



University student researchers needed for Fall 2014 term!

OPIRG's Toronto Research and Action Community Exchange (TRACX) is looking for 1-3 university students to work on a community-based research project on the 2015 Pan Am and Parapan American Games in collaboration with the Ontario Coalition Against Poverty (OCAP). A detailed project description is listed below. The timeline and deliverables are negotiable depending on the number of researchers selected for the project.

This research should begin in the 2014 fall term and may be completed for credit as an independent study course, or as an independent project with faculty supervision. This research may also be featured at a TRACX symposium in the 2015 winter term.

Please contact opirg.crep@gmail.com for more information.

NOTE: There is no deadline for application, but the research positions will be filled as soon as possible. Please contact us early and indicate your availability.

For more information on TRACX and OPIRG Toronto, please visit our website: opirgtoronto.org

Toronto Pan Am Games Resistance Project

Organization

Ontario Coalition Against Poverty (OCAP)

Project Description

Hosting large sports events such as the Commonwealth Games, the Olympics, the Pan Am Games, and the World Cup have long, well-documented histories of violence and dispossession. While these games create wealth for large corporate sponsors, they come at a huge cost to the general public, particularly indigenous, immigrant, and poor communities residing within the host cities. As Toronto prepares to host the Pan Am & Parapan American Games in the summer of 2015, OCAP wants to help these communities prepare and fight back.

This project is intended to:

- Research the general recent history on community resistance to large sports events, drawing particularly on the Brazil World Cup, Glasgow Commonwealth Games, and the Vancouver Olympics.
- Research the various locations where Games facilities are being built. Focusing specifically on understanding the impacts of the “Athlete’s Village” on the Toronto downtown east end.
- Research how Games preparation impacts service provision and housing in poor communities.
- Find out more about the Pan Am & Parapan American Games corporate sponsors and funding agreements/arrangements.
- Develop a “money trail” of public and private spending on the Pan Am & Parapan American Games.
- Investigate any changes in policing and surveillance strategies leading up to the Games, including changes in policy, training, and equipment/weapons/gear.

Research Methodology

This project builds on previous research on the general historical context of the impacts of large sports events and community resistance to them. This included:

- A media analysis of games coverage—particularly focusing on alternative media sources.
- An academic literature review.

This project has two focuses:

(1) Research impacts of Games on Toronto downtown-east end.

- Consult urban planning reports to understand what changes are being made in communities to accommodate the Games—in particular, gentrification schemes.
- Interview services providers to better understand the pressures Games preparations might be placing on services users or community-based organizations.

(2) Research changes in surveillance and policing strategies.

- Retrieve reports from Police Service Board. Look for anything related to “Pan Am and Para Pan Am Games,” “Olympics,” new training, new toys (e.g. tasers, rubber bullets, riot gear), new policies and bills around protesting or criminalization of homeless people and/or service users.

Timeline

Data Collection – **September – December 2014.**

Dissemination – Winter 2015.

OCAP Deliverables

- The final write-up should be in clear, easy-to-understand bullet points that are organized in terms of importance and priority. OCAP will take make pamphlets, etc. out of these bullet points.
- OPIRG-Toronto will publish a write-up on initial historical research in OPIRG Toronto’s Action Speaks Louder newsletter.

- Research will be featured at a TRACX symposium in the 2015 Winter Term. Research may also be published in an online journal.
- Potential collaboration with the Radical Design School (radicaldesignschool.net) to make comics about the findings.

Required Skills and Qualifications

- Registered as an undergraduate or graduate student, preferably at University of Toronto
- Able to work collaboratively with and take some direction from a community organization
- Self-motivated
- Committed to social justice
- Some background in community organizing
- Can politically analyze and prioritize large quantities of diverse data.
- Can deconstruct information and then put it forward for campaign development
- Can deliver useful information in a limited timeframe.
- Some experience with community-based research preferred
- Knowledge of Toronto's downtown east end and/or existing knowledge of the negative impacts of large sports events on poor communities preferred

Description of organization

"OCAP is a direct-action anti-poverty organization based in Toronto, Ontario, Canada. We mount campaigns against regressive government policies as they affect poor and working class people. In addition, we provide direct-action advocacy for individuals against welfare, ODSP, public housing and others who deny poor people what they are entitled to. We believe in the power of people to organize themselves. We believe in the power of resistance." Website: ocap.ca