

POLICY LINK NB

FORGING LINKS

INVESTING IN

NEW BRUNSWICK COMMUNITIES

Report of the Forum, OCTOBER 20 & 21, 2004

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For POLICY LINK NB

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FOREWORD

Policy Link NB is a multisectoral network of federal and provincial government departments and voluntary and non-profit organizations. One of its key goals is to serve as a catalyst in bringing different networks and sectors together to discuss and debate issues related to improving the quality of life of New Brunswickers. Policy Link organized **Forging Links: Investing in New Brunswick Communities**, a bilingual Forum, on October, 20 - 21, 2004 in Moncton.

The Forum, **Forging Links: Investing in New Brunswick Communities** was an unique opportunity for 150 individuals from many communities - Rural, Urban, Aboriginal, Francophone, Anglophone and Multicultural - to come together to share and learn about issues, experiences and best practices. The participants represented all three levels of government, members of the voluntary and non profit sectors, universities, labour and church organizations. Participants were also present from Nova Scotia and Ontario.

A number of partners made this Forum possible. *Financial support* was provided by the Community Mobilization Program of the National Crime Prevention Strategy of the Government of Canada, Canadian Heritage and the New Brunswick Local Network of the Canadian Volunteerism Initiative. A small *organizing committee* was actively involved: Angela Carr and Barbara Lemieux, Family and Community Services; Jay Clifford, Public Safety; Rene Pelletier, Culture and Sport Secretariat; Bob Stranach, National Crime Prevention Centre; Nadia Hanna, Human Resources and Skills Development Canada; and Pauline Rockwood, United Way of Central New Brunswick. Special thanks to *staff support*: Greta Doucet, Tamara Farrow and Connie Locke (NB Coalition for Literacy) who assisted with the organizing details and Rick Hutchins, animator for Policy Link, whose dedicated commitment and enthusiasm contributed to the success of the forum. Special thanks to the coffee house musicians, Sean Hutchins and Jeremy Costello who provided *entertainment* - a wonderful rendition of the "oldies" music.

The following report presents highlights from the Forum. It was prepared by Cathy Wright with assistance from Joanne Murray. Thanks to the assistance from note takers, Sara King and Lee Webb, students from University of New Brunswick's Renaissance College. *To continue the momentum for learning and networking, further information will be available in the near future on Policy Link's website, www.policylink.nb.ca.*

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FORGING LINKS

INVESTING IN NEW BRUNSWICK COMMUNITIES

INTRODUCTION

Overview

In April 2002, Policy Link successfully organized one of the first provincial forums bringing community and government together to better understand social policy issues and processes. Since then Policy Link has organized smaller venues around specific issues and topics. In May of 2003, it established a multisectoral planning committee to organize a provincial forum that would provide opportunities for community groups and government to focus more strategically and collaboratively on ways to improve the quality of life for all our citizens.

Forging Links: Investing in New Brunswick's Communities was a bilingual Forum, organized to achieve the following goals:

- Promote a greater understanding of the processes for involving and engaging different sectors of the community.
- Build a knowledge network of tools that facilitate awareness of community issues, ways to develop strategies and indicators of success.
- Strengthen local capacity to develop and connect with networks or alliances within and between communities.

'At this conference, look for ways to think about problems differently'.
Monique LeBlanc, National Crime Prevention Centre

The Forum, **Forging Links: Investing in New Brunswick's Communities**, took place on October 20th and 21st, 2004 in Moncton. The funders, organizers and participants reflected the high level of multisectoral partnerships in existence today.

Funding was provided by the Community Mobilization Program of the National Crime Prevention Strategy of the Government of Canada, Canadian Heritage and the New Brunswick Local Network of the Canadian Volunteerism Initiative. Staff from different provincial government departments provided in-kind services including hosting the

150 individuals from many communities – Rural, Urban, Aboriginal, Francophone, Anglophone and Multicultural - came together to share and learn about concerns, experiences and best practices.

planning meetings, photocopying and translation services, and promoting the forum among their colleagues. The planning committee represented provincial and federal levels of government and the voluntary sector.

The one hundred and fifty individuals¹ participating in the forum came from many communities – Rural, Urban, Aboriginal, Francophone, Anglophone and Multicultural. Individuals represented a broad spectrum of social development issues including family violence, seniors, food security, housing, children and families, education, disabilities, child protection, corrections, recreation, and the environment.

It was a rich event with an almost equal representation of the three levels of government with the non-profit and voluntary sector organizations. Universities, churches, private sector, and media were also represented.

The two day Forum offered a diverse program of workshops, presentations, learning circles and an information fair/learning exchange. It was an opportunity to gain insight into issues and become more knowledgeable with specific skills and tools. Topics included: examining challenges related to the capacity of non-profit and voluntary organizations; strengthening the ways we understand issues in our community; building new partnerships in communities; and ways to research, analyze and evaluate our work.

Setting the Context

As a starting point for the Forum, four leaders with a history of working on community issues in New Brunswick, spoke of the challenges facing us and of the need for new ways to approach the challenges.

Duality recognizes not only language differences, but cultural differences. Duality is about exchanging, learning, and sharing each others perspectives.
Léo-Paul Pinet, Centre de Bénévolat de la Péninsule Acadienne

Anthony Knight, Chair of Policy Link, talked about the changing demographics in New Brunswick: increasing number of seniors, decreasing numbers of immigrants, youth moving to urban areas, and decreasing number of volunteers. He also referred to the more complex social problems and the contribution of the non-profit and voluntary sector. **Léo-Paul Pinet**, Centre de Bénévolat de la Péninsule Acadienne, defined duality as more than language differences, but as a concept that includes the recognition of

¹ See Appendix A for list of participants

cultural differences; duality is all about exchanging, learning, and sharing each other's perspectives. **Rick Hutchins**, Policy Link, explained the role of Policy Link and the importance of providing opportunities for people to connect with each other. **Monique Leblanc**, National Crime Prevention Strategy, emphasized the importance of consultation and collaboration, and the need for government and communities to do this differently and that we must approach the issues in new ways.

KEYNOTE PRESENTATIONS

TELLING THE STORY: FIRST NATIONS CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

CINDY BLACKSTOCK, PRESENTER

Executive Director, First Nations Child and Family Service Agencies

Cindy delivered a powerful and inspiring keynote address to help us understand the impact of few if any culturally based quality of life and prevention services available for children, youth, and families living on reserves. She took us back to the oppressive history for Aboriginal Communities and the stories of atrocities carried out against children and families.

She contrasted this to the current day where we find children removed from families because of child protection issues and placed in off reserve foster homes with minimal if any services to help families cope better. Cindy told the audience that there are now more children in care off reserve than were in residential schools in the past. She asked us to question whether there are libraries, safe places for children to play or non-profit and voluntary sector services on the reserves.

- The true highlight of the conference.
- Cindy was amazing and inspiring
- Absolutely very powerful.
Participants

Cindy suggested that we each take the time to learn the story - the history of First Nations, to advocate for inclusiveness - equal access to services, and to support their empowerment - First Nations having their own decision making powers because they are in the best position to do so. And yes, they will make mistakes but could they be worse than the atrocities already done to them? She spoke of "Caring Across the Boundaries", initiatives to build relationships across the cultures and that New Brunswickers will have an

opportunity to participate through the work of Elsipogtog First Nation (Big Cove). Cindy closed her passionate and moving address with a call to action to “do anything, but do it with all the passion”.

NEW BRUNSWICKERS: TALKING TO EACH OTHER

LISA HRABLUK, PRESENTER

**Special Advisor, Office of the President
University of New Brunswick**

“Stories connect all of us. Through them we learn the values we share, we seek to understand our differences and we consider where all these stories may lead”.

Lisa Hrabluk

‘It is time for New Brunswickers to talk to each other’. The University of New Brunswick has begun the conversation through a new initiative, Next NB/Avenir NB. This bilingual project will highlight New Brunswick's economic, cultural, social and demographic challenges and provide options for New Brunswick's future using the work of the province's researchers. It asks one central question - What kind of New Brunswick do we want?

To simulate the conversations, ten discussion papers are being produced, eight dealing with specific policy issues. Each paper will be discussed at public forums around the Province, in both French and English. The topics are culture and identity, community development, immigration and migration, education, poverty, the economy, health care, and New Brunswick's place in the world. The Telegraph Journal is publishing each paper as they are released.

Another phase of this project is the 21 Leaders for the 21st Century. Twenty-one leaders between the ages of 20 and 35 will be selected by a panel of judges and will participate in a Leaders' program at Renaissance College. The emphasis will be on strengthening leadership skills, public policy analysis and community development, plus learning about New Brunswick through a week-long tour.

Next NB/Avenir NB will culminate in a conference next June in Saint John. “Let's acknowledge our debt to those who came before us.... and may we together transform this province and welcome the next New Brunswick”, quoted Lisa Hrabluk in her closing remarks.

COMMUNITY VITALITY RESEARCH PROJECT
MICHEL DESJARDINS, PRESENTER
Consortia Development Group

The United Way of Greater Moncton and Southeast Region, Enterprise Greater Moncton and the Volunteer Centre of Southeast NB have been jointly working on a research project entitled "Community Vitality". This collaboration has four purposes: to measure the "vitality" of the community or its "quality of life"; to better understand community opportunities and needs; to help inform important decisions; and to assess objectively the community's progress over time.

The research will use various research methods, including the selection of community vitality indicators which reflect the interest and concerns of the community and can be tracked over time. These include employment and sustainable incomes, affordable housing, community safety, and community participation. A number of vehicles will help collect this information such as statistical analysis, focus groups, survey of community organizations, a community forum and a web strategy. The research will be ongoing and is designed to establish benchmarks and monitor progress over time.

INCLUSIVE CITIES CANADA
RANDY HATFIELD, PRESENTER
Saint John Human Development Council

Inclusive Cities Canada is an innovative and timely project designed to examine and enhance social inclusion in cities and communities across Canada. The three year project involving six cities and funded by Social Development Canada, aims to strengthen the capacity of cities to create and sustain inclusive communities for the mutual benefit of all people. In Saint John, the first phase of the project is looking at a number of issues or areas of inquiry including public spaces, housing, health care, transportation, and community safety and applying five key dimensions - diversity, human development, civic engagement, living conditions, and community services. Ten focus groups, involving more than 100 participants, were organized to explore the level of inclusion in these key areas. The results of the focus groups are being analyzed by a civic panel which will audit what is and isn't working in the

We need to re-engage local government in social issues and forget about "who is responsible".
Randy Hatfield

community and develop policy and practice recommendations that will be shared across the country.

It is a very rich and unique opportunity to examine one's community so closely, to encourage individuals to come together and talk about issues, to observe the different perceptions and to meet the challenge of agreeing on specific recommendations. This initiative is important because it involves local governments in social issues, regardless of jurisdictional responsibilities. Greater Saint John is a caring and responsive community. But it has a fragile and fragmented support base of services and significant challenges with underlying divisions such as income level and meeting the needs of youth. At the same time, there is an emerging climate for shared civic community leadership for change.

WORKSHOPS BY THEMES

The workshops are organized under three theme areas: Capacity of the Voluntary Sector, Building Partnerships, and Community Engagement.

THEME ONE: CAPACITY OF THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR

Topic: "ASSESSING PERFORMANCE: EVALUATION PRACTICES AND PERSPECTIVES IN CANADA'S VOLUNTARY SECTOR"
By: Paula Speevak Sladowski, Centre for Voluntary Sector Research and Development, Carleton University.

Paula posed several questions for participants to discuss at their table. It was here that the real learning took place.
Participant

Voluntary organizations have an interest in assessing their programs and services to ensure that they meet identified needs, and funders have an interest in understanding whether the funding they provide achieves the desired outcomes. The workshop focused on identifying the challenges with conducting evaluations that contribute to furthering the work being evaluated. Evaluation takes time, money and expertise, which are frequently not present among community agencies. It is important to build the capacity of both funders and organizations in the process of evaluation and to ensure that evaluation is meaningful and makes the best use of

available resources. A number of tools were suggested which are located on the Voluntary Sector Evaluation Research Project website (www.VSERP.ca) and through the Canadian Evaluation Society and workshops offered in New Brunswick (www.ces.ca).

Topic: PAID EMPLOYEES IN THE VOLUNTARY NON PROFIT SECTOR. WHY SHOULD WE CARE?

By: **Lynne Toupin**, Working with two projects, Developing Human Resources in the Voluntary Sector and the Feasibility Study for a Human Resources Council for the Voluntary Sector.

I left this session with a new appreciation of the paid personnel in voluntary organizations.
Participant

Information exists on the number, role, and challenges related to volunteers, but until recently very little was known about the one million employees (or 8% of the workforce) who work in voluntary non-profit organizations across the country. Through studies at the national, regional, provincial and local level we have a better understanding of the trends and emerging issues related to human resources in the voluntary sector. This session discussed a number of challenges facing the voluntary sector and its impact on recruiting and retaining staff. Some of the key challenges are associated with funding and fundraising, volunteer burnout and increasing liabilities with volunteers, managing change, board/staff relations and the will and ability to compensate staff. Participants were referred to the following website for further information on human resource tools and services: www.hrvs.ca.

Topic: FUNDING MATTERS: BUILDING AN ENABLING FUNDING ENVIRONMENT

By: **Katherine Scott**, Canadian Council on Social Development

Nonprofit and voluntary sector organizations in Canada are groaning under the strain of a new funding regime that seriously impedes their ability to perform vital work on behalf of millions of Canadians. *Funding Matters*, a study published by the Canadian Council on Social Development, chronicles how a decade of restructuring has changed the way in which organizations generate resources and sustain themselves in what has become a competitive and volatile financial environment. The move to increased targeting by funders/donors and shift from “core” to “project based funding” model threatens quality human resources, loss of infrastructure, “advocacy chill” –

the inability to speak out on issues, and the availability of skilled leaders to be collaborative partners. This is all happening at the same time that the demand for services is increasing.

The discussion covered a number of areas related to the presentation. For example, the term 'mission drift' implies no direction which is not an accurate portrayal; reporting requirements for one group has moved from four to eight pages; and government is less willing to be

According to the recent study released by the Canadian Centre for Philanthropy in New Brunswick there are:

- 3,890 nonprofit and voluntary organizations; 68% of which are registered charities
- 30% of organizations are churches, 20% are in sports and recreation, 10% in social services.
- 33,850 paid staff are working in the sector (about one-third in hospitals and universities)
- 295,181 volunteers are involved
- Sources of revenue for nonprofits in New Brunswick:
 - 41% government; Canadian average is 49%
 - 52% earned income; Canadian average is 35%
 - 6% gifts/donations; Canadian average is 13%

innovative and take a risk in the non-profit sector than with other sectors. It was noted that although Community Foundations is a small sector, it has the potential to grow and is willing to fund what is needed. Its sources of funding include each of us and endowment funds can be set up for an agency and associated with a foundation to manage. It was also interesting to note that a core funding program exists for all provincial sports organizations in New Brunswick, though not yet multi-year.

Topic: THE LANDSCAPE, ECOLOGY, TRENDS, AND VARIOUS OTHER INITIATIVES THAT HAVE CHARACTERIZED THE RECENT EVOLUTION OF THE CANADIAN VOLUNTARY SECTOR

By: Paula Speevak Sladowski, Centre for Voluntary Sector Research and Development, Carleton University, and Georgina Schwartz, Canadian Centre for Philanthropy.

Convergence is occurring more and more, people and organizations are bringing their ideas together and finding that their goals link up.
Participant

The voluntary sector is gaining recognition as an engine of the social economy and a vehicle for citizen engagement. The landscape of the Canadian voluntary sector has changed dramatically over the past decade

with jurisdictional shifts around basic services, new relationships with business, labour, and governments, and global trends around social development and civil society. The landscape has been changing from the national level with the Voluntary Sector Initiative of the Federal Government, to the local level such as with local groups joining Chambers of Commerce to access staff benefit packages. More frequently, we are seeing the emergence of coalitions and networks in local communities, provinces, and territories as an integral partner in many aspects of social development and well-being.

Information on the Canadian Federation of Voluntary Sector Networks which works to build cohesion in the sector across Canada can be accessed at www.cvsrd.org. The Canadian Centre for Philanthropy which will be merging with another organization in 2005 can be accessed at www.ccp.ca.

THEME TWO: BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS

Topic: KNOWING OUR STUFF: RESEARCH AND POLICY CHANGE

By: **Malcolm Shookner**, Atlantic Health Promotion Research Centre at Dalhousie University.

This workshop defined what is meant by policies and by research and ways to link the two together. Policies are developed by government, non profit organizations and by ourselves personally. Communities have an important role to play in influencing policies set by government and social science research can be an important part of a community's efforts to provide the evidence needed to promote a change in policies. Research is a systemic gathering of information, which can be carried out in a number of different ways or through different methodologies. Methodologies include interviews, focus groups, case studies, and surveys. Further information can also be found through the Rural Communities Impacting Policy Project Community Training Workshops located at www.ruralnovascotia.com.

Topic: STRENGTHENING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR AND THE GOVERNMENT OF CANADA

By Nadine Thériault, Voluntary Sector Forum

Signed in December 2001 by the Prime Minister and representatives of the Voluntary Sector, the Accord was developed to strengthen the capacity of the government and the sector to work towards the common goal of improving the quality of life of all Canadians. It sets out concrete commitments for the two sectors and is the result of years of discussions and collaborations between the two sectors. The Codes of Good Practice on Policy Dialogue and on Funding, prepared jointly by the Voluntary Sector and the Government of Canada, was released in October 2002, to improve the practices in these two fundamental areas of their relationship. Both sectors are encouraged to discuss ways to utilize the Accord and Codes.

Topic: CIVIC ENGAGEMENT AND DEMOCRACY

By: David McLaughlin, Deputy Minister to the Commission on Legislative Democracy, and Commission co-chair Lise Ouellette

If we have a reformed system and can reach more people, then perhaps we can also engage them to participate in our volunteer organization.
Participant

The workshop provided an overview of the Commission's mandate which is to seek views of New Brunswickers on increasing public involvement in decisions affecting people and their communities and on increasing participation in democratic processes in New Brunswick.

Statistics revealed that New Brunswick has: a low level of voter turnout, especially among youth; few people seeking public office; decreasing numbers of volunteers involved in organizations; and few people feeling included in the political processes. However New Brunswickers wanted to talk with their elected officials face-to-face.

Some of the issues raised included: difficulty to strive for long term change because political accountability is tied to the 4 year cycle; a strong civil society results in healthier communities so work of the Commission makes sense; and the need to find ways to meaningfully involve communities, such as immigrants or youth, who have been excluded from government processes. It was noted that immigrants don't always understand or trust government

because of their own political experiences, and youth often don't feel qualified to vote because they lack the confidence, or have a low level of 'civic literacy'.

THEME THREE: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Topic : QUEBEC : VOLUNTARY ACTION CENTRES AND SOCIAL ECONOMY

By : Pierre Riley, Fédération des centres d'action bénévoles du Québec

There are some 200 Voluntary Action Centres throughout Canada, including nearly 120 in Québec. The mission of a Voluntary Action Centre is to promote volunteerism in various sectors of humanitarian activities and to respond to the needs of a community. Volunteerism is a tool for personal and social development and an important resource for a community. In Quebec, some Voluntary Action Centres also manage a socioeconomic venture.

There are growing pressures on the Voluntary Action Centres: pressure to act more like a business and less like a charity; activities are being dictated by government which results in competition among the Centres; most volunteers are over 65; expectation for same level of service but decreasing resources, and growing use of user fees and fee for services by the Centres. Suspicion can exist when developing partnerships with the private sector and it is vitally important in developing new relationships to ensure that the partners share some common values and some convergence in mission.

Topic: VIBRANT COMMUNITIES PROJECT

By: **Monica Chaperlin**, Saint John Business Community Anti-Poverty Initiative and **Bob Stranach**, Crime Prevention Centre Strategy

Encourages us to engage and invite the business community to join us, and not just contribute financially.
Participant

This workshop focused on Saint John and its comprehensive approach to addressing poverty, through a new initiative - Vibrant Communities Saint John Poverty Reduction Strategy. The four sectors - business, government, community organizations and people living in poverty - have formed a Leadership Roundtable to guide a Poverty Reduction Strategy for Saint

John. The Strategy rejects addressing crime, welfare, employment, education, child development, health, and housing, one at a time. Instead, it endorses the idea that the multiple and interrelated problems of people living in poverty require multiple and interrelated solutions...and a commitment to building new "community" models and social networks. The workshop talked about the experiences in Saint John of successfully involving the business community, the importance of the whole community participating in developing a plan of action, the components of a community-based, comprehensive, multi-sector approach to poverty reduction and the need to continually evaluate and learn from our experiences.

Topic: INCLUSION LENS

By: **Cathy Wright**, Community Development Consultant and **Ken Pike**, NB Association for Community Living

There is a growing emphasis in Canada and elsewhere to build more inclusive communities, where people feel that they belong because of opportunities to participate both socially and economically. The Inclusion Lens, is a tool to assist community agencies, governments, and citizens in examining the barriers faced by individuals and families dealing with issues such as poverty, health, disability, and housing. The workshop provided an overview of the tool and an opportunity to apply the tool to specific case studies. Many of the participants felt the concepts associated with the Lens provided them with a clearer understanding of inclusion and that this will be helpful in working with individuals, but also as a way of looking at their own programs. More information on the Inclusion Lens can be obtained through the website: www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hppb/regions/atlantic/documents/index.html#social

This will be useful when we do an inclusion audit of services my organization delivers.
Participant

The workshop also provided an opportunity to hear about upcoming conferences being organized by the NB Association for Community Living, including a session to discuss the concept of Creating a New Brunswick Social Inclusion Network – the interest, possible role and structure.

Topic: WORKING WITH MULTICULTURAL COMMUNITIES: A GUIDEBOOK

By: **Joanne Murray**, John Howard Society of Moncton, and **Rick Hutchins**, Policy Link NB

Respect for diversity is one of the hallmarks of Canadian values. Diversity of cultures, in its broadest sense, refers to the interconnectivity of people through their ethnicity, language, and traditions. Volunteering is one of the best ways to connect with people from different cultures, and it provides an opportunity for people from minority groups to be fully included in the community.

Policy Link NB, in partnership with John Howard Society of Greater Moncton Inc. and the Multicultural Association of New Brunswick, recently developed a guidebook for non-profits who are interested in making their agencies more inviting to people from minority groups. The draft guidebook was presented to the workshops participants, and in a facilitated process, the developers received feedback on the layout, the language, and the usefulness of the information.

The feedback from the group was excellent! Workshop participants represented the multicultural community, community agencies, and volunteers so the feedback was very relevant and has enhanced the guidebook. The suggestions will be incorporated into the final guidebook and distributed to the community before the end of the year.

LEARNING CIRCLES AND LEARNING EXCHANGE

Learning Circles

Seven learning circles were offered to stimulate discussion and debate around specific issues. The goal was to provide informal environments for information sharing, discussion of issues and building networks. Each learning circle dealt with a different topic, issue or project.

Topic: INVESTING IN CHILDREN , FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES - ITS TIME

Dixie Mitchell, "Investing in Children, Families and Communities - It's Time"

This project is hosted by Mawiw Council Inc. in partnership with the New Brunswick Association for Community Living. It is a 3-year project addressing social inclusion and issues related to persons with a disability in both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities. It focuses on a need to bring people from Elsipogtog First Nation together with other non-reserve communities around a common issue - children with disabilities. Stories connected families and once parents shared their stories, then barriers began to disappear. Many people continued a relationship between organized meetings.

Topic: ISSUES IN RURAL NEW BRUNSWICK

Sue Rickards, Selby Consultants and Coordinator for NANY (Neighbours' Alliance of North York)

Sue shared resources and her experience on 1) entrepreneurship - key elements for economic growth through entrepreneurship and actions that communities are undertaking or could undertake to support entrepreneurship. 2) Community Capacity Building - key elements and approaches that could have a significant impact on communities. 3) Youth - engaging young people in planning for the future of their communities and dealing with some of the challenges and opportunities.

Topic: DUALITY IN NEW BRUNSWICK: THE UNIQUENESS OF NEW BRUNSWICK CULTURE, DIVERSITY, CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Léo-Paul Pinet, Centre de Bénévolat de la Péninsule Acadienne and Rick Hutchins, Policy Link NB

New Brunswick is a unique province with a unique culture. This learning circle discussed the realities of duality and the need for better understanding of the cultural and linguistic diversity that makes us what we are. According to some participants, duality refers to more than only French and English but also First Nations and others. Rick would you like to add something else here.

I am a First Nations person and to attend a session where the design was partly of a first Nations talking circle was intriguing.
Participant

Topic: HEALTH PRODUCTS AND FOOD BRANCH (HPFB), HEALTH CANADA

Rosane Leblanc, Health Canada (Canadian Public Health Agency)

HPFB is in the process of developing a public involvement framework, and wanted to hear from stakeholders about what should be included. The session was very open, with wide-ranging and honest dialogue that covered related topics such as challenges with the funding process of government. It provided an opportunity to present the HPFB in a way that was accessible and participatory. Participants had an opportunity to learn more about the new structure of the Canadian Public Health Agency and what it will mean for the non profit and voluntary sector. Several participants indicated an interest in being involving in the ongoing development of the Public Involvement Framework and other public involvement activities within HPFB.

Topic: COMMUNITY FOUNDATIONS IN NEW BRUNSWICK

Leslie Cuthbertson, Fundy Community Foundation

There are over 140 community foundations in Canada with combined assets of over \$1.7 Billion. Last year alone over \$70 million was granted to support projects delivered by the non-profit sector in Canada. New Brunswick is served by six community foundations. They allow communities themselves to respond to existing and emerging needs and opportunities. Grantmaking is done by volunteers who know and understand the community and are interested in putting dollars where they are needed most.

For more information visit Community Foundations of Canada at

www.community-fdn.ca

Topic: FUNDING MATTERS

Katherine Scott, Canadian Council on Social Development and the NB Finance Action Group of Policy Link NB

There is a real need for changing relationships with funders and with the way organizations are funded. This session talked about the need for a new funding regime – developing new financing vehicles and structures for the voluntary sector as a whole. Can the ACCORD and Code of Good Practice on Funding provide guidance to this process? Discussion included the need for groups themselves to band together in a community to make a point to their

fundere. Also that banks should look at how they deal with non-profit organizations, especially since this entails a great deal of business for them. There is currently some work exploring the concept of a Charity Bank, a new banking system for non profit and voluntary organizations.

The NB Finance Action Group is a multi-sectoral committee established by Policy Link and supported through the McConnell Foundation to further the discussion on funding in New Brunswick. The Finance Action Group is currently developing a plan of action to bring funders and the voluntary and non-profit sector together to discuss ways to address the funding crisis.

Topic: INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY, WHERE DO FRANCOPHONES FIT?

Pierre Riley, Fédération des centers d'action bénévole du Quebec

Voluntarygateway.ca is designed as a tool that will help volunteers and paid staff of the voluntary sector find answers. It will link to resources already available throughout Canada, including services being offered by the Voluntary Sector Initiative and other national organizations, by regional networks, local groups, etc. The portal will also strengthen the capacity of voluntary organizations by providing a gateway to opportunities to better connect, communicate, and network with one another.

Learning Exchange

The learning exchange was a space dedicated to showcasing resources, information and opportunities. There were over 50 exhibitors in the Learning Exchange with poster displays and information booths. At the end of the first day a reception was held at the Learning Exchange to promote the exhibits. Many exhibitors were participants or presenters at the Forum. A number of national and regional organizations forwarded information for the Exchange including: the Canadian Association of Fundraising Professionals, Canadian Policy Research Network, Community Foundations of Canada, Federation of Voluntary Sector Networks, Volunteer Canada, and New Brunswick Department of Training and Employment Development. The Exchange was a huge success with little information left behind.

It would have taken me a year to collect information that I gathered in this hour.
Participant

ASSESSING THE FORUM

OVERALL

Feedback on the forum was captured in a variety of ways: through formal evaluations of the overall forum and individual workshops (limited number), through anecdotal stories from presenters and participants, from comments recorded at the Plenary Session and from individuals who agreed to write a testimonial on a particular session. Participants benefited from the opportunity to come together, to share experiences and best practices, and at the same time offered concrete suggestions for future forums.

Forging Links provided the opportunity to challenge yourself to step out of your comfort zone and talk to other sectors, and to learn how those in your sector are managing the same issues and barriers.

Participant

The Forum provided an environment conducive to students, seniors, government, non profit agencies, and individuals from different cultural communities. Individuals felt comfortable to express themselves, and to connect and learn from each other. Many individuals expressed an appreciation to Policy Link for organizing the event, for providing subsidies to attend, and for the chance to feel renewed and inspired. Participants consistently referred to the opportunity to meet others working on similar initiatives, to share and gather new information, and to leave with tools to help in the delivery of programs or to engage the different sectors.

ENGAGING MULTISECTORAL INVOLVEMENT

Many participants commented on the value of being able to have a forum where staff from government departments and non profit and voluntary agencies could meet, dialogue together, and discover commonalities. As mentioned earlier, the forum exemplified a multisectoral component through its planning committee, funders, and participants.

Being a newcomer to Fredericton, I felt for the first time what it means to live in a bilingual New Brunswick. Bravo! Well done!

Participant

BEING INCLUSIVE WITH LANGUAGE AND CULTURE

The content of the forum reflected the Province as a whole with participants and topics relating to our different communities: Rural and Urban, Francophone and Anglophone, First Nations and Multicultural. Sessions were held in both French and English, with simultaneous translation available for some of the individual sessions.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE FUTURE

Participants made a number of suggestions for future forums, related to content, format, participation and timing.

Content

Sessions could also focus on issues related to volunteers, the role of bureaucrats versus politicians in the development of policies, working with the business community and structured sessions for sharing success stories.

Perhaps it is time to move to a design which results in more dialogue, less presentations and more discussion.
Participant

Some individuals felt that recommendations for action could be developed in the different sessions to promote greater momentum for change.

Format

Participants felt that it is important to ensure that workshops and learning circles are structured to facilitate greater discussion and participation. Some felt that the schedule was too packed to give adequate time and energy to benefit from all the parts and to reflect on what they were learning. It was also suggested that there could be more sessions in French.

Others recommended more introductions of each other to facilitate greater networking and information sharing.

Participation

Participants recommended broadening the invitation list to include greater representation from politicians, churches, and individuals most affected by policies and programs.

There are great challenges, but there is great energy and leadership here in New Brunswick.
Anthony Knight, Chairperson
Policy Link NB

Timing

Many participants recommended that this forum take place on a regular or annual basis.

APPENDIX A: LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Francoise Albert, Heritage Canada
Carmen Comeau-Anderson, Human Resources and Skills Development Canada
Suzane Arsenault, Avenir jeunesse de la Péninsule acadienne
Nadia Maltais Arseneau, Prov. Dept of Family and Community Services
Mary Astle, Provincial Department of Family and Community Services
Gloria Baccouch, Communities Raising Children S.E.E.D Moncton
Aida Bahtijarevic, Multicultural Association of Fredericton
Jacqueline Banks, NB Association for Community Living
Denise Sénéchal-Beaulieu, Prov. Dept of Family and Community Services
Slyvio Belliveau, United Way
Tina Nicholas-Bernard, Mi'kmaq-Maliseet Institute, UNB
Isabel Black, Wilmot United Church
Cindy Blackstock, First Nations Child and Family Caring Society
Roger Boudreau, Centre de Bénévolat de la Péninsule Acadienne
Donald Bourgoïn, NB Seniors Federation
Marie-Corinne Bourque, Go Ahead Seniors
Steven Boyce, NB Community Volunteer Initiative
Réal Boyer, Réseau de l'action bénévole du Québec
Lovaina Brideau, NB Breakfast for Learning
Jack Brownell, Active Living Coalition for Older Adults
Inez Caldwell, Saint John Volunteer Centre
Jeff Campbell, March of Dimes
Andrea Caron, Provincial Department of Family and Community Services
Angela Carr, Provincial Department of Family and Community Services
Krista Carr, NB Association for Community Living
Cindy Carter, Provincial Department of Family & Community Services
Lynne Castonguay, Provincial Department of Family & Community Services
Andrea Caven, Rural Communities Impacting Policy (Nova Scotia)
Monica Chaperlin, Saint John Business Community Anti-Poverty Initiative
Jean-Claude Charest, Provincial Department of Family & Community Services
Heather Chase, Enterprise Network Central New Brunswick
Jim Christopher, Community Workshop Inc
Mitch Claybourn, City of Fredericton
Jay Clifford, Provincial Department of Public Safety
Karen Campbell Connors, Elizabeth Fry Society of New Brunswick

Elizabeth Cormier, Turning Points, Youth, Parent and Early Childhood Development Centre
Deo Cuma, Maison Nazereth
Leslie Cuthbertson, Fundy Community Foundation
Jody Dallaire, Early Childhood Care and Education NB
Denise DeMerchant, Doone Street/Wilson Row Tenants Association
Michel Desjardins, Consortia Development Group
Renu Dhayagude, Multicultural Association of Fredericton
Ray Dillon, Neighborhood Alliance of North York (NANY)
Valerie Donovan, St. Thomas School of Social Work
Norma Dubé, NB Executive Council Office, Women's Issues Branch
Louisa Barton-Duguay, Mascaret
Josée Dupont, Provincial Department of Family and Community Services
Karen Eustace, The Helpline
Mary Farrell, Human Resources and Skills Development Canada
Cécile Gallant, Provincial Department of Family and Community Services
Elizabeth Greek, Go Ahead Seniors
Marie-Josée Groulx, New Brunswick Commission on Legislative Democracy
Nicole Guimond, Provincial Department of Family and Community Services
Colleen Hanna, City of Fredericton
Nadia Hanna, Human Resources and Skills Development Canada
Steve Harris, Government of New Brunswick
Randy Hatfield, Saint John Human Development Council
Diane Hawkins, Provincial Department of Public Safety
Lisa Hrabluk, Next NB/Avenir NB, University of New Brunswick
Rick Hutchins, Policy Link NB
Derek Jones, Dads Making a Difference
Derwin Joseph, Elsipogtog Mental Health Services
Ljiljana Kalaba, Multicultural Association of Fredericton
Sarah King, Renaissance College, UNB
William King, Salvation Army Correctional and Justice Services
Anthony Knight, NB Public Libraries Foundation
Delphine Lanteigne, Go Ahead Seniors
Brigitte LaPointe
Christine LeBlanc, VON Healthy Baby and Me
Denis Leblanc, Elsipogtog
Jeff LeBlanc, Culture and Sport Secretariat
Melanie Leblanc, Elsipogtog

Monique LeBlanc, National Crime Prevention Centre
Rosanne LeBlanc, Health Products and Food Branch, Health Canada
Reno LeBouthillier, Provincial Department of Family and Community Services
Rheal Leger, Aines En Marche
Barbara Lemieux, Provincial Department of Family and Community Services
Colette Lemieux, Ministère de l'environnement et des Gouvernements
Jennifer Surette- Lemon, Renaissance College, UNB
Maurice Lewis, Wilmot United Church
Judy Lombard, Correctional Services of Canada
Margie MacDonald, Public Health Agency of Canada Atlantic Region
Annette Vautour MacKay, Volunteer Centre of South Eastern NB
Noella Maillet, Go Ahead Seniors
Erin Maston, St. Thomas University
Jackie Mathews, NB Advisory Council on the Status of Women
Viola McArdle, Aines En Marche
Paul McAfee, John Howard Society, Saint John Branch
Carrie McBain, R.C. M.P
Lori McCullough, Passamaquoddy Childrens Centre
Nancy McGarvie, Human Resources and Skills Development Canada
Lou McGinn, Riverview Crime Prevention
Debbie McInnis, Laubach Literacy New Brunswick
Fabienne McKay, Learning Disabilities Association of New Brunswick
David McLaughlin, New Brunswick Commission on Legislative Democracy
Brenda McVicar, Provincial Department of Family and Community Services
Berttie Melanson, Veterans Affairs Canada
C.A. Melanson, Greater Moncton Association for Community Living
Gisele Bujold Michaud, NB Advisory Council on the Status of Women
Dixie Mitchell, vanRaalte Consulting
Ishbel Munro, Coastal Communities Network
Joanne Murray, John Howard Society of Greater Moncton
Bruce Oliver, Provincial Department of Family and Community Services
Cheryl O'Toole, Human Resources and Skills Development Canada
Lise Ouellette, New Brunswick Commission on Legislative Democracy
René Pelletier, Culture and Sport Secretariat
Vicky Adams Pelletier, Veterans Affairs Canada
Johanne Perron, Coalition for Pay Equity
Ken Pike, NB Association for Community Living
Léo-Paul Pinet, Centre de Bénévolat de la Péninsule Acadienne

Tina Fournier Poirier, Provincial Department of Family & Community Services
Kelly Price, Doone Street/Wilson Row Tenants Association
Karen Rice, vanRaalte Consulting
Jeanne Richard, Provincial Department of Family and Community Services
Sue Rickards, Selby Inc
Pierre Riley, Fédération des centres d'action bénévole du Québec
Julie Rioux, Making Waves/Vague par vague Inc
Brigitte Robichaud, Connect NB
Guy Robinson, Université of Moncton
Art Robson, National Parole Board
Renée Roy, Provincial Department of Family and Community Services
Robin Saliba, NB Multicultural Council
Charles Savoie, Veterans Affairs Canada
Elda Savoie, Centre de prevention de la violence familiale
Julie Savoie, Provincial Department of Family and Community Services
Real Savoie, Sport and Recreation
Feida Scott, Connect NB
Katherine Scott, Canadian Council on Social Development
Roger Sénéchal, Provincial Department of Family and Community Services
Malcolm Shookner, Atlantic Health Promotion Research Centre
Georgina Steinsky Shwartz, Canadian Centre for Philanthropy
Janice Slaney, Provincial Department of Family and Community Services
Harry Sock, Child and Family Services, Elsipogtog First Nation
Danny Soucy, Soucy Consulting
Paula Speevak Sladowski, Centre for Voluntary Sector Res. & Develop.
Bob Stranach, National Crime Prevention Centre
Nadine Thériault, Voluntary Sector Forum
Robert Thibault, Maison Nazereth
Séan Tobin, Community Mobile Soup Kitchens
Lynne Toupin, Human Resources in the Voluntary Sector
Mandy Tower, St. John Ambulance New Brunswick Council
Steve Turgeon, National Crime Prevention Centre
Dr. John Valk, Renaissance College, UNB
Micheline Ward, Provincial Department of Family and Community Services
Lee Webb, Renaissance College, UNB
Garth Williams, Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada
Phil Williams, Kidney Foundation
Cathy Wright, CWright Consulting

APPENDIX B: SUMMARY OF FEEDBACK

The following provides a summary of feedback from participants, gleaned from the completed overall evaluation forms and individual workshop evaluations.

SATISFACTION WITH THE FORUM

The majority of participants rated the conference at 4 or 5 on a scale with 5 being 'very satisfied'. The most common themes from the comments described the Forum in the follow ways:

- Provided an excellent environment for groups to network, to exchange and to share information; and to meet people with similar points of interest;
- Presented stimulating workshops/excellent workshops on a variety of subjects ;
- Keynote presentation by Cindy Blackstock was the highlight of the forum;
- Greater awareness of key issues such as inclusion, social economy, and funding and human resource challenges facing voluntary sector;
- Insight into what other communities are doing in community development and community engagement
- Understanding the challenges others face.

HOW THE FORUM WILL CONTRIBUTE TO WORKING WITH INDIVIDUALS, GROUPS AND COMMUNITIES

Participants spoke about the practical tools they received that will help engage different sectors and assist in the delivery of programs and information dissemination. They also spoke about changing perspectives as the following comments demonstrate:

- View issues with fresh eyes
- Helped me get a real life perspective
- Hope to walk forward and have a better vision for the future
- Reflect on my job
- Refresher; opportunity to revisit some of the issues and challenges
- Confirmed the importance of being involved
- Encouraged to take leadership
- Leaving the conference very motivated
- Future fuel

SUGGESTIONS FOR THE FUTURE

Under **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE FUTURE**, a number of specific suggestions were made for topics and broadening the invitation list and making sure this was an annual event. Participants also described the challenge of balancing the need for time to reflect on what they were learning with repeating workshops to capture all that was going on.

Another common theme was the desire for more discussion in the sessions which would include an element of developing action plans and ways to promote changes. More small group discussion, more learning circles with facilitated discussions, more examples of projects working at the community level and more 'how to' sessions were specific suggestions for the future.

Understanding and supporting the diversity of New Brunswick was a key component throughout this forum. Participants commented on the many learnings related to: working with different sectors such as the business community; the meanings associated with the duality of our province; building understandings across cultures with the aboriginal and non-aboriginal communities; and the profile given to both rural and urban issues.