

# PUBLIC EDUCATION IN BY-LAW ENFORCEMENT: FIREWORKS, DIWALI, AND CULTURAL SENSITIVITY

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# OVERVIEW



## Increase in complaints for fireworks

- A large increase during the Diwali period in 2024 (41% of all complaints)



## Importance of compliance with the fireworks by-law and best practices

- Safety, environment, and noise pollution

Image 1: Aftermath of a Diwali gathering in 2023 at Westwood Square in Mississauga (Cornwell, 2024)

### OBJECTIVE:

- ✓ Best practices in public education
- ✓ Cultural sensitivity and equitable engagement

# WHAT IS DIWALI?

**An auspicious period for  
Hindus, Sikhs, and Jains**

- 5-Day Festival of Lights
- Celebrated by rows of Diyas, spotless homes, shiny attire (gold/jewelry)... and fireworks!
- Major themes of “light” and “cleanliness” → Goddess Lakshmi



7.9



# REGULATIONS

## Fireworks Regulations

- Fireworks Licensing and Use By-law 0182-2023
- Intersecting By-laws

## Regional and Global Contexts

- Neighbouring municipalities
- Large metropolitan cities (e.g. India and China)

Municipality	Prohibit Use	Prohibit Sale	Permissible Holidays (fireworks without permit)	Fines/ Charges Laid*
Mississauga (UR)	No	No	Lunar New Year, Victoria Day, Canada Day, Diwali and New Years Eve.	27
Toronto	No	No	Canada Day and Victoria Day.	Unknown
Caledon	Yes	Yes	N/A	52
Brampton	Yes	Yes	N/A	216 (2023,2024)
Milton	Yes	Yes	N/A	0
Hamilton	No	No	Victoria Day and Canada Day.	4
Markham (UR)	No	No	The days before and after Victoria Day and Canada Day.	0
Ottawa	No	No	The days before and after Victoria Day and Canada Day.	17
Burlington	No	No	Victoria Day and Canada Day.	0
Kitchener (UR)	No	No	On Victoria Day, Canada Day and Diwali.	56
Oakville (UR)	No	No	Fireworks can be used on Victoria Day, Canada Day, New Year's Day or any religious or cultural celebrations where fireworks are used to celebrate the religious or cultural event.	Unknown

Table 1: Jurisdictional scan of fireworks restrictions in various municipalities

# CASE STUDIES: CULTURALLY SENSITIVE EDUCATION

## Cervical Cancer Screening Education in the Netherlands

- Short videos for Turkish- and Moroccan-Dutch women
- Consultations/discussion groups
- Role models: positive, negative, and neutral

## Diabetes Self-Management Intervention

- Regular sessions for low-income diabetic Latino individuals
  - Soap Operas – cultural visualization
  - Bingo – reinforce key concepts



Image 2: Behind-the-Scenes of the Moroccan-Arabic culturally-sensitive education video for informing on cervical cancer screening



# CASE STUDIES: SHIFTS IN BEHAVIOUR

## Longitudinal Stockholm Study

- Information leaflets to encourage food waste recycling
- Messaging to implement societal norms:
  - “Join your neighbour”
  - “Sorting food waste collectively could fuel 15 garbage trucks for a year”

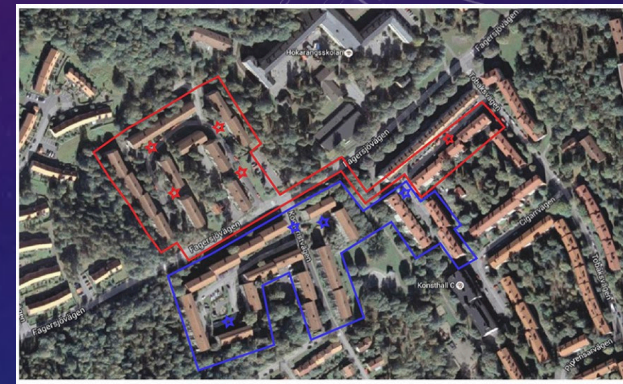


Image 3: Satellite image of the research area. Blue is the treatment group, and red is the control group

# RECOMMENDATIONS

## 1. Community Consultations

- Religious institutions
- Equitable consultations

## 2. Culturally Relevant Content

- Positive/neutral/negative role models
- Adapting to cultural formats (e.g., Bollywood videos, Tambola)
- Simplify language and reinforce key concepts

## 3. Training & Support

- Culturally sensitive and informed training:
- Educate on the significance of Diwali

# RECOMMENDATIONS

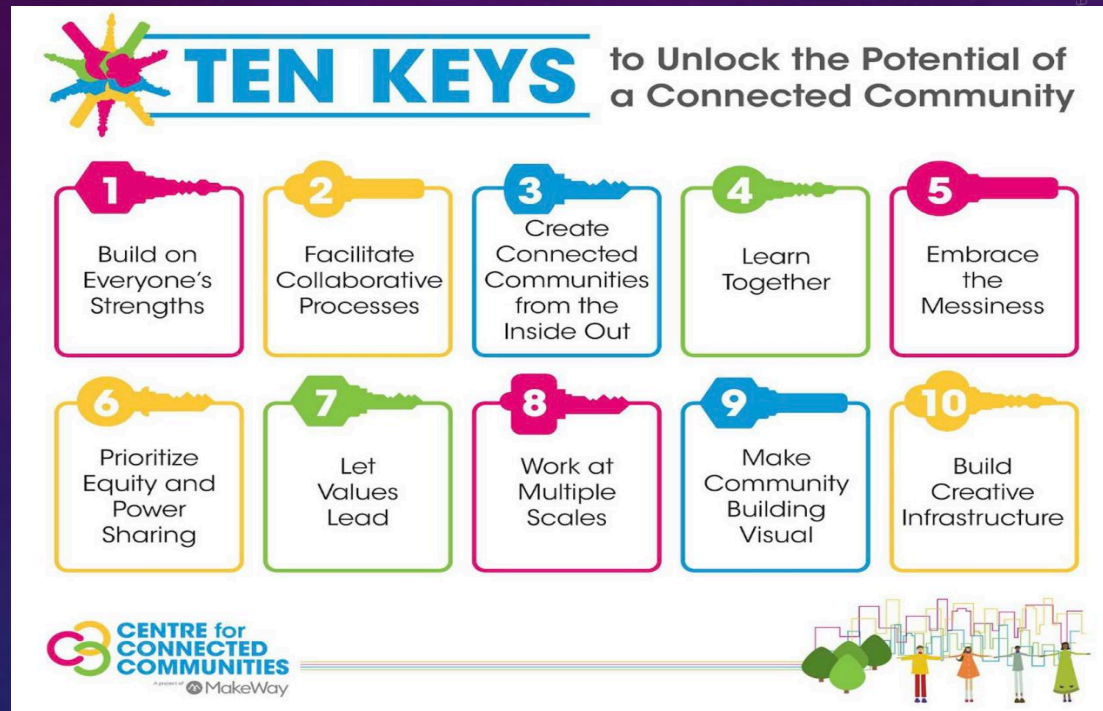


Figure 1: Ten Keys model for Connected Communities

## Connected Community Approach (CCA)

- Derived from a Scarborough neighbourhood and UofT scholars
- Conditions to create a connected community and gain insights collectively

# RECOMMENDATIONS

## 4. Messaging & Norms:

- Emphasize positive norms
- Cultural themes to invoke familiarity
- Test Educational Materials to assess impact (RCTs or A/B tests)
- Ontario's Behavioural Insights Unit: [BIU.CAB@ontario.ca](mailto:BIU.CAB@ontario.ca)

Thinking of **celebrating using fireworks**?

Let's keep our homes looking **spotless**, **neat**, and **damage-free** by following **guidelines and best practices** for fireworks use.

Learn more at <https://tinyurl.com/4yfpts6e>

Image 4a: Example of a poster created by the presenter (Ishita Joshi)

Looking to live a **healthier lifestyle**?

**Cleaner air** and **lower noise levels** can be significant for long-term health. **Fireworks misuse** can impact **air quality** and cause **noise pollution**.

**Let's be mindful** of our neighbourhood and learn about **fireworks guidelines** to keep everyone safe.

Learn more at <https://tinyurl.com/4yfpts6e>

Image 4b: Example of a poster created by the presenter (Ishita Joshi)

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# Thank you!



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