

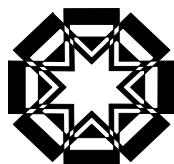


Bulkley River: April 30, 2009

Flowing Dialogue: An Exercise in Connecting Community Development and Organizational Development

Smithers and Telkwa: April 2, 16, 30, 2009

Sponsored by the Smithers Social Planning Council and the partners of Learning Initiatives for Rural and Northern BC (LIRN)



AN INITIATIVE OF THE BC HEALTHY LIVING ALLIANCE



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Dialogue no. 1: Smithers, Old Train Station

1. Introduction

Community issues and assets change over time, and so do the interests of people living in communities. Organizations that seek to make their communities better places for everyone, regardless of age, sex, religion, culture, ability, etc., face the persistent challenge of putting their organizations through continuous cycles of reflection, re-organizing and re-development – with a view to ensuring that the given organization is responsive to community life. *Flowing Dialogue* was a community and organizational development exercise designed to help community leaders that are formally and informally associated with the Smithers Social Planning Council meet this challenge.

Put simply, *Flowing Dialogue* was a series of three interactive meetings that engaged community members in a journey to reflect upon the theory and practice of community development with a view to enriching the pool of potential community development activities in the Bulkley Valley while simultaneously strengthening the community development leadership role of the Smithers Social Planning Council. The meetings were held on April 2nd, 16th and 30th, 2009, and each meeting provided a space in which participants could engage in dialogue and deliberation about what community development means, what constitutes effective and inclusive community development, and how the Smithers Social Planning Council (SSPC) can continue to facilitate community development activities in the Bulkley Valley.

The overarching purpose of the dialogue series was to facilitate a community-based process in which diverse community members could critically assess existing community development practice in the Bulkley Valley, and begin the process of imagining new or re-invigorating existing pathways to community development in the region. Specifically, the dialogue series aimed to achieve the following three objectives:

1. Provide a continuous open forum for community members to exchange ideas about the success factors and barriers to effective and inclusive community development activities;
2. Create space for the inclusion of new community leaders to become actively involved in the community development work of the SSPC;
3. Generate actionable ideas that can inform the work plan of the Smithers Social Planning Council for the 2009/2010 fiscal year,

This report provides a summary of the proceedings of the dialogue series which will inform the next phases of community and organizational development enacted by and within the Smithers Social Planning Council. The next section describes the dialogue format and outlines the activities that occurred at each of the three dialogues. The results of the dialogue series have been translated into a draft work plan for the SSPC, which is featured in the next section. Closing reflections on the dialogues series and an outline of next steps comprise the second last section. The final section is the appendices, which include the participant list, evaluation results, review of sponsoring organizations and an information sheet about community engagement methods.



Dialogue no. 3: Telkwa, Old Rangers Station

2. Overview of *Flowing Dialogue*

Flowing Dialogue is a place-based process that recognizes the fact that rural and Northern communities are built on interpersonal relationships and in order to effect positive change one must design strategies that build on and strengthen these relationships. This means seeking out the strengths, assets, and local sense of place and culture that make a small community unique, and then designing a community development effort that fits into that context.¹ *Flowing Dialogue* takes this insight as its starting point and, as such, was a project developed incrementally and reflexively in partnership with the dialogue participants.

The dialogue series organizers employed semi-structured formats for meetings and worked to ensure that participants drove the dialogue direction. The first meeting took place in Smithers at the Old Train Station, where over twenty participants gathered to learn about integrated approaches to community development and participate in open ended conversation about their personal experiences engaging people in community development activities.

The second meeting consisted of a presentation on the role of social planning councils in community development, as well as an historical overview of the activities of the Smithers Social Planning Council. These presentations provided an informational backdrop to a group deliberation exercise that engaged participants with the current

¹ Kushman, J.W. & Barnhardt R. (2001). Reforming education from the inside-out: A study of community engagement and educational reform in Rural Alaska. *Journal of Research in Rural Education*, 17(1). <http://ankn.uaf.edu/Curriculum/articles.html>. Retrieved on June 13, 2006.

overarching goals of the SSPC, and enabled the group to make some selections about priority action ideas that they would like to consider pursuing in the third dialogue, and potentially throughout the upcoming year. This second session aimed to help participants refine some of their thinking from the first dialogue and reach consensus on the general contours of the type of work that they would like to see from the SSPC.

The third dialogue was intended to serve as a reflective meeting, providing participants the opportunity to reflect and/or explore in more detail the content of the previous two meetings, and, in so doing, confirm and/or change the priority action ideas that were identified at the second dialogue. The informal café-like atmosphere of the third dialogue intended to set the stage for participants to revise ideas that emerged from the previous two dialogues and/or generate new ideas for the development of the SSPC and communities in the Bulkley Valley.



Dialogue no. 3: Telkwa, Old Rangers Station

3. Results: From Dialogue to Work Plan for the SSPC

We have combined the consensus ideas from the dialogue series with the ongoing goals and activities of the SSPC as expressed in the Smithers Social Planning work plan for 2008/2009², and input from the annual community forum held in November 2008 to chart a course of collaborative action for the 2009/2010 fiscal year for the SSPC.

In addition to the information presented below, three additional columns should be added to the proposed work plan: (a) Activity leaders (naming the people who will drive the given organizational/community development on behalf of the SSPC; (b) Time line; (c) evaluation strategy (describing the method that will be employed to assess the effectiveness of the given activity as it relates to the outcomes that the activities aim to achieve). The following draft work plan represents the proposed scope of activities for the SSPC for the 2009/2010 fiscal year.

² Terms of Reference, Smithers Social Planning Council, November (2006). 2008/2009 Work Plan for the Smithers Social Planning Council (2008).

3.1. Draft SSPC Work Plan 2009/2010

Goals	Objectives	Action to achieve Objectives	Intended Outcomes
Support priority community health initiatives	Continue to support community initiatives directed at the top 5 identified social issues: Aboriginal Health, Mental Health & Addictions, Literacy, Child & Youth Development, and Housing	Support 2 projects developed by the community; a) Community Navigator b) Community Task force on Housing, and assist with x-sectoral conversations with decision makers as needed	a) Completed feasibility study for the Navigator b) Completed a housing strategy plan for presentation to town council
Increase engagement in improving quality of life for all	Design and deliver a series of community conversations about relevant local issues and assets	Create plan for a series of conversations in different locations on different topics in the Bulkley Valley. Considerations for the development of the plan include: partnerships, funding, format types (i.e., world café, open space, philosopher café, soap box, door-to-door conversations, etc.); relationship between the community conversations and the community celebration, etc. Deliver and evaluate the conversation series. Consideration for evaluation: digital story telling	a) Enhanced feelings of being heard among participants b) Improved respect, understanding and harmony across cultural groups and generations c) Increased number of new relationships between participants d) Improved public awareness of social and community issues e) Generation of new ideas and increased participation in SSPC activities
Development of the SSPC	Finalize the vision, mission and guiding principles of the SSPC	Develop and implement a process to finalize vision, mission and guiding principles.	Improved coherency of public description of SSPC
	Develop communication materials and related communication tools for the SSPC	Create electronic and paper-based communication tools for the SSPC, including: power point presentation; fact sheet about historical work of the SSPC; brochure that includes vision, mission, guiding principles, accomplishment highlights and contact information of the SSPC, etc. Establish an interactive web site for the SSPC. Possible components of the website could include: SSPC info, discussion forums; place to locate inventories; blog spot; etc.	a) Improved consistency of messaging and profile of the SSPC b) Increased number of people who are aware of the work of the SSPC and member organizations c) improved process for communicating between members of public, SSPC and ally organizations

Goals	Objectives	Action to achieve Objectives	Intended Outcomes
	<p>Develop strategy to increase the number of community organizations and businesses actively involved in the work of the SSPC. Implementation and monitoring of strategy</p>	<p>Strategy should consider: effective use of communication and promotional materials; identification of organizations, businesses and ad hoc groups that have similar mandates to SSPC and/or would be interested in being involved with the work of the SSPC; development of personal relationships with ally organizations, businesses and individuals; plan to feature presentations from organizations, supporting businesses, groups at SSPC meetings; SSPC presentations to other organizations, etc.</p>	<p>a) Increased number of relations and improved quality of relations with ally organizations and businesses b) Increased number of collaborative arrangements between SSPC and ally organizations c) Improved public awareness of social development issues in Bulkley Valley and the work of the SSPC</p>
<p>Promote & support Inclusive Community Development</p>	<p>Continue to develop new engagement and relationship between SSPC and the Town of Smithers to inform the decision making process</p>	<p>Create plan for developing relationship with Town of Smithers and Village of Telkwa, including a special attention to the sequence of relationship-building activities, such as: informal conversations with council members and city staff, delegations to town council; driving a process to form social policy advisory committee to council; creation and submission of social policy proposals to the Smithers and Telkwa councils, etc.</p>	<p>a) Improved relations with town council b) Increased number of social policy issues engaged by local governments c) Increased public awareness of social policy issues in Smithers and Telkwa d) Improved public awareness of the work of the SSPC and member organizations</p>
<p>Promotion of Inclusion, Celebration of Diversity</p>	<p>- Strengthen relationships across cultures - Encourage a voice and full participation by all community members -Promote a healthy, safe, culturally diverse community and address racism</p>	<p>Public education through workshops, media, celebration and recognition Host Annual bridging forum and issues forum Support “Safer Communities” Work</p>	<p>a) Identification of community development interests of participants; b) Strengthened feelings of belonging among participants c) Improved respect, understanding and harmony across cultural groups and generations Increased number of new relationships</p>

4. Reflections: Results of Dialogue Series and Next Steps

In BC, we share a rich history of community development that has, in large measure, been facilitated by social planning councils. Charged with the function of making communities places where people are able to exercise their rights and responsibilities in a manner that dignify all living things, social planning councils are pivotal in making positive change happen - and generally manage to have fun while doing it. *Flowing Dialogue* serves as another example of community development work facilitated by a social planning council that mixed engagement with serious issues with fun and relationship development – all activities that continue the tradition of community development in BC.

Each meeting in the *Flowing Dialogue* series aimed to place conversations about community development in a dialectal relationship with conversations about the types of community activities that should be undertaken by the SSPC. As such, *Flowing Dialogue* was a confluence of reflective dialogue, action-planning, and relationship development, amounting to a route for community leaders to travel upon in their shared aspiration of turning the places where they live into just and healthy communities.

In addition to strengthening the leadership of the SSPC by involving new people in the action planning activities of the organization, *Flowing Dialogue* also resulted in a draft work plan for 2009/2010. The draft work plan featured in this report serves as an organizational development tool that will empower the SSPC to re-assert and realize its mission of materializing social justice and health in the Bulkley Valley. To keep the dialogue about the work plan and related activities flowing into the near future, it is recommended that the following steps be taken.

The first step is to share the electronic draft work plan for the SSPC with members who were not participant in the *Flowing Dialogue* series and elicit their input through an electronic consultation process. After a round of input via email, the plan should be revised based on new information and a meeting should be held to adopt the work plan, including an invitation for people to sign up and take a leadership role in one of the activity areas outlined in the plan. Questions about how to report on work plan progress should also be engaged at the work plan adoption meeting.

5. Appendices

Appendix A: Evaluation Results

At the final dialogue in Telkwa, participants were asked to complete an evaluation of the series. In this appendix, we feature the summary of the evaluation results. The evaluation form was completed by seven participants.

1. Please indicate the type of group/organization that you represent

- | | | |
|--------------------------|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | First Nation government or Aboriginal organization | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Social development nonprofit organization | 2 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Economic development nonprofit organization | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Environmental preservation nonprofit organization | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Arts and culture nonprofit organization | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Government (municipal, regional, provincial or federal) | 2 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Business | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Health (health authority, mental health association, etc.) | 1 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Education (school, college, university, etc.) | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Civil society (engaged citizen, volunteer group, etc.) | 2 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Religious organization | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Other: _____ | |

2. Was this learning event relevant for your community?

Not at all					Very relevant
1	2	3	4	5	

Average: 4.3

3. Did this event help you connect with people in your community and/or people from a different community?

Not at all					Very helpful
1	2	3	4	5	

Average: 4.5

4. Did this event provide you with an opportunity to engage in meaningful dialogue about topics that matter to you?

Not at all A great deal

1 2 3 4 5

Average: 4.4

Comments:

- I think there would be a benefit to continually re-ground the intention of the group. Dialogue occurs within deep intention.

5. Did this event increase your knowledge of how to participate in community life?

Not at all A great deal

1 2 3 4 5

Average: 4.0

6. How would you rate the event facilitators?

Poor Excellent

1 2 3 4 5

Average: 4.5

7. What could have made this event better?

- More participants
- Engage more people
- Clarity of intention
- Communication of agenda/objectives prior to meetings

8. Based on your experiences today, what would you like to know more about?

- How to engage community
- Creative engagement models
- Ways to have event reflect more diverse realities
- How other agencies gain the attention of the general public

9. How will you act on what you learned today?

- Continue to dialogue and develop framework
- Attend future informal meetings
- Further participation with SPARC
- Continuing with dialogue

Appendix B: Participant List

Name	Organization	Email	Phone
Dave Jones		oonjit@yahoo.com	877-7725
Carmen Nikal		alnikal@uniserve.com	847-9511 (home)
Linda Bayes	BV Anti-poverty	lbayes@hotmail.com	847-6166
Geli McAloney	BC Chamber of Commerce	amcaloney@yahoo.ca	847-2346
Tisha Witt	Volunteer Smithers	volunteer@scsa.ca	847-9515
Nancy Cody	Northern Health	nancy.cody@northernhealth.ca	847-6400
Darcy Repen	Great Bear Cooperative Project	info@greatbearcoop.ca	846-9008
Tricia Kapelari	One Sky	triciak@onesky.ca	877-6030
Stephen Lockwood	School District #54	slockwood@sd54.bc.ca	847-2008
Adrian Johnson	Bulkley Valley Consulting	adrian.johnson@bulkleyvalleyconsulting.ca	847-6146
Shawna Scafe	Northern Health	shawna.scafe@northernhealth.ca	847-6400
Amelia Mattson	BV Regional Pool	amattson@bvpool.com	847-4244
Tara Schritter	Make Children First	child1st@telus.net	847-4244
Bill Goodacre	Citizen	billgoodacre@telus.net	877-1895
Rima Zitakauskas	Telkwa Village Council	rimas@citywest.ca	846-5464
Dave Stevens	BCEN	geek@uniserve.com	876-8939
Jane Boulton	Smithers Social Planning Council	jboulton@usdc.bc.ca	846-5739
Dawn Hanson	BC Healthy Communities	dhanson@bc.cancer.ca	847-4354

Appendix C: LIRN BC and Partner Organizations

LIRN is a collaborative approach to building on the capacities of rural, remote and northern British Columbian communities. The LIRN process encourages government (municipal, provincial and federal), First Nations, non-government organizations (community-based, regional and provincial) and businesses to work together to plan, deliver and evaluate a locally relevant learning initiative. LIRN is made possible through a partnership of federal and provincial governments, as well as non-government organizations that recognize the strengths and challenges of rural, remote and Northern BC communities. The LIRN partners also understand the importance of local opportunities to learn about and work on current issues, as well as assess, envision, plan and act for a better future.

As LIRN partners, the BC Rural Network, Canadian Rural Partnership, Service Canada, PeerNet BC, BC Healthy Communities, BC Healthy Living Alliance, and the Social Planning and Research Council of BC (SPARC BC) have combined their expertise and resources in an effort to maximize community capacity building opportunities for people living in rural, remote, and northern parts of the province. The objective of the LIRN process is to create a safe space in which community members learn and work together in a manner that is locally relevant. On the following pages, we provide brief descriptions of each of the LIRN partners.

Canadian Rural Partnership

Canadian Rural Partnership (CRP) is a federal initiative which supports rural communities by helping to identify the issues they are facing, by taking collaborative action to address these issues, and connecting community to community and community to government to share information on available resources and best practice in rural development. We identify issues by bringing rural community residents together for dialogue or at conferences. The information from these gatherings is shared with a federal/provincial Rural Team which can undertake collaborative action to address these issues and can provide the input toward influencing government policies and programs with a Rural Lens. We also share information from one community to another and from government to communities through listservs, newsletters, best practice guides, and program lists. For more information about the Canadian Rural Partnership, please visit our website at: http://www.rural.gc.ca/team/bc/bchome_e.phtml

Service Canada and the New Horizons for Seniors Program

Service Canada is becoming the program delivery arm of the federal government. Over a dozen federal departments are working with Service Canada so it can become a single window of service and program delivery for the federal government. Service Canada is home to the Employment Insurance system, labour market programming to help unemployed people return to work, income support like Old Age Security and Canada Pension. Service Canada also coordinates the New Horizons for Seniors program, which is a program that provides funding for community-based projects that aim to encourage seniors to contribute to and become more engaged in their local communities. Service Canada is interested in strengthening linkages with communities for more effective delivery of federal programs and services. For more information about Service Canada and the New Horizons for Seniors program, please visit our website at: <http://www.sdc.gc.ca/en/isp/horizons/toc.shtml>

Social Planning and Research Council of BC (SPARC BC) and the Community Development Education Program

SPARC BC, a registered non-profit society and a federally registered charity, was established in 1966 and is a leader in research, public education and advocacy regarding issues of community development, accessibility, and income security. SPARC BC is a provincial organization with over 15,000 members and is governed by a Board of Directors from across BC. Our mission is to work with communities in building a just and healthy society for all.

The Community Development Education Program is one of our methods for realizing our mission. The Community Development Education Program aims to empower individuals and organizations by providing them with learning opportunities to identify local assets and issues, build local knowledge and develop skills and action-plans that contribute to effecting local consensus-oriented change. The curriculum resources and facilitation services of the Community Development Education Program are available to communities through the LIRN BC process. For more information about SPARC BC and the Community Development Education Program, please visit our website at www.sparc.bc.ca.

PeerNet BC

PeerNetBC has been helping people connect since 1986, providing resources for peer groups and peer-led initiatives. Our resources and services are available for community members and groups across British Columbia, including online, rural, multicultural and youth engagement initiatives. PeerNetBC is a non-profit, registered charitable organization.

PeerNetBC offers interactive and dynamic workshops focusing on the nuts and bolts of peer support. We concentrate on the process of peer support so that you can apply it to your own issue, community or project. Workshops are designed so participants learn from each other, gain knowledge through practicing skills in a safe environment, and meet others who are experiencing the same challenges or situations.

We offer a regular series of standard workshops several times a year for community members, and we develop customized workshops around many topics for community groups and organizations. If you'd like to be notified when public workshops are scheduled, please join our emailing list. If you'd like to arrange a customized workshop for your group, give us a call at 604-733-6186. Also, see our website: <http://www.peernetbc.com>

BC Healthy Communities

BC Healthy Communities is part of the international Healthy Cities/Healthy Communities movement. We support communities and community groups that are taking a holistic and integrated approach to increasing the health, well-being and healthy development in their communities.

Worldwide, the Healthy Communities movement has identified some important building blocks for creating a health community: Community Involvement, Political Commitment, Inter-sectoral Partnerships, Healthy Public Policy. These building blocks are important tools for addressing multiple and interconnected determinants of health: social, environmental, economic, physical, psychological, spiritual and cultural.

BC Healthy Communities supports communities and community groups that are working on Healthy Community-related initiatives in a number of ways:

- Providing information on resources, tools and other Healthy Community initiatives
- Making referrals to relevant resource materials and organizations
- Facilitating/co-facilitating community meetings that engage diverse sectors
- Developing educational materials and resources
- Publishing the BCHC Healthy Communities newsletter
- Working in partnership to develop/maintain databases and resource inventories

For more information about BCHC and to find out how we might be able to support your efforts to create a healthier community, please contact us at our Central Office in Victoria, or call the Regional Facilitator for your area. Also, check out our website: <http://www.bchealthycommunities.ca/content/home.asp>

BC Healthy Living Alliance and the Community Capacity Building Strategy

Led by the BC and Yukon Division of the Canadian Cancer Society, the Community Capacity Building Strategy is an initiative of the BC Healthy Living Alliance (BCHLA). The Alliance is working to improve the health of British Columbians through leadership that enhances collaborative action to promote physical activity, healthy eating, and living smoke free. The BCHLA has received funding through ActNow BC. Community capacity building aims to enhance the skills, abilities, resources, and commitment of communities and their members to care for each other, nurture unique talents and leadership, and act on challenges and opportunities the community faces. As a result, individuals and groups increase their ability to impact the health and vitality of their communities in a positive, sustainable manner through collaboration, education, communication, and cooperation. The strategy is focusing on areas of the province that can most benefit from this approach to promoting health. This takes in rural and remote communities addressing the unique needs of aboriginal people, youth, new immigrants, refugees and low-income populations

For more information about the Community Capacity Building Strategy, please visit the following site: www.bchealthyliving.ca

Smithers Social Planning Council

The Smithers Social Planning Council (SSPC) acts as a resource to Smithers residents, agencies and all levels of government in providing a broad based social perspective on community issues or in response to specific matters of a social nature. The SSPC acts as an advocate for the resolution of community social issues and may address the public, agencies and all levels of government in support of this role. The Council also acts as a liaison with community committees, agencies, the public and other government sectors. The SSPC is dedicated to an inclusive process that addresses the social aspects of building and maintaining a healthy, thriving community for the benefit of all its citizens.

The Smithers Social Planning Council is charged with meeting the following objectives:

- To ensure the community works together to provide a safe, convenient and people oriented environment, which ensures access to all community amenities by all citizens regardless of age, income or other factors.
- To emphasize citizen participation in all social planning decisions affecting Smithers.
- To respond to changing social needs and issues in a responsible, flexible, collaborative and innovative manner.
- To support and reinforce social development activities.

People, Participation, Positive Change: SPARC BC Information Sheet

This information sheet contains:

- Definitions of three forms of community engagement
- Brief descriptions of eleven different community engagement methods, as well as related resources for each method

Defining Community Engagement (CE)

CE is the practice of informing and indirectly and/or directly involving members of the public in the agenda-setting, decision-making and policy-forming activities of government and non-government organizations. It consists of three basic forms: Communication, Consultation and Participation. Each of these forms of community engagement is explained below.

Communication: Communication efforts aim to transfer relevant information from an individual, group or organization to another. The goal is to reach as many relevant citizens as possible with as much of the information as possible. Examples of common communication methods include: cable TV, radio, websites, email, newspaper ads, newsletters, brochures, etc.

Communication is the thread that ties together all types of community engagement. It is not possible to consult with or involve the public in community processes unless it is first adequately informed about the matter at hand.

Communications are fundamentally important because they serve as the first point of contact for the public and enable members of the public to gain an understanding of the services and activities of an individual, group and/or organization.

Consultation: Consultation can be conceived as the reverse of communication as characterized above because it attempts to maximize the inflow of information from the relevant population to a given individual, group or organization interested in knowing something. While consultative processes often include communicative aspects, they focus on bringing information from members of the public into the internal decision making processes of a given public or private body. Common consultation methods include: focus groups, public meetings without voting, public hearings, public input sessions during council meetings, surveys, stakeholder workshops, etc.

Consultation enables individuals, groups and organizations to gain information from stakeholders and the public, and provides participants in a consultation process the opportunity to express their views on a local issue and or development. Consultation can also serve as an effective means to improving accountability and public ownership over direction of local activities.

Participation: Participation often includes communication and consultation processes, as well as ongoing involvement of people in the act of shaping some aspect of a public policy, whether it be local, national or global. Participation differs from communication and consultation in that it involves the sharing of decision making power among participating stakeholders. Participation of the public in decision making processes comes from the tradition of *participatory democracy*, which seeks to locate common sense and local people at the centre of community change processes. This differs from *representative democracy*, which generally locates control over decisions in the hands of elected representatives whose primary responsibilities are to communicate and consult with members of the public. In liberal democracies, elected representatives shape their decisions with public input, and in most cases at provincial and national levels, party ideology also plays a big part in decision making about addressing issues affecting communities.

However, some governments and nongovernmental agencies have and continue to use participatory approaches to decision making. Government-driven forms of public participation in decision making include: advisory committees and task forces, deliberative polling, citizen's juries, participatory budgeting, etc. Non-government organizations who involve the public in their operations and activities generally do so through planned programs that contribute to a particular developmental direction of the organization. Examples of NGO forms of public participation include: working on sub-committees, sitting on a board of directors, helping to plan and care for a garden, etc.

It should be noted that participation in community change falls on a continuum from weak to strong participation, and methods vary in the degree to which they engage participants in framing the issues at play and in designing the actions for addressing the

given issues. The popular rationale for involving the public in decision making processes is that public participation fosters pluralism and encourages examinations of issues from as many perspectives as possible in order to find the best solution for everyone involved.



In this section, eleven popular and proven community engagement methods are reviewed: Open Space Technology, Study Circles, Conversation Cafés, Citizen's Jury, Future Search, Citizens' Choice Works, SpeakOut, Digital Story Telling with Youth, Community Visioning, Charettes, SPARC BC Social Development Plan. The information presented below was derived from the reports developed by Tamarack Institute, Sarkissian Consulting and SPARC BC.

The Port Moody Public Engagement Toolkit (2007), created by SPARC BC and Cogeny, includes summaries of most of these methods. See this toolkit for more information, as well as the five step community engagement planning process and checklists.
www.sparc.bc.ca.

1. Open Space Technology: Open Space sessions take form according to participants' agendas. Participants sit in a large circle and devote their 30-60 minutes towards creating their own meeting. All participants are teachers and learners. When a topic is brought up, everyone provides their views and opinions on the topic. There is no limit to the number of participants. The meeting can take as long as an afternoon or a few days, depending on when participants decide that their work is done. The idea is to allow participants to create and define their version of a conference and articulate what they believe are the important and essential issues.

To conceptualize Open Space Technology (OST), imagine a conference with no agenda, no planned sessions, no scheduled speakers, etc. OST is an effective and economical self-organizing system whose two fundamentals are passion and responsibility. Without passion, nobody is interested. Without responsibility, nothing will be done. OST meetings have the greatest chance of success if they include people who have chosen to come together to address issues they care deeply about, and if those people can then do something about the issues. Open Space meetings follow the following four basic principles:

- Whoever comes are the right people;
- Whatever happens is the only thing that could have happened;
- When it starts is the right time; and
- When it's over, it's over.

Open Space meetings work in the following three ways: a) Participants create the agenda; b) Participants choose which sessions to attend and record the ideas that emanate; and, c) Participants re-convene to share insights and conclusions.

When all issues have been posted, participants sign up and attend those individual sessions. Sessions typically last for 1.5 hours; the whole gathering usually lasts from a half day up to about two days. The opening and agenda creation lasts about an hour, even with a very large group. After the opening and agenda creation, the individual groups go to work. The attendees organize each session; people may freely decide which session they want to attend, and may switch to another one at any time. Online networking can occur both before and following the actual face-to-face meetings so discussions can continue seamlessly. All discussion reports are compiled in a document on site and sent to participants, unedited, shortly after.

Related Resources:

Co-Intelligence Institute. www.co-intelligence.org/P-Openspace.html

Open Space World. www.openspaceworld.org/

2. Study Circles: Study circles are an informal way to engage residents in a public issue. They are small group, democratic and highly participatory discussions, ranging in size from 5 to 15 people who agree to meet over a period of months to explore a specific issue(s). Groups decide how frequently they would like to meet, but generally discussions are held over a series of four two-hour sessions.

Discussion leaders, acting as facilitators, guide the discussion by asking questions, identifying key points and managing the group process. Complex issues are broken down into manageable sub-divisions, and controversial topics are dealt with in depth. The results of study groups depend on what a given group decides. Some examples of results can include: delegations and reports to city councils, public awareness raising campaign, etc.

Related Resources

Study Circles Resource Center. www.studycircles.org

3. Conversation Cafes: Conversation cafes are structured, but informal, hosted conversations, held in a public setting (like a café), where people come together to talk about issues that matter. The exact format for a café varies, some last one hour with 12 people, others over two hours with over 1200 people, but the common theme across all cafes is an emphasis to stimulate thinking on a topic with a diverse group of people.

Conversation Cafés generally include a series of rounds of conversations where people can move to different spaces should be hospitable, include a clear statement of the

purpose for engaging in conversation, and provide facilitators (Table host) and recorders for each conversation. Conversations built on one another through the table host, who updates new participants, are a great way to build community, explore an issue without the burden of finding the right answer, and see an issue through the eyes of others. Café conversations are guided by the following considerations: Focus on what matters; contribute your thinking; speak your mind and heart; listen to understand; link and connect ideas; listen together for insights and deeper questions; play, doodle draw; have fun. Conversation cafes are relatively easy to set up and can be directed at a diverse range of public policy issue areas.

SPARC BC and the Voluntary Organization Consortium of BC co-hosted a conversation café on the topic of capacity development in the non-profit sector. The event, entitled *Negotiating the Slippery Slope of Capacity Building*, used a world café format that was structured according to a conceptual framework for understanding the different players in the non-profit sector. Conversations took place at nine tables, divided into the following four distinct categories as follows:

- Individual (2 tables)
- Group (2 tables)
- Organization (3 tables)
- Sector (2 tables) participants rotated across one of four thematic tables every 25 minutes.

Each table engaged the following three questions:

- What are your personal experiences with capacity development initiatives at this level?
- What kinds of capacities do you think should be developed at this level?
- How can these kinds of capacities be developed and supported?

A facilitator/note-taker was assigned to each of the nine tables to guide and track conversations, using the predetermined questions to build ideas from one round of conversation to the next. In this way the conversations at each table progressed even as the participants

Related Resources

Conversation Café: www.conversationcafe.org

The World Café: www.theworldcafe.com

SPARC BC: <http://www.sparc.bc.ca/search/negotiating%20the%20slope>

4. Citizens Jury: The Citizens' Jury method is a means for obtaining informed citizen input into policy decisions. The jury is composed of 12-16 randomly selected citizens, who are informed by several perspectives, often by experts referred to as 'witnesses'. The jurors then go through a process of deliberation where subgroups are often formed to focus on different aspects of the issue. After a series of focused discussions, the jurors

produce a decision or provide recommendations in the form of a citizens' report. Usually a 4-5 day process, the Citizens' Jury is intended to provide a means for more democratic decision-making.

The commissioning authority (i.e., government, non-government agency) are required to publicize the jury and its findings, to respond within a set time and either to follow its recommendations or to explain publicly why not. Compared with other models, citizens' juries offer a unique combination of information, time, scrutiny, deliberation and independence. The Citizen's Jury Project at Australian National University (ANU) is a good example of how to run a Citizen's Jury project. Under the project, two citizens' juries have been run. The first, which was conducted in October 1999, involved examination of the management of national parks and reserves in one Australian State. The second, conducted in January 2000, looked at management options for a coastal road in northern Queensland.

Related Resources

Australia national University: www.cjp.anu.edu.au/index.html

The Jefferson Center: www.jefferson-center.org

5. Future Search Conference: A Future Search Conference is a 2 ½ day planning meeting that helps large, diverse groups (organizations or communities) discover values, purposes and projects they hold in common and enables participants to create a desired future together and act in pursuit of it. The conference is designed to bring the whole community system into the room to work on a task-focused agenda to find common goals and to develop actions to help meet those goals.

Related Resources

Future Search Network: www.futuresearch.net

For a useful plan on how to conduct a Future Search Conference, visit the Department of Sustainability and Environment of Victoria's website. Department of Sustainability and Environment. "Future Search Conference." (Victoria: Australia, October 2005). www.dse.vic.gov.au/DSE/wcmn203.nsf/LinkView/

6. Citizens' Choicework: Public Agenda's Citizens' Choicework is a process to assist communities tackle hard issues – such as the environment, health care, or childcare – in a way that engages citizens who are normally uninvolved, and ensures advocates and experts do not hijack the conversation. The technique is designed to develop three or four different points of view on a community issue, based on what the public and experts say, each with arguments for and against, and a description of costs and tradeoffs for each option. These packaged choices are meant to be conversation starters – a way to clarify alternatives and promote discussion. Each set of choices is explained using everyday language and focus on concerns and values that non-experts can readily engage.

Related Resource

Public Agenda: www.publicagenda.org/pubengage/pubengage.cfm

7. SpeakOut: *SpeakOut* is a lively, innovative, colourful and interactive staffed exhibition — a hybrid event combining some of the characteristics of a meeting and some of an exhibition or 'open house'. The purpose is to provide an informal and interactive public meeting environment where a wide range of people have a chance to participate. It is designed to facilitate structured 'drop-in' participation about community planning and design issues. Participants come to the venue, find the issues on which they wish to 'speak out' and have their say.

A *SpeakOut* is used in any community planning process and can be organized at the start of a process — to introduce a community to a project and generate early enthusiasm and participation — or at the end of a process to 'test' material generated in other consultation processes and 'wrap up' a substantial consultation phase. The applications of *SpeakOuts* are really only limited by one's imagination, as it can be tailored to a number of issues and to a range of communities.

A *SpeakOut* has broad appeal and allows a wide range of participation. The *SpeakOut* works well where specific community feedback or input is sought (for example, a redevelopment, a design process, a needs analysis, etc.). It can be effective when wide community participation is sought and a less structured time format than a formal public meeting or workshop is acceptable (or desired) — as a result, it attracts a great deal more interest than the typical public meeting (a *SpeakOut* generally attracts several hundred people). It can be used in the early stages of a participation process to gather ideas (issue identification) or in later stages where the results of studies/planning are being communicated back to community members.

Some common and key features of a *SpeakOut* are:

1. A *SpeakOut* is organized around local issues. Typically, a *SpeakOut* is structured into a number of 'issue stalls' which relate to findings of earlier consultations and to the specific project goals. So, for example, in an urban renewal project, the issue stalls may be organized as follows: a) Registration; b) Getting around

- (transport); c) Arts and culture; d) Housing; e) Retail and shops; f) Rest, relaxation and recreation; g) Community safety; h) What is important to children; i) What is important to young people; j) How to get involved.
2. A *SpeakOut* is facilitated and recorded. Unlike a typical ‘open house’, a *SpeakOut* is a carefully facilitated event. A trained Listener pays close attention to what people are saying and asks pertinent questions, while all their comments are clearly recorded (on butcher’s paper or pre-printed panels/exercise sheets) by a trained Recorder. A range of interpretive material is used to encourage people to comment on issues of local concern. This is really a ‘listening session’ focusing on the community’s views. As the *SpeakOut* progresses, the walls of the venue become covered with community views. Reading their neighbours’ comments often encourages shy and hesitant people to speak out.
 3. A *SpeakOut* goes to people rather than asking them to come to it. The location of a *SpeakOut* is an important consideration and we have had our best successes with *SpeakOuts* by locating them in places that people naturally congregate — the local park, the town square, the retail area, the pedestrian mall. A *SpeakOut* relies on passers by as well as invitations and it needs to be located centrally where curious people, about their other business, will ‘drop in’.
 4. A *SpeakOut* is an action-learning model. The *SpeakOut* allows us to build on the ideas and material generated during previous consultation activities and will influence final stages of consultation and/or recommendations and action for the project. A *SpeakOut* day is designed to maximize participants’ opportunities to find out more about the project, as well as to identify issues relevant to community. Emphasis is placed on identifying opportunities that will make community projects/planning/renewal successful, as well as seeking advice on the most effective ways forward in the project development, methods to further consult with local communities and how to best communicate future information to people.
 5. A *SpeakOut* is a social activity as well as a consultative one. An important aspect of all *SpeakOuts* is to provide a non-threatening, informal and fun day for local people to participate in decision making. Interactive activities at ‘issue stalls’ are complemented by opportunities for informal discussion over a BBQ lunch and music. An important aspect of *SpeakOuts* is to build enthusiasm for participatory processes and consultation amongst people who may have felt cynical and/or excluded from other types of process.
 6. A *SpeakOut* caters to children as well as adults. The voices of children are often missing from consultation activity and the *SpeakOut* has always involved methods and techniques specifically designed to involve children. We normally have a separate children’s consultation space where specially trained facilitators use techniques such as drawing, model building (with food or with recyclables, as

examples) or interviewing (while doing a fun activity such as face painting) to probe children's aspirations regarding the future of their community.

7. A *SpeakOut* is well advertised. We use combinations of letterbox drops, newspaper advertisements, radio advertisements, online invitations and information, billboards, flyers and posters and word of mouth to generate interest in the *SpeakOut*. Start advertising a month ahead of time and reinforce that advertising up to the day of the event.
8. A *SpeakOut* doesn't leave people to guess what is going on. Emphasize the point of providing clear indication (through signs, badges, flyers, etc.) of what is happening, who is involved and can answer questions and how to participate in the *SpeakOut*. Stalls are all clearly labeled and have verbal prompts (questions to think about or answer) as well as visual ones (photos illustrating issues from the local area, for example). Any interactive exercises require clear, plain language instructions on display.

Related References

Sarkissian W & Cook A: Speaking Out in Community Engagement: A Review of Fifteen Years of Refinement of the *SpeakOut* Model.

8. Digital Story Telling with Youth: This technique is a way of helping community planners and program designers understand the "mental maps" older children and youth hold in their heads about their neighbourhoods. It enables participants to document use of environments and to articulate their wishes for that environment. Significant landmarks, play circuits, focal points, and sacred places in the children and youth's realm can also be identified.

This technique is best used when you want photographic documentation of children's and youth's use of their built and natural environments. It can be used alone or in conjunction with other techniques. As this technique requires some understanding of digital photography and story board making, it is best used with older children and youth. It has been used successfully with children as young as eleven.

This technique can be completed in a full day. Plan a half day of photo taking by recruiting a group of youth, assigning each youth a facilitator familiar with story board technique and a zone in your community for photography. Have the youth take photos of the designated area and use the second half of the day for the facilitator and youth to create a story board for their photos, including dialogue among youth about what they would like to see. Music and voice can be added according to time and interest of group.

Related Resources

Centre for Digital Story Telling: <http://www.storycenter.org/index1.html>

9. Community Visioning: Community visioning is both a process and a product. The process gives residents the opportunity to express what they value about their community and to develop a consensus on what they would like to change or preserve. During this process, residents discuss their ideas on what they would like their community to look and feel like in the next five to 10 years. The product of these discussions is a vision statement. This short statement describes what residents value about their community and what they would like their community to look like in the future. The process of developing a vision statement is more important than the actual statement. The process helps residents to take a realistic look at their community; not to assign blame but to establish an honest appraisal of what their community is. This information is critical for developing a strategy for change.

The product, the vision statement, is important because it helps keep the community on track. Think of the statement as a compass that guides a community through the ups and downs of economic, social and political change. If the statement is truly community developed and supported, changes in these landscapes will have little impact. In addition, the statement may be used to assess the compatibility of new initiatives and programs with the residents' ideas. A community will always have new opportunities, such as new businesses, highways, and government programs. But it is up to residents to determine if these opportunities will either hinder or help their community achieve its vision for the future.

While the actual process of developing a vision may vary from place to place, the Center for Rural Pennsylvania found in its study of examples throughout Pennsylvania and other states that every community goes through the following steps.

1. **Getting Started:** Steering committee forms and begins planning for first workshop.
2. **First Community Workshop:** Steering committee provides an overview of the visioning process and asks participants to identify issues affecting their community.
3. **Establishing Taskforces:** Steering committee tallies results, develops list of taskforces, and plans for second workshop.
4. **Second Community Workshop:** Steering committee reviews activities to date and breaks participants into small taskforces, giving each a specific issue to examine in detail.
5. **Keeping on Track:** Steering committee ensures that taskforces are meeting regularly and plans for the third workshop.
6. **Third Community Workshop:** Taskforces report major findings to the community. Participants are asked to discuss what they want their community to look like in the future.

7. **Drafting the Visioning Statement:** Steering committee ensures that taskforces are meeting regularly and drafts a tentative vision statement.
8. **Fourth Community Workshop/Celebration:** Public unveiling of vision statement and celebration of the community and its residents.
9. **Marketing and Making the Vision a Reality:** Steering committee and taskforces present the vision statement to community groups, local governments, and other groups for their formal approval of the statement. Committee and taskforces request these groups to use the statement when making decisions affecting the community.
10. **Action Plan:** Working with various community organizations and governments, the steering

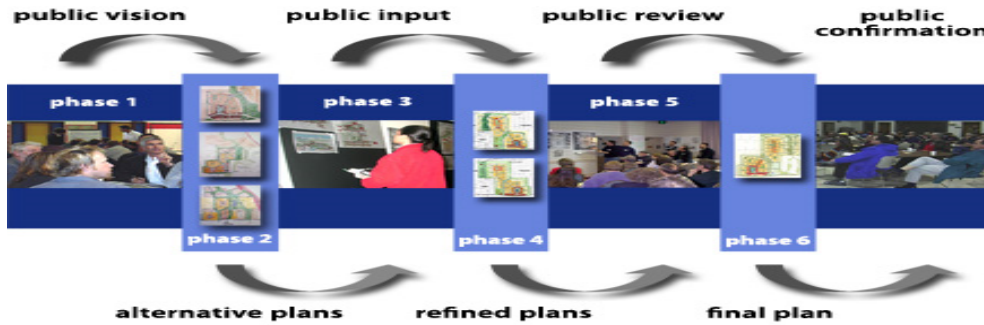
Related Resources

Planning for the Future: A Handbook on Community Visioning (3rd edition, 2004) The Center for Rural Pennsylvania: A Legislative Agency of the Pennsylvania General Assembly.

Cowichan 2020: Achieving the Vision: <http://socialplanningcowichan.org/visions.html>

10. Charrette: The charrette is organized as a series of feedback loops through which stakeholders are engaged at critical decision-making points. These decision-making points occur in primary stakeholder meetings, several public meetings, and possibly during an open house throughout the course of the charrette. These feedback loops provide the charrette team with the information necessary to create a feasible plan. Just as importantly, they allow the stakeholders to become co-authors of the plan so that they are more likely to support and implement it.

The charrette needs to last at least four days for the simplest of projects, and six to seven days for a standard project, in order to accommodate the required three feedback loops. Processes that last less than four days usually do not allow enough time to perform feasibility testing and to deal with major stakeholder issues. Some firms have successfully developed processes lasting less than four consecutive days, which is usually done by breaking the longer charrette into several three-day events about a month apart. The six phases of a NCI charrette are featured in the diagram below.



Related Resources

The National Charrette Institute (NCI): www.charretteinstitute.org/people.html

The Charrette Center encourages the sharing of information regarding Charettes.
www.charrettecenter.net

11. SPARC BC Social Development Plan: The following method assumes that a municipality is driving the creation of a strategic social development plan and that the final deliverables are for a city. We have found that it is always beneficial to maximize the opportunities for community participation and input at multiple stages of the process of developing a strategic social development plan. This helps ensure that the outcomes of the project reflect community needs, and that the goals of the plan are appropriate and have community support. In total there are thirteen steps in developing a strategic social plan for a city.

1. Project initiation and work plan
2. Literature review
3. Key informant interviews and outreach to community stakeholders
4. Prioritization workshop
5. Social indicators quality of life audit
6. Inventory of social programs in Community
7. Social responsibility matrices (Assessing roles and responsibilities of different levels of government in relation to issue areas)
8. Community consultations: gap analysis & discussion of opportunities
9. Preliminary report
10. Action plan consultations
11. Draft action plan
12. Final report to Council
13. Community forum to report on action plan

Related Resources

<http://www.surrey.ca/Living+in+Surrey/City+Plans+And+Strategies/Social+Planning/default.htm>

Appendix E: Smithers Social Planning Council Terms of Reference (2006)

INTRODUCTION

The Smithers Social Planning Council (SSPC) acts as a resource to Smithers residents, agencies and all levels of government in providing a broad based social perspective on community issues or in response to specific matters of a social nature.

The SSPC acts as an advocate for the resolution of community social issues and may address the public, agencies and all levels of government in support of this role. The Council also acts as a liaison with community committees, agencies, the public and other government sectors.

The SSPC is dedicated to an inclusive process that addresses the social aspects of building and maintaining a healthy, thriving community for the benefit of all its citizens.

OBJECTIVES

The Smithers Social Planning Council is charged with meeting the following objectives:

- To ensure the community works together to provide a safe, convenient and people oriented environment, which ensures access to all community amenities by all citizens regardless of age, income or other factors.
- To emphasize citizen participation in all social planning decisions affecting Smithers.
- To respond to changing social needs and issues in a responsible, flexible, collaborative and innovative manner.
- To support and reinforce social development activities.

SCOPE OF WORK

To achieve these objectives, the Smithers Social Planning Council will undertake the following activities:

1. Advise residents, Town Council and other levels of government on social needs, issues and priorities by:
 - initiating, recommending and/or supporting strategic studies to identify local action respecting matters of community development;
 - submitting consolidated program proposals to affected agencies, Town Council and other levels of government having identified community social needs;
 - initiating strategies to deal with areas of social need when identified;
 - supporting and providing methods for involving citizens in social planning activities;
 - supporting and providing methods for educating the community about social planning issues;
 - participating in long range social planning projects; and
 - consulting and participating with service providers and recipients on specific task forces or project committees. *

2. Advise Town Council on the social implications of community development and municipal policy. *
3. Assist with the development of municipal social policy by commenting on Municipal social planning goals, objectives, policy and priorities as set by Town Council.*
4. Receive submissions on relevant social matters from individuals and committees serving the community.
5. Advocate policy that promotes the inclusion of social indicators in the Town's Official Community Plan.*
6. Hold an annual community issues forum ensuring inclusive community participation.
7. Following the community forum, annually file a work plan for the upcoming year for approval by the Social Planning Council. The work plan shall include:
 - issues and areas of concern which require examination;
 - identified process to accomplish tasks;
 - estimate of time required to accomplish listed activities; and
 - a "Fact Sheet" that reports on various economic and social conditions.

MEMBERSHIP

In order to offer a broad-based social perspective on community issues it is **critical** that the Council's membership represent a diversity of service providers, organizations, businesses and interested citizens of Smithers. Council members shall include (as a minimum) the following representation:

- one (1) Town Councillor;
- one (1) representative from the Town Planning Committee;
- one (1) Health Advisory Committee representative (may be a member of SSPC)
- community-at-large members as interest is expressed.

The goal of all appointments will be an inclusive, balanced Social Planning Council with consideration given to areas of interest and expertise.

APPOINTMENT AND TERM OF MEMBERS OF SMITHERS SOCIAL PLANNING COUNCIL

At the first meeting of the year, the facilitator will confirm each returning member and their names will be recorded in the minutes. Any new person wishing to join the SSPC must attend 2 meetings and then write a letter requesting membership which will be recorded in the minutes. They will then be deemed to be a member of the SSPC.

Members shall be appointed to one (1) year term. Following public notice the Council shall fill vacancies for member(s).

APPOINTMENT AND TERM OF MEMBERS OF SMITHERS SOCIAL PLANNING COMMITTEE

Smithers Social Planning Council will recommend members of this committee which will be brought forward to Town Council. The mayor will then appoint these people to the committee.

Members shall be appointed to one (1) year term. Following public notice the Council shall fill vacancies for member(s).

ADMINISTRATION AND MEETINGS

The Social Planning Council will meet regularly throughout the year with a minimum of four (4) meetings. The Facilitator and Co-Facilitator will be elected by the Council at the first meeting in each new year. If both are absent from any meeting, an Acting Facilitator shall be chosen by those members present.

Following a community issues forum to be held once each year, the Council shall draft a work plan. The work plan shall accompany a year-end report written by the outgoing Facilitator of the previous year. A total of six (6) members, including the Facilitator, Co-Facilitator or Acting Facilitator shall constitute a quorum. If any member misses three (3) regularly called consecutive meetings without giving a reasonable cause to the Facilitator or Staff in advance, he or she will be deemed to have resigned. The Facilitator will contact any member after their 2nd missed meeting to determine their interest in continuing as a member of the Social Planning Council.

An agenda package will be mailed or otherwise delivered to all members prior to each meeting. All meetings will be timed and discussion will take place in roundtable-style. Council will strive to reach all decisions by consensus. If consensus is not possible, decisions will be reached by a simple vote of the members present. All points of procedures not specifically provided for in these Terms of Reference shall be decided and determined in accordance with Robert's Rules of Order.

Upon joining the Council, new members will receive a binder containing Council Terms of Reference, past minutes and reports. All new members, either individually or as a Council, shall participate in a formalized orientation process facilitated by the Social Planning Council Facilitator or designate.

STAFF SUPPORT AND BUDGET

This section remains undetermined at the time of printing. Currently the Social Planning Council will function as a volunteer council. Efforts to locate funding sources will continue.

***Smithers Social Planning Committee**

This committee was established in September 2006, to provide a formalized means for the Smithers Social Planning Council to communicate with the Town of Smithers. It is to be an "ad hoc" committee of council, meeting quarterly. Its work will include that described in sections 1,2,3,&5 above and it will also bring forward recommendations to town council. Direction for this committee will come from Smithers Social Planning Council and minutes will be circulated to Town Council and the members of the Smithers Social Planning Council

These Terms of reference may be amended at any regularly scheduled meeting of the Council following 2/3 majority approval. Formal notice of any proposed amendment must be given to all members of Council one month in advance.

Appendix F: Smithers Social Planning Council Work Plan 2008/2009

Goals	Objectives	Action to achieve Objectives	Lead	Date
Support priority community health initiatives	Support community initiatives directed at the top 5 identified social issues: Aboriginal Health, Mental Health & Addictions, Literacy, Child & Youth Development, and Housing & Homelessness	Support 3 projects developed by the community; c) Aboriginal Peer Counseling project d) Community Navigator e) Community Task force on Housing Assist with x-sectoral conversations with decision makers as needed	Project coordinator Bo Sontag will support the community teams in taking action	Feb - Nov
Increase engagement in improving quality of life for all citizens	Promote development and use of Quality of Life measurement to inform programs, services, policy and planning Involve the community in social change	- Develop Quality of Life indicators for Smithers - Collect baseline data and create the first Q of L report card for the community - Hold the annual issues forum	Bo Sontag as project coordinator	Feb - Nov
Ongoing development of the SSPC	Support the ongoing evolution of the SSPC to maintain usefulness and relevance to the community	- Revise our promotional materials - Ensure media stories highlight our work - Review our terms of reference, process, & strategy - Participate in capacity building/training	Council volunteers	Ongoing
Strengthen our relationship with Town of Smithers	Continue to develop new engagement and relationship between SSPC and the Town of Smithers to inform the decision making process	- Plan for regular feedback to Town council about the work of the SSPC - Continue to apply for partner grants from UBCM with the town.	Cathryn Bucher and James Kotai (town staff) Council volunteer	Ongoing
Promote & support Inclusive Community Development	To have social planning recognized and incorporated into planning by all levels of government (town, ministry, Northern Health, Regional District etc)	- Participate in the review of the Official Community Plan - Have a representative sit on the Economic Development and Sustainability Committees - Conduct community workshops, trainings	Jane Boulton To be decided As needed	Ongoing all year
Promotion of Inclusion, Celebration of Diversity	- Strengthen relationships across cultures - Encourage a voice and full participation by all community members -Promote a healthy, safe, culturally diverse community and address racism	- Public education through workshops, media, celebration and recognition - Annual bridging forum - Develop a communications plan including website for the Bridging Subcommittee - Support “Safer Communities” Work	Bridging committee Contractor	Ongoing Spring

