



# Affordable Housing for Families: Assessing the Outcomes

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**Panel Topic:  
Societal Outcomes of Affordable, Adequate Housing**

**National Housing Research Committee  
Distinct Needs Working Group  
Metropolitan Hotel, Toronto  
May 5<sup>th</sup>, 2009**

# SPARC BC

***SPARC BC works with communities in building a just and healthy society for all***

Particular focus on promoting:

- Income security
- Accessibility
- Community capacity building

[www.sparc.bc.ca](http://www.sparc.bc.ca)

# Project Objectives

1. Create a profile of families currently receiving placements in social housing
2. Assess the appropriateness and affordability of social housing for the families
3. Assess the other social and economic outcomes for the families as a result of having moved into social housing
4. Determine to what extent families view social housing as transitional or permanent housing

# Project Methodology

- Preliminary work:
  - Literature review
  - Selection of outcomes to be measured
  - Development of supporting questionnaires
- Key informant telephone interviews:
  - Primarily housing providers
  - 17 key informants interviewed (13 Metro Vancouver, 4 Okanagan)
- Family household head in-person interviews:
  - Sample criteria:
    - Moved into public or non-profit housing 7 to 30 months ago
    - At least one child under 19 years of age
  - 85 families interviewed (65 in Metro Vancouver, 20 Okanagan)

# Family Social Housing Placement Profile

	Family Interviewees	BC	Canada	Metro Vancouver Interviewees	Metro Vancouver CMA	(Greater) Kelowna Interviewees	Kelowna CMA
<b><i>Household Head</i></b>							
Single Parent	80%	10%	16%	82%	10%	90%	10%
Average age	36	40.8	39.0	36	39.1	36	43.4
<b><i>Birthplace/ Ethnicity</i></b>							
Immigrant	33%	27%	20%	40%	40%	20%	10%
Aboriginal	13%	4.8%	3.8%	10.0%	1.9%	0.0%	3.8%
Visible Minority	22%	20%	16%	20%	42%	10%	0%
<b><i>Health Status</i></b>							
Presence of a Disability	22.8%	16.0%	14.3%	21.0%	n/a	20.0%	n/a

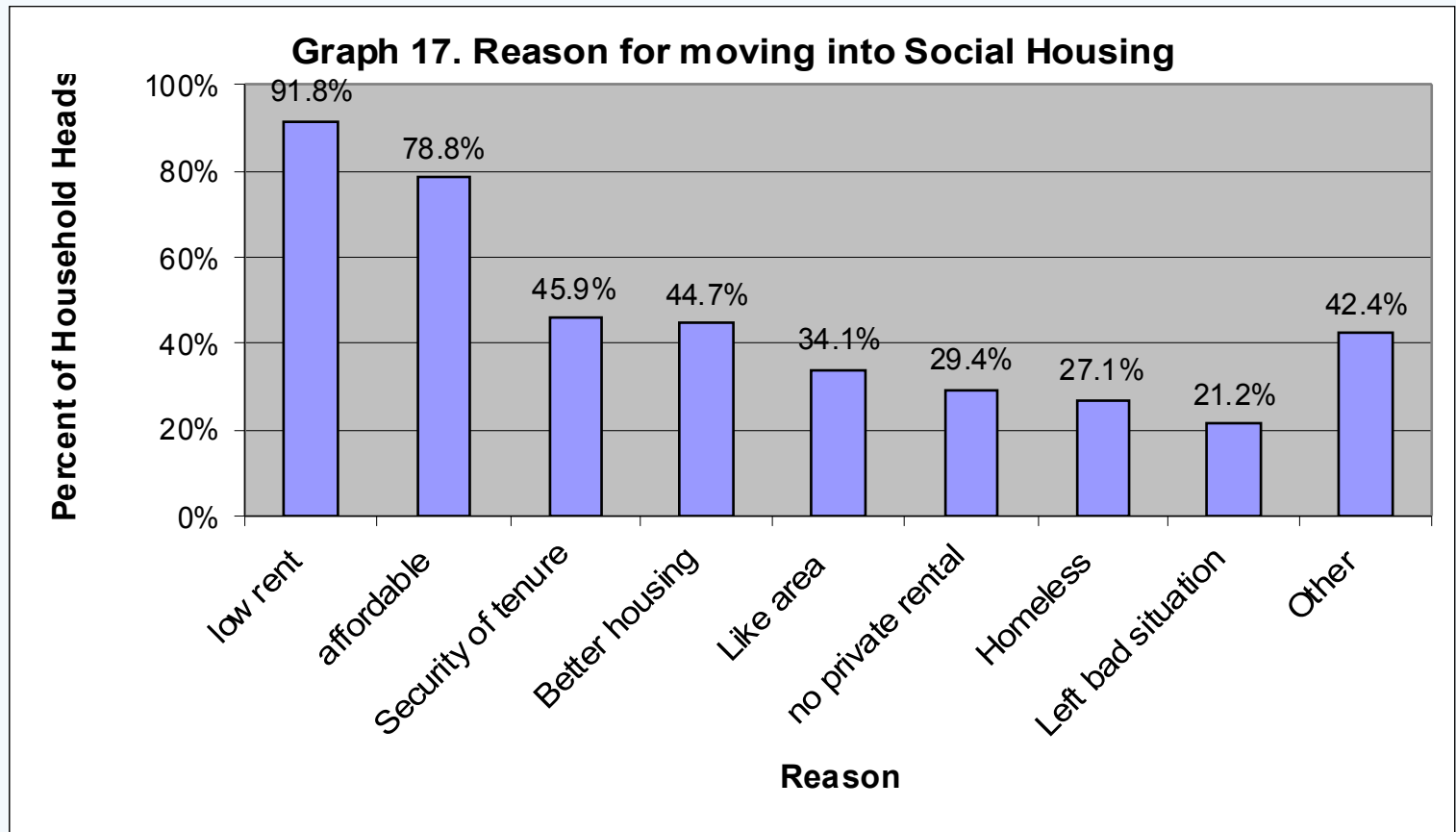
# Family Social Housing Placement Profile (cont.)

	Family Interviewees	BC	Canada	Metro Vancouver Interviewees	Metro Vancouver CMA	(Greater) Kelowna Interviewees	Kelowna CMA
<b><i>Education</i></b>							
Less than Grade 12	17%	12%	10.4%	19%	10%	10%	11%
High School Diploma	22%	26%	24%	20%	24%	29%	28%
Some Post Secondary	61%	62%	44%	61%	66%	61%	61%
<b><i>Source of Income</i></b>							
Employment income/female	44.7%	70.1%	76.2%	46.0%	78.0%/73.1%	40.0%	70.1%/60.1%
Govt transfer payment/femal	40.0%	10.7%/10.0%	11.1%/10.9%	41.0%	8.8%/12.7%	30%	12.9%/17.2%
Other		12.4%	11.3%	19.0%	11.7%	30.0%	10.6%

# Previous housing and housing history

- All 85 households had moved at least once in the previous two years
- Over 25% had made use of emergency short-term housing in the past
- 94% had moved from some form of rental accommodation into social housing
- 23.5% had shared their accommodation with others outside of the immediate family
- 36.5% indicated they had been homeless at one point in their lives

# Reasons for moving into social housing



# Shelter outcomes: average and median rents\*

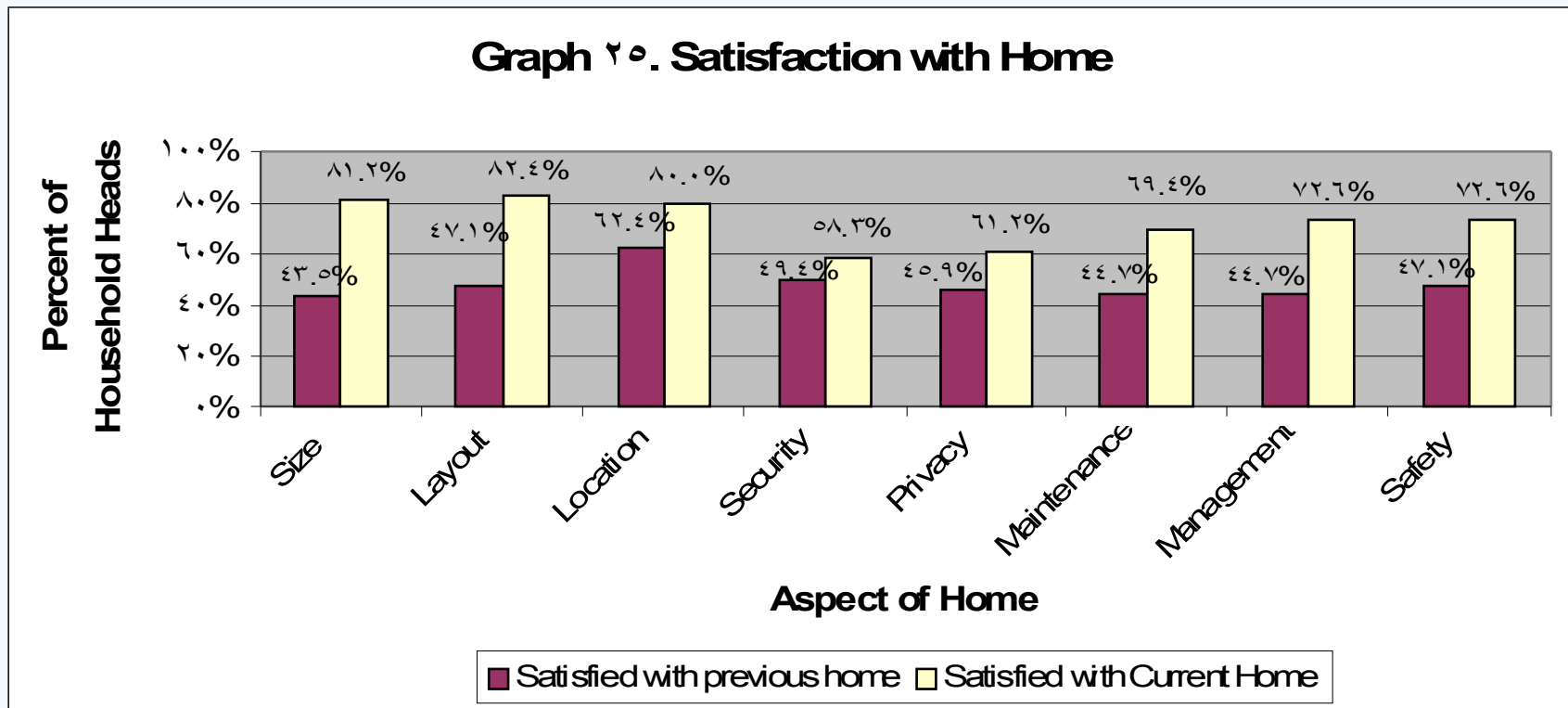
	<u>Average Rent: Current home (social housing)</u>	<u>Average Rent: Previous home (private rental)</u>	<u>Median Rent: Current home (social housing)</u>	<u>Median Rent: Previous home (private rental)</u>
<u>Vancouver</u>	<u>\$403</u>	<u>\$618</u>	<u>\$313</u>	<u>\$650</u>
<u>Okanagan</u>	<u>\$374</u>	<u>\$595</u>	<u>\$320</u>	<u>\$585</u>

\*While utilities are always extra in social housing, in their previous housing a little more than half of the households (54.1%) paid extra for the utilities.

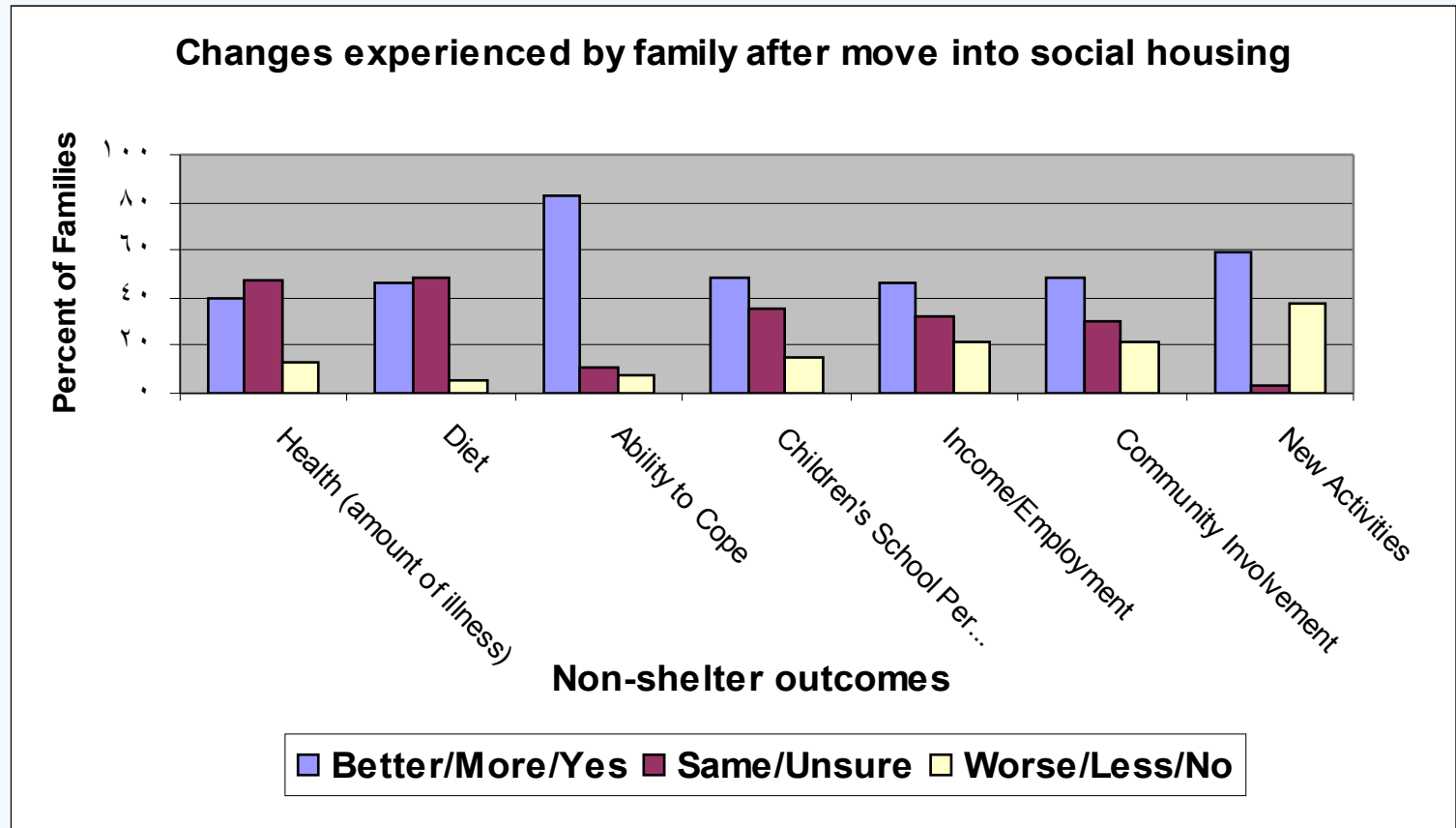
# Shelter outcomes - affordability

- 75.3% of families had lower shelter costs (rent and utilities) after moving into social housing
- A further 5.9% had lower rents but utilities made for higher overall shelter costs
- A further 3.5% had higher rents due to increased incomes
- The remaining 15.3% were paying higher rents, but for larger, better quality housing

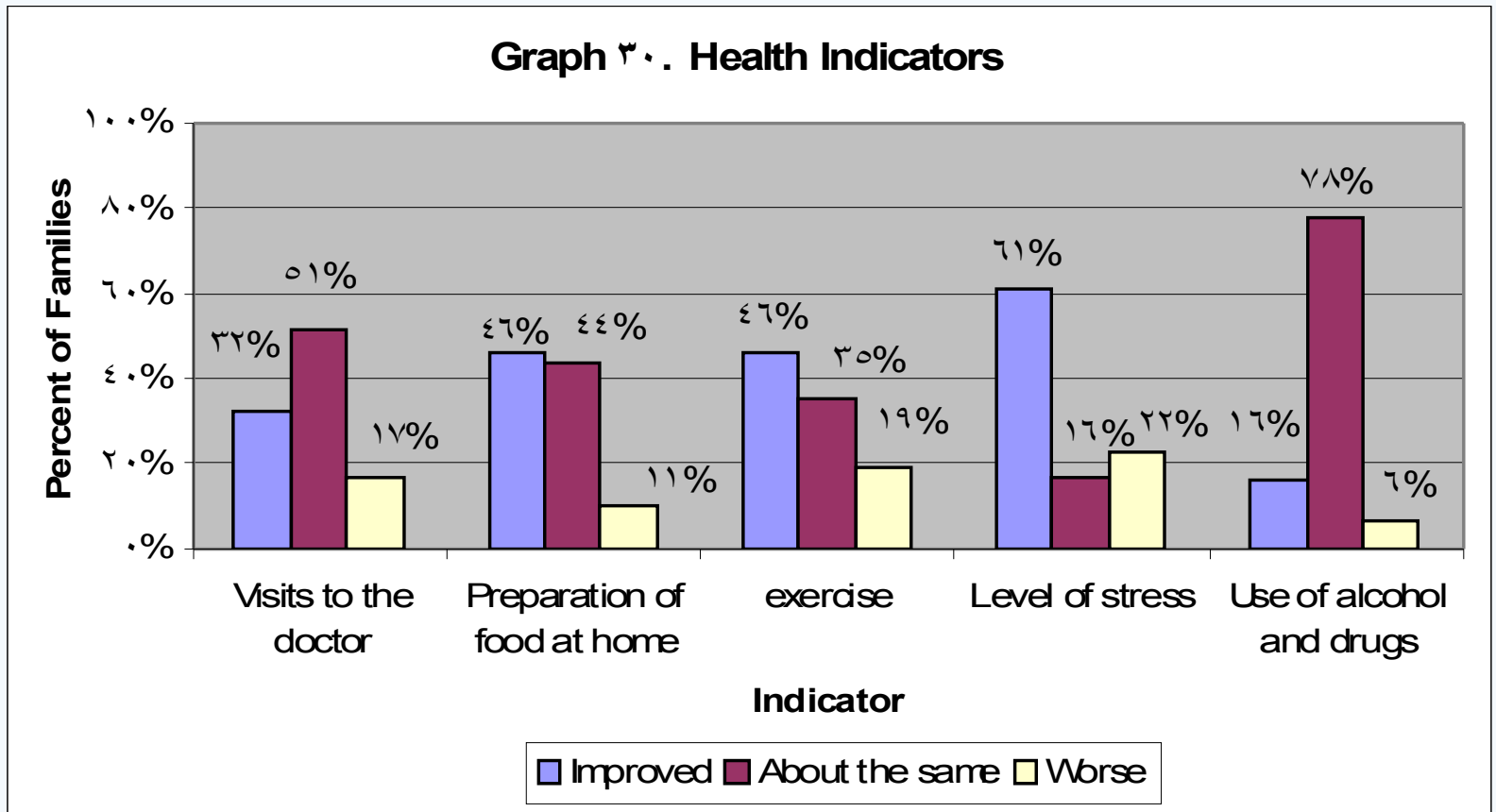
# Shelter outcomes – appropriateness (size, condition, etc)



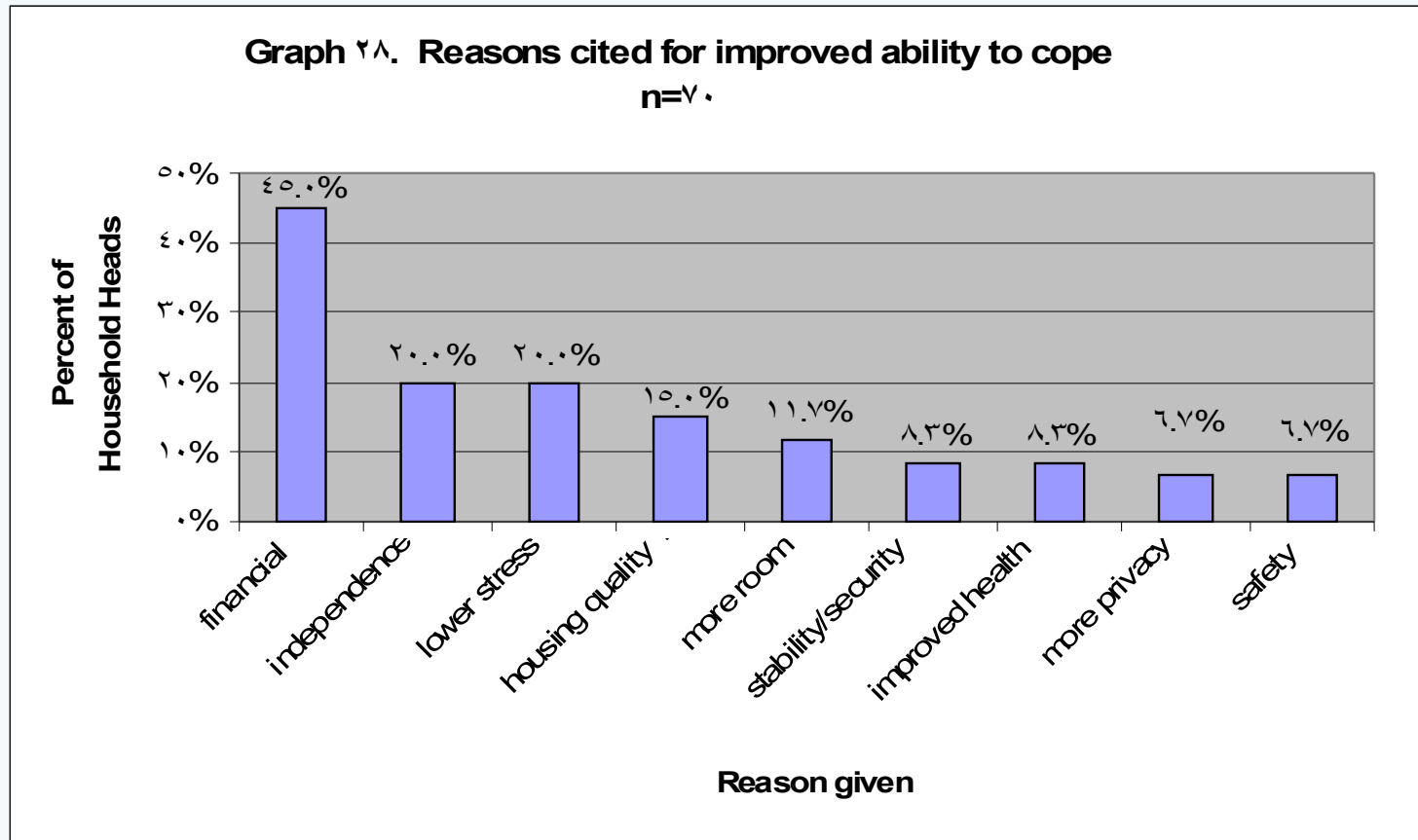
# Non-shelter outcomes - summary



# Non-shelter outcomes – health indicators



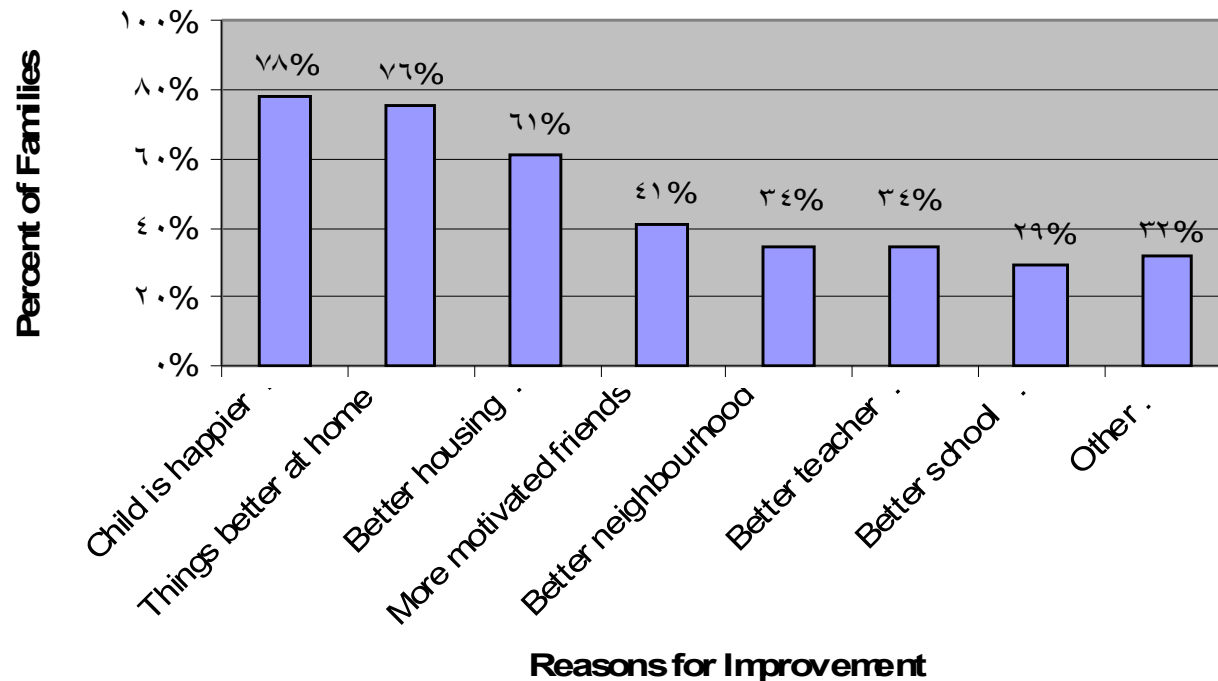
# Non-shelter outcomes – reasons for improved ability to cope



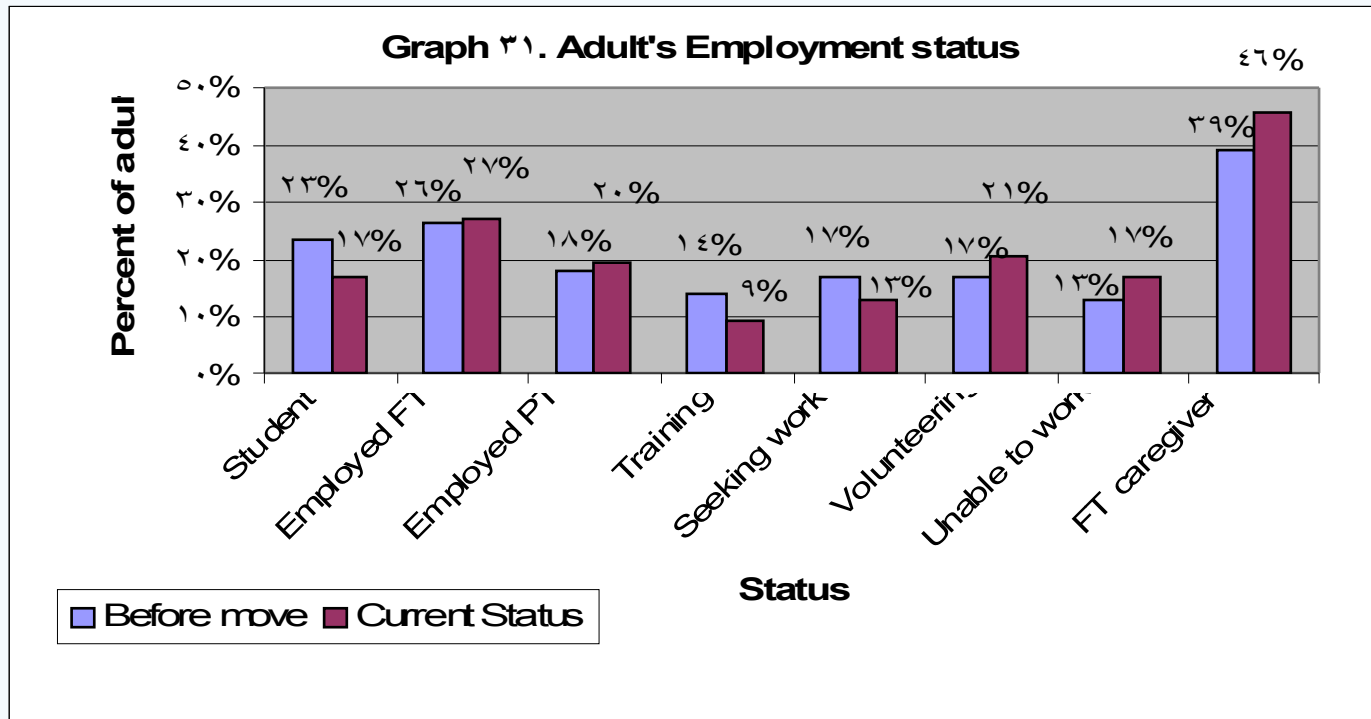
# Non-shelter outcomes – reasons for improved school performance

Graph 29. Why school performance has improved since move

n=41

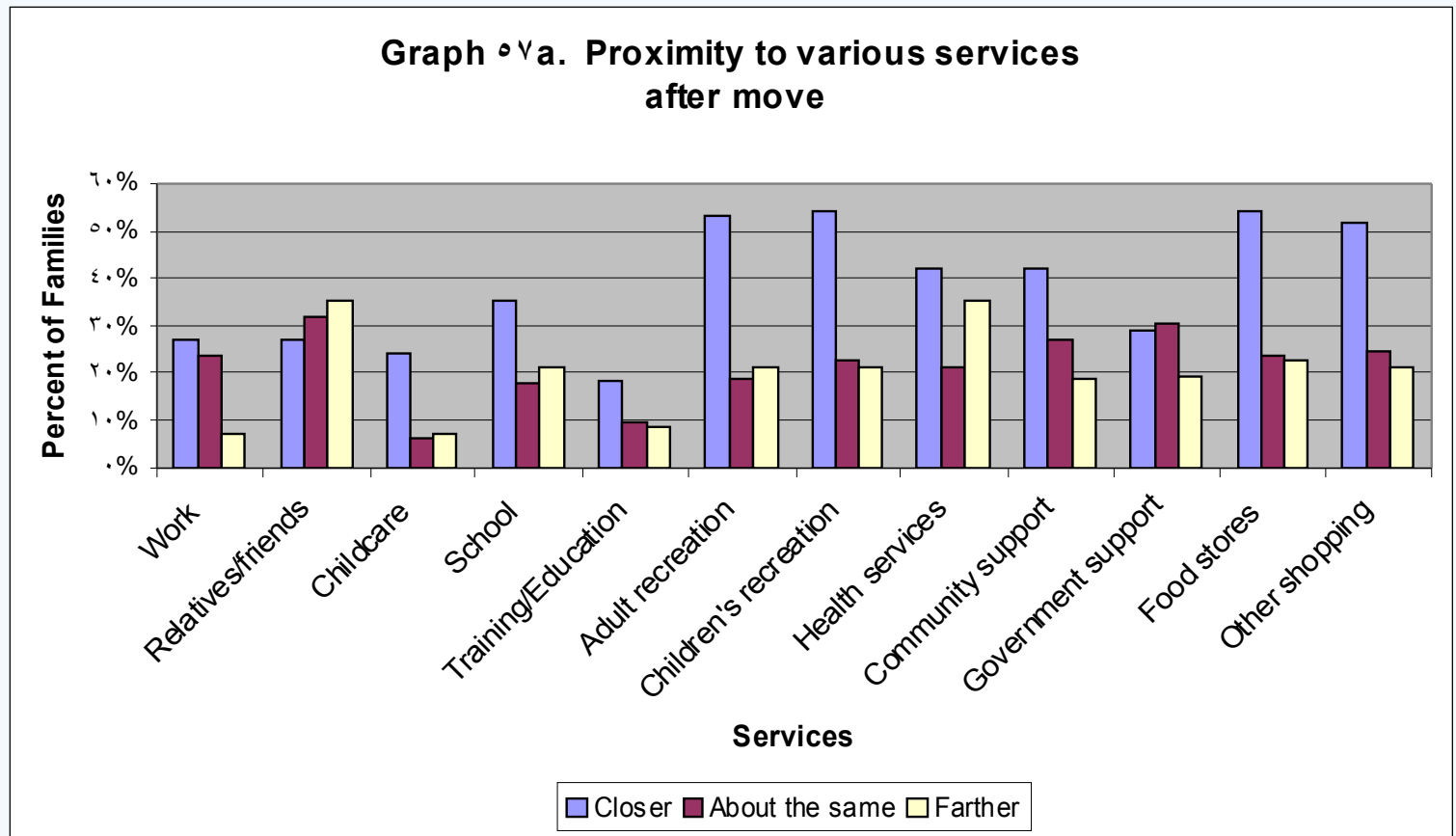


# Non-shelter outcomes – adult employment/schooling



FT=Full Time  
PT=Part Time

# Non-shelter outcomes – access to services

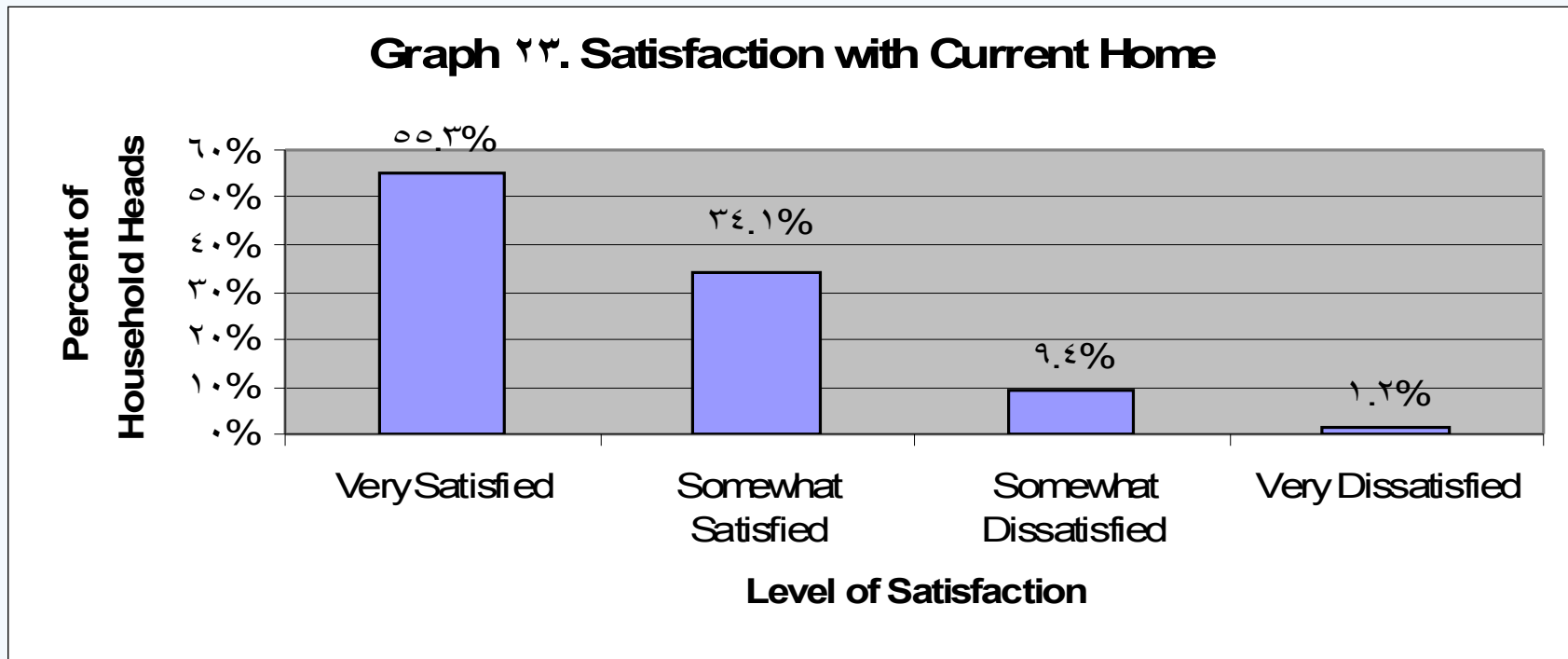


# Social Housing: long-term or transitional

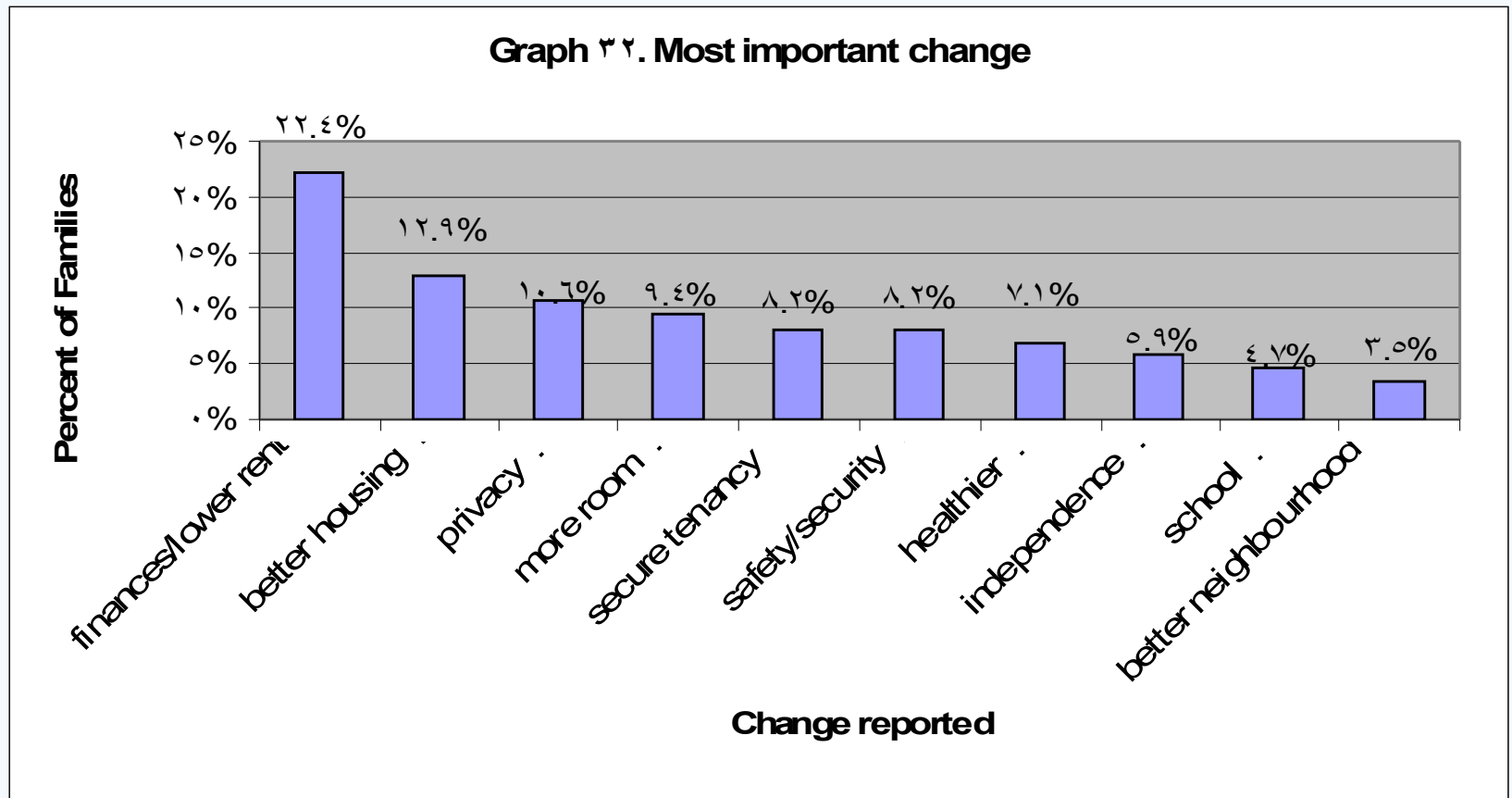
	<b>Total # families</b>	<b>Long-term</b>	<b>Transitional*</b>	<b>Don't know</b>
<b>Vancouver</b>	60	55%	42%	3%
<b>Okanagan</b>	20	35%	65%	0%

\*Overall for those who indicated it would be transitional, two-thirds (67.0%) said they saw their family staying in social housing for between one and five years.

# Families' satisfaction with social housing

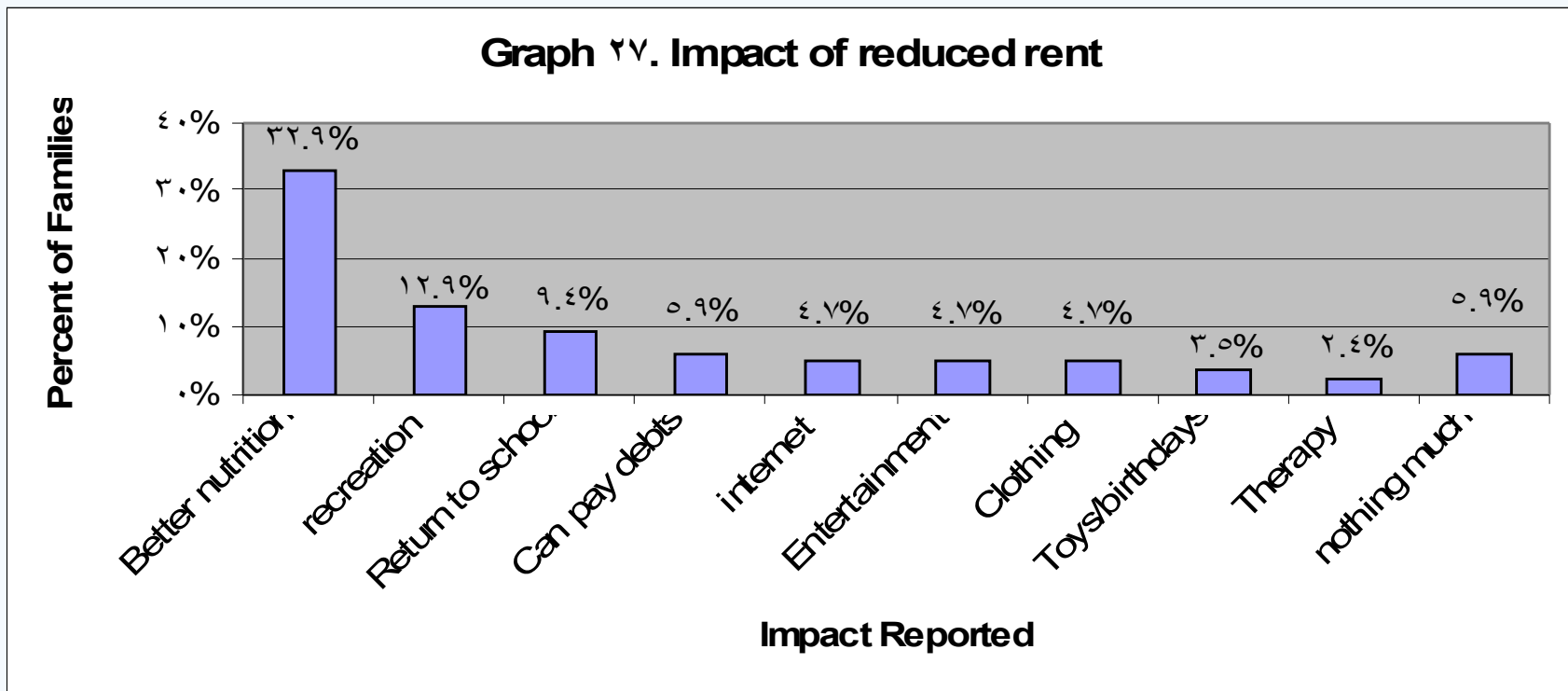


# Most important change for family since moving into social housing



# Impact of reduced rent

Graph 27. Impact of reduced rent



# Parting quotes

- “We feel like we belong in the community like everyone else; we don't feel you can tell we're poor”
- “I wish I didn't have to live here”
- “Child can now play outside; can now cope financially”
- “Happy not to have to move again”

# Key findings

- Study strongly suggests that for a majority of families in need, a move into social housing not only improves their financial situation, but can have a positive impact on health, education and social well-being outcomes
- Social housing projects are more likely to produce positive outcomes for families if they are located in neighbourhoods that are considered 'good' or 'safe' and with easy access to recreation, shopping and transit
- Adequate housing condition and size with increased privacy reduces stress for families and enables better school performance and independence in children

# Thank You

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[www.sparc.bc.ca](http://www.sparc.bc.ca)



*The Social Planning and Research  
Council of BC works with  
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healthy society for all.*