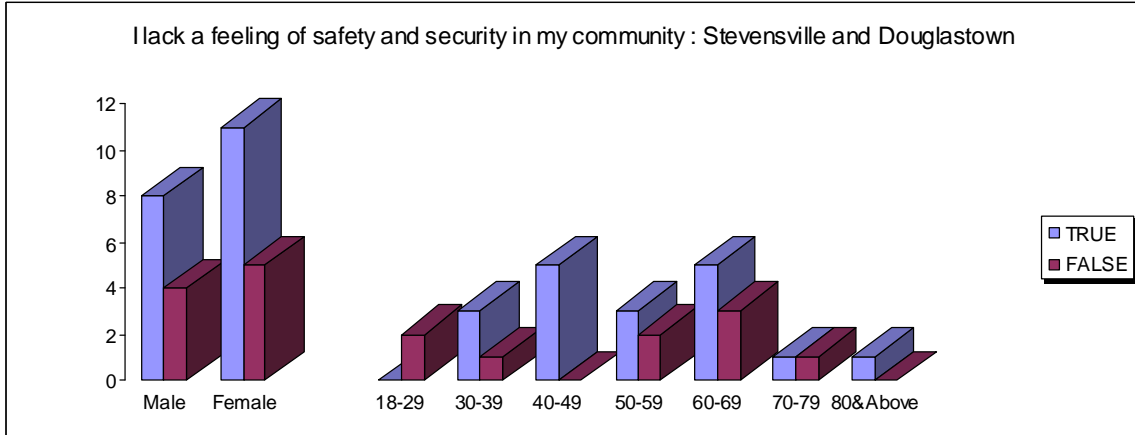
In Fenwick and Ridgeville, both females and males both felt safe and secure in their community and no age group feels unsafe.



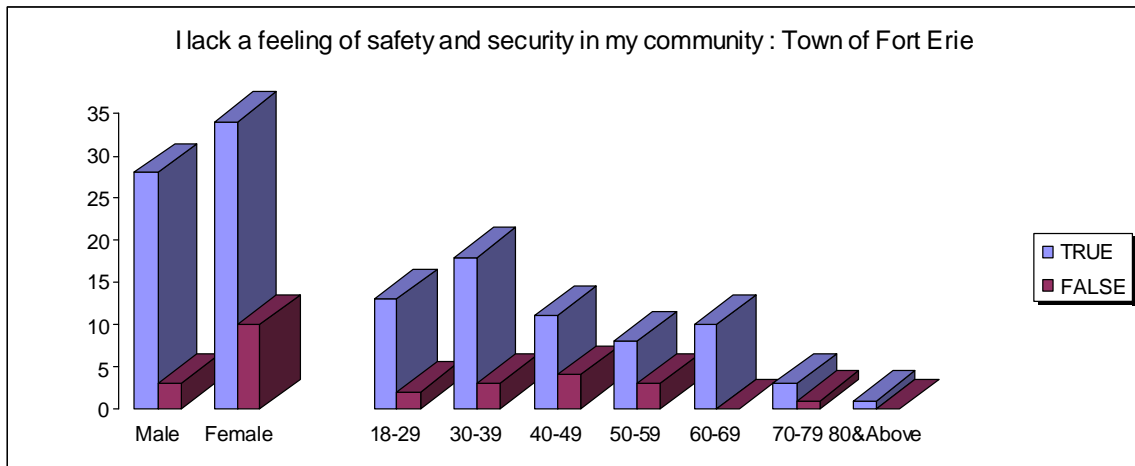
In Crystal Beach, females were more likely to feel unsafe in their community, while males were evenly split. In terms of age groups, individuals between 18-29, 50-59 and 70-79 were those feeling unsafe.



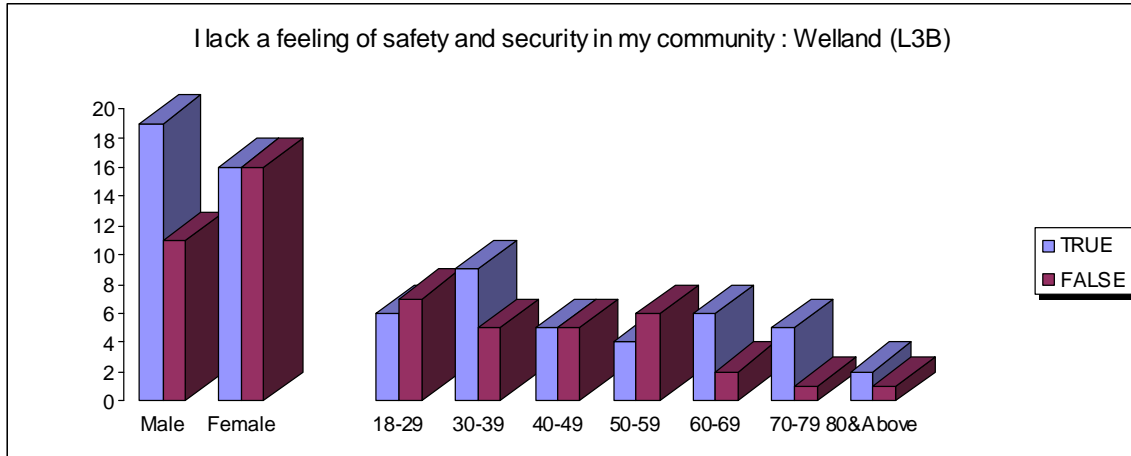
As is seen above, in Ridgeway, both male and female groups feel unsafe. In terms of age distribution, it is shown that every group, except for the 30-39 age group, expressed a feeling of being unsafe or insecure in their community.



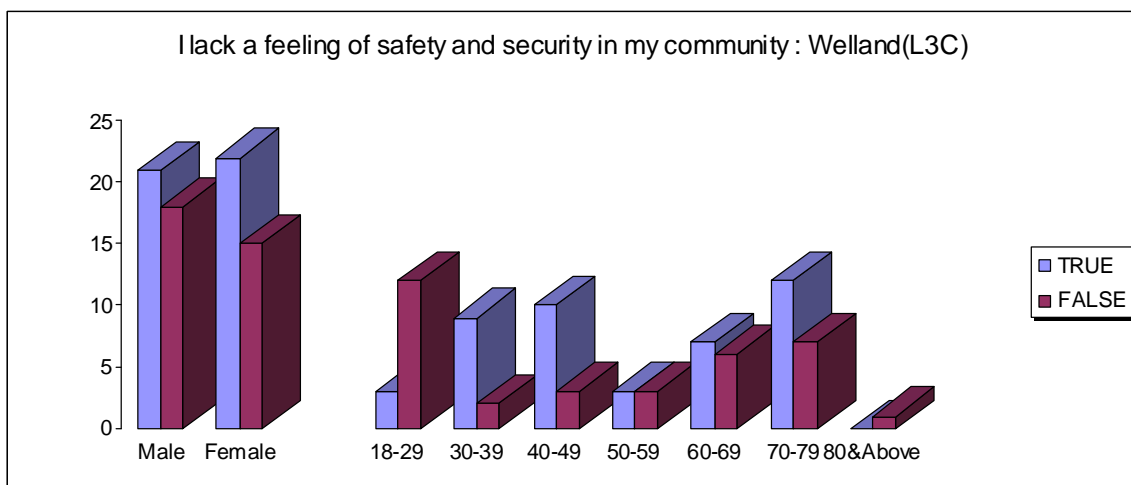
In terms of Stevensville and Douglastown, both males and females tend to feel unsafe or insecure in their community. For age groups, apart from 18-29 whom 100% feel safe in their community and 70-79 which are evenly split, each age group feels unsafe.



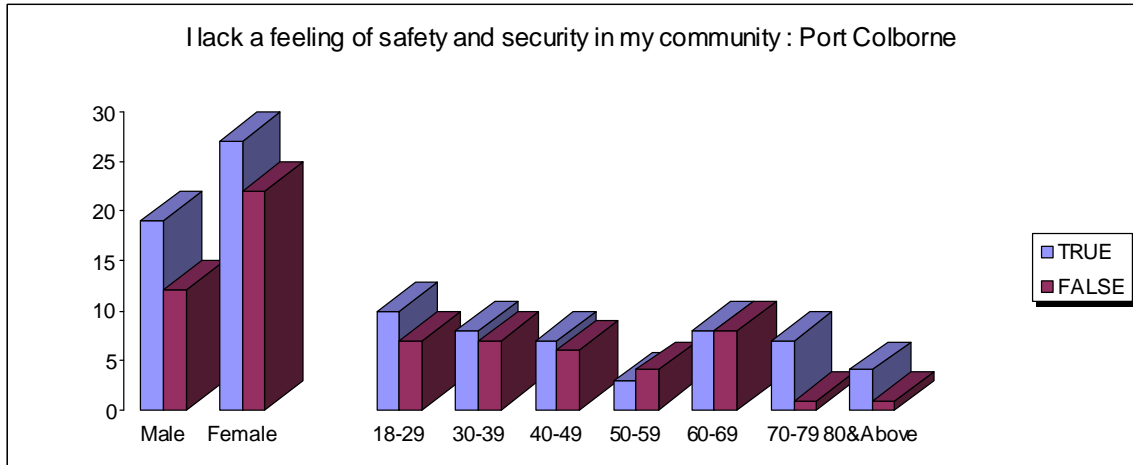
In the Town of Fort Erie, a significant majority of respondents in both genders and age groups expressed a lacking sense of safety and security in their community.



In East Welland (L3B), females felt equally split in their feeling of safe and unsafe, however, the majority of males agreed with this statement. Age distributions for those questions were well distributed with groups 18-29 and 50-59 feeling overall safe, by a slight majority, groups 30-39, 60-69, 70-79 and 80 and above not feeling safe and the 40-49 group being split.



In West Welland (L3C), both gender groups agreed with the statement by a small majority. In terms of age groups, the 18-29 disagreed with the statement, whilst every other group, except for the 50-59 which were tied, agreed with lacking a feeling of safety and security in their community.

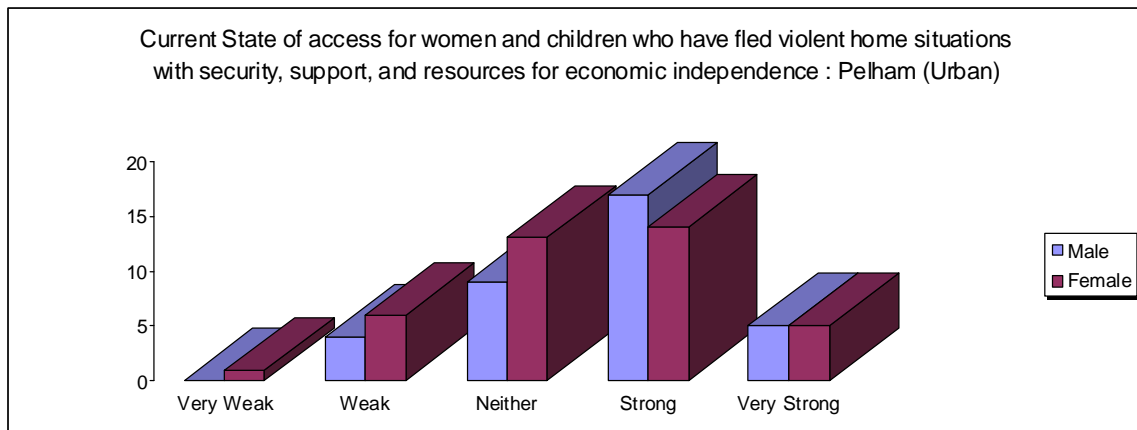


In Port Colborne, both men and women across every age group except 50-59, agreed that they lacked a feeling of safety and security in their community.

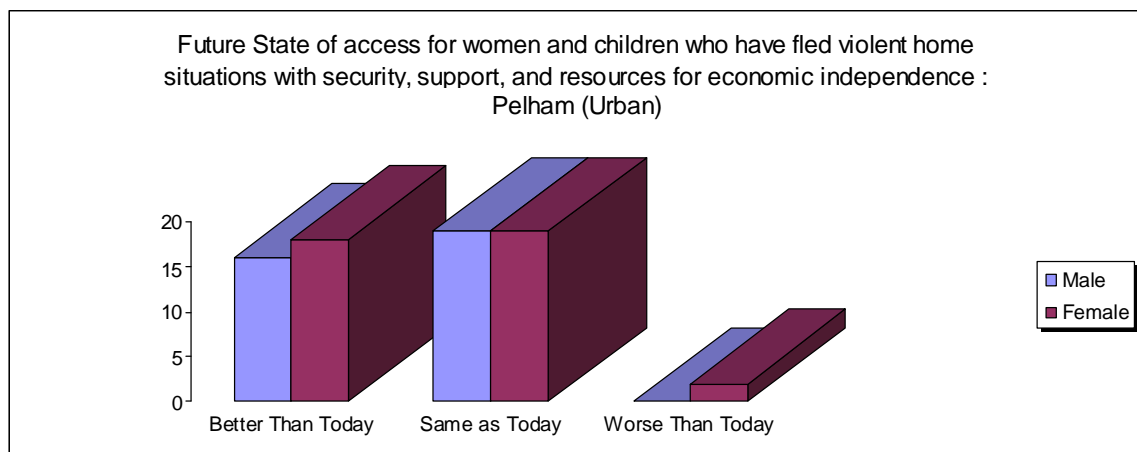
The results seen above are not surprising as 60% of South Niagara agreed with lacking a feeling of safety and security. In certain regions, women were more likely to feel unsafe than men, whilst others were a share concern. Overall, the younger age groups were more likely to feel safe, whilst the middle aged and older did not.

**Access for women and children who have fled violent home situations with security, support, and resources for economic independence (Present and Future)**

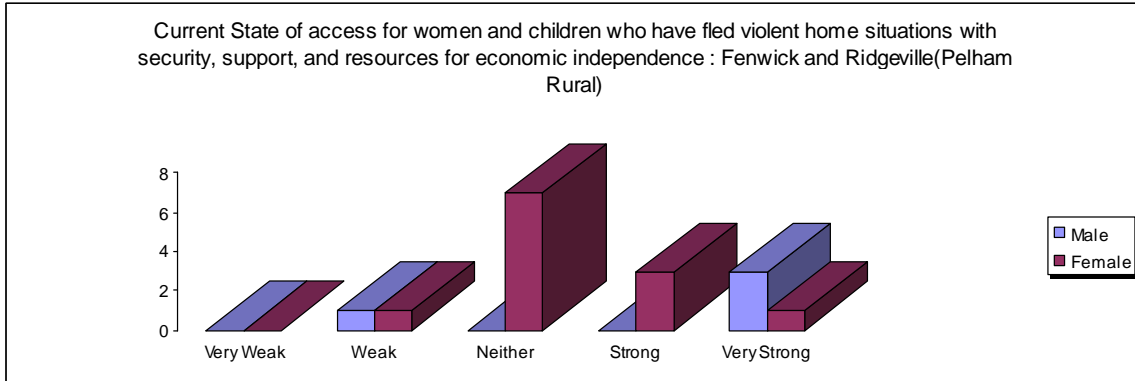
It was determined that both current and future perceptions of this should be crossed with gender information about the respondents to achieve more meaningful findings.



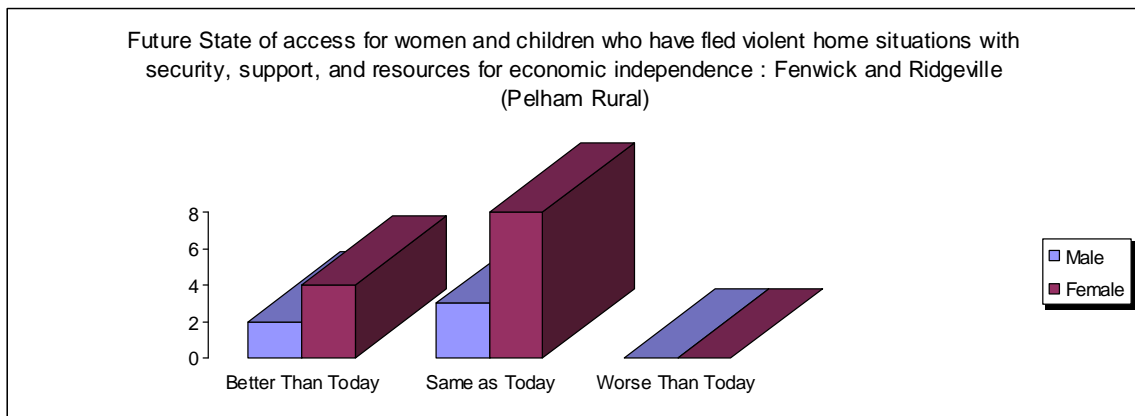
Among respondents in Pelham (Urban) concerning the statement, the majority of both men and women agreed that it was currently strong. However, it is important to note that in the three lower designations, the majority of respondents are female, which demonstrates a more negative view for women concerning this issue.



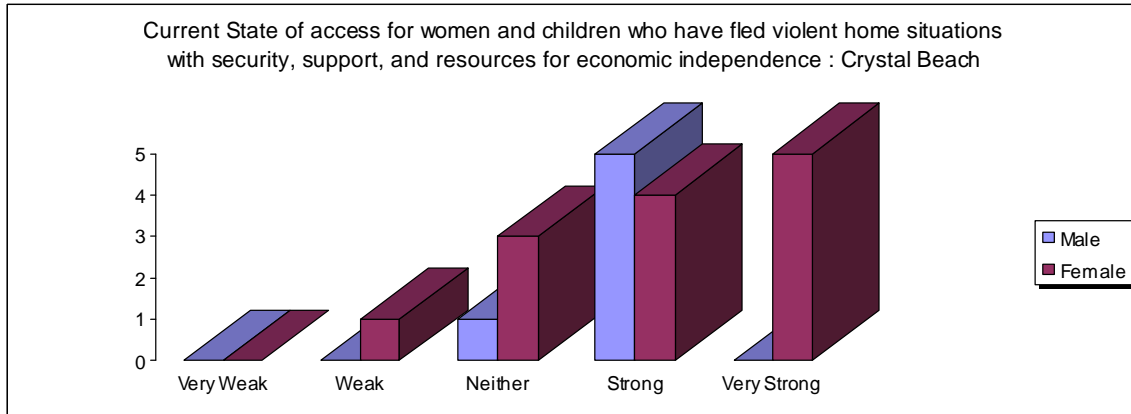
For the future state of this issue, the gross majority of respondents in Pelham (Urban) agreed that it would remain the same or improve. Furthermore, there were more women than men believing it would improve.



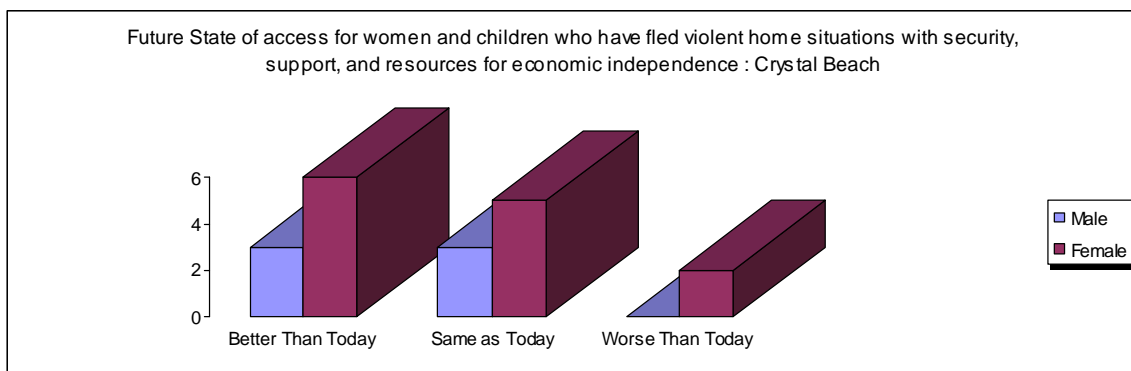
In Fenwick and Ridgeville, women considered the current state of the issue as being in majority neither weak nor strong, while men determined it to be very strong.



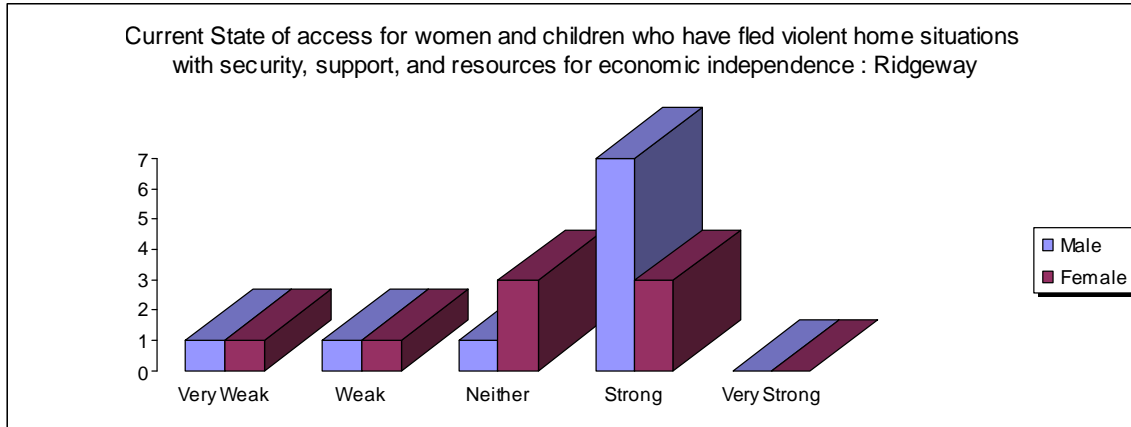
For the future state of this issue in Fenwick and Ridgeville, most respondents answered that they expect it to stay the same as today.



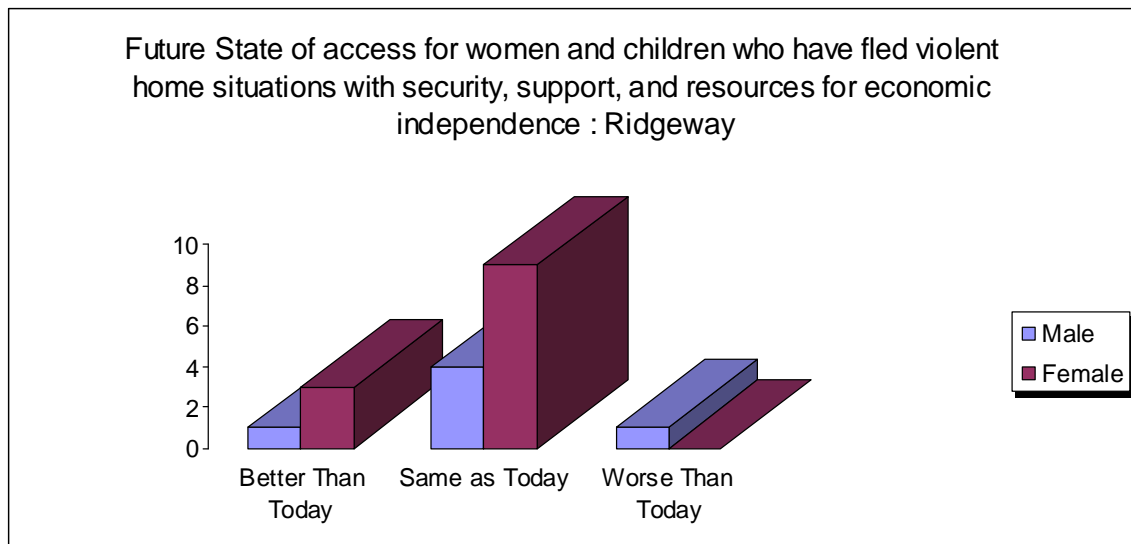
For Crystal Beach, the majority of females answered either strong or very strong while the majority of men answered strong.



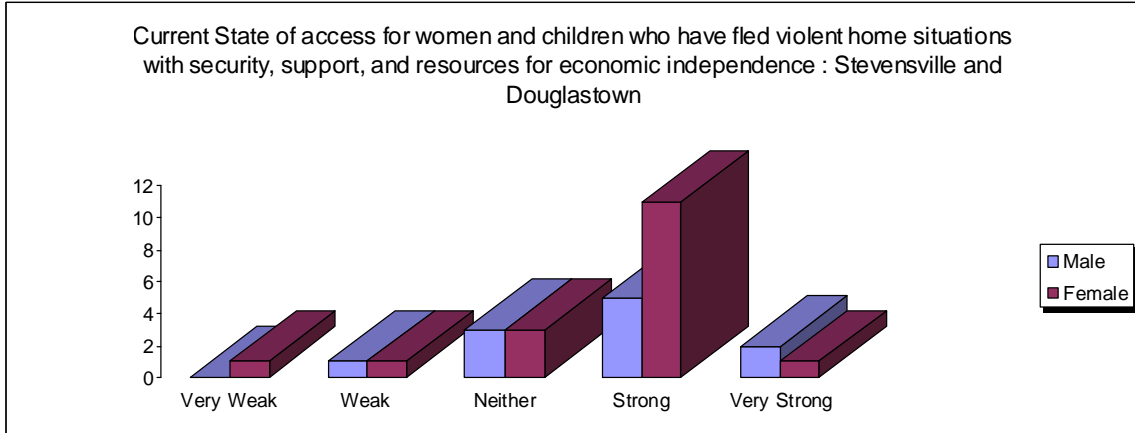
When assessing the future state of this issue, the female residents of Crystal Beach perceive it as being the same or better than today, however, it is important to note that they are represented in every group.



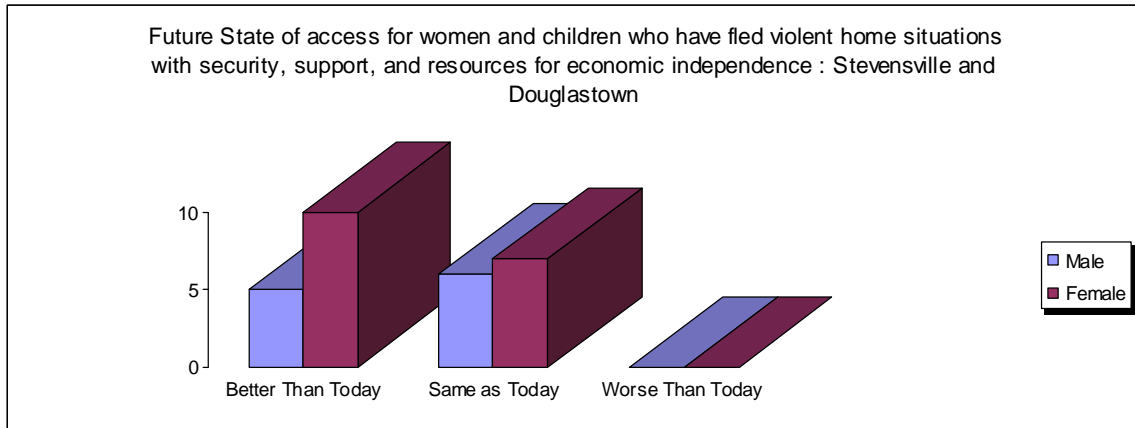
In assessing the current state of this issue for Ridgeway, there is a distinction between genders, the majority of males are found in the strong segment, while females are found in majority in assessing the situation as neither strong nor weak. It is also important to note that both very weak and weak responses were answered equally by both genders.



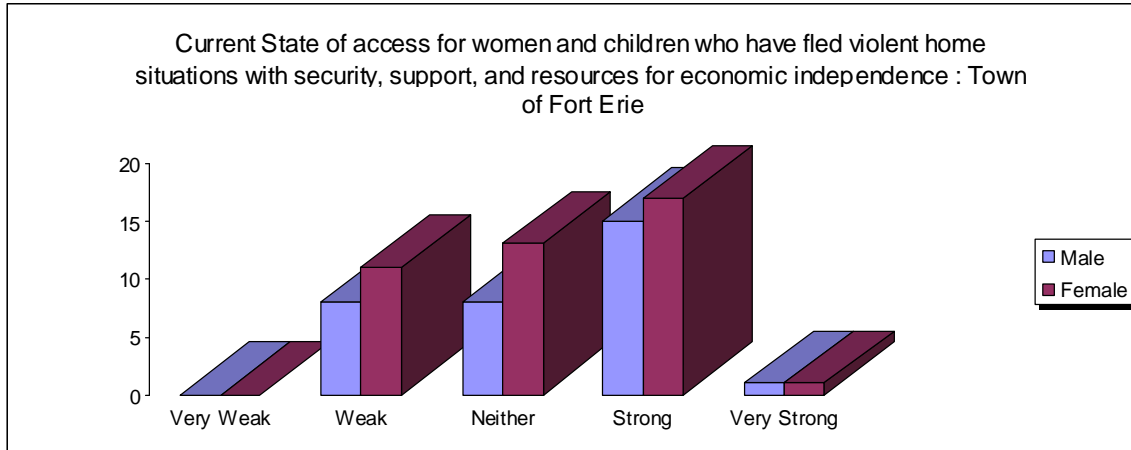
When asked to assess the future state of the issue, the majority of Ridgeway respondents from both genders determined it to remain the same as today.



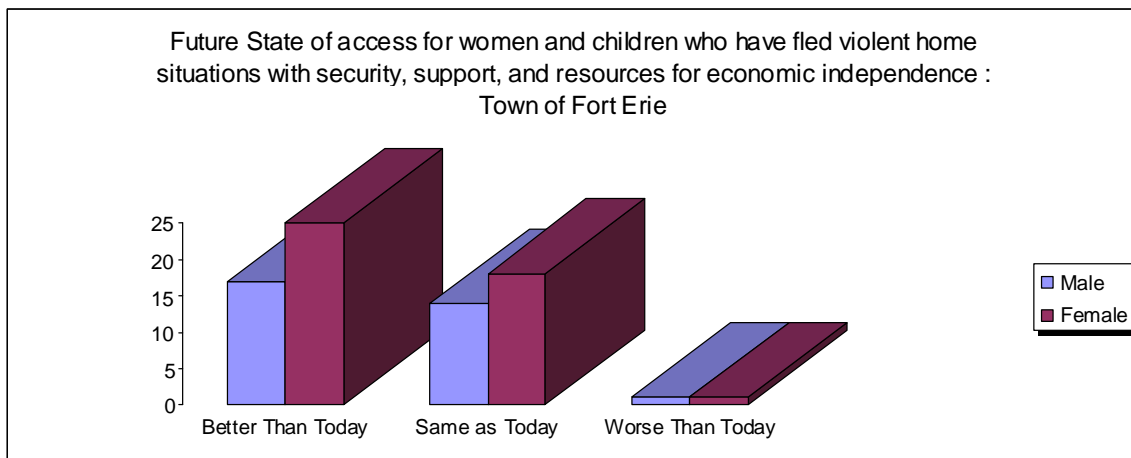
Respondents from Stevensville and Douglastown agreed that the current state of the issue was strong. The majority of this consensus was found in the female respondents.



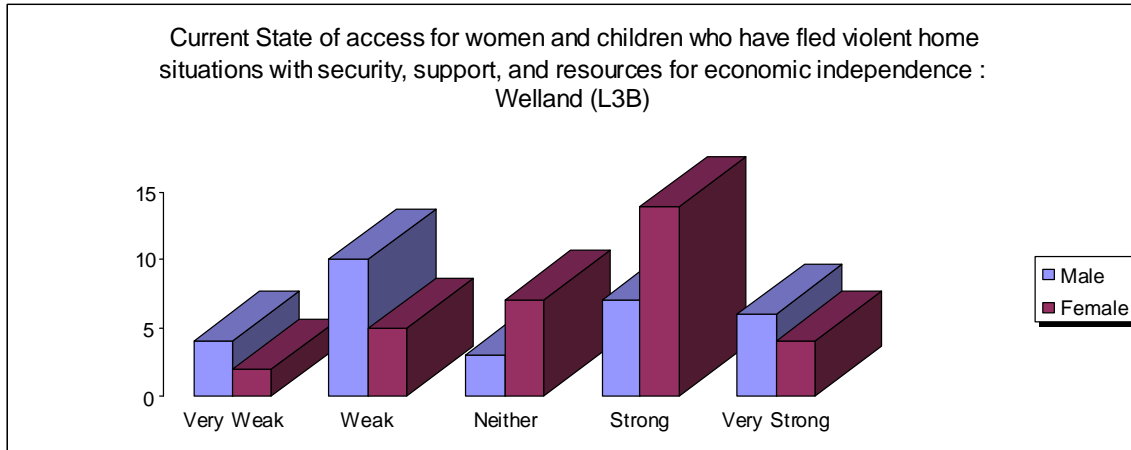
In assessing the future state, respondents from Stevensville and Douglastown found the issue to become the same or better than today.



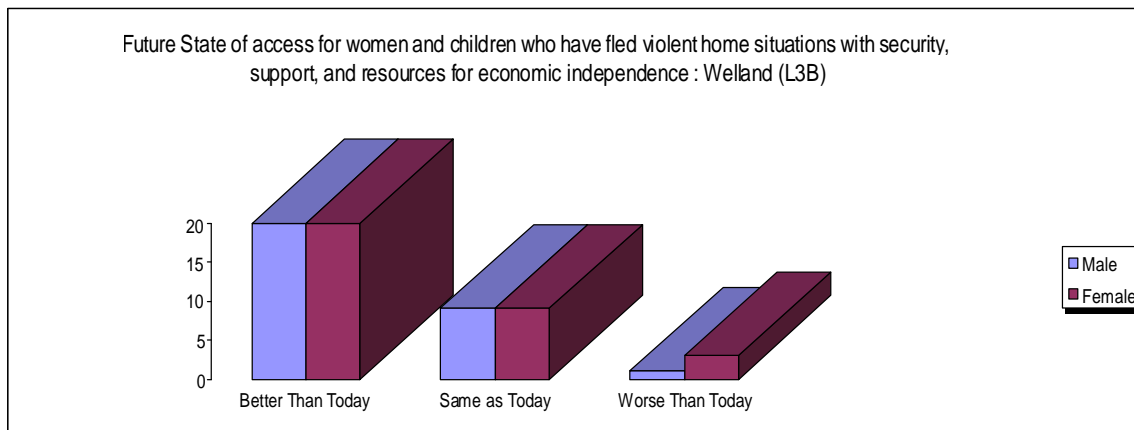
When perceiving the current state of this issue, the Town of Fort Erie distribution was concentrated within the three middle answers. The majority of answers for both males and females ranked the issue as being strong; however, there was a significant showing in both neither weak nor strong and weak. This indicates quite a division among answers, however, not due to gender.



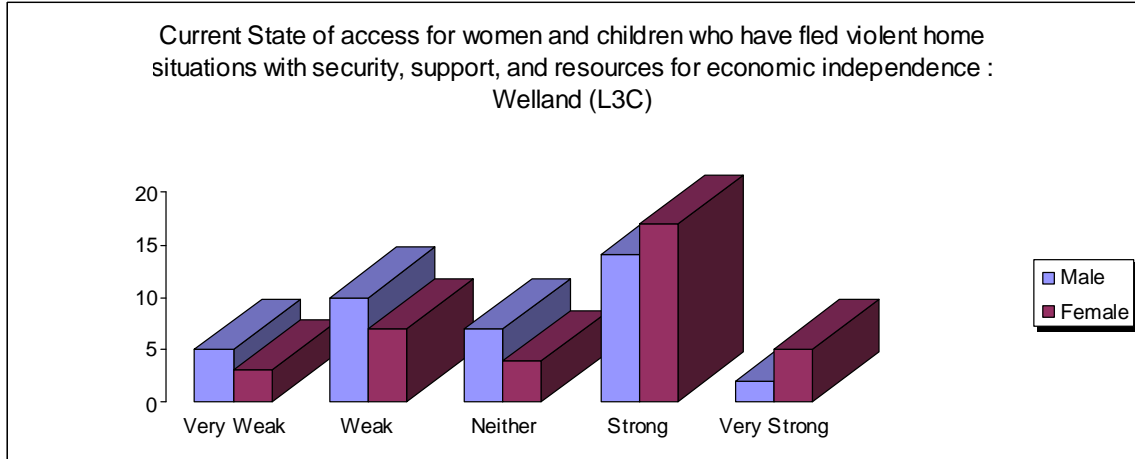
When asked about the future state, the Town of Fort Erie determined that the situation would become better than today or remain the same.



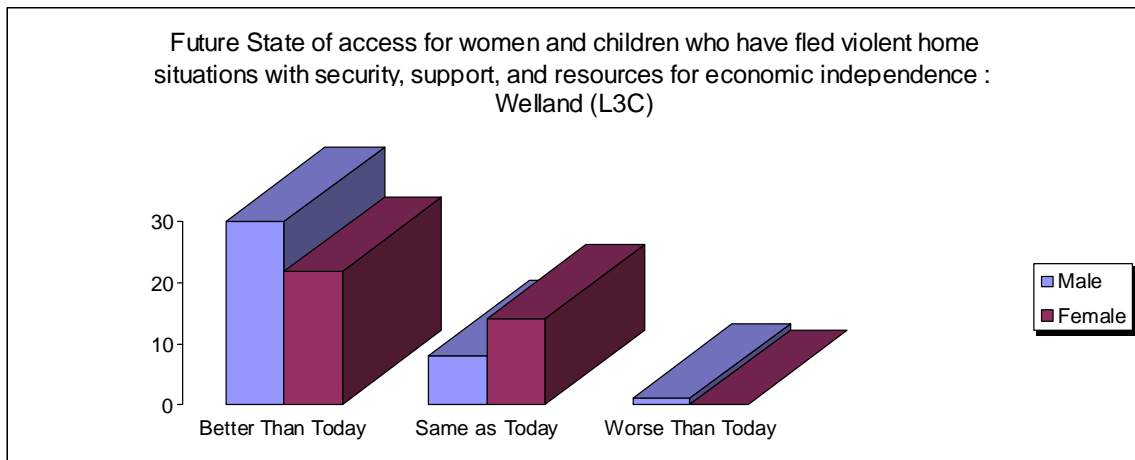
The graph above of respondents from East Welland (L3B) demonstrates a wide dispersion of answers amongst perceptions. The majority of females answered that the current situation was good or that it was neither weak nor strong, while the largest clumping of male answers were found in the weak category. This disconnect is of interest, as one might expect women to have a negative view of the situation.



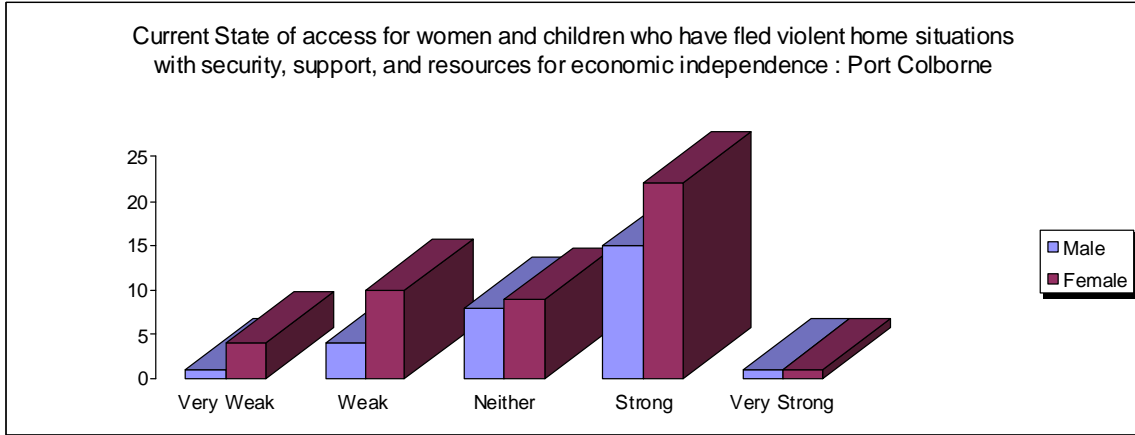
Despite their dispersion in the first question, both males and females were represented equally in their perception of the situation being better than today, which was the majority, or in being same as today.



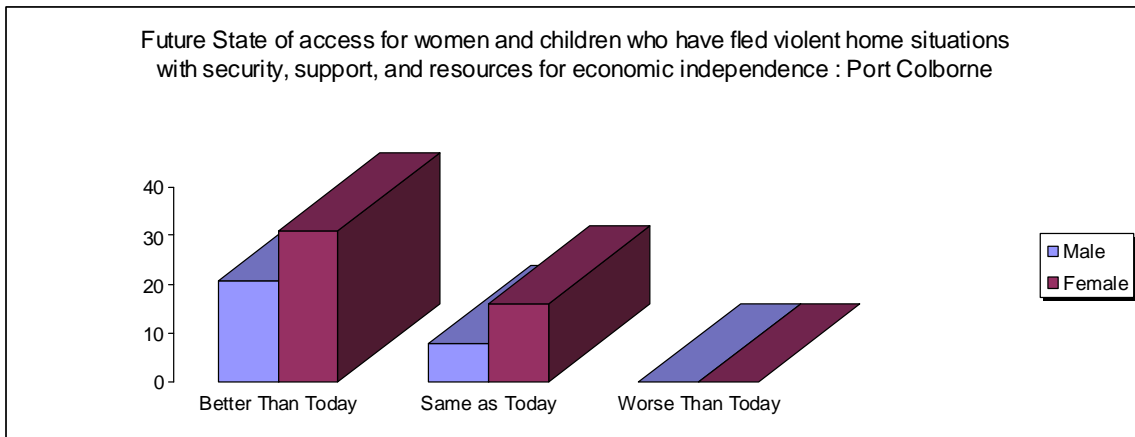
When stating their perception of the issue, West Welland (L3C) respondents were divided like the East Welland respondents. Males were found to be more inclined to answer that the situation was weak or very weak, while females saw it as being strong or very strong.



Despite their negative current perception, the gross majority of male respondents perceived the situation as improving. Similarly, so did the majority of the female respondents.



When asked to state their perception of the current state of the issue, the majority of male and female respondents gauged it as being strong. However, the female responses were quite varied through the very weak, weak and neither segments.

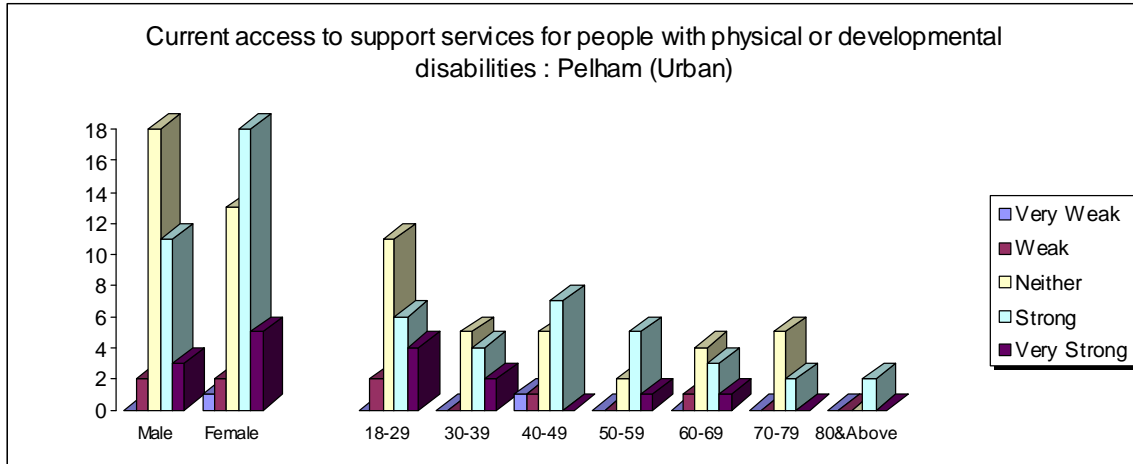


When asked to gauge the future state, 100% of both male and female responses were in the better than or same as today.

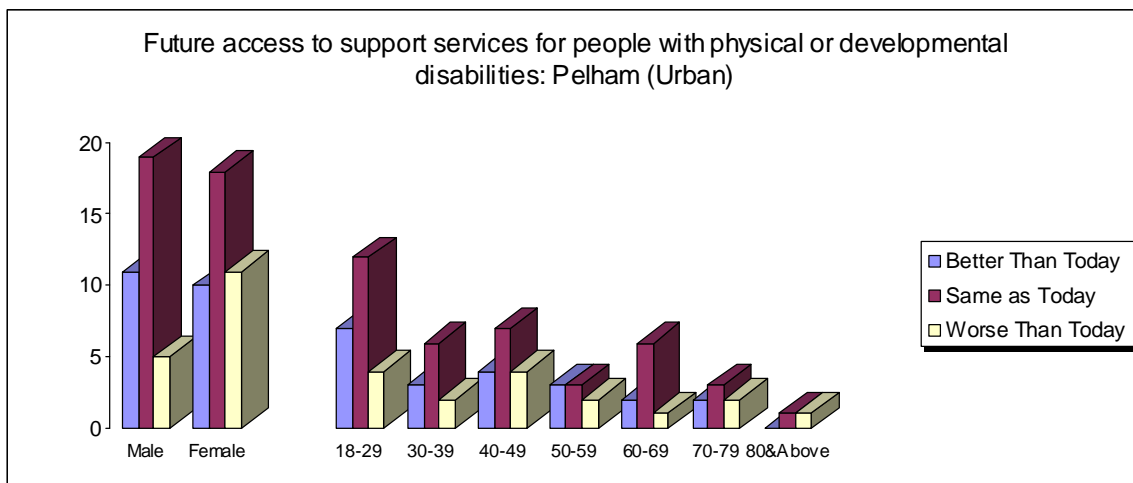
The aforementioned information is interesting as it demonstrates that in some communities, male respondents demonstrated a much more negative view to this issue than women. This may be linked to misinformation or lack of knowledge in this area. Also of note are the similarities in responses between East and West Welland for this issue.

## Access to support services for people with physical or developmental disabilities (Present and Future)

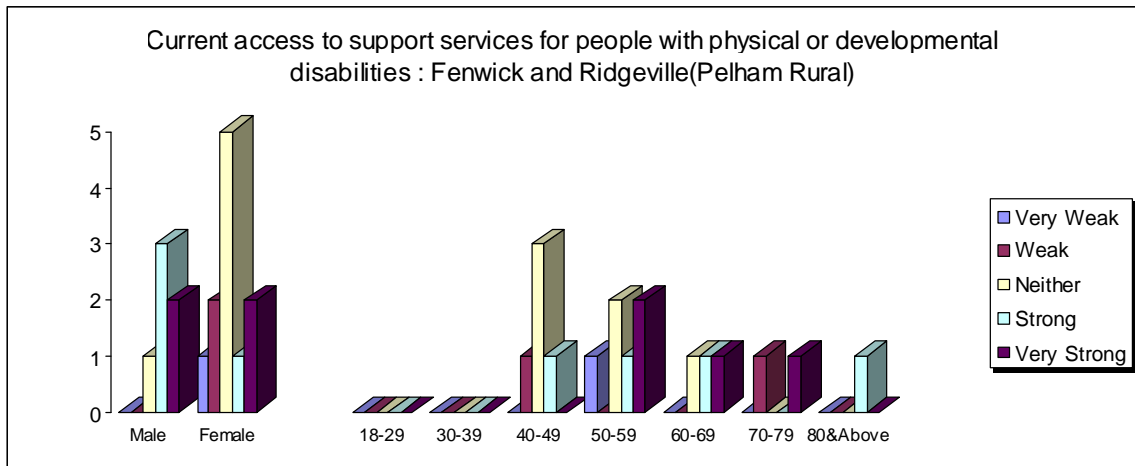
In assessing the present and future state of this issue, it was determined that it should be crossed with gender and age.



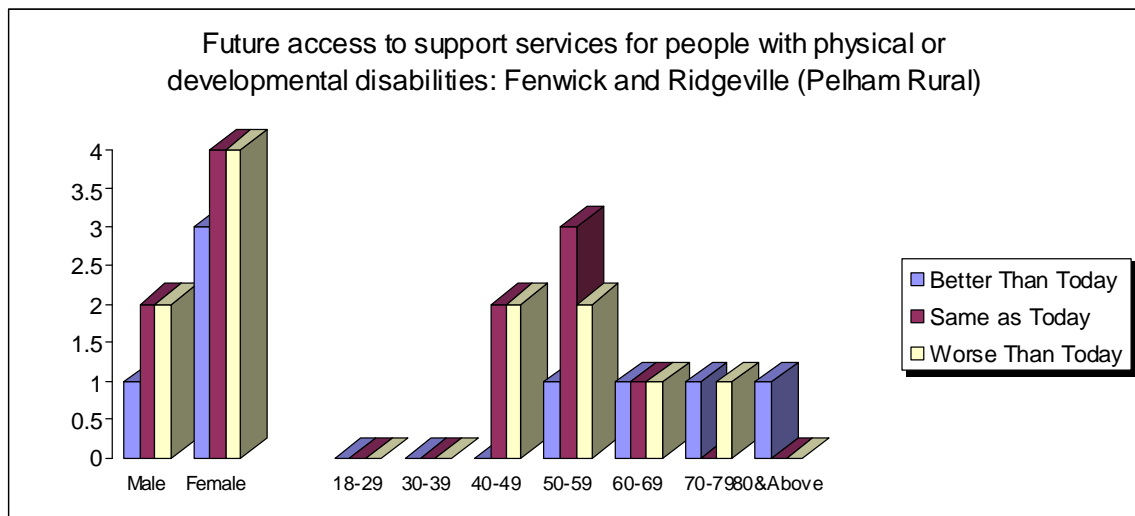
In assessing the current state of this issue, the majority of both male and female Pelham (Urban) respondents were found to be in the strong or neither weak nor strong category. While in terms of age groups, the 18-29 and 70-79 groups ranked them as being neither weak nor strong, while the middle groups, 40-49 and 60-69 showed a clear ranking of strong.



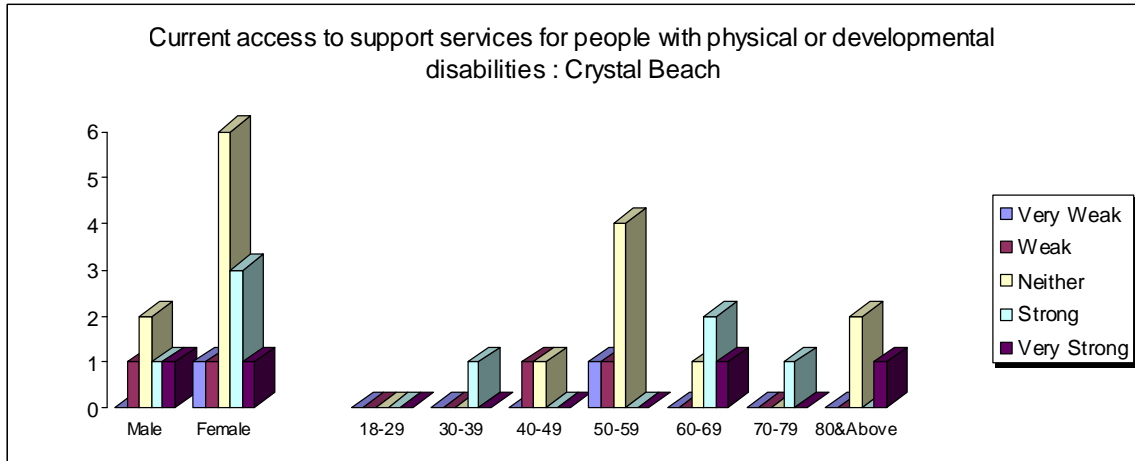
In determining the future state, the majority of males saw it as staying the same or getting better, while females determined it as being the same or being worse. This negative sentiment was equally distributed throughout the age groups, and never achieved a majority. The about the same answer was prominent throughout age groups, while most of the better answers came from the youngest segment 18-29.



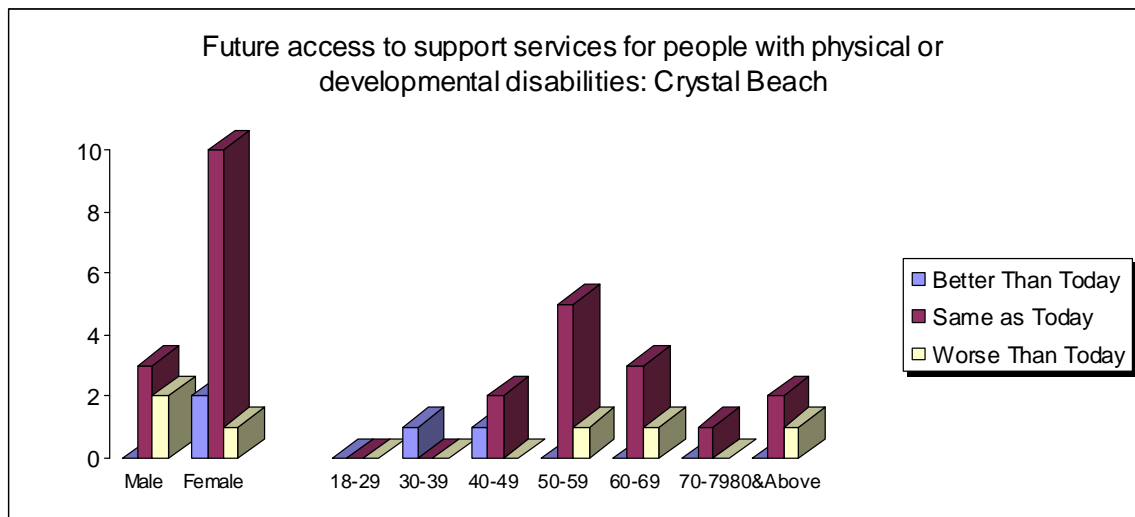
When asked to gauge the current state of this issue, the majority of female Fenwick and Ridgeville (Pelham Rural) respondents found it to be neither weak nor strong while the majority of males saw it as being strong. In terms of age groups, the most significant segment was found in the 40-49 age group with their neutral vote.



When asked about the future state of the issue, both males and females foresaw it staying the same or becoming worse. In the 40-49 age segment, 100% of votes were concentrated in the same or worse categories.

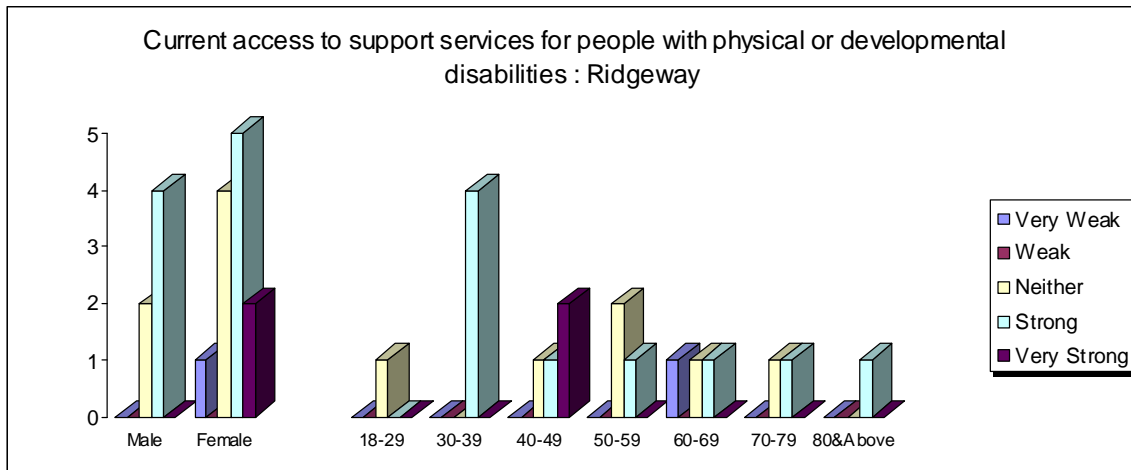


In Crystal Beach, both female and male respondents found this issue to be neither weak nor strong, though a part of the female vote went towards the strong segment. In terms of age, 30-39, 60-69 and 70-79 believed it to be strong, while 100% of the 40-49 and 50-59 votes gauged it as being neither weak nor strong, weak or very weak.

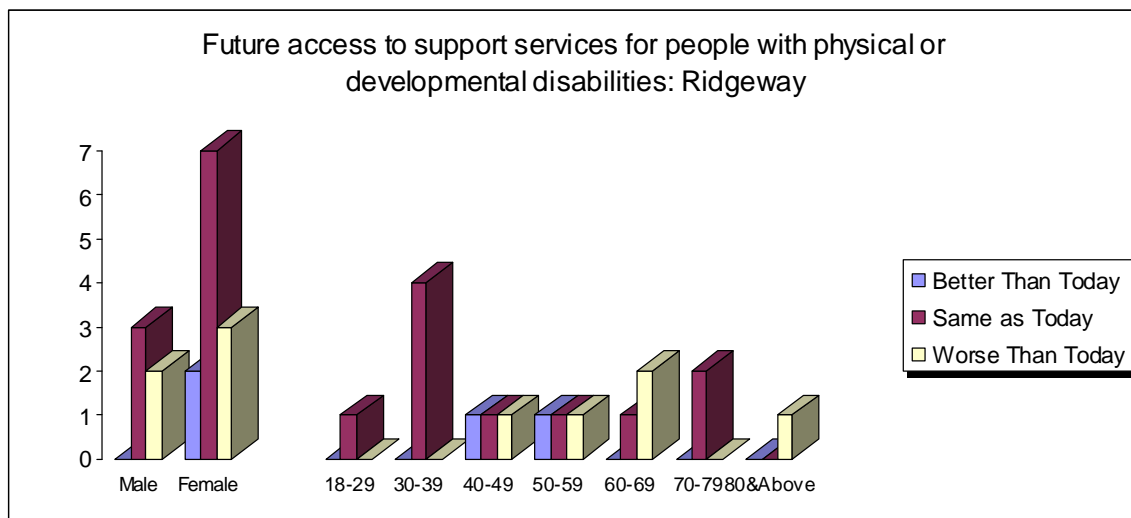


In terms of the future, 100% of male votes believed it to be the same or worse, while the female vote had its majority seeing it as the same as today. In terms of age distribution, only the 30-39 and 40-49 age groups recorded a better than vote, leaving the

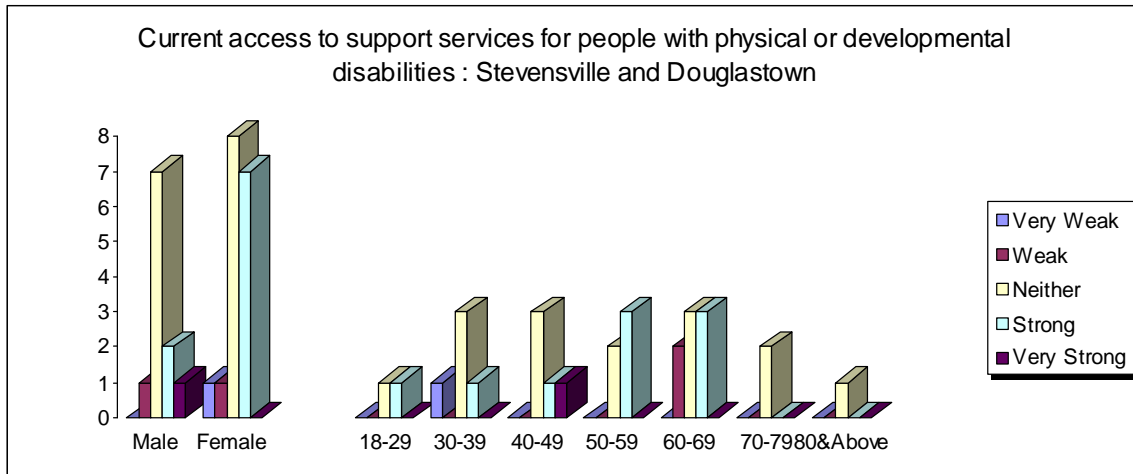
rest of the group having 100% of answers found in the situation being the same or worse than today.



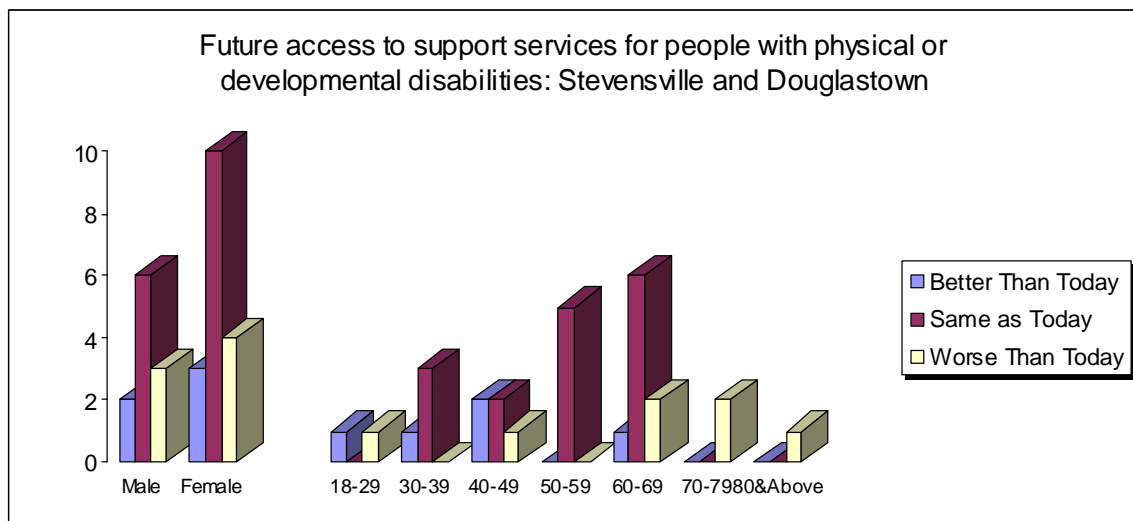
The majority of both male and female Ridgeway respondents gauged the current state of this issue as being strong. This was reflected in the 30-39 and 80 and above age groups, in which 100% of respondents gauged it as being strong. Also interesting to note that 100% of the very weak vote was found in the 60-69 age bracket.



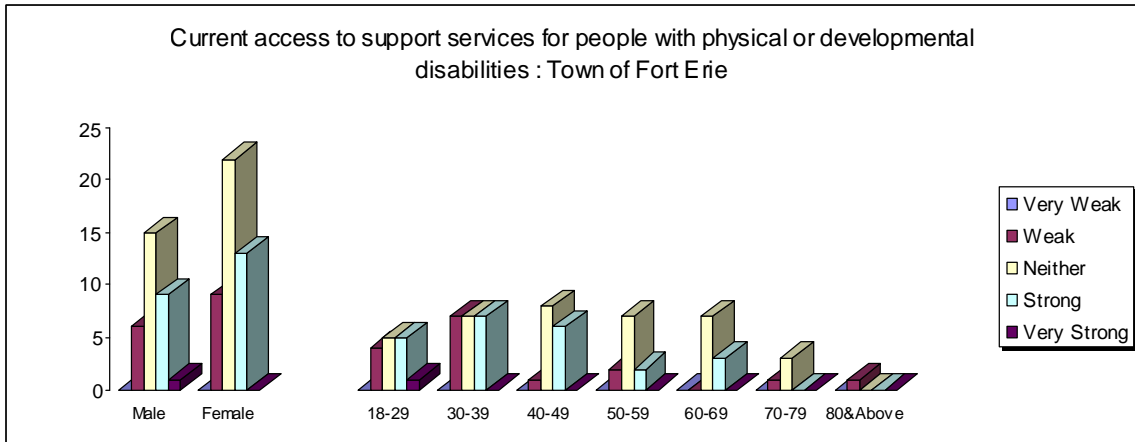
When asked about the future state, the majority of both male and female Ridgeway respondents perceived the issue as remaining the same or becoming worse. In terms of age distribution, the better than today respondents were equally split between the 40-49 and 50-59 age groups.



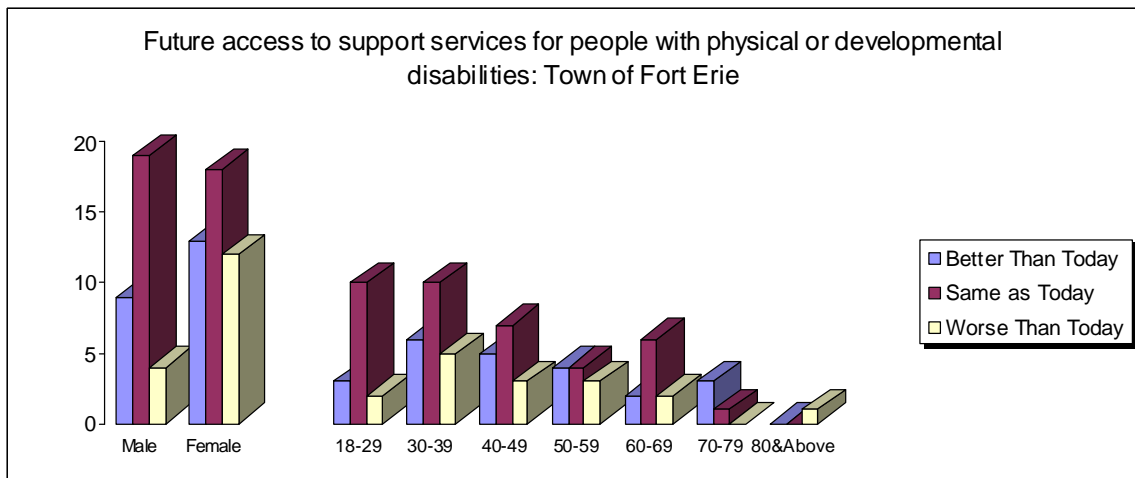
In Stevensville and Douglastown, the majority of both gender responses believed the situation to be neither weak nor strong or strong. In particular, the female vote demonstrated a large strong vote. In terms of age distribution, 100% of the very weak vote was found in the 30-39 age group, while the neither weak nor strong and strong responses were throughout.



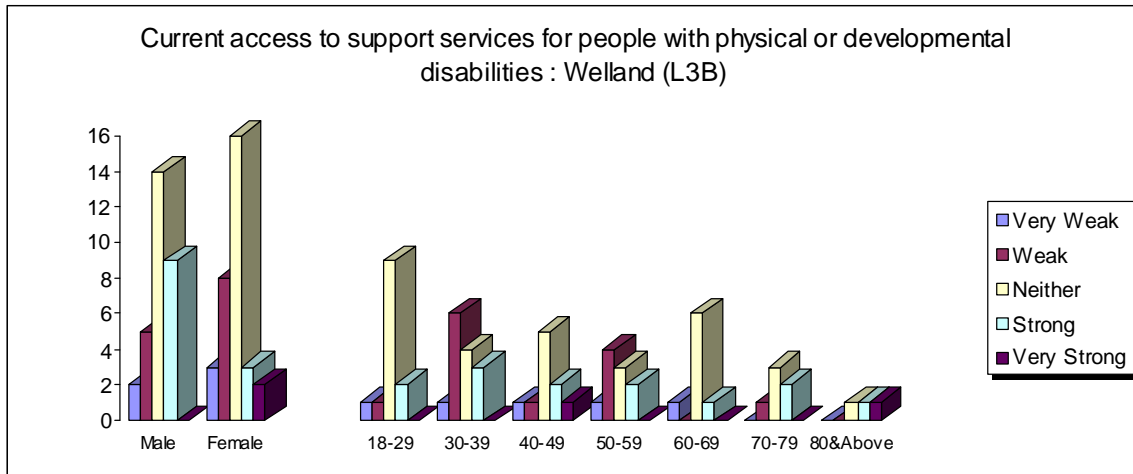
When gauging the future state of this issue the majority of both male and female respondents determined that they felt the situation would be the same, or worse than today. In terms of age distribution, of particular interest was that the majority of worse than today responses were found in the 60-69, 70-79 and 80 and above age groups.



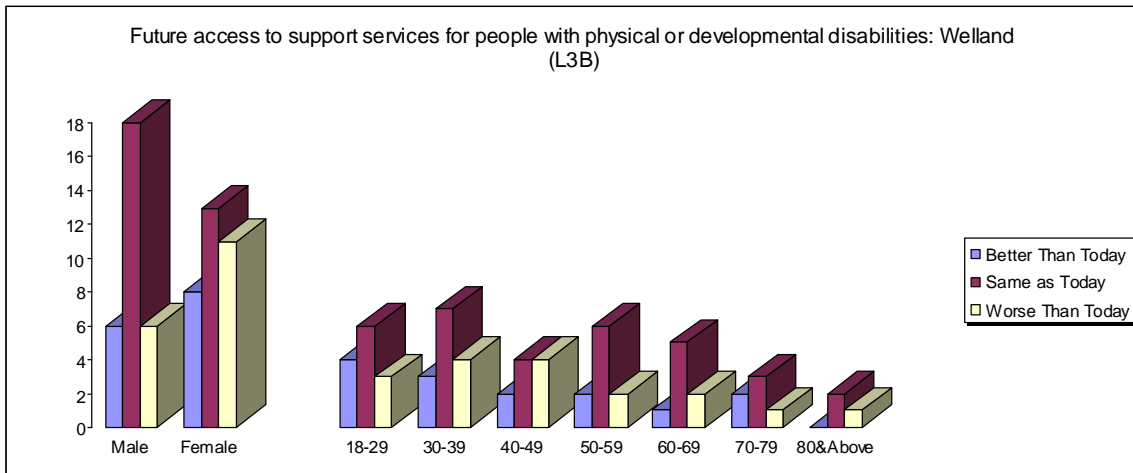
In the Town of Fort Erie, both males and females saw the situation as being neither weak nor strong or strong. While in terms of age, the distribution is equal in the young ages, however, among the 40-49, 50-59 and 60-69, the majority of opinion as in the neither weak nor strong or strong segment.



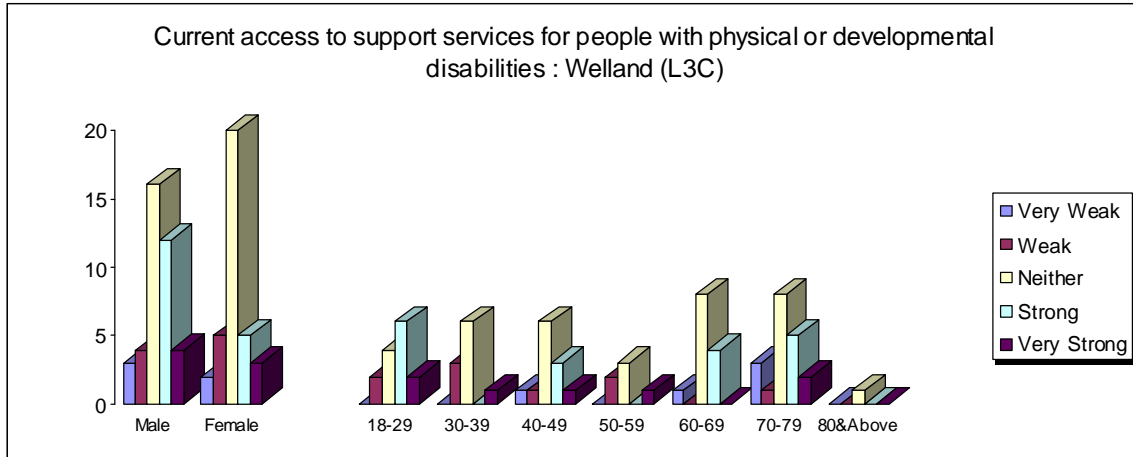
In assessing the future state, the majority of men and a slight majority of women saw the situation as staying the same or getting better. A large majority of same as today or better than today were found in the 18-29, 30-39, and 40-49 age groups.



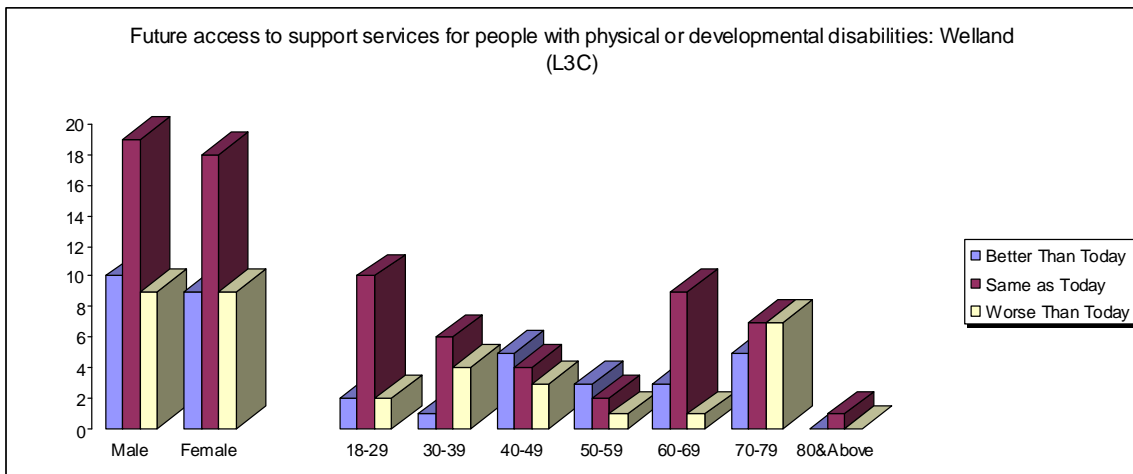
In East Welland (L3B), the majority of male respondents saw it as being neither weak nor strong and strong, while the majority of females saw it as being neither weak nor strong and weak. The weak respondents were mostly found in the 30-39 and 50-59 age groups.



In terms of the future, East Welland (L3B) males believed it to be the same, while females saw it as staying the same or getting worse. There is an even distribution of all responses throughout age groups.

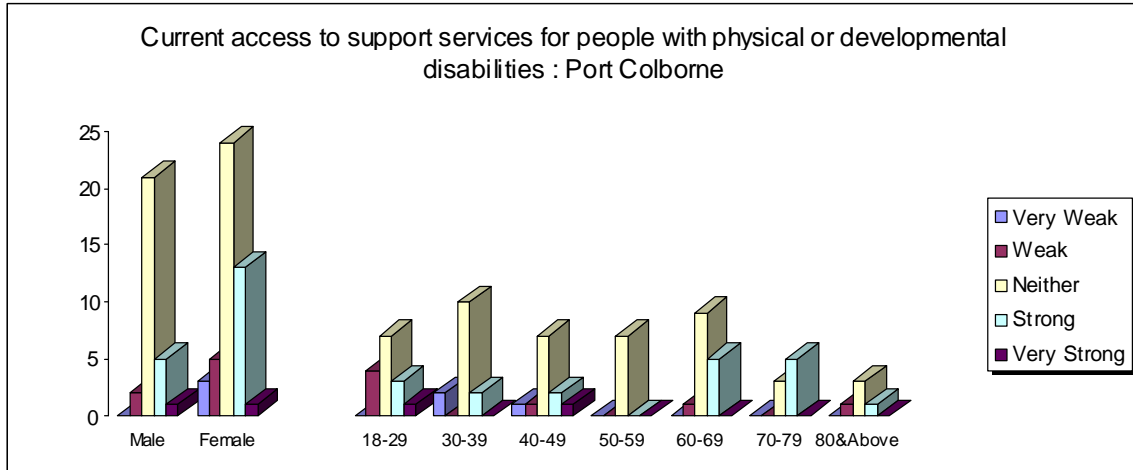


In West Welland, the majority of both male and female respondents gauged the current state of the issue as being neither weak nor strong and strong. In terms of age distribution, the majority of this sentiment was found in the 18-29, 40-49, 60-69 and 70-79 age groups, however, important to note that the majority of the very weak answers were found in the latter group.

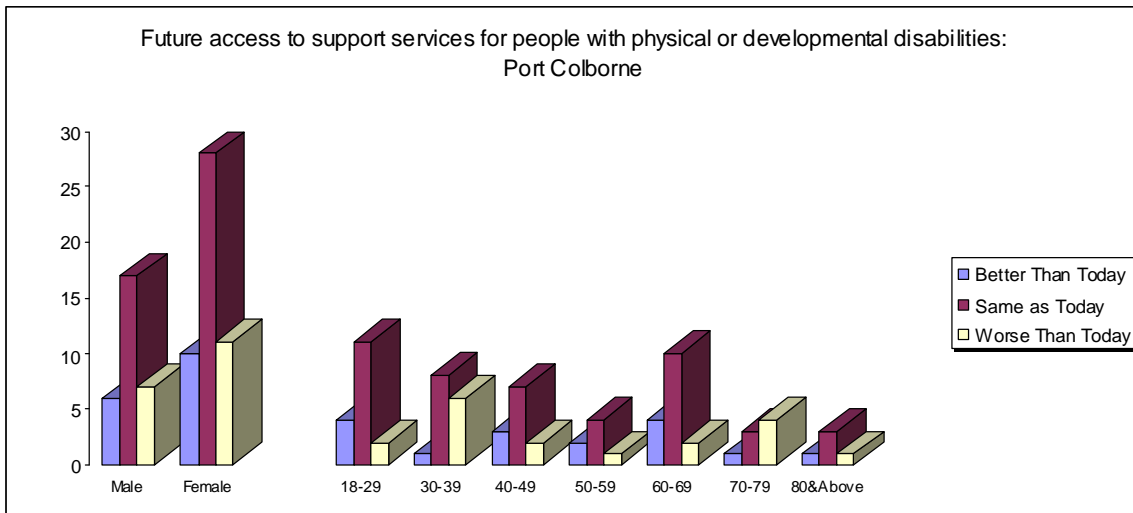


In terms of the future state of the issue, slight majority male respondents saw it as being the same or getting better, while the female respondents believed it would remain the same. Age distribution was particular for this answer, as every group sees some representation of answers, however, the majority of worse than today votes came from

the 70-79 age group, while the majority of better than today votes came from the 40-49 and 50-59 age groups.



In Port Colborne, a significant majority of both male and female respondents perceived the current state of this issue as being neither weak nor strong and strong. This is also found through the age groups.

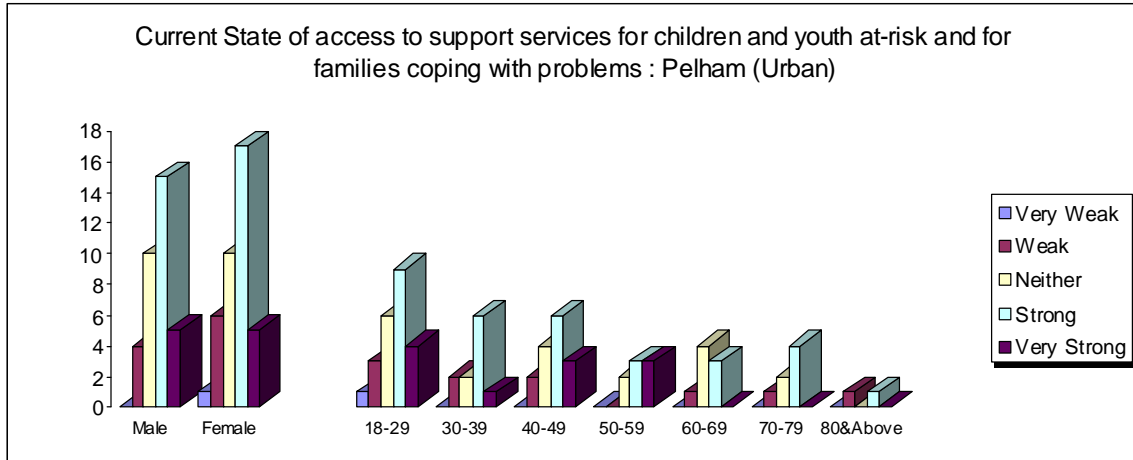


In terms of the future, a slight majority of both genders believe it to be the same or to become worse. This sentiment is mostly reflected in the 30-39 and 70-79 age groups.

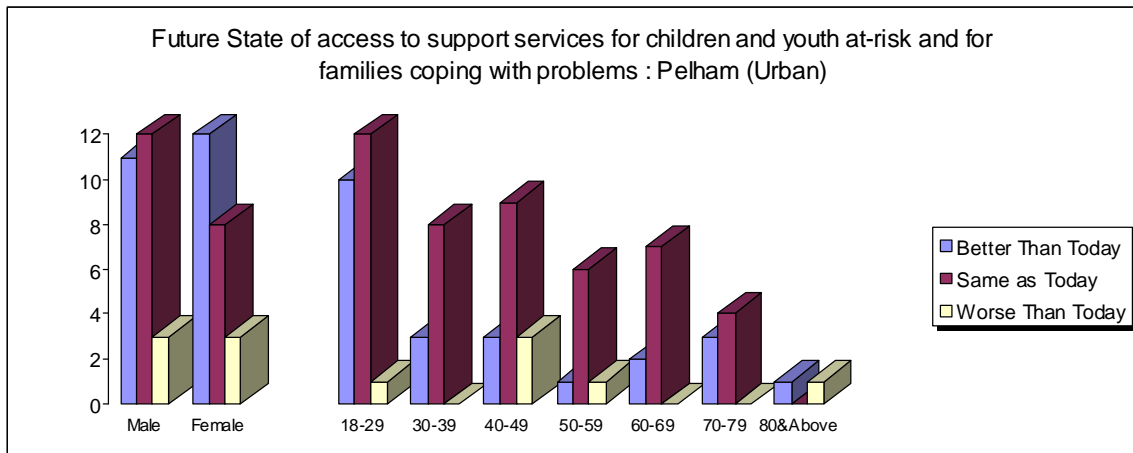
The overall response of this question was that current state was neither good nor bad and that most people expected it to be the same as today, this was fairly consistent throughout the aforementioned data.

## Access to support services for children and youth at-risk and for families coping with problems (Present and Future)

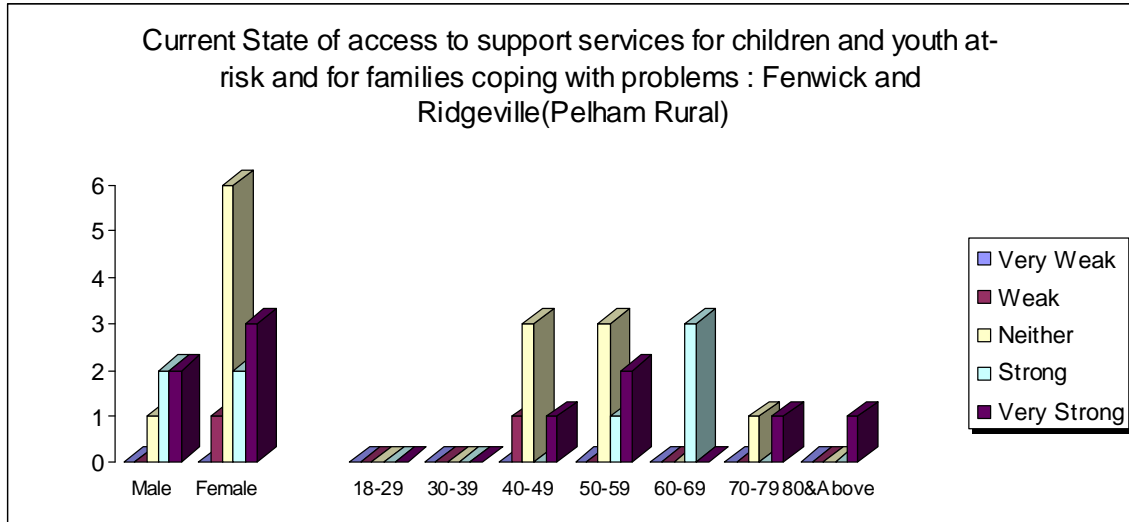
To delve deeper into the current and future state of this issue, the data was crossed with gender and age data.



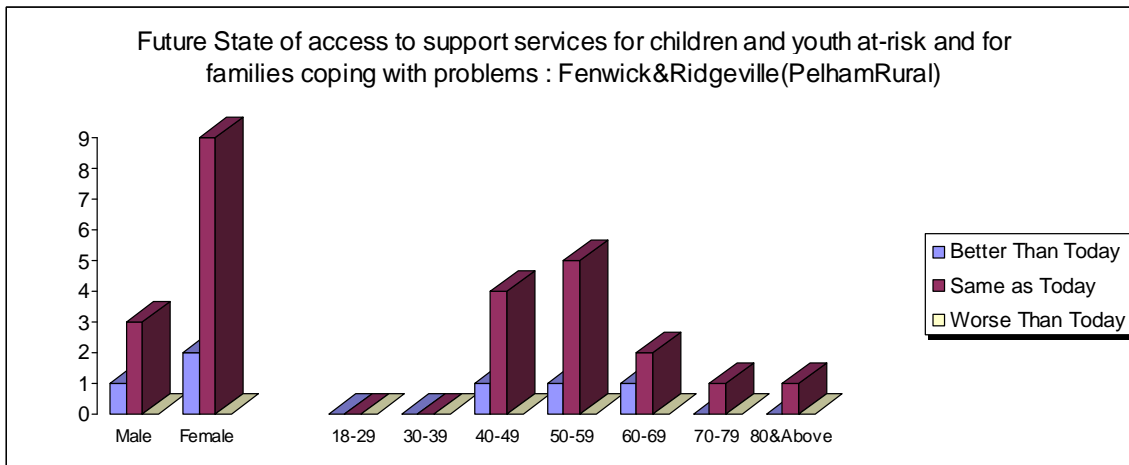
When asked to assess the current state of this issue, the majority of both genders agreed that they saw it as being strong. The majority of this strong vote was found in the 18-29, the 30-39 and 40-49 age groups.



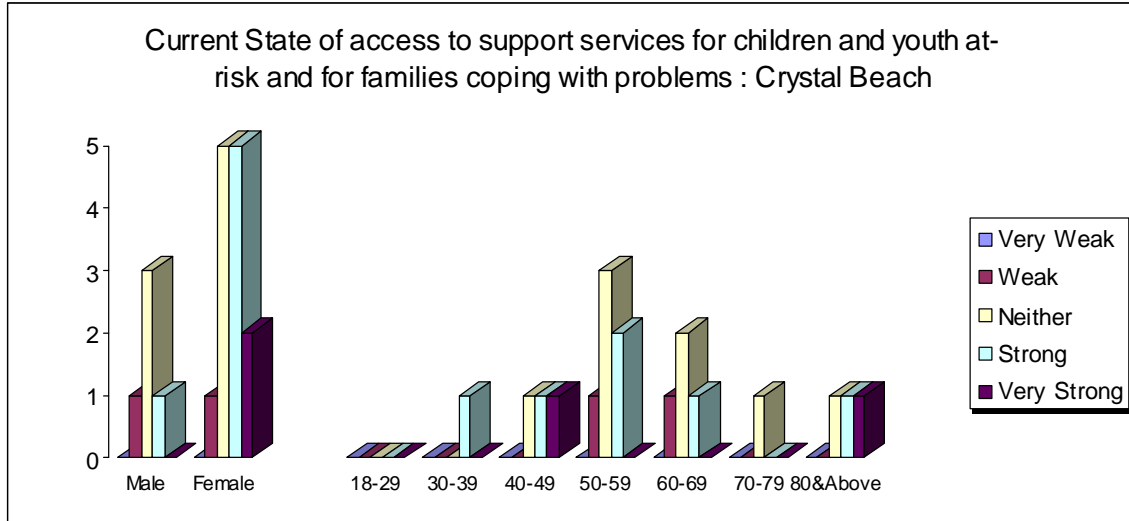
When determining the future state, the majority of female Pelham (Urban) respondents foresaw it as being better than today, while the majority of males saw it as being the same or better than today. The gross majority of the better than today votes came from the 18-29 age segment.



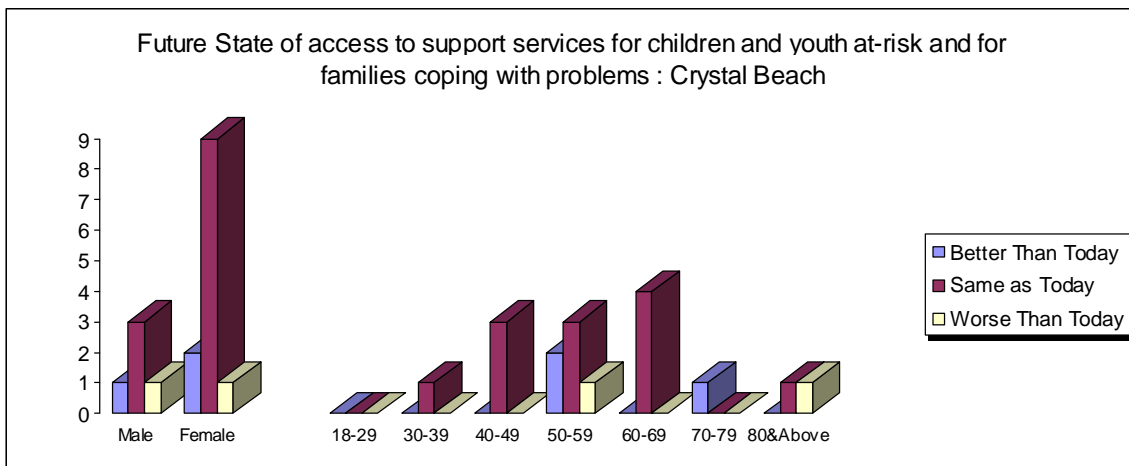
The current state of this issue in Fenwick and Ridgeville (Pelham Rural) the majority of male respondents saw it as being strong or very strong, while the majority of female respondents believed it was neither strong nor weak, though it had many votes in the strong and very strong areas. This positive outlook is mostly found in the 50-59 and 60-69 age groups.



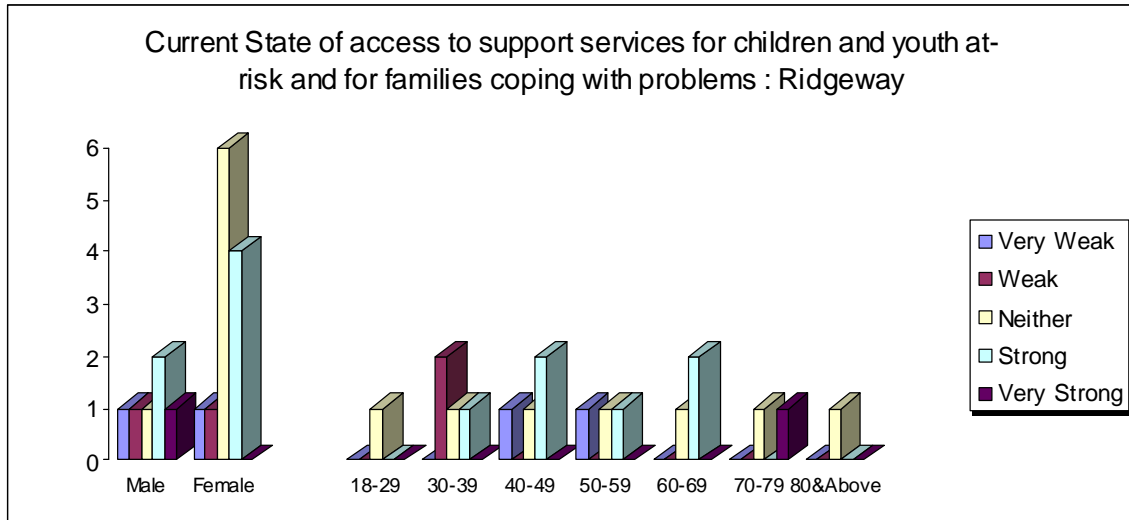
In assessing the future state, both gender groups agreed that it would remain the same, the majority of these responses coming from the 40-49 and 50-59 age groups.



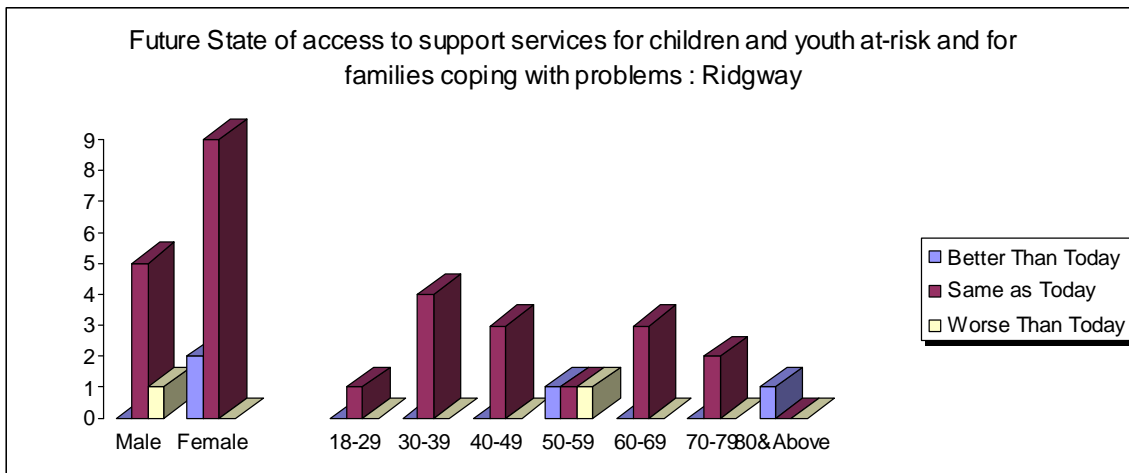
In Crystal Beach, the majority of the female respondents believe the current situation in this issue to be neither weak nor strong or strong, while the majority of male respondents saw it as being neither weak nor strong. The strong responses were mostly found in the 50-59 age groups.



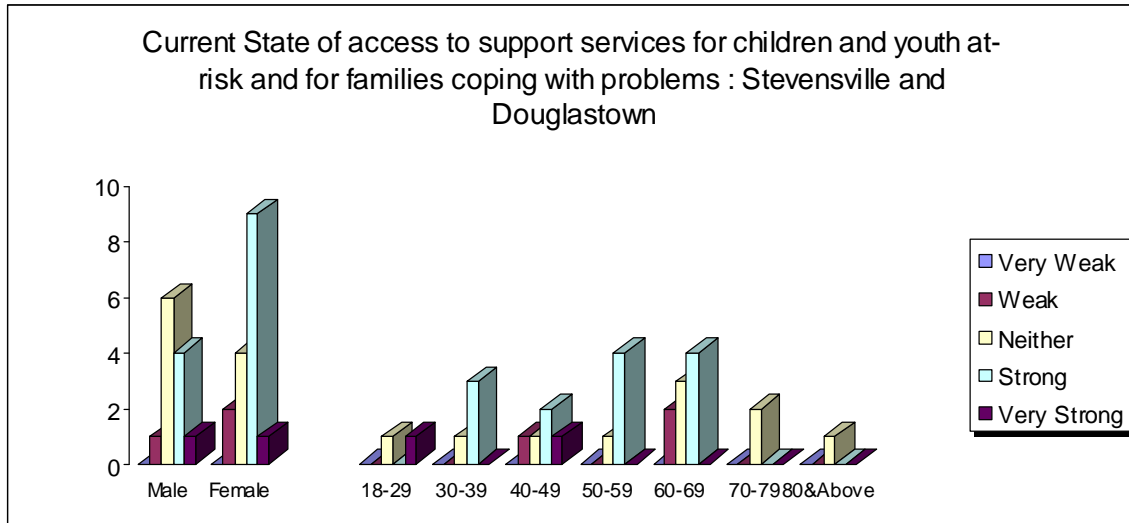
The majority of both male and female respondents foresaw the situation as being the same as today, only the 50-59 age group demonstrated strong beliefs of it being better than today.



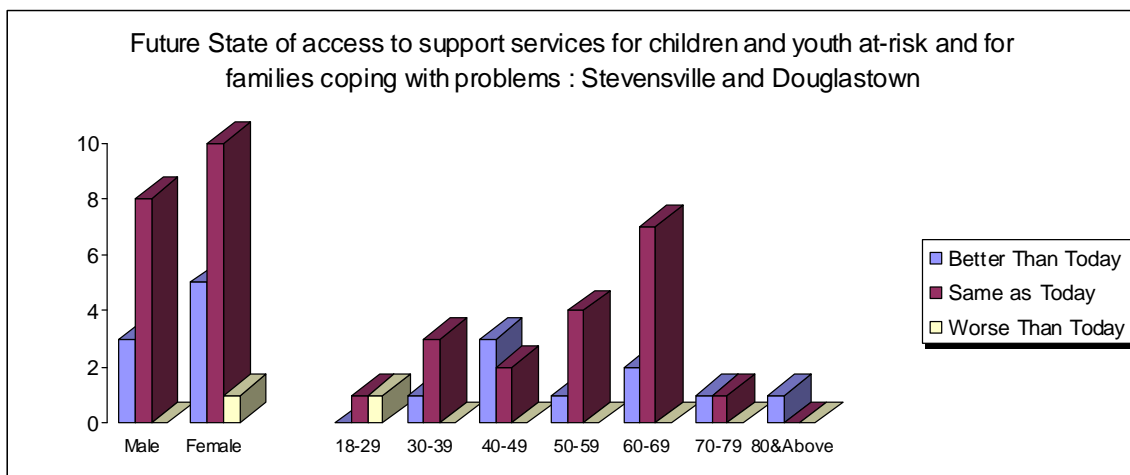
In Ridgeway, the male respondents were evenly distributed with a slight exception of believing the situation to be strong, conversely, the gross majority of females believed the situation to be neither weak nor strong or strong. In terms of age distribution, the positive female sentiment was found for the most part in 40-49 and 60-69 age groups.



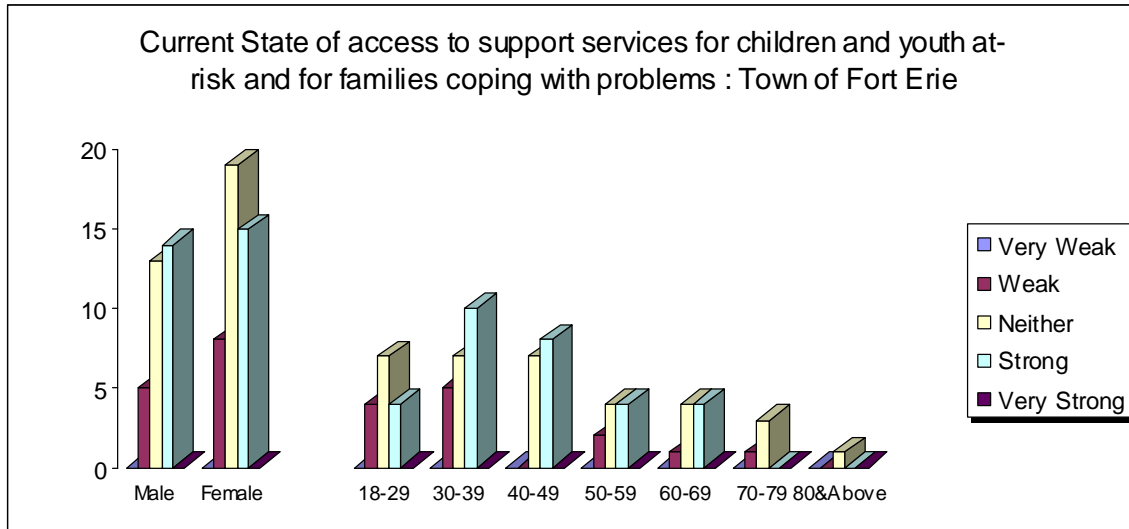
In terms of the future state, the majority of both gender respondents believed it would be the same as today. However, the rest of the male group was in the worse than category, while the rest of the female group was in the better than today group.



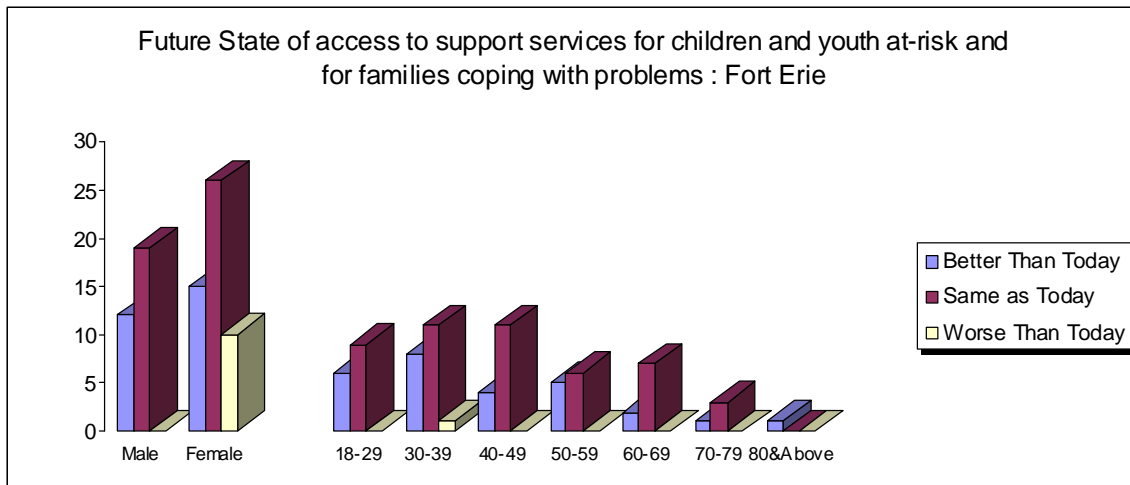
The current state of this issue in Stevensville and Douglastown is split among genders with the majority of males see it as neither weak nor strong, while the females saw the current state as being strong. This significant showing of strength is led by the 30-39, 50-59 and 60-69 age groups.



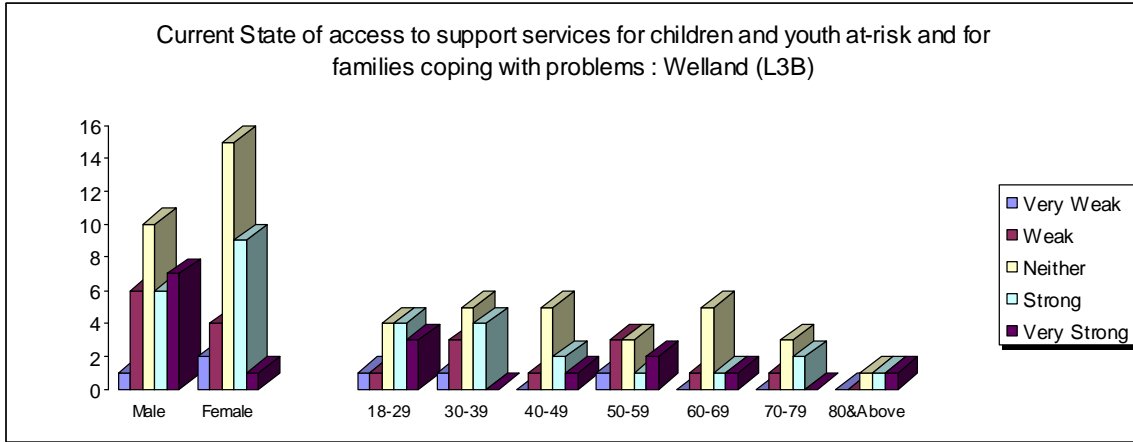
When asked to assess the future state, the majority of both genders believed it to be the same, however, they all had strong showings in the belief it would be better than today. This opinion was mostly found in the 40-49 age group.



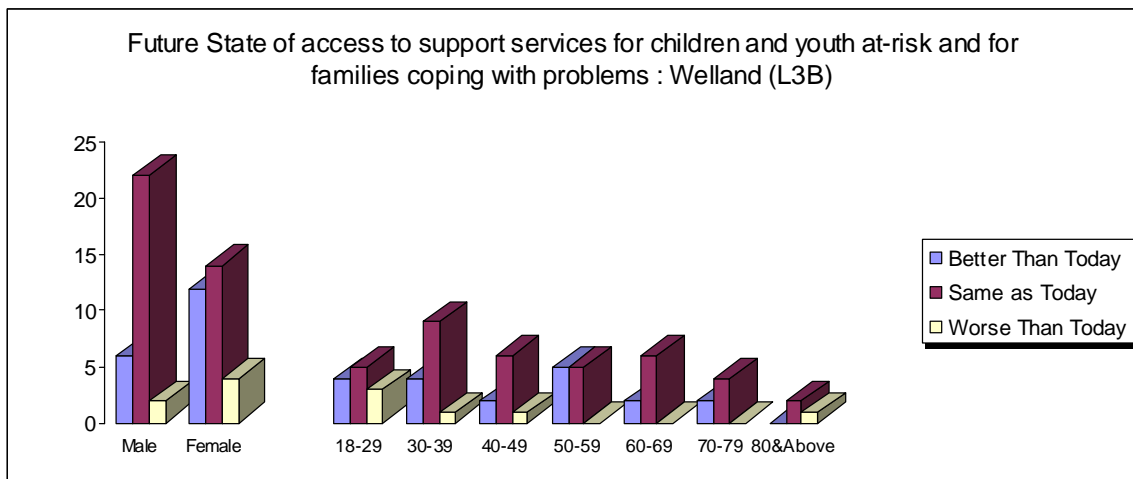
In the Town of Fort Erie, both male and female respondents had the majority of responses were found in the neither weak nor strong and strong segments. These were then reflected in the 30-39 and 40-49 age groups.



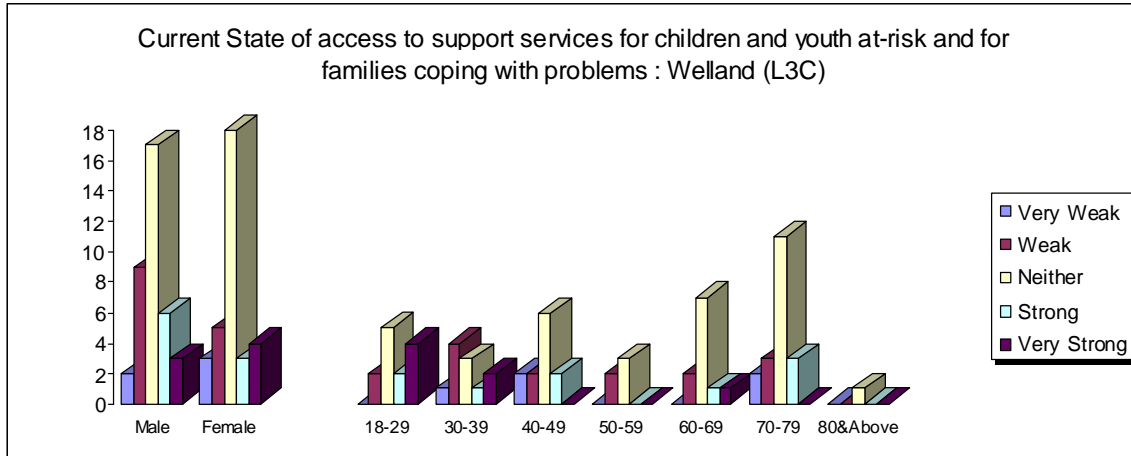
When asked about the future state of this issue, the majority of male and female respondents were found in the same as or better than today segments. This was diversified throughout the age groups.



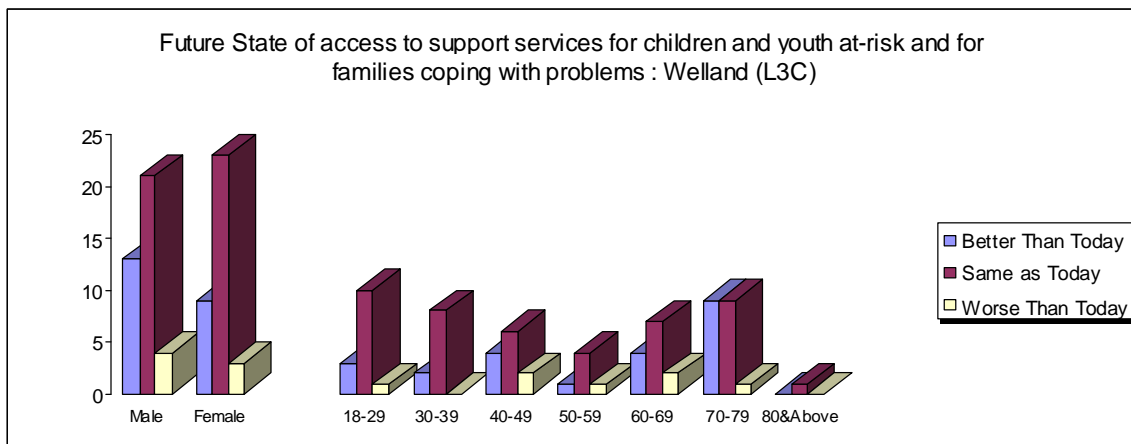
When asked about the current state of this issue, both male and female respondents from East Welland (L3B) believed it to be neither weak nor strong. The remaining scores of each group were mostly toward the strong and very strong answers. The results were evenly distributed throughout the age groups.



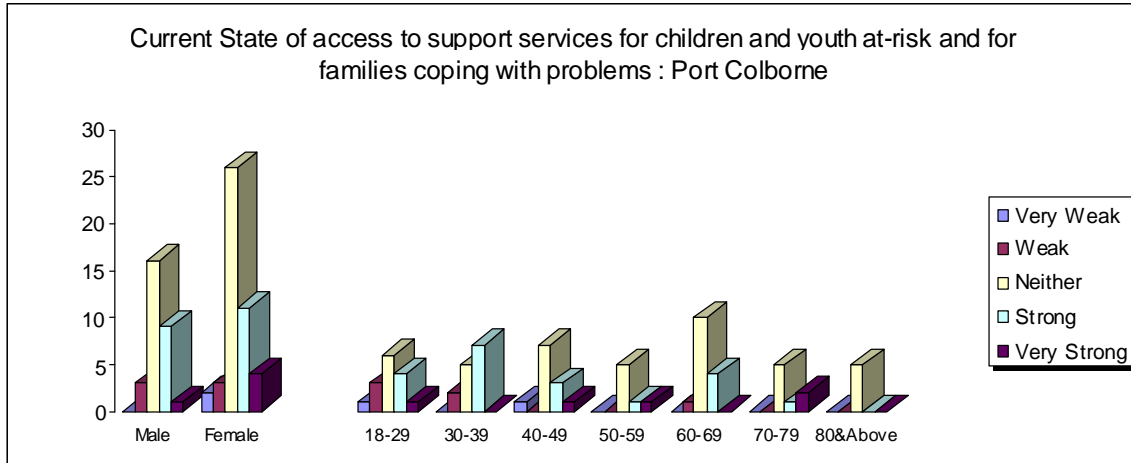
Concerning the future state of this issue, the majority of both gender groups believed it would be the same or slightly better than today. As the current data, the answers are evenly distributed among the age groups.



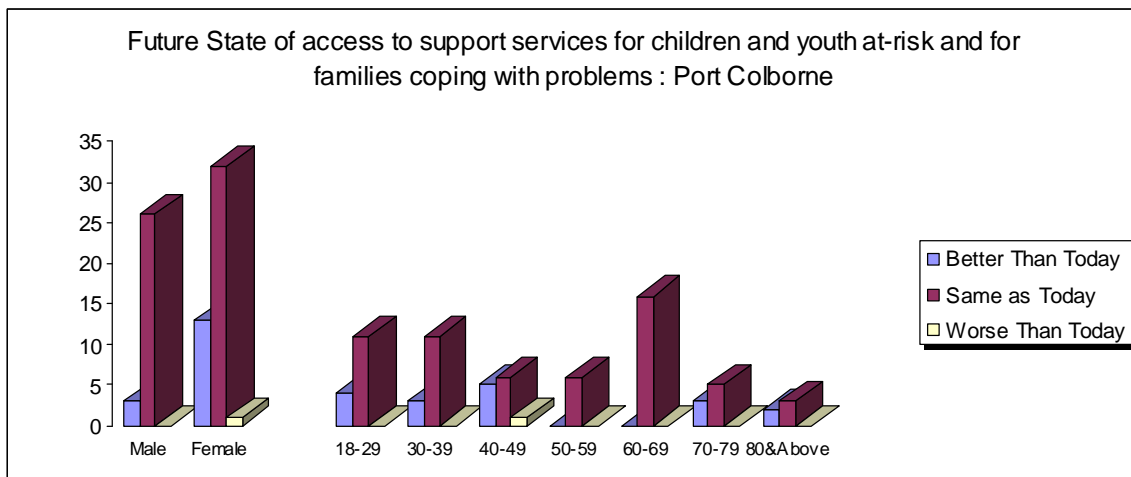
The majority of respondents from both genders in West Welland (L3C) believed the current state of this issue to neither weak nor strong. Amongst the higher scores in this segment were the 60-69 and 70-79 age groups.



In terms of the future state of this issue, the majority of both genders believed that it would be about the same with a slight inclination towards being better. Most age groups had fairly distributed except for the 70-79 age groups which demonstrated the highest belief of the issue being better.



When asked about the current state of the issue, the majority of Port Colborne respondents from both genders believed the situation to be neither weak nor strong or strong. The distribution among the age groups was even.

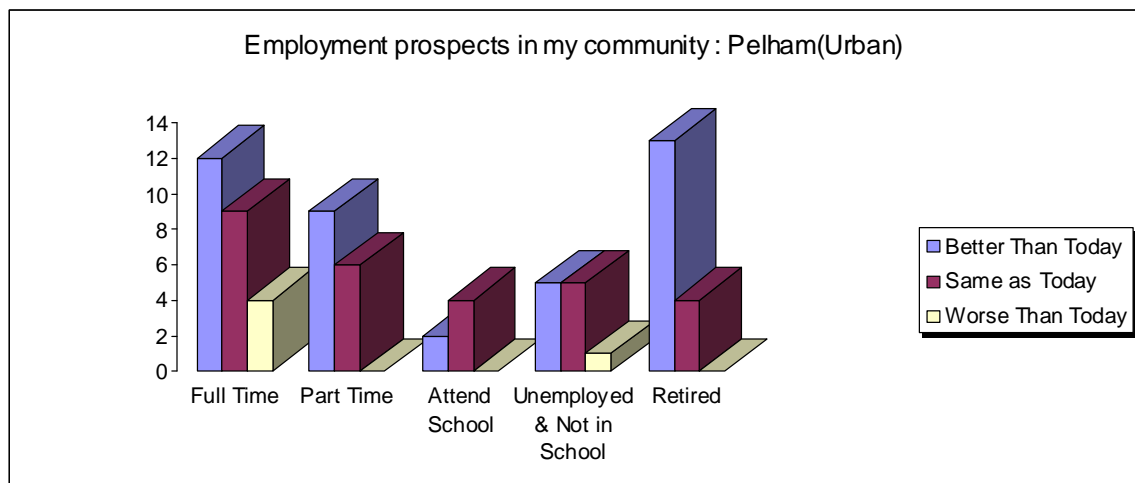
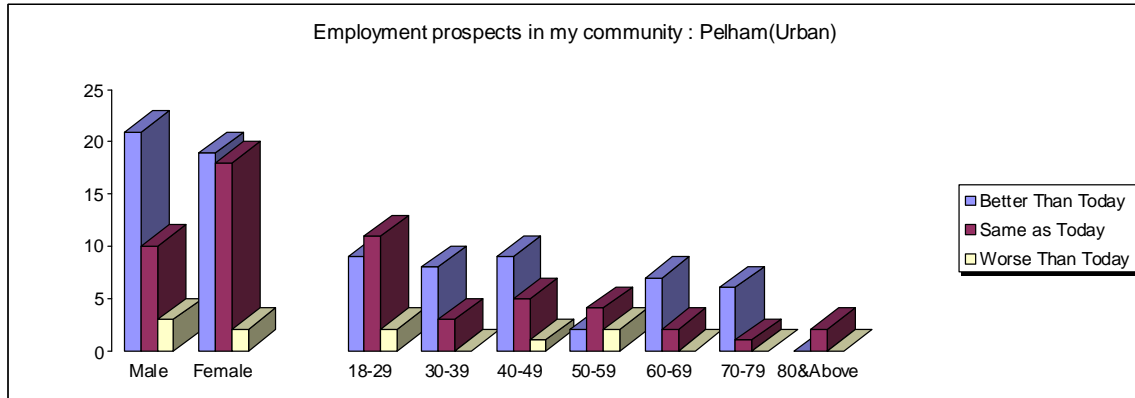


When asked about the future state, the gross majority of respondents foresaw the situation to be the same as today. These were well represented among all age groups.

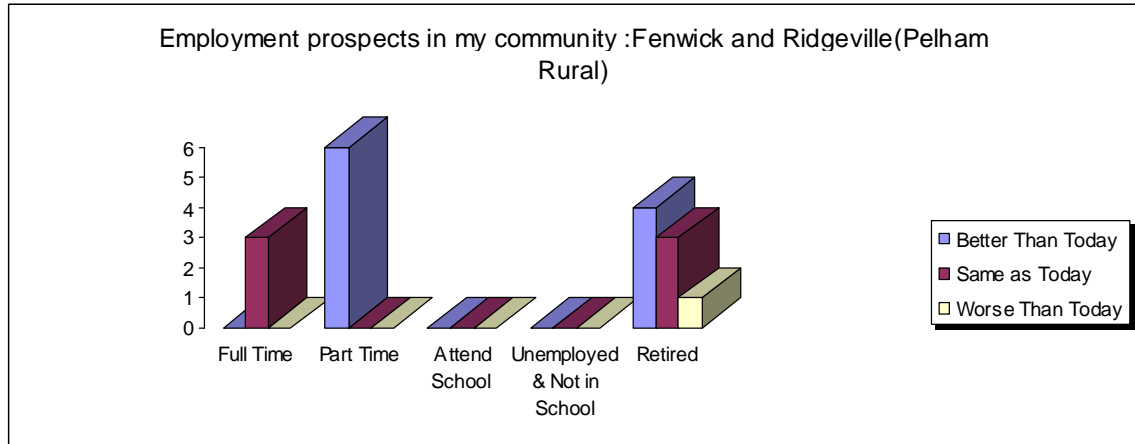
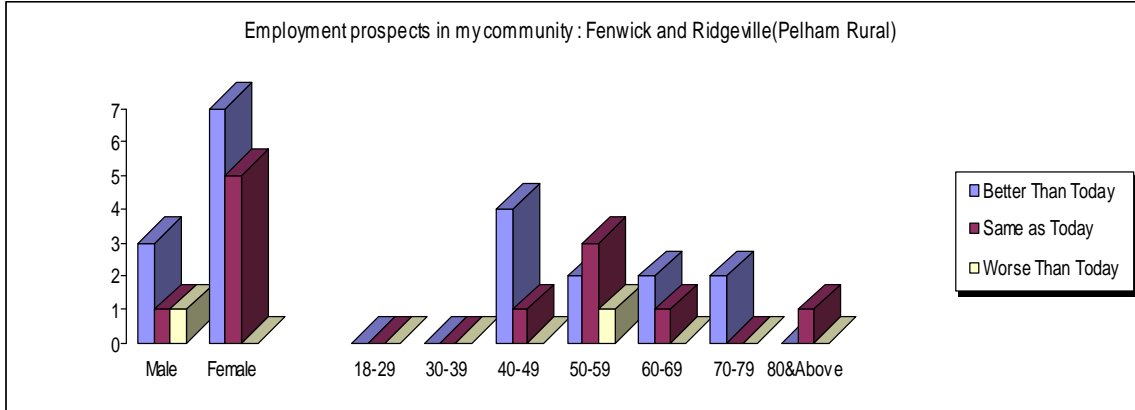
There were some distinct differences on this question throughout the community; the overall results show a current state being acceptable with optimism for the future. This was found in many communities above especially among women and younger age groups.

## Employment prospects in their community (Future)

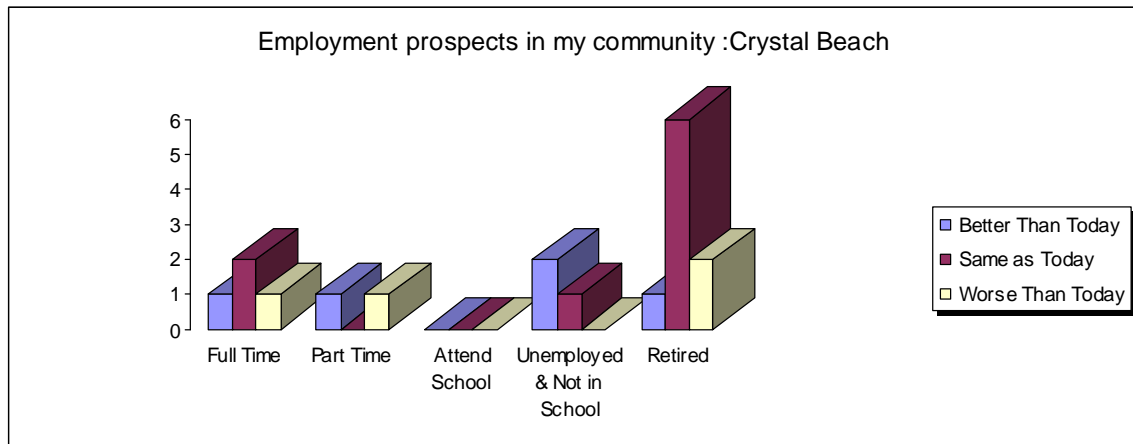
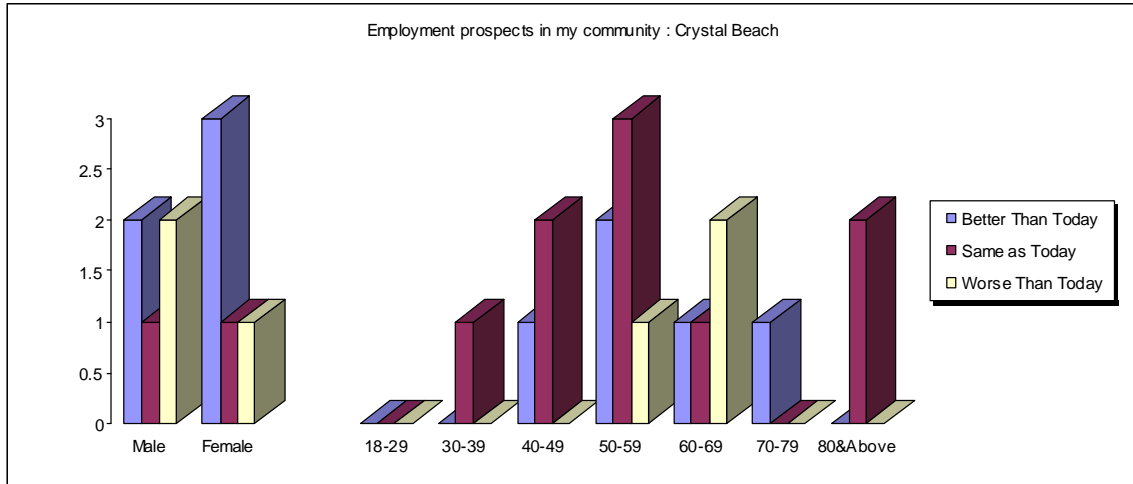
To ascertain a greater understanding of the future state of unemployment employment in the community, the data was cross referenced with age, gender and current work status.



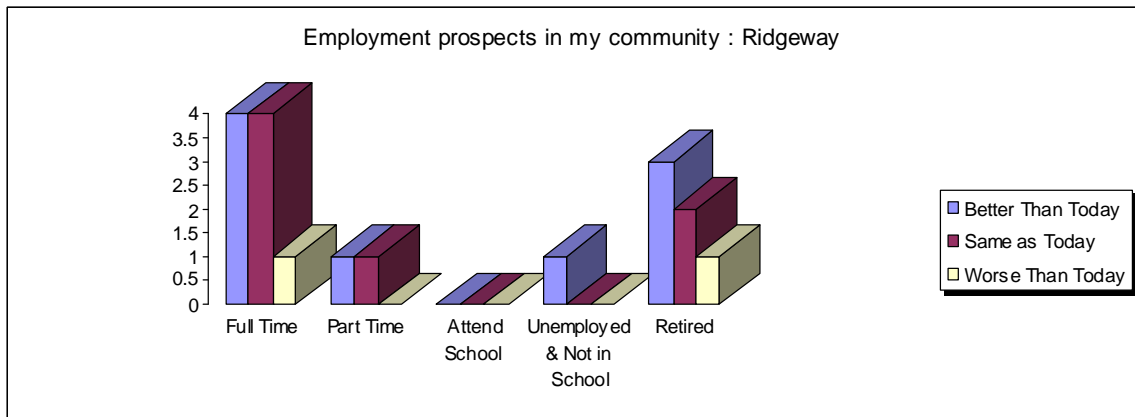
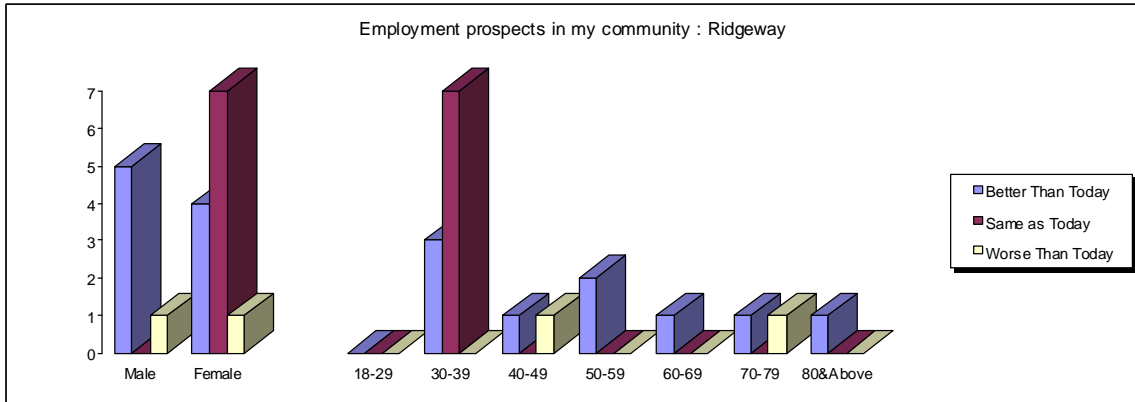
The above graphs show a strong picture of the Pelham (Urban) opinion of the respondents to this issue. The majority of both genders believed the situation to be better than today, this was represented in the 18-29, 30-39 and 40-49 age groups. As per work status, the majority of those seeing it as being better than today were either full or part time employed or retired. Those in school or unemployed were more cynical.



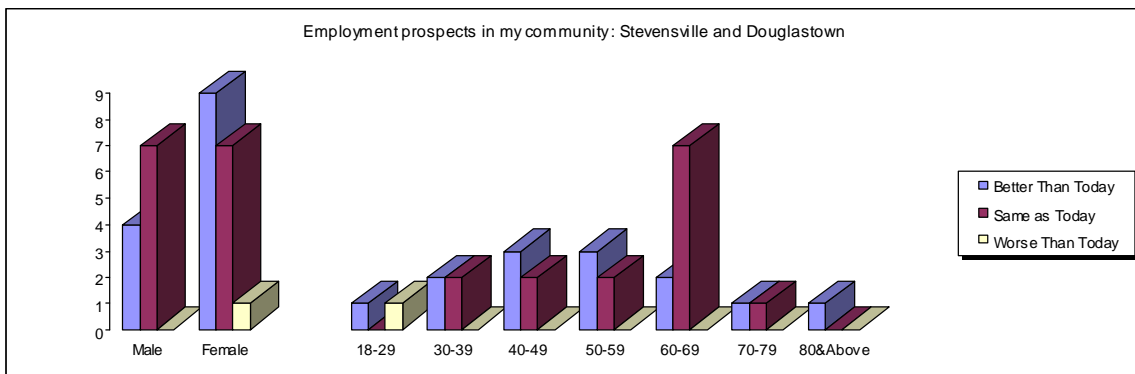
Respondents from both genders in Fenwick and Ridgeville (Pelham Rural) believe the issue to become better in the future. This was led by a strong number in the 40-49 age group. As in the Pelham Urban findings, those most optimistic about this issue are employed or retired.

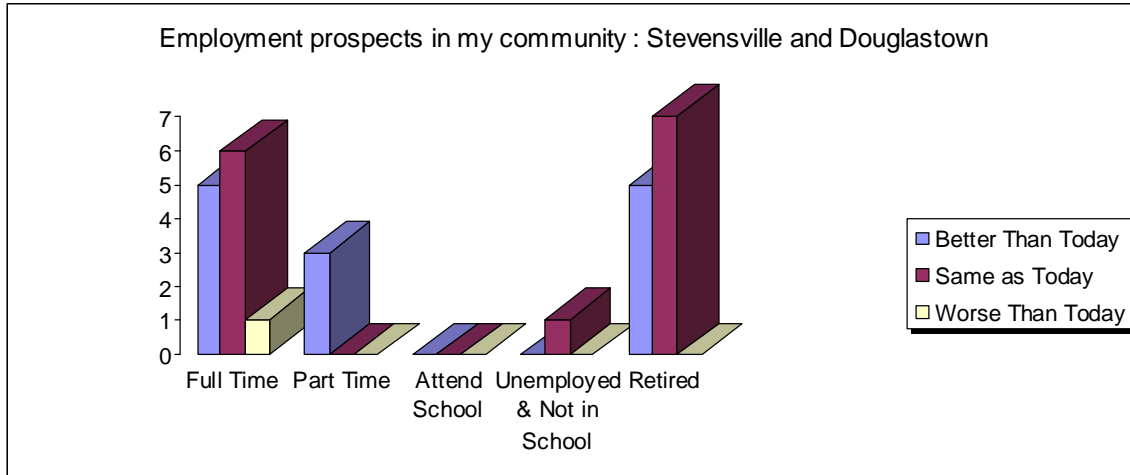


As is seen in the graphs above, female Crystal Beach respondents were the most optimistic about the future, while males were evenly split between better and worse than today. The better than today scores were mostly found in the 40-49, 50-59 and 70-79 scores, while 100% of the worse than scores were found in the 50-59 and 60-69 score. The current work employment was diversified.

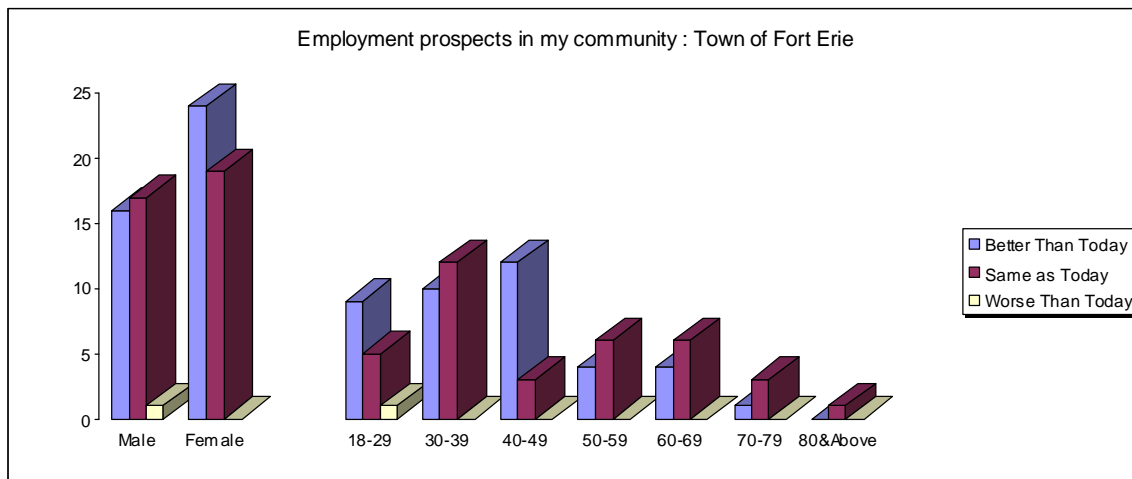


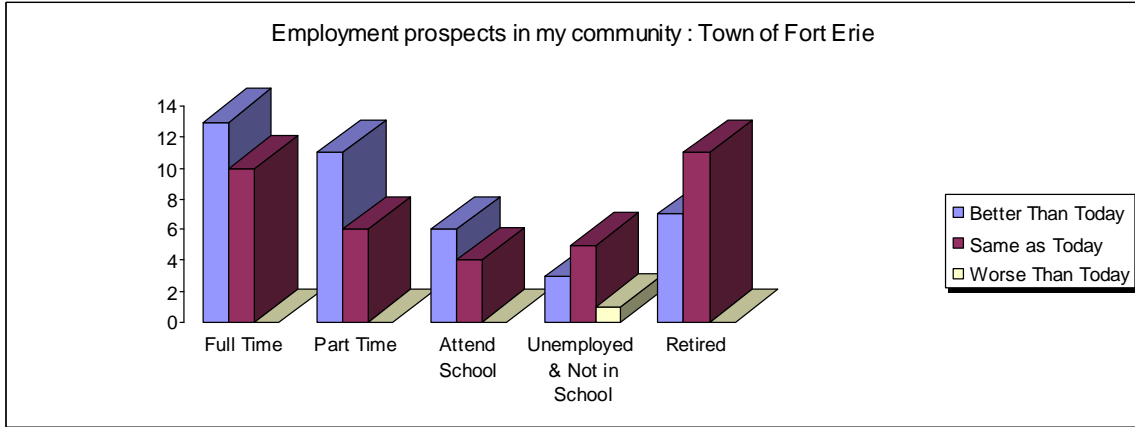
The above graphs demonstrate the expected state of the issue in Ridgeway, as can be seen the majority of males believed it to be better, while females saw it as staying the same. Better than scores were mostly found in the 40-49, 50-59, 60-69, 70-79 and 80&above segment. The positive or neutral outlooks were found in the employed or retired segments.



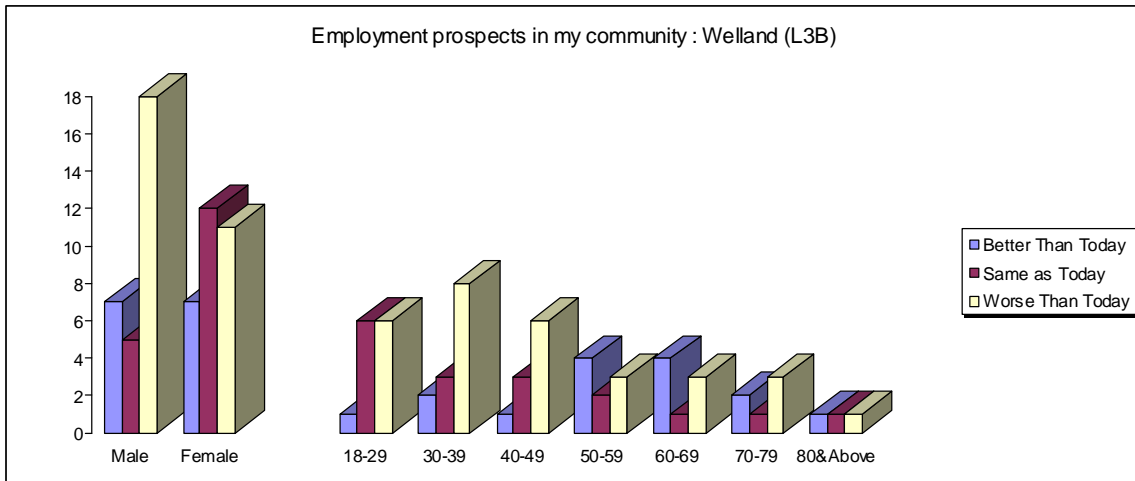


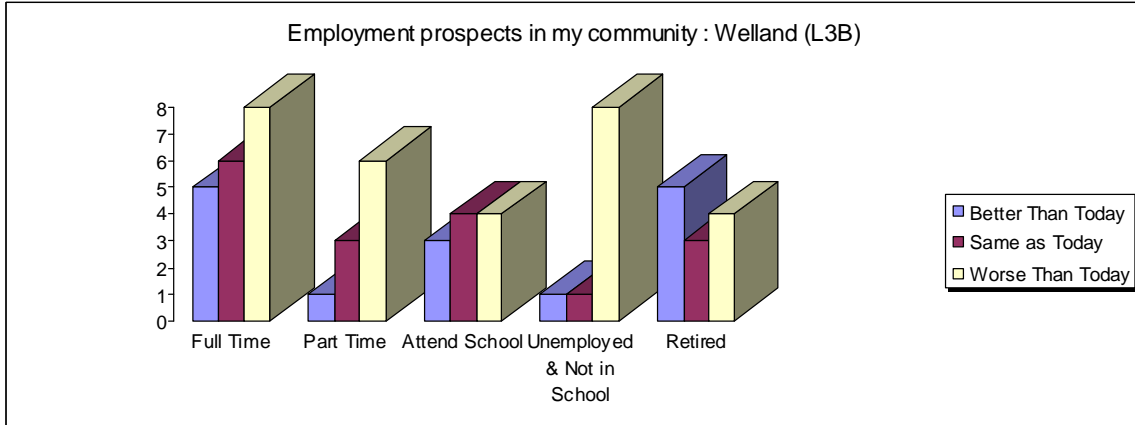
When asked about this issue, the majority of Stevensville and Douglastown female respondents believed the situation to be better, while males saw it as remaining the same. The age distribution was fairly even with the exception of the 60-69 age group whose majority believed it to remain the same. As has been consistent throughout, the majority of positive opinions come from employed or retired segments.



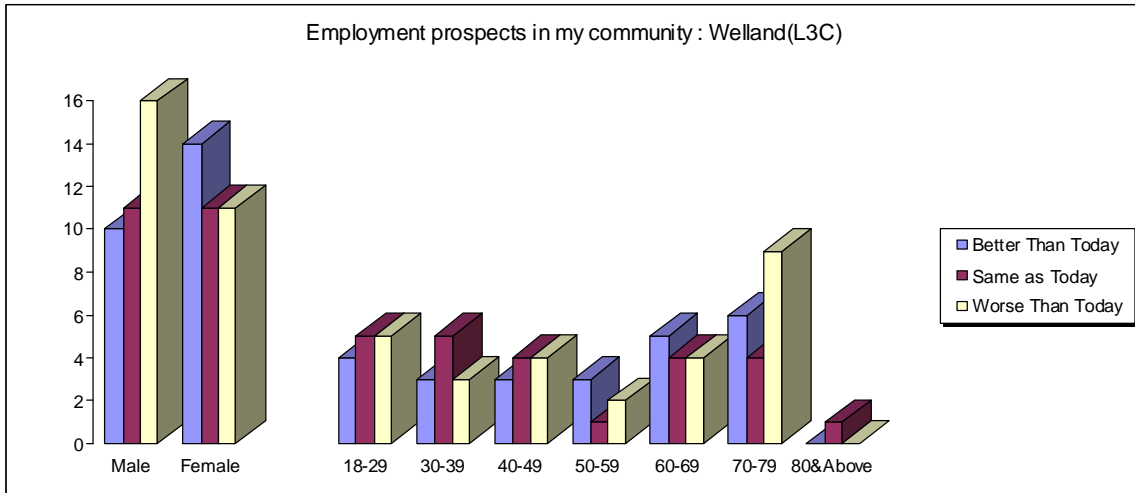


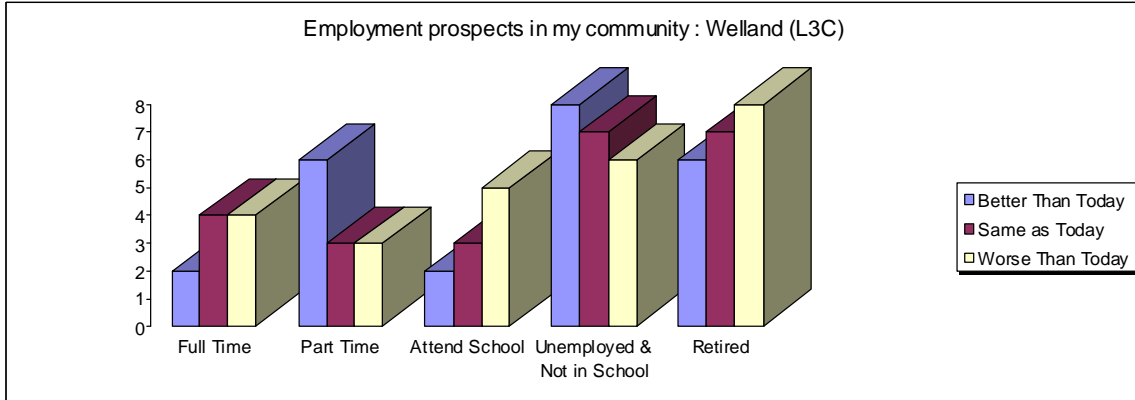
When asked about the future state of this issue, both male and female respondents from the Town of Fort Erie perceived the future to be mostly the same or better. The 18-29, 30-39 and 40-49 age groups strongly believed the future state to be better. The strong expectance of improvement throughout the Town of Fort Erie is also seen when cross reference with the respondents' employment.



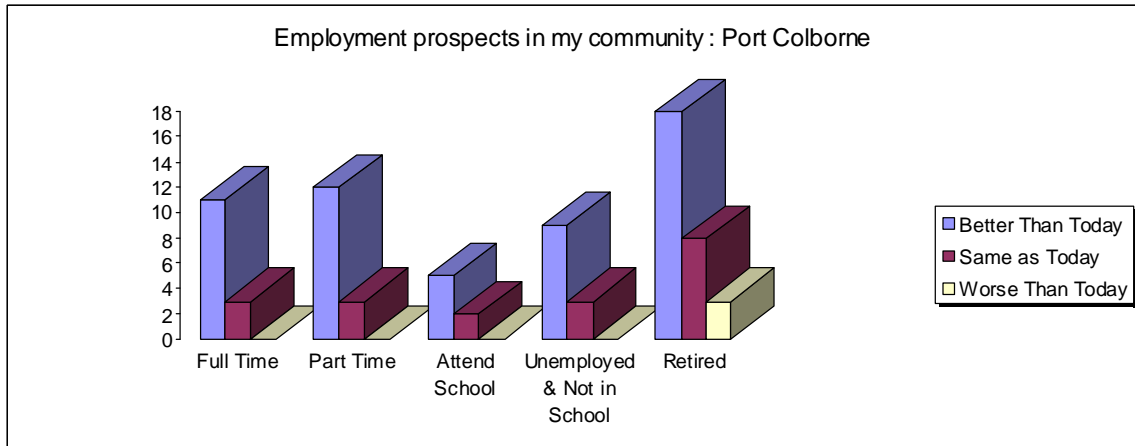
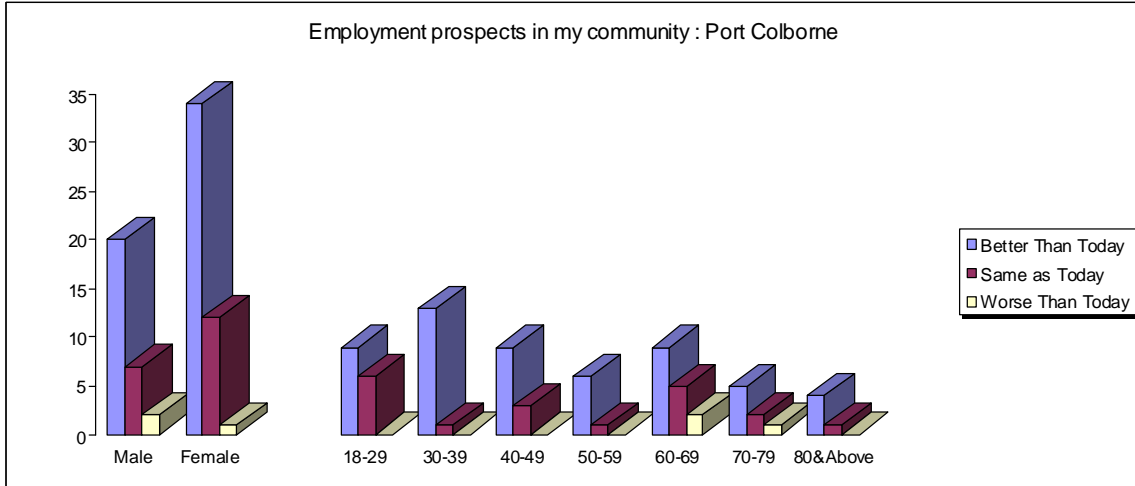


The majority of male respondents from East Welland (L3B) perceived the future state of the issue as being worse than today, while female respondents believed it would remain the same. The significant portion of ‘worse than today’ responses was found in the 18-29, 30-39 and 40-49. Unlike the other areas, all segments of the employment respondents had a negative outlook on the future of this issue.





The responses in West Welland (L3C) were strongly grouped throughout the cross segmentation groups. The majority of male respondents believed that the situation would be worse, while the majority of female respondents believed it to be better in the future. The strongest showing for both those responses was found in the 70-70 age groups. Contrarily to the rest, the highest level of optimism was in the unemployed segment, while the most pessimistic was in the retired segment.

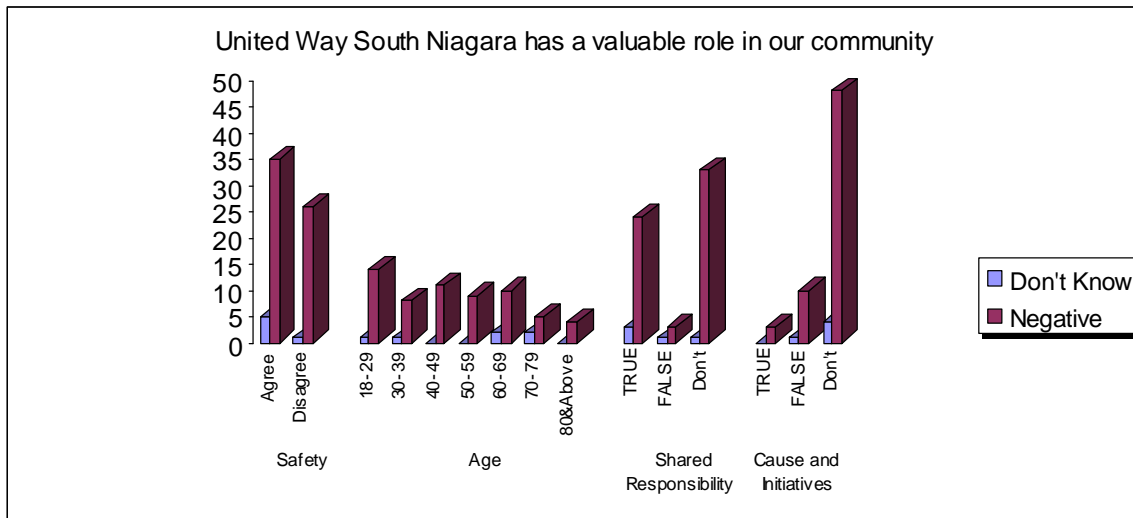


When asked about the future state of this issue, the gross majority of both genders from Port Colborne believe the situation to be better than today. These scores were reflected throughout the age groups. In terms of their employment status, the majority of optimism was derived from the retired segment.

In some communities, it was clear that both male and female respondents from younger age groups felt optimistic about the future state of employment. This sentiment, however, was associated with respondents currently working full or part time, or retired. Furthermore, there were some communities with negative outlooks on this issue, throughout age groups, gender and current work status showing a clear difference between communities.

## Negative or uncertain views towards role of United Way

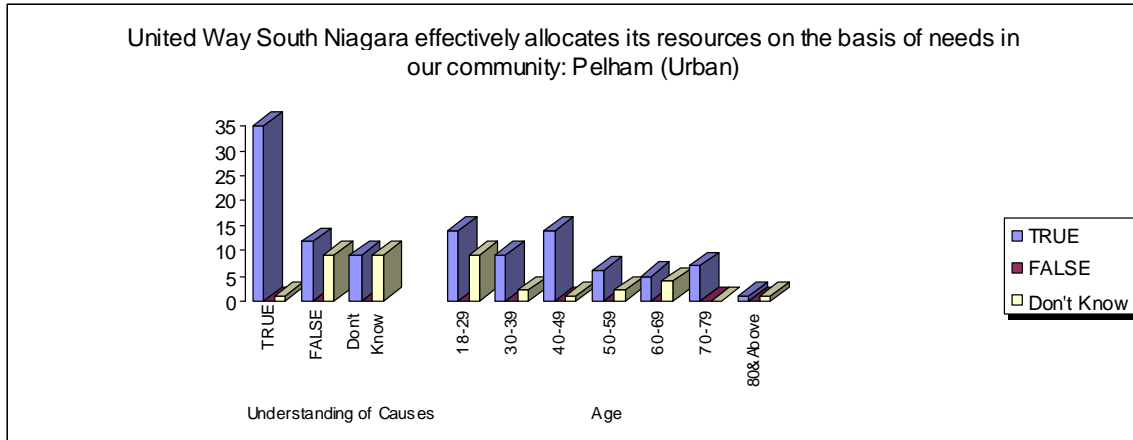
To receive a clearer picture of those who did not agree that the United Way South Niagara/United Way of Greater Fort Erie, the negative and don't know answers were cross tabulated with their opinion of safety in their community, their age, their belief about the shared responsibility about social troubles and their understanding of the causes and initiative which the United Way supports.



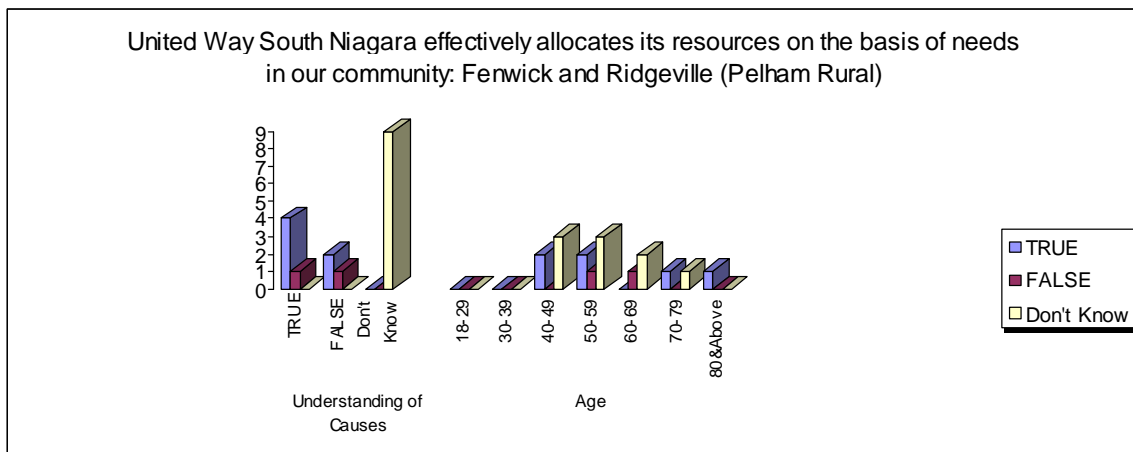
As the United Way is a well known organization in the community, there were very few 'don't know' responses, most respondents had an opinion on the matter, thus negative opinions are the majority of the responses above. When compared to safety and security, the majority of respondents negative to the role of the United Way also answered that they lacked a feeling of safety and security in their community. This negative opinion is very spread throughout the different age segments. When asked about the shared relationship the community and other organisms, such as government, have in solving problems, the majority answered 'don't know' and when asked if they were aware of the causes which the United Way supported, a significant majority were not. This indicates that the majority of people who responded negatively about the role of the United Way in the community, although having an opinion, were not necessarily well informed.

## The effective allocation of resources on the basis of needs in their community

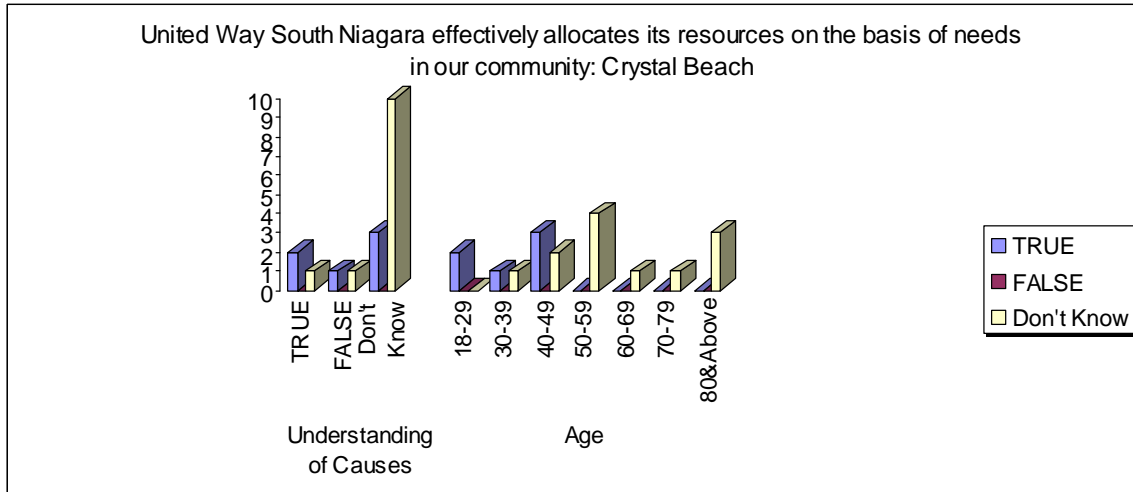
To achieve a greater understanding of this issue, the data was cross tabulated with respondents understanding of the cause and age.



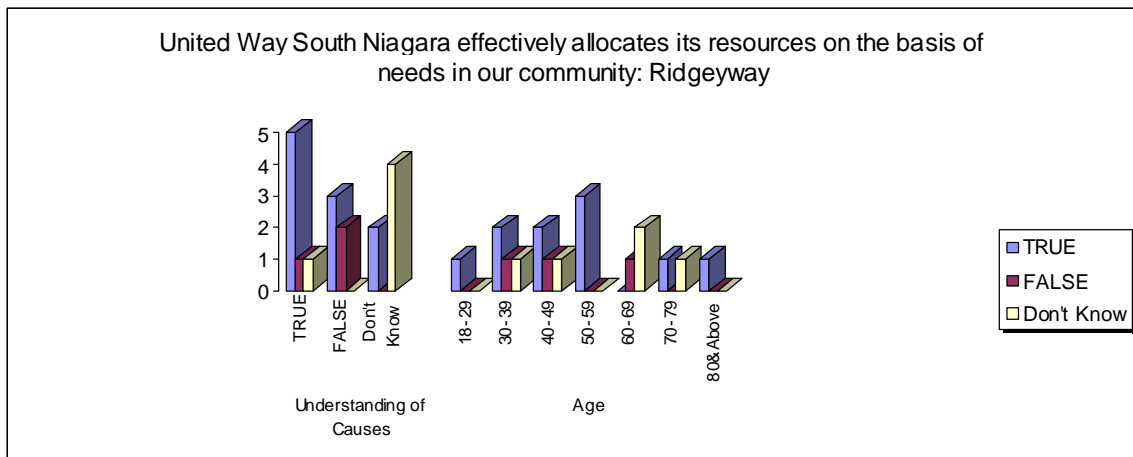
As is seen in the graph above, the majority of Pelham (Urban) respondents whom believed the allocation was correct believed they had a strong understanding of the causes the United Way supports. The distribution among the age groups was fairly distributed.



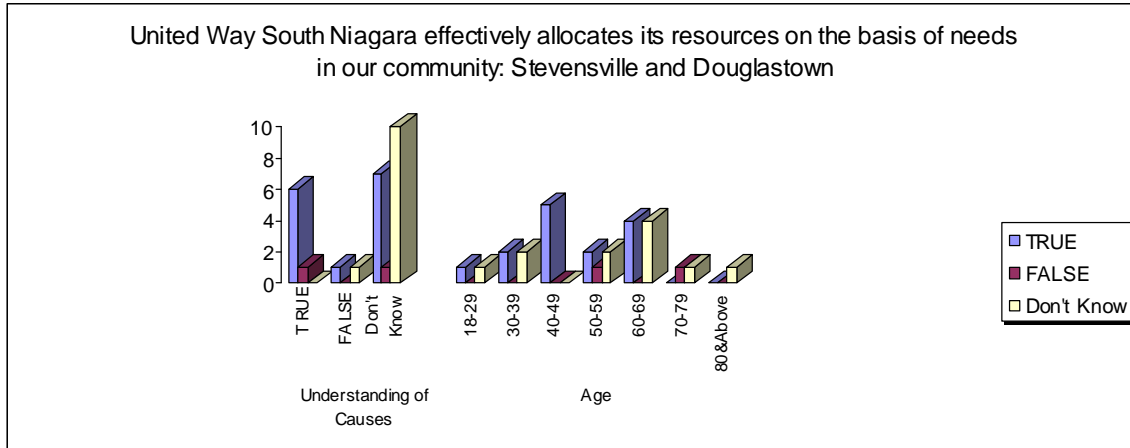
As is seen in Fenwick and Ridgeville (Pelham Rural) the majority of individuals unaware of the allocation were unaware of the causes the United Way supported. Among the most unaware in this region are the 40-49 and 50-59 age groups.



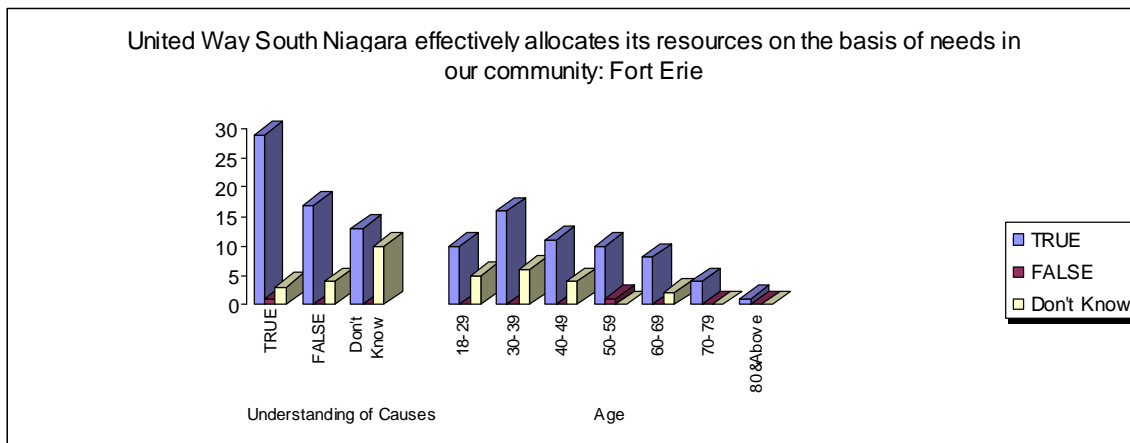
As can be seen above, the majority of respondents in Crystal Beach was unaware of causes supported by the United Way and thus was unaware of proper distribution. In terms of age groups however, respondents under the age of 50 believed the statement to be true while 100% of those over 50 were unaware of the proper allocation.



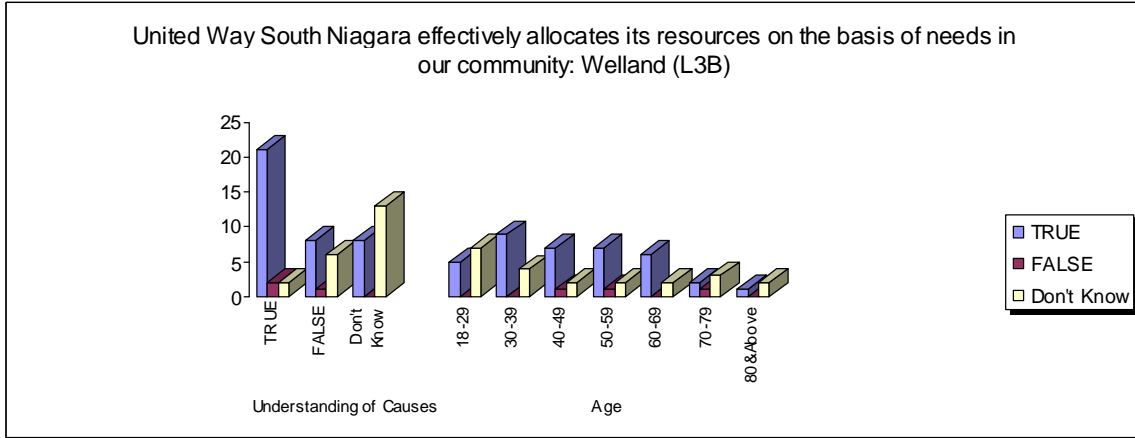
The Ridgeway respondents were quite divided with a slight majority agreeing that the funds were being properly allocated by those whom had an understanding of the causes. The younger age groups, 60 and below all believed for the most part, that funds were being properly allocated.



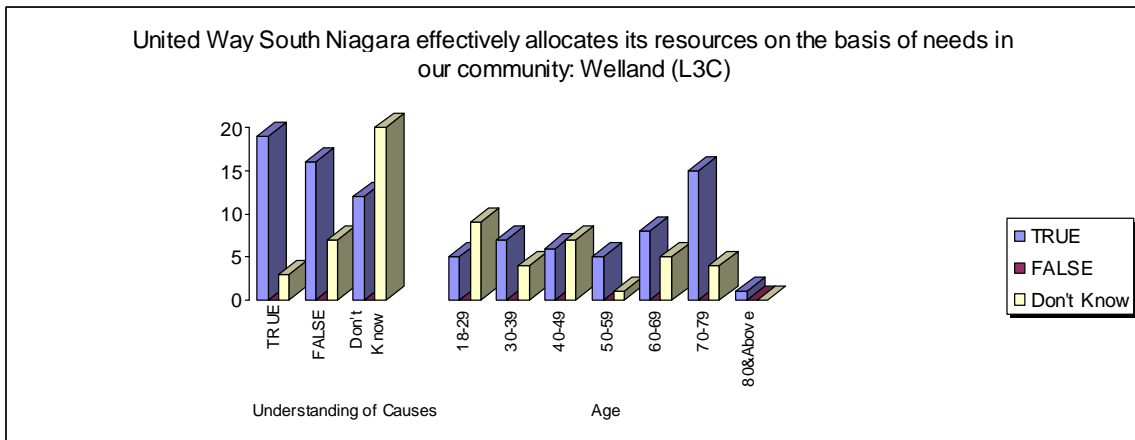
The majority of respondents from Stevensville and Douglastown were unaware if funds were being distributed as they were unaware of the cause which the United Way supports. However, a piece of interest was that the second largest group was those whom considered themselves unaware of the cause, but believed the allocation to be correct. The strongest group to believe the allocation was correct was the 40-49 year old group.



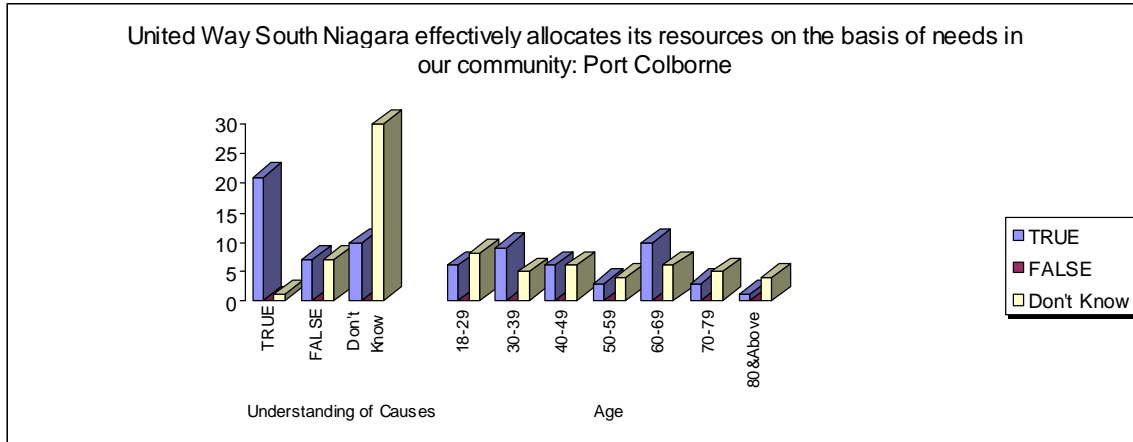
The majority of the Town of Fort Erie respondents agreed that the funds were being properly allocated despite their level of knowledge of causes, and this was fairly distributed throughout age groups.



The majority of East Welland (L3B) respondents believed the statement to be true despite their own knowledge of the cause which the United Way supports. This was fairly distributed throughout the age groups.



The West Welland (L3C) respondents all believed the funds to be properly allocated despite their knowledge, or were unaware of the information to make an answer. The most significant group to agree with this statement was in the 70-79 age group.

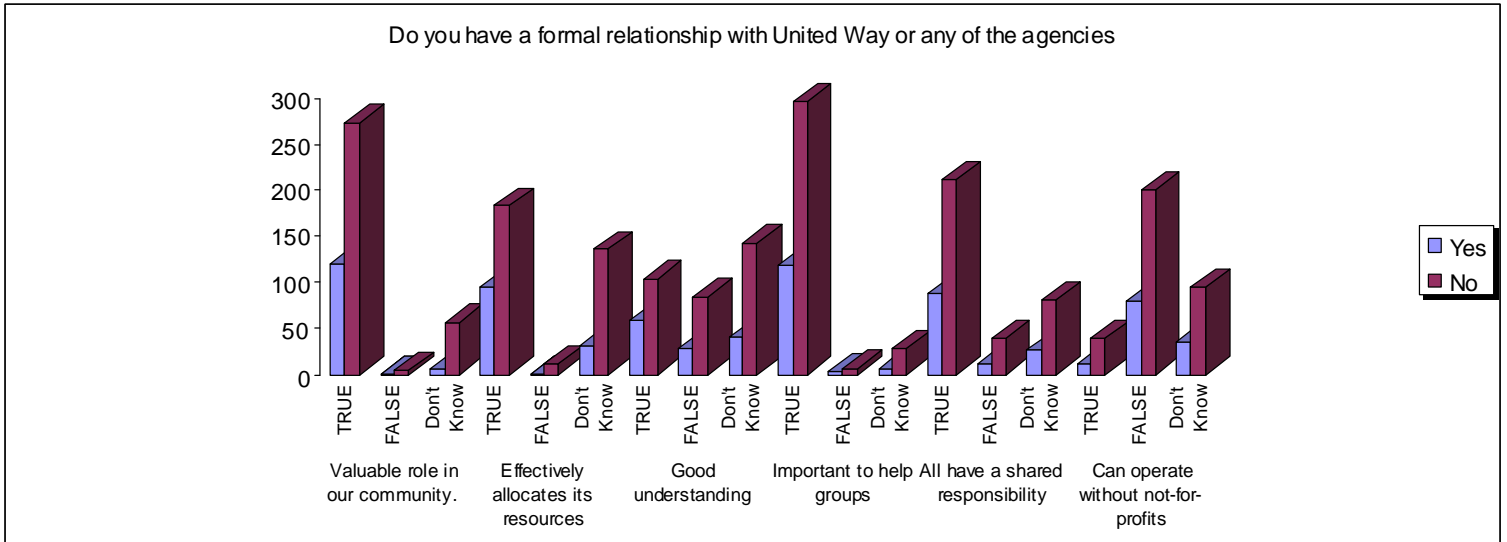


The majority of respondents in Port Colborne believed that they were not informed enough about the causes to make a decision on this issue; this was also the case evenly distributed across the age groups.

Throughout the samples above, it is evident that those uninformed as to the causes which the United Way undertakes are unaware of the allocation of resources. However, the gross majority of informed respondents agreed that this allocation was effective.

## People who have formal relationship with United Way

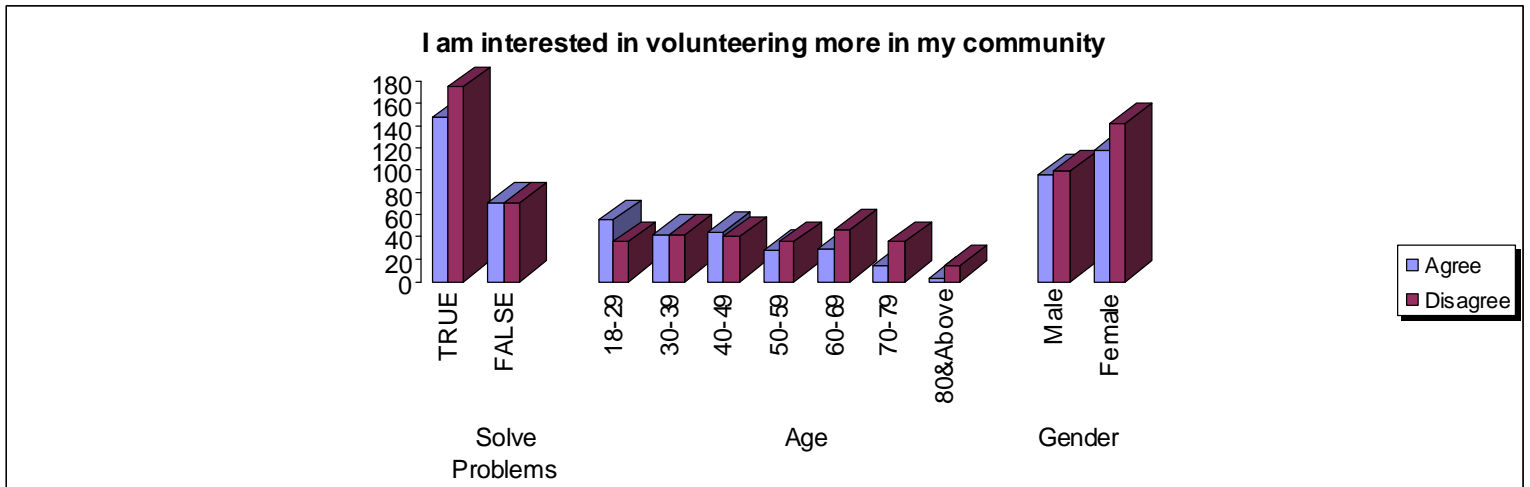
To gauge the perceptions of the United Way by those who have a formal relationship with the agency compared to those who do not, this question was cross tabulated with the last section of the survey which contains all of the opinion questions about the United Way and its role.



As is clearly shown above, respondents whom had a formal relationship with the United Way and those who did not had the same opinion. The ratio between yes and no answers stays fairly consistent throughout the questions. This demonstrates an equal opinion of the United Way from those whom have and those whom do not have a formal relationship with the agency.

## A picture of those who want to volunteer more in their community

In an effort to illustrate individuals who were interested in volunteering more in their community, this question was cross tabulated with their gender, age and their opinion as to where problems should be solved first, locally or abroad.



The majority of respondents who wanted to volunteer and those whom did not both agreed there should be a focus on local issues before we go abroad. Distribution among age groups showed that younger individuals were more interested in volunteering while older respondents were not. Lastly, both gender groups were fairly even in terms of their desire to volunteer.

## **Summary and analysis of comments of townhall session attendees**

Townhall sessions held in the City of Port Colborne, City of Welland, Town of Pelham, and the Town of Fort Erie on February 26, 2007, March 3, 2007 (Welland and Pelham, separately), and March 5, 2007, respectively, provided insightful and useful information that shall be described in this section. The intended role and objective of these sessions, as explained earlier, was to complement the findings of the primary research conducted by the BCS and we find that they were successful in this regard. As became apparent, and as will be discussed, some significant departures emerged between the views of the surveyed population and those of townhall session attendees (whom are described below). This contrast is interesting, though not unexpected, and will be defined and analyzed for its implications below.

For the most part, townhall sessions were reasonably well attended by people interested in the findings of the research on more than one level: generally, attendees both resided in the local area and were employed either by local government or a United Way-funded agency and, as such, they were able to complement the research findings with firsthand information. In addition, a representative of the local media attended the townhall session in the City of Welland and a copy of his article is appended to this research report (Appendix D). As alluded to above, at times an apparent “disconnect” was observed between the perceptions and views of townhall session attendees and survey respondents and, as such, the comments indicated and discussed in this section are unique to those addressed in the analysis of the survey findings.

Townhall sessions commenced with an introduction of our research including discussions of its goals and supporting objectives, methodology, considerations and limitations, and their intended role within it. Attendees were then provided with results of questions concerning perceptions of community members (i.e., survey respondents) on a range of topics (e.g., diversity, commonality of goals, security, etc.; please see the appended survey instrument and related discussion for more information). Next, we presented our findings regarding eight important community issues as to both their current and expected future states at the specific community (e.g., Port Colborne) and

aggregate levels. Following this, attendees were asked four questions in order to facilitate a meaningful discussion; the questions were:

- In what specific ways do your views differ from the findings reported in this presentation?
- What additional issues need to be considered in developing a vision for your community?
- What do you believe is the role of the United Way in your community?
- What all-encompassing goals need to be set for the United Way's role in and vision for your community?

As can be observed, these questions were intended to draw out differences in perceptions (which were drawn out), as well as to yield defined views of United Way (South Niagara/Greater Fort Erie) as held by townhall session attendees. Since townhall session attendees were, in most cases, distinct from most survey respondents (because they held more precise information as to issues in their communities and they generally previously interacted with United Way South Niagara or the United Way of Greater Fort Erie), townhall sessions were very valuable in that the expressions of attendees did not simply just reiterate those of the survey respondents.

### Differences in views

Likely as a result of differing degrees of access to information and interest in the subject matter, views concerning both current and future states of the community issues considered in the research varied considerably between survey respondents and townhall session participants. A statement of the survey findings concerning feelings of safety and security (or lack thereof), for instance, surprised many participants; our analysis revealed that, for the whole survey population, 60% indicated that they do not feel safe and secure in their community, whereas many attendees commented that they feel reasonably safe and secure. While perceptions may be based, at least to an extent, on unrelated factors, the finding that these differences exist is important.

A further example of a difference in views is highlighted by a comment made by a participant at the townhall session in the Town of Pelham. This participant stated that it seems that survey respondents may (figuratively) be wearing “rose-coloured glasses” which is a reference to a divergence between reality and perceptions of reality. This participant suggested that, while residents of the Town of Pelham may perceive the social climate to be fully devoid of problems (since, for example, most survey respondents from the Town of Pelham reported that basic needs are largely met), social maladies do exist and are more prevalent than many realize (since many people in the Town of Pelham have unreliable access to food and transportation).

### Additional issues

Several issues were indicated by participants at the townhall sessions that were not explicitly and separately considered in the survey instrument (since, as described earlier, it was not possible to include every issue in it). Many of these issues were also raised by survey respondents when they were asked to provide additional points of interest; additional issues were:

- Mental health for young people – a participant at the Port Colborne session reported that young people currently need to travel to the City of Hamilton to receive treatment which is not feasible for all people in need;
- Mixed housing – participants at all sessions mentioned the need for an improved availability of housing that is affordable to people or fixed and/or low incomes
- Transportation, both within and outside communities – this issue was raised by participants in the Fort Erie, Pelham and Port Colborne sessions as many residents, particularly those living in more outlying areas, have very limited access to public transportation which can make it very difficult to attend medical appointments, maintain employment, purchase groceries, etc.
- Access to resources in emergency situations – this issue is related to more than one of those included in the survey instrument but is important in itself; whereas, as a participant at the Pelham session suggested, people have access to resources

under normal circumstances, it is important to consider whether that same level of access is possessed during times of real need (e.g., natural disasters, severe family conflict, etc.)

### The role of United Way (South Niagara/Greater Fort Erie) in communities served

Our research was additionally concerned with perceptions of the role of UWSN and UWGFE in communities served by them and the extent to which these perceptions either reinforce or contradict results obtained from the survey phase of this research. Over the course of the four townhall sessions, two main (and significantly divergent) views emerged: some participants felt that the role of UWSN and UWGFE is more passive than active whereas others described UWSN and UWGFE as playing an important facilitating, bridging, and gathering role (the latter view, as described below, was far more popular than the former).

Numerous participants at the townhall sessions in Fort Erie, Pelham, Port Colborne, and Welland described UWSN and UWGFE as an important social convener in the communities they serve. The organizations bring resources (e.g., funds donated by local employers, private citizens, etc.) and capabilities together to allow frontline agencies to effectively address the social maladies with which they are concerned.

Moreover, UWSN and UWGFE play an important facilitative role in that they can encourage meaningful discussions with important stakeholder groups and provide an important mechanism for addressing new social issues as they emerge. As suggested above, this view of the role of UWSN and UWGFE was popular amongst townhall session participants.

### Goals for United Way (South Niagara/Greater Fort Erie)

Moving forward, townhall session participants were asked to comment on goals for UWSN and UWGFE conducive to the organizational role described above. Interestingly,

responses reiterated the important bridging function performed by the organization. In particular, goals were:

- To continue playing an important bridging function – UWSN and UWGFE should maintain their focus on eliminating the gap between current reality and ideal situations
- Bring together generations of people to address needs that are not widely known – some participants expressed value in bringing together generations of people to jointly uncover and address social issues.
- Community awareness – through this initiative, UWSN and UWGFE are showing commitment to maintaining and enhancing their awareness of the changing needs of the communities they serve.

## **Open Ended Responses and Commentary**

This section provides an overview of the comments from respondents, organized by community, who were asked: Is there any other relevant information that you would like to share as to how United Way South Niagara could improve its involvement in our community? It is important to note that, in an attempt to preserve the original context of the respondents' comments and opinions this section is being presented in its whole form.

### **Greater Fort Erie**

#### **Crystal Beach:**

- Because the big corporations have taken away so much from our community then they should give more money to the United Way.
- This is a very small community. We do need United Ways contribution wherever they see a need. I do not see people at a poverty situation here though. There are jobs and people are driving nice new cars.
- It is a small town with mostly kids and seniors and we both need services.
- We are small but do not need too much. There are only 2 buses here but we do not need any more. United Way is helpful.
- We are a very small community. We do not have any recreational facilities here for our kids...all of it is in Fort Erie...the YMCA.. The 2 arenas. We also do not have proper transportation for anyone wanting to use these places for recreation
- Kids here in Crystal Beach do not have anywhere to play sports. They must go to Fort Erie I guess, and for some that is hard to do if you are poor. I am 85 yrs old and I still help out whenever I can... I go to homes and read to the elderly and help out too.

- We have a problem with decent jobs here in the Crystal Beach area. There is no industry here, just the racetrack and slots in Fort Erie.
- Unless they get some type of industry here in this area we have only lower paying jobs
- I just recently moved here from a larger city but I feel quite safe in this community. I hope to learn more about this town.
- I feel very safe in our small community of Crystal Beach. We have a good public transportation system and I cannot think of anything that is in need of help here except better jobs, but this is a small town so that is to be expected.
- I do not know if the United Way can do anything about this but Crystal Beach can use more affordable housing as we are a community of rather lower income families. Younger families need a chance to own a place but is out of their reach
- It is a wonderful community
- We do not have a postman here in Crystal Beach and Ridgeway does. It makes it hard for those who are disabled to get their mail every day if they cannot walk very well and must use a wheel chair...we have good sidewalks but are they are on a slant and snow covered in the winter
- I do believe that things will get better here in this small but growing town of Crystal Beach. More jobs and transportation
- There is a problem with the lack of or affordability of counseling for youth in our community. Same goes with marriage councilors for married couples in trouble that need help in that way. The councilors are quite expensive and those folks or youth are the ones that can't afford the services.
- Where is a police station in this area? Where do people go if they are out and sense trouble? We need more help to stay safe in this community
- This is a very small town...There is nothing to do here...for recreation or jobs. I am not sure what United Way can do about that but we need help.

## **Ridgeway:**

- I have had a bad experience with a United Way agency - the YMCA. When I was in need of the therapeutic use of a hot tub in there for medical reasons, because of an accident, they would not help me. I was out of work for nearly a year and could not afford to buy a membership.
- Nothing I can complain about. It seems as if the bases are covered here in Ridgeway and I thank United Way for doing a good job
- More shelters for women and children who are leaving a bad situation at home are needed
- These surveys are a good idea so that the money raised goes go to the proper places that are in need of it. If our town grows in the future we will need more services in Ridgeway and the public transportation will need to expand too.
- We lack good public transportation here in Ridgeway for those who need to go to larger towns that have services people need
- We need more access for women and children who have fled violent home situations. They need security from those they fear.
- It would be great if the families who could not afford to allow their children to play sports (because it is quite expensive) had the access to used sports equipment (of kids that grew out of their sports equipment) that they could give to their kids...this type of program would help a lot of people.
- Unemployment is very high here...none of us here have a job
- The problem with Ridgeway is that it is a small town and there are a lot of services supported by the United Way that go to the larger towns. Many people cannot get to these places so our community suffers a lot. What we need is better transportation system.
- The services supplied for people are too far for most of them to travel...making it very difficult to get any help at all. There is only one bus here in Ridgeway and that makes it tough for many people. Maybe the United Way should supply a bus of some type.

## Stevensville/ Douglstown:

- I work for the federal government and am very pleased that the United Way is conducting a survey to see what each community needs and the members perspective on it. It is important that organizations get involved and see what people think.
- We all choose to live in this small rural community so we do not expect to have public transportation, so its weakness in service does not matter to most of us .We do however have a great community centre with the members of this community participating a lot.
- The biggest problem here is there is not enough participation in this community from the younger generation. They do not care about their community the way they should. The United Way is doing a great job... And having many various services and agencies is necessary in keeping a community together.
- If there was a ' one horse town' Stevensville is it. We do have a problem with employment though, maybe the United Way could help with job skills teaching classes
- It is hard to say how things will be in 5 yrs time. We do not know if there will continue to be health cut backs or not...all depends who is running the country at that time. If more cuts are made from government then there will be more of a need from organizations like the United Way to fill the gaps.
- The YMCA is still too expensive for some families, so recreation for all members of my community does not fly. Can the united way help those in need?
- When a healthcare nurse visiting patients in their home only get 15 minutes allotted for each patient, that is not enough at all for some patients and yet we must hurry and complete our job as quickly and efficiently as we can. This can be very stressful- maybe the United Way can help draw attention to this need.
- I am new here in this community ... so if there was not anything I needed then I am not aware that there is a service out there for it. Awareness is a good thing...get people to become more aware
- I answered 'about the same' on the questions that expect me to figure out what things might be like in 5 years ...how do we know? If agencies stop getting funds to provide services things will be worse but if they get more funding and it goes to the right places than it will be better.

- The United Way needs to get more info out there as to what services are offered and where they can go obtain these services supported by the United Way. I am sure many people who need services do not know where to find them or maybe we just don't know that they are supported by the United Way.
- It would be great if the United Way could run programs for the community on health awareness and prevention.

### **Town of Fort Erie:**

- We need more info on the United Way and the agencies it funds
- United Way is a very valuable organization in Fort Erie. Please continue to help those of us who are less fortunate. I use some of the services so I know they are what makes surviving a bit easier
- I think we can use more media on the United Ways accomplishments and current projects so people can get involved
- United Way should get high school kids to volunteer by having different fundraising events for schools.
- United Way should have an ongoing food drive at the supermarkets, if people see the bins they always drop something in . . . I know I do!

### **Port Colborne:**

- They should help seniors more. It is very disgusting how the seniors and pensioners are treated by the government and the community. We need help as we get older and disabled and we cannot find help anywhere. The United Way needs to help the seniors more and more . We cannot volunteer because we are too sick and old but we did have 30+ yrs contributing to the workforce and all we get back is a kick in the pants.

- The government needs to help the older folks more in our town. Too many of us need food and services. We cannot get even get to the services that are available because we don't drive.
- I am 87 years old and I cannot volunteer but the young kids who get things from the United Way should volunteer and help seniors – it will show them that they will get old someday and that everyone needs help
- Port Colborne desperately needs help. We do not have very much help here except 'Port Cares'. I have not heard of the United Way as much here as I do in Niagara Falls where I work. I hope they are helping us because we need it.
- The government should not be responsible for all the problems in a community. All of us make up our community ...we are responsible ...we should pull together and help those less fortunate so we can be proud of the community we call home
- We should all help others who are in need...give food and clothing to those who need it especially in the winter months when it is so cold out there .Sometimes you see children with no winter coats. These kids need good warm clothes and boots...please give to the children and help collect stuff like that so parents don't have to buy it when they can't even afford groceries.
- Wish the economic times were better where more of us could give a little more than our time to help those less fortunate in our city. I volunteer 20 hrs per wk.. because I do have time...I am retired now. Hope others can give more to help our city too. When you volunteer you see how bad things really are.
- I am very busy and I do not know much about United Way in Port Colborne. Maybe they should advertise more I guess.
- I volunteer at school and church so I know that people in our community need help, need food and clothing for the winter. It is great to help. More college students should volunteer because they will see how very important an education really is...and how much our community really needs us
- I guess I have to read more about the United Way, I know they are out there – just not too sure what they do.

- I do a lot of volunteer work because I took an early retirement( because of health reasons)...I work for 'out of the cold' and 'Port Cares'. They are both wonderful organizations which help those less fortunate and it is a great feeling to help those in need. Thank you United Way. Great job!!!
- United Way has continued to do a great job here. If they need help they should advertise or go to schools for high school kids to volunteer
- United Way needs to continue support in the port...we have many people who need help and just not enough money to make a big enough difference but we are getting there
- We need the help the Unites Way is giving our city. Let those politicians know how much of a difference the United Way makes in our community and they can probably get more grants.
- We are very thankful that the United Way is helping those less fortunate in our community but maybe some people do not realize it...maybe more fundraisers are a good idea... Like collecting canned and non perishable food not only at Christmas but maybe once a month at schools or supermarkets...as an ongoing thing so that people do not forget that hunger does exist.....and also ..so the food banks do not run out...and children do not go hungry. Do fundraising at schools I know my grandkids love collecting money and stuff to help out and people rarely say no to little ones asking for help in their community
- The United Way is great. Is there any way it can provide jobs for the unemployed in our community? That way some of the people they are supporting can get a job and maybe get on their own and feel really good about themselves.
- There should be easier or cheaper ways families can participate more in recreational activities...yes it is difficult for everyone to afford to participate in sports or afford the memberships. What can be done about this? Can the united way help in any way
- If more local services can be available to people in the Port area it would be great. Most people must travel out of town for services and that is very difficult if you do not have transportation or like to drive far. You even have to find work out of the city because there is nothing here that pays enough money to live off of.

- With the awareness of abuse to women and children in violent home situations I think it can only get better for these women and their families as far as help and protection is concerned...I hope it is the United Way supporting this cause because it is a good one.
- I think that the United Way is doing a great job but we are not getting enough info on the groups that need volunteers for fundraisers . I was asked to volunteer for a fundraiser and said yes but otherwise I would not have known about this ...so maybe they should advertise or somehow let people in the community know how or where they can help. There are probably a lot of people who would help but do not know where or who to contact. Maybe they can advertise through churches or schools so it doesn't cost anything.
- United way should give our city more awareness of their accomplishments and projects so those of us who would like to volunteer or give in any way...can do so
- I have a business here in Port so I do not spend a lot of time reading the newspaper because I am so busy. I guess my ignorance about the United Way's support and projects is my own fault. I cannot say they need to advertise more about what they do because sometimes people do not read enough. I know fundraising is out there but there are a lot of people like me -we just have to read more.
- There is access to many support services mentioned...but many are out of town in St. Catharines and Welland. Maybe our town is too small. It would be nice if some things came to town so us older people can get there easier.
- United Way should let us know what part of the monies raised go for administration and other costs not allocated to groups they support
- United way should get more services for Port Colborne seems like a lot of things are available but you have to hunt them down. It should be easier to find...and in town would be great- maybe they could handout a chart with phone numbers for help agencies.
- There is a lot of info out there if you can volunteer but people need to look for it- its there if you are interested because as soon as I looked for it I found lots.

- I do not know who is responsible to help a troubled community but I do believe it is a combination of efforts...and united way is doing a fine job leading change
- I help out whenever I can because you never know when life throws you a curve and you find yourself on the receiving end ...instead of the giving end
- We are at a loss for transportation here in Port. Many people who have disabilities find it very difficult to take taxis to their services because it costs so much. It would be great to have a service here to help the disabled and elderly get to their appointments.
- Recreation! What recreation? Port Colborne does not have anything for the community. It would be great to get a program here for the kids ...one that all can afford.

**Wainfleet:**

- By helping those in need. Communicating better with the public about the services they offer.
- Although I really do not know too much about the United Way. I do realize that if a community needs help and it is able to get support from something as reputable as the United Way ... then please continue to do so.
- What part of every dollar given to the united way actually is allocated to various groups it supports? It would be good to see this information.
- United Way is good in any community that needs help. Sometimes you do not realize problems until you go through them and that is when you realize services that need assistance.
- What percentage of every dollar donated to the United Way and its affiliates goes for administration? Heard something on the news today re: M.A.D.D ...and administration costs are pretty bad, almost taking all of the money raised. So I was just wondering, as so do other members of my community on how the money I donate is spent.
- United way has always been of great help to those in need. They should run ongoing fundraisers all year round. Like food for children of poor families

**Pelham:**

- Kids here need a place to play sports. There is nothing to do here in Fenwick...please help!! The public transportation is zero and what are we to do when a senior loses their drivers license? We need help in those areas
- I do not volunteer for the United Way but I do volunteer with children, teens, and families who are in trouble and have family problems
- I will moving out of this community soon, but it was a good place to live with good services when I needed them
- The kids here need some sports and recreation in this area of Fenwick. They have nothing!!! Are they just supposed to hang out on the street corners and get into trouble? If United Way can do something...please help the kids of Fenwick get some sports and recreation going.
- We need buses here in the Fenwick community. We have nothing. I was hoping that in 5 yrs that will get better only if enough people complain and express their need for it
- If people in this community would volunteer more we will have a 'better than now' possibility for many things here, I am optimistic.
- There are many private organizations who support and sponsor sports for children here, so that is not a concern.
- We need sports and recreation here in Fenwick
- When you asked if I felt safe and secure in my community I said I did not because I am a senior citizen and maybe all of us feel that way because we are seniors. We feel that way anyway, maybe other community members feel safe but I don't.
- Although this is a very small community it seems as if we are pretty good here. We have places and services to help those who need it and we have a very hard working farm type of community. I do not know too much about unemployment because we all are working on our own farms where there is a lot of work to do but those without farms may have trouble in this area.

- Living in this small community of Ridgeville we have many services supported by the United Way...like Pelham Cares.....a food bank and senior transportation service. And then there is the Hope Centre, which does a great job also. Thanks to the united way we are pretty well taken care of here in this community. Please keep up the good work!!
- It is nice to be safe and secure in your community. Fenwick is a good community
- We are a very small community so we do not expect too much, to me it is a great place to live in Ridgeville
- By helping those in need. Communicating better with the public.
- I really do not know too much about the united way in Pelham. But any services it provides to help the community is appreciated and needed.
- United Way has always been of great help to those in need. They should run ongoing fundraisers all year round like food for children of poor families
- United Way is priceless to those in need. Not everyone can make ends meet. So the high school kids should volunteer some time to feed the hungry and collect food for those less fortunate
- Please put up signs that acknowledge the wonderful contributions this organization makes, there is not enough information about who you help. Then all of us will know more about this great organization.
- They should get high school kids to volunteer to feed the hungry at holiday time that way they get to see that there are those that are happy just to get a meal
- If the United Way needs volunteers they should advertise more or ask school children to help out with the little things so they get an idea of how important it is to help those less fortunate in your community. They will grow up to be compassionate adults
- United way is very important to a community. Food fundraising should go on all year at supermarkets so they do not run out at the food banks, maybe the United Way can oversee a program like this

- I was wondering how they screen for candidates to receive support from various charities that the United Way supports. I know of a boy on welfare who can afford to play hockey and this is not a cheap sport, but my friends' son cannot play because. Even though they are hardworking parents they just can't afford to let their son play. United Way should help kids like this so they all can have a childhood.
- United Way is great for this community. Thank you. Please keep up the good work
- What groups benefit from the monies united way allocates in Fonhill- there should be more information available
- United Way does not give info on the groups it supports, or at least I have never seen anything.
- United way does not provide enough information on how it helps groups in my community, I would like to know more. I am sure they do a wonderful job in the services they give but I just don't know a lot.

### **Welland – East of the Old Welland Canal (L3B)**

- Our town is suffering with unemployment. It used to have industry and now we have nothing. We sure do need the help of the wonderful people from the United Way.
- United Way is doing a fine job but if we you get more volunteers you can do more. Make it known to people where and how they can volunteer, I would like to help but just don't know how to get started
- Keep up the good work. See you are always up to great things in our community...please do not stop...this is one city that needs your help
- We see a lot of the things you mentioned right here in Welland. Our community. jobless rate is very bad. People turn to crime when this happens ...making people feel scared in our city.
- They should think of more creative fundraisers. Maybe we should learn from what they do in Niagara Falls with Nova House and have book and magazine fundraisers where you get people to donate books and the money raised from the sale goes to help women's shelters. This is a perfect example of raising lots of money and people in the community feeling like they are contributing to a good cause while getting stuff they need at cheap prices.
- Welland really needs the United Way, we are in a bad shape here in Welland. Industry has left here many times and people who were making \$25 an hour now have to take jobs at \$10 an hr. It makes a big difference. People are facing all kinds of cutbacks, especially factory workers. We have faced 2 layoffs this year alone.
- We can use any help anyone has to offer we are in dire straits when it comes to decent job availability in this town. I feel sorry for those families. Thank god for the United Way ...you are doing a great job. Too bad you couldn't create good industrial jobs for us factory workers.
- Thank you United Way for a great job done and continue to do, we need you!
- United Way is doing a great job please keep up the good work

- I do not know too much at all about the United Way. More information through the media would be good.
- Not adequate info on the groups it supports
- More info on volunteering in case someone has the time ...like older people who want to get involved.
- United Way is doing a great job. They should let people know if they need more help. You never know when a member of your own family would need the services of an agency the United Way supports. It would be good to draw people in to volunteer by striking this chord with them.
- United Way has helped a lot of people in our town. Women and children need protection if they are in a bad situation...this will always need the attention and support services of the United Way.
- It is very important that United Way continues to help people in our community...if they need more support from the public then they should make it known loud and clear...after all this is our community...where we live and work and raise our kids...the next generation. People need to know that they are needed. They should do volunteer marketing campaigns to encourage more participation.
- Not enough info on the various volunteer positions...more media coverage would help by highlighting how the funds help agencies and how agencies in turn help citizens
- Needs to be more info on the United Ways allocation of funds
- We should all work together as a community after all it is all for us and our people. Maybe the needy people should volunteer too

### Welland – West of the Old Welland Canal (L3C)

- United Way is doing a great job.. Please keep up the good work. People need the services you help. You also need to advertise your volunteer jobs more so people can give some of their spare time to helping in their community
- I have been retired from John Deere for a few yrs now. It is through them that I get my information about the united way because it has always been a great contributor to the united way. All of its employees give every week through donations from their pay cheques. Even now I still get information and a letter regarding donations to the United Way and this makes be feel comfortable giving to a great cause.
- You can advertise more for the volunteers you need. Also maybe the people who do benefit from the services ...they can volunteer if they have time...especially if they do not have a job...we sure can use help no matter how little the time. Everyone should pull together.
- I would like to see the United Way continue their support in our community. After industry left our city the people have only low paying jobs to deal with and we need support more than ever.
- I am retired now but I was up on the donations and fund raisers we had for United Way where I worked. I continue to see the great things it does for us here in Welland and I only hope it will continue to do so. Welland has a big unemployment problem that needs attention.
- Where does the United Way advertise for volunteers? I would like to see more of that...so I can plan to do so someday. I also think that able bodied citizens who are benefiting from United Way's kindness should do some volunteering themselves. Also with Niagara College in our city, they would be a good source of help by getting students to volunteer in the community.
- Make it more visible at all times instead of only when there is some type of crisis and then we see how very important t is to donate and volunteer. It would be good to spread out their fundraising so we are always aware of the less fortunate in our own city rather than one big drive.

- United Way is doing a great job in Welland .Thank you!! Please do not leave ...our community needs you. I am fortunate to have a job and I do volunteer work whenever there is a fundraiser for the United Way and its affiliates. We are all in this community...we must help the unfortunate whenever and however we can. After all this is our city. It is up to us to make this work.
- We need more good jobs in Welland
- I feel that United Way is doing a great job. Please keep up the good work. We as a community need you. There are many people who are less fortunate than I and people like us who donate our time and money feel good about it by knowing we help those in our city. Advertise about volunteering... I am sure at this time of year people want to contribute in some way
- I just started getting involved with the United Way working for Casino Niagara. I am very interested in volunteering when I do have time that is. But keep up the good work, Welland needs you.
- Welland has problems with unemployment. Can the United Way help that kind of thing by attracting industry or providing free training to those in need.
- Yes the charities have to pick up the slack of a negligent govt. They do not give to us so the United Way has no choice but to help us by filling the gap of what citizens need.
- I am tired of the rich getting richer and nothing is left for the middle class anymore. The United Way is doing a great job helping people in need by providing services that integrate less fortunate people into the community. You really aren't aware of how much they help unless you use the services it supports and then you see that friendly United Way sign ... and then you know. I hope it continues to help make our community a better place.
- United Way has done a great job helping people in Welland. Too bad it cannot fix the jobless rate and drug problems we have here in Welland, maybe they can do something at an awareness level to get attention from higher powers that can enforce change. Even this would help make the situation better.

- Need more volunteers to help out. Sometimes the agencies I go to look like they don't have enough help around and if there is too much for the current volunteers to do they might quit.
- United Way should try and get the young people to volunteer more. Like after school programs, something kids could get credit for at school. And still help our community. Us older folks are too sick to help but the young ones have lots of spunk...and can have fun too. It would use their energy in a good way and not for trouble.
- I am not that sure about what the United Way does. I know they help because you see them giving big cheques to centers but it would be nice to know other stuff like let people know what percentage of donations goes to wages and admin., versus support causes.
- They need to create more awareness about what they do. Sometimes it seems like you only hear about the United Way when they are doing a fund raiser.
- United way does not provide info on the groups it supports. I would like to hear how we are helping changing people's lives by knowing people's stories. This makes a difference in how much people donate. If they believe it is making a difference in someone's life than they are more likely to give more money. Like the Sleep Country radio ad that donates used beds to the needy – this helps people make the connection.
- United Way should do something to make sure that other not for profit stores do not charge so much money for the stuff they sell. People donate thinking their stuff will go to people in need but because these 'thrift shops' charge so much usually the truly needy can't afford even the used stuff.
- United Way should advertise more about needing volunteers...where and how to apply for such volunteer opportunities would be good- they should target this at senior homes, us older people would love to help out ..we have the time when you are retired and its good to help in your community
- Regarding recreational opportunities... The prices for the family membership for the YMCA are a bit high. I am a part time worker on disability and would love to get my family a membership but it is too steep for me right now. The United Way does wonderful work and I do commend them but maybe they could set up a partnership program that gets families in need lower prices and then send notes

home through the schools to parents who might be too embarrassed to seek out discounts for being “needy”. Often kids don’t understand money problems at home and just want to do what their friends do- United Way can help with that.

- They should really promote the adopt a family program, at work places. It gives a human compassion connection when you know your money is helping specific people rather than just an ‘organization’. It puts a face on the need we hear about.
- Surveys are good for the United Way because they find out how much people really know and then they can see if more media coverage is necessary. I volunteer and see how needed we are but sometimes at work I hear people say that all of our services are well kept and don’t need much attention. I always correct them by telling them that the system is actually quite strained and help is needed. It’s a shame because people don’t know how bad certain services suffer until they need them. People need a constant reminder that their help is needed.
- We have just moved back to this town from up north and we are happy with the work United Way is accomplishing in our Welland. We see improvements that have been made over the past few years.
- Stress the importance of volunteers and advertise
- Keep up your support for the needy people in our community....maybe they can volunteer so they feel useful and proud too
- As a community we must all work together. I have been looking for a job for over a year now and it is so frustrating. I hope things get better here, when you don’t work sometimes you feel like you lack purpose and that’s how crime happens. People stop caring.
- I am a retired man. Pensioners pay a lot of money for little services, dental, prescriptions, etc. We would think after working for so many years our pension would serve us better. The jobs here in Welland are pitiful...all the industries have left leaving only \$7-\$8 an hour jobs for people to deal with. Everyone should sell their houses and live in apartments. And healthcare in 5 years, what kind of surprises does the government have for us now. We think we need the United Way now, we might need them even more in the future.

## **Discussion of significant implications**

The implications of this research for United Way South Niagara, United Way of Greater Fort Erie, and other interested stakeholders are important. Through an updated awareness of community views and perceptions, United Way South Niagara, United Way of Greater Fort Erie, and their partners will continue to be aptly positioned to make vital contributions in their respective communities. This section will discuss, at a strategic level, the important implications of this research in order that the value of this research can be maximized; from our analysis, we believe the most important implications are derived from the interconnected nature of the community issues, the apparent disconnect between reality and perceptions of reality, and the heterogeneous nature of the communities of South Niagara and Greater Fort Erie.

### **The interconnected nature of community issues**

As became evident from our analysis of the findings of this research, community issues are largely interdependent and interconnected which makes their effective remedying particularly challenging. This challenge, however, can be overcome: United Way South Niagara and United Way of Greater Fort Erie, through collaboration with a range of stakeholders (since, for instance, more than 65% of survey respondents agree that fixing social problems requires a partnership approach) including all levels of government, local employers, religious and community organizations, and individual citizens, can jointly fix many maladies. To manage the interconnected nature of the community issues, a range of community resources and capabilities need to be assembled and leveraged over extended periods of time.

### **The apparent disconnect between reality and perceptions of reality**

As discussed above, views and perceptions of community issues vary widely depending on the extent of a person's knowledge and familiarity with them. In many cases, service providers who attended townhall sessions expressed some concern with the

degree of either positivism or negativism (or, optimism or pessimism) concerning the community issues included in this research (since, for example (and as discussed earlier), many residents of Pelham are unaware that members of their community are not consistently able to feed their families). This research was interested in uncovering areas of disconnect for their implications on United Way South Niagara, United Way of Greater Fort Erie, and their partners and our analysis reveals that they do exist. Over time, efforts are needed to better align reality and perceptions of reality in order to allow for communities to fully embrace their roles as drivers of positive change.

### The heterogeneous nature of the communities of South Niagara and Greater Fort Erie

As discussed throughout this report, areas of moderate (to high) heterogeneity were observed with regard to the views and perceptions of communities consulted in this research. More than 90% of survey respondents indicated that their communities are composed of people from a diverse range of backgrounds and this heterogeneity extended (to varying degrees) into the views and perceptions of the community issues considered. The implications of this heterogeneity are important: opportunities for implementing one-size-fits-all approaches are limited and, as such, United Way South Niagara, United Way of Greater Fort Erie, and their partners need to continue consulting stakeholders throughout their respective communities so that their uniqueness is appreciated and areas of latent need uncovered.

### Moving forward

The future of South Niagara and Greater Fort Erie appears bright, based generally on the views of survey respondents, though it is clear that considerable work is required to realize positive change. Collaborative approaches are required due to the complex and interconnected nature of the issues the communities of South Niagara and Greater Fort Erie face and, as such, managing relationships and interdependencies will become increasingly vital. United Way South Niagara and United Way of Greater Fort Erie are

aply positioned for this critical role; survey respondents and townhall session participants alike tout the positive contributions made by these organizations and look to them for leadership, coordination, the gathering of resources and capabilities, and motivation to make the vision of positive change a reality.

## **Appendix A**

“Hello, my name is FIRSTNAME SURNAME. I am part of a group conducting research for the United Way about our community and would be very pleased if I could have about 5 minutes of your time to complete a brief survey.

If answer is “**NO**,” caller to say:

“I understand your hesitancy. Please be assured that this is not a sales or fundraising call and any responses you give are both totally anonymous and confidential. May I please continue?”

If answer is “**NO**,” caller to say:

“Very well. Have a nice day and thank you for your time. Good bye.”

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**“Thank you. I am first interested in knowing what ‘community’ means to you. I will read you some statements and ask whether you believe each to be either True or False:”**

1. My community consists of people from a range of cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds. **True or False?**
2. Members of my community share common goals and a vision for the future. **True or False?**
3. I am interested in volunteering more in my community. **True or False?**
4. There is not enough information available about how I can volunteer my time and contribute more to my community. **True or False?**
5. I lack a feeling of safety and security in my community. **True or False?**
6. It is important that we solve all our community problems before we worry about issues abroad. **True or False?**
7. I think government should be responsible for fixing social, environmental, and economic problems in my community; that’s why I pay taxes. **True or False?**

**“United Way South Niagara supports a variety of community initiatives and is interested in ensuring that resources are allocated on the basis of need. I am now going to ask you about how you see the need for certain services supported by the United Way. Please comment on the current state of each of the following (1 being very weak, 3 being neither weak nor strong, 5 being very strong):**

1. Meeting the basic needs of people for food, shelter, clothing, and literacy
2. Access for women and children who have fled violent home situations with security, support, and resources for economic independence
3. Access to support services for children and youth at-risk and for families coping with problems
4. Unemployment and underemployment in my community
5. Access to support services for people with physical or developmental disabilities
6. Provision of health support services including rehabilitation and home healthcare
7. Access to community services including counseling, referrals, volunteer development and community capacity building
8. The availability of opportunities for recreation to all members of my community

**“United Way South Niagara would like to develop a vision of our community in 5 years based on current perceptions. Please indicate, for each of the following, whether you feel that in 5 years, these things will be Better than, About the same, or Worse than today.”**

1. Meeting the basic needs of people for food, shelter, clothing, and literacy
2. Access for women and children who have fled violent home situations with security, support, and resources for economic independence
3. Access to support services for children and youth at-risk and for families coping with problems
4. Employment prospects in my community
5. Access to support services for people with physical or developmental disabilities
6. Provision of health support services including rehabilitation and home healthcare
7. Access to community services including counselling, referrals, volunteer development and community capacity building
8. The availability of opportunities for recreation to all members of my community.

**“United Way South Niagara is interested in gauging the awareness of our community of its role and the services it provides. Please indicate whether you believe the following statements to be True, False, or Don’t Know.”**

1. United Way South Niagara has a valuable role in our community.
2. United Way South Niagara effectively allocates its resources on the basis of needs in our community.
3. I have a good understanding of the various causes and initiatives to which United Way South Niagara allocates funds.
4. It is important that United Way South Niagara continues to help groups in our community that are in need.
5. United Way South Niagara provides adequate information in terms of how it helps groups in my community that are in need.
6. Government, businesses, and citizens along with not-for-profit organizations have a shared responsibility for overcoming problems in our community.
7. A community can operate without any help from not-for-profit organizations.

**OPEN ENDED COMMENTARY** – Is there any other relevant information that you would like to share as to how United Way South Niagara could improve its involvement in our community?

**“For statistical purposes, may I please ask you:”**

- your age;
- whether you have a formal relationship with United Way South Niagara or any of the agencies it supports;
- whether you have children under the age of 18 living in your home or community;
- whether you work on a full-time or part-time basis, attend school, or are unemployed and not attending school;
- whether you immigrated to Canada within the last 5 years;
- The first 3 characters of your postal code;
- Sex (caller: do not ask, just record)

**“Please allow me to thank you for participating in this survey. Your responses will help us to better understand the needs of communities in South Niagara and to ensure the effective allocation of resources. I hope you have a nice day/evening. Goodbye.”**

## Appendix D

# Developing a vision for the future

By **ALLAN BENNER**

Local News - Sunday, March 04, 2007 **Updated** @ 7:22:28 PM

Tribune Staff

WELLAND

Employment is the most pressing need in south Niagara.

The loss of good jobs – especially in Welland – is a trend most people surveyed by a team of Brock University students, fear will only get worse in the years to come.

The students from the university's MBA Business Consulting Service were at a town hall meeting Saturday at the Days Inn on Niagara Street to announce their preliminary findings from a survey of 383 participants, and to garner more information to add to their report which should be publicly released in May.

The student-run consulting team was hired by the United Way of South Niagara, with funding from a Trillium Foundation Grant, to help the agency develop a vision for the future.

Area residents who were surveyed, by telephone, as well as at the Seaway Mall and other locations, were asked to rank what they felt were the most-pressing needs in south Niagara from a list of eight topics.

Brock teacher Jim Doyle listed the results in order for the gathering of about 10 people at the meeting.

In order of urgency, they chose:

1 - employment;

2 - access to community services such as counseling and volunteer development;

3 - access to support services for children and youth at risk and for families coping with problems;

4 - the provision of health support services including rehabilitation and home healthcare;

- 5 - access to support services for people with physical or developmental disabilities;
- 6 - meeting basic needs for food, shelter clothing and literacy;
- 7 - access for women and children fleeing violence;
- 8 - recreational activities.

Doyle also discussed specific survey results for each topic, including public perception on how desperate the situation currently is , as well as opinions on if the situation will improve within the next five years.

In most issues, he said, people surveyed felt things would improve in the years ahead.

Doyle said the optimism expressed in the survey was higher among respondents under the age of 40, of whom 60 percent were male.

“Obviously, these findings can be qualified with that information.”

The findings of the Brock students differed greatly from a similar survey done by parishioners from St. Kevin Church a year earlier, said Wendy Arscott, a church parishioner who worked on the “social audit.”

Instead of surveying the general public, as the Brock students had done, the church asked people who deliver emergency care to people, such as food banks or emergency hostels, for their opinion on the state of the community.

“All of them have stated that in the future they see everything negative increasing, unemployment, underemployment, the lack of housing, a lack of security, all of those things,” she added.

Considering the differences between the social audit a year ago and the new survey, Sylvia Berkhout, executive director of Hope Centre, said the survey result “leads her to wonder if maybe the perception is that maybe we are starting to improve as far as being able to address those needs.”

Doyle, however, said the difference between the two surveys may also indicate a “disconnect between reality and perception” among the general population.

And that could spell problems in the future when it comes to addressing the ongoing needs in the community.

“Their perceptions are going to affect their willingness to participate in the community in a volunteering capacity, or their willingness to donate to organizations like the United Way and the agencies that it supports,” Doyle said. “If there’s a disconnect between

reality and perception that's an issue that does require some addressing.”

United Way executive director Bill Auchterlonie said when the final report is complete, the agency will develop a presentation they plan to use to gain support for the social programs that are needed in the city.

“We'll take it to regional council, we'll take to the councils of the city of Welland, Port Colborne, the township of Wainfleet and town of Pelham,” he said. “We're going to distribute it not just to political people, but to key staff as well.”

He said they also plan to distribute copies of the report through their member agencies, as well as public libraries to be available as a resource for “anyone who wants to read it.”

In addition, he said the United Way's board is developing a subcommittee that will “take a look at (the report) and determine what the next steps are for us as an organization.”

Armed with the report, Arscott would like to see the United Way become “a more proactive agent of change, rather than just a supporter of the status quo.”

She said they could work for meaningful change so agencies like Hope Centre are no longer necessary.