Quality of Life Indicators and Community Mobilization for Improved Well Being in the Bulkley Valley
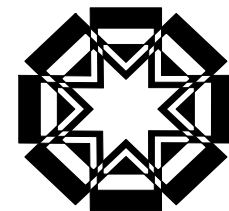
Workshop Report

Smithers, BC, February 28, 2007

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

Canadian Rural Partnership

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1. Introduction

In July of 2006, the *Smithers Social Planning Council* submitted an Expression of Interest to the partners of *Learning Initiatives for Rural and Northern BC* (LIRN). As one of fifteen successful applicants to LIRN, Jane Boulton of the *Smithers Social Planning Council* worked closely with Scott Graham of the Social Planning and Research Council of BC (SPARC BC) to plan a community development workshop. Mabel Jean Rawlins Brennan, Executive Director of the Greater Victoria Community Council, provided additional planning support and presented an overview of Greater Victoria's *Quality of Life Challenge* (www.qolchallenge.ca)

The purpose of the workshop was to provide participants with information about the elements of successful community quality of life indicator projects, as well as an opportunity to develop some ideas for the framework and process of the upcoming UBCM sponsored community Quality of Life indicators project for the Bulkley Valley.

This report summarizes the content of the LIRN sponsored Smithers workshop entitled: "Quality of Life Indicators and Community Mobilization for Improved Well Being in the Bulkley Valley". The first part of the report offers an explanation of the LIRN partnership, as well as the partner organization *Smithers Social Planning Council.* Next, a summary of the workshop presentation and activity results as articulated by the workshop participants is provided. The workshop agenda, evaluation results, participant list, as well as a summary of other useful funding opportunities and related resources can be found in the appendices.

2. About the Partners

The workshop on "Quality of Life Indicators and Community Mobilization for Improved Well Being in the Bulkley Valley" was a collaborative effort between LIRN and the Smithers Social Planning Council. A brief description of each of the partners is provided below.

2.1. Learning Initiatives for Rural and Northern BC (LIRN)

At the last Rural Summit in Osoyoos BC, 2006, participants noted that they wanted to have regional events in their own communities. They also felt that organizations doing consultations and workshops in rural areas needed to be more coordinated in their approach to communities so people aren't burned out by uncoordinated learning and/or planning activities. They also wanted to be able to determine what topics would be discussed so that learning and/or planning events were focused on community needs.

As a result, a number of organizations formed a partnership to provide one-day learning events for communities. The partners are: the BC Rural Network, the Canadian Rural Partnership, New Horizons for Seniors of Service Canada, and the Social Planning and

Research Council of BC. The partners issued an Expression of Interest that was sent to all rural communities through a variety of e-mail lists. The initiative was titled Learning Initiatives for Rural and Northern BC (LIRN). Of the 40 applications received, 15 were approved for one day events based on the communities' understanding of their key issues, on the breadth of partners that they could bring to the table, on their commitment to follow-up on the learning to support development in their community.

The LIRN partners are committed to combining their expertise and resources in an effort to maximize community capacity building opportunities for people living in rural, remote, and northern regions of the province. LIRN is a sustainable development and continues to grow with the recent addition of the Self Help Resource Association of BC, who bring a wealth of experience in helping communities help themselves.

2.2. Smithers Social Planning Council

The Smithers Social Planning Council was established in 1999 and consists of a coalition of approximately 30 service agencies including representation from the Town of Smithers, the RCMP, and the Northern Health Authority.

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:

1. 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;
2. To emphasize citizen participation in all social planning decisions affecting Smithers;
3. To respond to changing social needs and issues in a responsible, flexible, collaborative and innovative manner;
4. To support and reinforce social development activities.

Since inception the Social Planning Council has remained dedicated to their mandate to provide "an inclusive process that addresses the social aspects of building and maintaining a healthy, thriving community for the benefit of all its citizens". Additionally they have conducted Quality of Life research for Smithers and established a Bridging Committee to link the aboriginal and non-aboriginal communities in the area. The SSPC has been instrumental in identifying community issues and working with others to address them through teams such as the Youth Task Force and Bridging

Committee and activities such as the Festival of Nations, Crystal Meth Forum, Youth Aids Awareness Day and community economic development workshops that link social, business and environmental groups in the community.

Earlier this year the Smithers Social Planning Council (SSPC), with a grant from SPARC, hosted a "Partners in Community Health" workshop. Three specific themes to improve community health emerged and corresponding working groups were created.

3. Summary of Workshop Activities

The workshop activities divided into three parts. The first part of workshop activities consisted of introductions, as well as an overview of local quality of life work in Smithers and the Bulkley Valley. Jane Boulton provided an overview of the previous quality of life indicator work in the Bulkley Valley, including the Smithers Quality of Life report from 2004 and the community workshop in February of 2006, entitled: "Partners in Community Health: Integrating Social, Economic, Environmental Planning in the Bulkley Valley." For more information about this aspect of the workshop, contact Jane Boulton: jboulton@scsa.ca.

The second part of the workshop featured a presentation and question and answer session with Mabel Jean Rawlins-Brannan, Executive Director of the Community Council of Greater Victoria. The final activities of the workshop consisted of small group discussions related to next steps for the Community Quality of Life Initiative for the Bulkley Valley.

The following sections of this report offer an overview of the Greater Victoria Quality of Life challenge as well as a summary of the outcomes of the small group discussions.

3.1. Overview of the Quality of Life Challenge

In this section, a very brief description of the Capital Region's Quality of Life Challenege is provided. The following descriptions of the different aspects of the Quality of Life Challenge were informed by the Quality of Life Challenge website: www.qolchallenege.ca. Other details about the Challenge were discussed by Mabel Jean in her power point presentation. For complete details of Mabel Jean's presentation, feel free to contact her at: mabeljean@communitycouncil.ca.

3.1.1. Background of Quality of Life Challenge

The Quality of Life Challenge is built on the relationships, experience and lessons learned from Community Council initiatives undertaken in the region since the mid 1990's. Many people from all sectors had experience working together to find constructive responses to critical issues in BC's Capital Region. Here are some local initiatives leading up to the Quality of Life Challenge:

- In 1994 the Creative Chaos Forum explored the process of collaborative solutions.
- Since 1994 a wide range of stakeholders have been working together to focus on food security in the region, known today as the Capital Region Food and Agriculture Initiatives Roundtable (CR-FAIR).
- From 1997 to 2000 the Victoria Downtown CRUNCH project facilitated dialogue and action among individuals, social service agencies, businesses and government about critical downtown issues.
- In 2000 the Capital Urban Poverty Project documented and initiated extensive dialogue about the scope of poverty throughout the region;
- Since 2000 the Housing Affordability Partnership has influenced housing policy.

The Founding Gathering of the Quality of Life Challenge was held on September 10th, 2001, when 60 people from all sectors and from most of the region's 13 municipalities gathered to study the report and determine the most critical issues for the community. Participants were informed by the Oregon Benchmarks, by Community Council multisector initiatives (see below) and by Opportunities 2000 in Waterloo. Priorities were identified, leaders stepped forward and committees were formed.

At the Founding Gathering three priority issues were identified for attention until November 2006: housing affordability, sustainable incomes and community connections. Time was needed to find partners, set targets, determine strategies and gather resources. Targets were announced for each of the priorities in February 2003, when Lloyd Craig, CEO of Coast Capital Savings hosted a Corporate Breakfast for the Quality of Life Challenge. The first Leadership Partners and Supporters stepped forward, and the keynote speaker, Paul Born, spoke about the vision and partnership of Vibrant Communities, a leadership partner in the Challenge and national poverty reduction initiative.

Description of the Quality of Life Challenge

The Challenege is informed by theory and practice within the disciplines of adult education, social change, community development, social determinants of health, health promotion, social planning, communication and leadership. The Quality of Life Challenge mission and vision was intentionally designed to build upon innovative work of the Community Council and emerging social science theory and practice: Vision: a sustainable quality of life for everyone in BC's Capital Region; Mission: providing leadership to bring the community together.

The Quality of Life Challenge aims to meet the following goals: a) The community is able to self organize around issues that threaten its sustainability and quality of life; b) The community is able to measure change and identify priority focus areas through systemic monitoring of quality of life indicators; c) All sectors of the community are mobilized to focus actions on priority areas; d) Community capacity is built and learning is enhanced because actions are recorded and analyzed, and the knowledge is widely shared.

Principles are reflected throughout the design and operations of the Quality of Life Challenge. By naming these principles and applying them in practice, the community's culture of engagement, inclusion and collaboration deepens, forming the basis of a healthy, cohesive community. Evaluation ensures that the Challenenge is operating in ways consistent with the following principles.

The Challenge demonstrates care and respect for each person, the community and the environment through: a) Cooperation with others to build community capacity; b) Understanding the underlying problems and opportunities; c) Participation from a variety of voices; d) Inclusion of people who experience the issue firsthand; e) Communication in ways that everyone can understand; f) Sharing of power, information, resources and leadership; g) Openness to innovation, various points of view and participation of all sectors; h) Acting on practical, effective solutions; i) Recognition for positive reinforcement and celebration; j) How change happens; k) People and communities are more vibrant and sustainable when there is capacity within the community to care for itself.

The Quality of Life Challenege was intentionally designed to apply and test social science strategies and theory. It is based on the assumptions that communities have greater capacity when there is:

- Shared Leadership: Opportunities are created for individuals and organizations to step forward and take leadership within the CHALLENGE;
- Awareness: An informed community makes better decisions. The public has a deeper understanding of the complexity of quality of life trends, issues and solutions;
- Shared responsibility and community ownership: Change happens because individuals and organizations are taking responsibility and action that contributes to long term solutions;
- Relationships: A community is a network of relationships. As people work together in new ways, new networks are created. The fibre of the community becomes more cohesive and strong;
- Monitoring and Measuring Change: Sound information brings credibility to the claim that change is needed. Evidence that change is happening, motivates people to get involved. Outcomes and indicators are measured and monitored through reliable research, and are reported regularly;
- Recognition: By acknowledging and celebrating the efforts that have been made, people are encouraged to replicate what's working, to have the courage to try something new and different, or to have the strength to carry on with their good work.

3.2. Summary of Small Group Discussions

At the beginning of the day, participants expressed several expectations for the workshop. On two occasion participants noted that they wanted to learn about the status of the Quality of Life initiative in Smithers. Several other participants expressed an interest in learning about indicators in general and specifically how Smithers can move toward sustainability. Also, others recommended that the day could be used to facilitate an opportunity to explore possible collaborations between Hazleton and Smithers.

The following text represents the outcomes of small group discussions related to the following three questions: 1) Given the community priority list from the 2006 Partners in Community Health meeting, what other priority areas should be considered for inclusion in the Community Quality of Life framework for the Bulkley Valley?; 2) In your opinion, what should be the characteristics of a community engagement process for developing quality of life indicators and action strategies in the Bulkley Valley?; 3) What other considerations should guide the Community Quality of Life Initiative for the Bulkley Valley?

The following pages offer three summary tables that compile the outcomes of each of the small group discussions on the aforementioned questions.

3.2.1. Table One: Additional Priority Areas for the Bulkley Valley Community Quality of Life Initiative

Given the community priority list from the 2006 Partners in Community Health meeting, what other priority areas should be considered for inclusion in the Community Quality of Life framework for the Bulkley Valley?

- ➢ Arts and culture
- ➢ Spirituality
- ➢ Work/life balance
- ➢ Family
- ➢ Sports/active living
- ➢ Shared community resources, e.g. telephone; bathroom
- ➢ Community identity
- ➢ Justice
- ➢ Shunning of victims who speaks out Aboriginal community
- ➢ Education – community capacity; boarding children in town
- ➢ Quality childcare
- ➢ Transportation
- ➢ Self-determination and self-sufficiency
- ➢ Suicide
- ➢ Inclusion of youth/senior
- ➢ Marketing/Plan
- ➢ Local hire/experience with community sharing
- ➢ Cultural/spirituality/engaging in communication/inviting and participating
- ➢ Municipalities/Regional District/Boards and chiefs "hereditary"
- ➢ Aboriginal culture friendly "downtown"
- ➢ Connection between impoverishment through local business
- ➢ Engaging groups for liaising "what is in it for me?"
- ➢ Consignment
- ➢ Business support for local
- ➢ Crafts/wares
- ➢ Creating infrastructure that will interfere regulations
- ➢ Food Security

3.2.2. Table Two: Characteristics of Community Engagement Process

In your opinion, what should be the characteristics of a community engagement process for developing quality of life indicators and action strategies in the Bulkley Valley?

- ➢ Use network of networks
- ➢ Outreach to faith communities
- ➢ Get involvement through job and personal interest (different times)
- ➢ Learn protocol for First Nations and Aboriginal communities
- ➢ Hockeyville as model?
- ➢ Personal contact – peer contact recognize individuals and 'stories'
- ➢ Include children
    - ▪ drawing pictures
    - ▪ display in public
- ➢ Photo shoot of community
- ➢ Incentives
    - ▪ Swim or movie passes
    - ▪ Food vouchers
    - ▪ Recognition … etc
- ➢ Form partnerships/education across all sectors
- ➢ Recognition/awards of business input
- ➢ Newsletter/Exterior News/Story Telling
- ➢ Engaging voices of all citizens/foremost those now excluded
- ➢ Blog/website
- ➢ Engage cross sectors
- ➢ Review language
- ➢ Regulation review/barrier recognition

3.2.3. Table Three: Additional Considerations for Community Quality of Life Initiative for the Bulkley Valley

What other considerations should guide the Community Quality of Life Initiative for the Bulkley Valley?
➢ Highlight positives – outcomes and processes
➢ "Integration" – what does it mean? → Work together
➢ Faith groups
➢ Improved presentation of results → Communication and marketing
➢ Outlying areas outside of Smithers and Morristown
➢ Racism: "tension and divide": cultural competence
➢ Spectrum of Cultural Competence: Reciprocal lack of understanding; Issues around power; Lack of relationships; Impoverishment – joined up problems
➢ Create opportunities for community members to "hand out"
➢ Get to know each other – celebrate diversity
➢ Chronic disease
➢ Early death
➢ Emotional distress …What is causing this unhappiness?
➢ How do we create total quality of life environment?
➢ Why do we have these problems? - underpinning
➢ Celebrate community
➢ Simple strategies to "see" each other – "Hello Wally Day"
➢ Values that reflect diversity of all ages
➢ Absence of cultural awareness/structure/centre
➢ Racism
➢ Denial
➢ Activity

4. Appendices

4.1. Evaluation Results

1.   Please indicate the sector in which you work.

Government	
Social and/or community	x 7
Economic	x 1
Environment	x 1

2.   Please indicate how relevant this event was for your community.

- **Average for ratings: 4.2**
- We need a plan

3.   Please indicate the degree to which you experienced each of the following:

    a) Increased awareness and/or knowledge of community development ideas and resources

- **Average for ratings: 3.6**
- Networking
- Info from other communities that have already done it
- Mabel Jean's presentation was invaluable

    b) Improved skills for engaging in community development activities

- **Average for ratings: 3.1**
- "Summary of activities involved in developing" is a great start for me

4.   Please indicate your assessment of the effectiveness of the LIRN BC event in building new collaborative relationships and/or strengthening existing collaborative relationships between your organization and another organization in:

    a) Your sector:
- **Average for ratings: 3.4**
- n/a

    b) A different sector:
- **Average for ratings: 3.4**
- n/a

5.   Please indicate your assessment of the degree to which the LIRN BC event increased your interest in exploring new ways of working with other organizations?

- o **Average for ratings: 4.0**
- o n/a

6.   How would you rate the event facilitator?

- **Average for ratings: 4.3**
- Scott is always great as is Jane

7.   Please indicate your assessment of the logistics and event materials of the event.

- **7A - Average for ratings: 3.7**
- **7B - Average for ratings: 4.1**
- I enjoyed the space to think and reconnect with "good" folks;
- Hard to see everyone around the long table
- I really enjoyed Mabel's presentation. Thanks so much. It was great and very useful

4.2. Workshop Agenda

9:00   **Introductions**

9:15   **Reviewing Smithers' Quality of Life Indicator Project**
- The Smithers Social Planning Council will provide an update on the Quality of Life Indictors Project: UBCM grant, steering committee, task forces, timeline, etc.

9:35   **Reviewing Current Community Developments and Priorities in Smithers**
- Have a snack, walk the room, read the responses and add your contribution to the pre-workshop questions that are posted on the wall.

10:00   **Confirming Community Priorities**
- Select your top priorities for the afternoon activities. We will use the dotmocracy method to select priorities.
- The priority list will be used to form small groups for the afternoon activity.

10:20   **The Quality of Life Challenge: Community Council of Greater Victoria**
- Learn about the Quality of Life Challenge in Victoria. Mabel Jean, Executive Director of the Community Council of Greater Victoria, will share her experiences and respond to questions.

12:00   **Lunch**

1:50   **Developing Potential Elements for Smithers' Quality of Life Indicator Project**
- Participants organize into small groups according to their interest in a given priority area. Each small group will use the provided matrix to account for the issues related to their priority area.
- The result of this exercise will inform the design of the Smithers' Quality of Life Project.

2:30   **Inviting You to Play a Role in the Smithers' Quality of Life Indicator Project**
- This final exercise invites participants to provide their name, area of expertise and type of involvement they would like to have in the project. The Smithers Quality of Life project team will follow up.

2:45   **Next Steps and Evaluation of Workshop**

4.3. Participant List

The planning and delivery of the "Quality of Life Indicators and Community Mobilization for Improved Well Being in the Bulkley Valley" workshop was successful because the Smithers Social Planning Council (SSPC) convened community leaders for a day of learning and working together. Below is a list of workshop participants.

NAME	ORGANIZATION	PHONE	EMAIL
Pamela Creak	Smithers Comm Services	847-9515	literacy@scsa.ca
Sasa Loghn	Terrace Make Children First	635-8761	info@terracechildren.org
Bernice Cremo	Nazho First Nation	992-9085	Bernice@nazhoband.ca
Wally Bonley	Volunteer	847-9660	wwbergen@telus.net
Joanne Voss	Smithers Community	847-3430	joannevoss@telus.net
Cathryn Bucher	Town of Smithers/CFDC Nadina	847-1389	Cathryn.bucher@cfdcnadina.ca
Anne Docherty	Storytellers' Foundation Hazelton	842-6500	Adocherty@upperskenna.ca
Melanie Sonderguard	Storytellers' Foundation Hazelton	842-6500	Melanie@upperskeena.ca
Kara Jenne	Northwest Comm College	847-4461	kjenne@nwcc.bc.ca
Dennis Thorne	CF Boundary	442-2722	dennis@boundarycf.com
Makiko Suzuki	Service Canada	604-988-1880 x.3230	Makiko.suzuki@servicecanada.gc.ca
Tomoko Kurihara		877-7507	liyuahzhizi@hotmail.com
Roger Benham	Green Party of Canada	847-9041	rogerbenham@yahoo.com
Doug Donaldson	Storytellers' Foundation	842-6500	doug@upperskeena.ca
Toby Coupe	BCSS	847-9779	bcssbv@telus.net
Cindy Savage	BCSS	847-9750	Bcss9779@telus.net
Linder Bayes	Anit-Poverty Bulkley Valley	847-6152	-
Nancy Cody	NHA	847-7883	Nancy.cody@northernhealth.ca
Jeanette Foreman	Northern Health	877-6099	Jeanette.forman@northerhealth.ca
Karen Berezon	Northern Health	847-4406	Karen.berezon@northerhealth.ca

4.4. Other Funding Sources and Resources

Brandon Hughes of the Canadian Rural Partnership has compiled the following information on funding opportunities and related resources.

- New Horizons for Seniors - Service Canada: This program provides funding for community-based projects across Canada. Projects encourage seniors to continue to play an important role in their community by: helping those in need; providing leadership; and sharing their knowledge and skills with others. Calls for Applications are issued once or twice a year. http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/en/isp/horizons/toc.shtml
- 300 plus community development programs a searchable database put together by the Canadian Rural Partnership, BC Rural Network, BC Healthy Communities, and Community Futures in Trail http://www.communityfutures.com/cms/Funding_Sources.2.0.html
- Union of BC Municipalities site for local government programs including green projects, healthy living, crime prevention, FN relations, and infrastructure http://www.civicinfo.bc.ca/18.asp
- Charity Village: Sources of Funding: Corporate Funding Programs, Government, Foundations, etc. http://www.charityvillage.com/cv/ires/fund.asp
- Charity Village Main Street – Suppliers, careers, resources, training, etc. http://www.charityvillage.com/cv/ires/fund.asp
- The Green Source from Environment Canada http://www.ec.gc.ca/ecoaction/grnsrc/index_e.cfm
- Voluntary Sector Knowledge Network – management, fund raising, accountability, leadership and other resources http://www.vskn.ca/
- Centre for Sustainability - Partners in Organizational Development (POD), a technical assistance granting program for not-for-profit organizations in British Columbia in social services, arts, or environment. http://www.centreforsustainability.ca/programs/
- The Canada Site A to Z http://www.gc.ca/azind/bindex_e.html
- BC Healthy Communities: Community Involvement, Political Commitment, Inter-sectoral Partnerships, Healthy Public Policy – regional facilitators and seed funding http://www.bchealthycommunities.ca/content/home.asp
- Community Foundations of Canada – foundation finder and other tools http://www.cfc-fcc.ca/who_we_are/list.cfm?id=2
- Real Estate Foundation – land use planning and conservation http://www.communitytransition.org/about.php
- Service Canada – The Partnership Handbook – building and maintaining effective partnerships to move communities forward. http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/en/epb/sid/cia/partnership/handbook.doc
- Free internet based long distance calling http://www.skype.com/
- Free meeting organizing utility http://www.meetingwizard.com/
- Free on-line collaboration for files and spreadsheets https://www.google.com/accounts/ServiceLogin?service=writely&passive=true&continue=http%3A%2F%2Fdocs.google.com%2F&ltmpl=WR_tmp_2_lfty&nui=1