



SOCIAL INCLUSION CONFERENCE

DEFINITIONS?
DEBATES?
DOGMA?

THURSDAY, APRIL 14, 2005
OAKHAM HOUSE, RYERSON UNIVERSITY

*SPONSORED BY
LAIDLAW FOUNDATION*

*ORGANIZED BY
INCLUSIVE COMMUNITIES FOR CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILIES
PILOT PROGRAM*

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In April 2005 Laidlaw Foundation sponsored a day of dialogue on social inclusion which addressed four major themes:

- ***Poverty and Social Inclusion***
- ***Policy and Research Perspectives***
- ***The Social Economy***
- ***Social Citizenship***

About one hundred people from Toronto and beyond joined in these discussions. The following record of the proceedings is based on the information made available to us by the panel moderators and speakers. Each of the sessions included time for discussion and debate which was lengthy and lively but too detailed to be recorded in this form. The information presented here provides a useful overview of the conference themes but is not complete; we were able only to provide the biographies and speaking notes made available to us.

Further information about the activities and views of the organizations represented by the conference panelists can be found at the following websites:

Alternative Planning Group (including the African Canadian Social Development Council)	http://www.cassa.on.ca/APG/
Caillouette, Jacques, The Community and Social Economy Movement in Québec: Development and Recognition (1989-2003)	http://www.crisis,uqam.ca/cahiers/ET0415.pdf
Campaign 2000	http://www.campaign2000.ca/
Canadian CED Network	http://www.ccednet-rcdec.ca/en/pages/home.asp
Social Economy Roundtable Briefing Notes	http://www.ccednet-rcdec.ca/en/docs/resources/Policy%20Brief%20Final-EN_2005.pdf
Inclusive Cities Canada	http://www.inclusivecities.ca
Laidlaw Foundation	http://www.laidlawfdn.org/
Maytree Foundation	http://www.maytree.com/
National Anti-Poverty Organization	http://www.napo-onap.ca/
Policy Research Initiative	http://policyresearch.gc.ca/

WELCOME

Welcome to all those attending this day of discussions and debate on various aspects of social inclusion. As you can see from the agenda in your conference kits, our panels today are addressing the topics of social inclusion and poverty, policy and research perspectives in social inclusion, social citizenship, and the social economy.

We are very excited about our lineup of speakers for today, representing such a strong combination of community and academic expertise and such a wealth of diverse experiences. And we are very pleased with the strong attendance for this event, demonstrating a continued lively interest in the topic of social inclusion.

As the title of our conference suggests, Laidlaw Foundation has never been interested in promoting a purely definitional approach to social inclusion. The interest of the foundation has been and continues to be in the potential contribution of the social inclusion discourse to better social policy, in both theory and practice. Judging this potential requires an honest examination of contrasting viewpoints and diverse experiences with respect to different forms of social exclusion and different paths to inclusion. We have organized this conference today as one contribution to this process.

We must acknowledge as well the many other contributors to this development of a social inclusion perspective in Canada, many of which are represented or even presenting at the conference today. Amongst these contributors are groups for example like:

- The Roeher Institute which will soon be publishing updated and comprehensive work on the Canadian contributions to social inclusion and the development of inclusive indicators;
- The Policy Research Initiative in Ottawa with its work in areas like social exclusion and poverty, and the use and measurement of social capital to build inclusion
- The Inclusive Cities project, which is working with social planning councils and the Federation of Canadian Municipalities across Canada to develop social inclusion as urban policy
- Community-based organizations like the Ontario Prevention Clearinghouse, the Alternative Planning Group and the Community Social Planning Council of Toronto which have been working to develop grassroots participation in establishing inclusive indicators.

And of course we cannot forget the numerous local initiatives and pilot projects, some of them funded by Laidlaw, which are testing the boundaries of social inclusion in practice, on the ground.

Again, I welcome you on behalf of Laidlaw Foundation, and hope you enjoy the day and find it beneficial.

Nathan Gilbert,
Executive Director
Laidlaw Foundation

POVERTY AND SOCIAL INCLUSION

The presenters had been asked to address the following themes:

- What are the most important policy issues in terms of combating poverty in Canada today? How does or to what degree does a social inclusion perspective help us to understand these issues?
- What are the most important factors behind the growing “racialisation of poverty” in Canada? How can we recognize and address the needs of particular groups such as recent newcomers, visible minorities and urban Aboriginals in the anti-poverty struggle?
- What is particular or special or unique about the issue of poverty for children and for youth? How does this understanding impact on the way we mobilize and build solidarity in combating poverty?

Moderator:

David Welch, National Council on Welfare

David Welch is presently an Associate Professor at the School of Social Work of the University of Ottawa. For over four years, until 2002, he was President of the Social Planning Council of Ottawa, an organization active in doing social research on the most excluded sectors of society in Ottawa. Since July 2001 he is one of the Ontario representatives on the National Council of Welfare a federal government advisory board. He continues to write on the social development of his own community, that of the Franco-Ontarians, with special emphasis on the third sector. More recently he has been studying the place of civil society and democracy in the urban context.

Presenters:

Betty Edel, Community Education Development Winnipeg

Grace-Edward Galubuzi, Ryerson University

Dennis Howlett, National Anti-Poverty Organization

Laurel Rothman, Campaign 2000

Betty Edel

Betty Edel is a Metis woman born in Portage La Prairie, Manitoba. She has a degree in social work from the University of Manitoba. Betty has worked in the area of community development, community economic development and social justice for the last 21 years.

Currently, Betty is the Co-Director of the Community Education Development Association (C.E.D.A.) operating out of the inner city of Winnipeg. A volunteer Board of Directors made up of people that either live in the community or work in social justice organizations manages C.E.D.A. C.E.D.A. works on issues of community and economic development as well as social justice issues.

Speaking Notes

Summary of response to questions

What are the most important policy issues in terms of combating poverty in Canada today?

- Problem with policies is that they are not made looking at the whole.

- They are made from a one world view perspective
- They are generally reactive to events vs. looking at the patterns
- They exclude the perspective of the people that they are impacting

How does or to what degree does a social inclusion perspective help us to understand these issues?

- Including the people that are impacted by the policies provides the policy makers with a clearer understanding of the impact of the policies. The intent may be well meaning but the impact can and does create more barriers for those living in poverty to get out.
- By including people from different cultures, you are expanding the policies to include different understandings of how the world is viewed, understood

What are the most important factors behind the growing “racialisation of poverty” in Canada?

- Poverty has always been racially based e.g. “Indian Industry” social workers, doctors, lawyers, jails, etc
- New immigrants e.g. professionals from other countries that can only get minimum wage jobs when they come here.
- Problem is with who sets the “standards” for the different professions, again, one world view defining the standards for everyone

How can we recognize and address the needs of particular groups such as recent new comers, visible minorities and urban Aboriginals in the anti-poverty struggle?

- Build respectful relationships with people that are working on the issues in the community.
- Become an ally/ support the struggles
- Work beside people instead of thinking you have to do something “for” them or “to” them
- Recognize that those that are being impacted daily by poverty are people with gifts, knowledge, wisdom, skills and have real solutions of how to deal with the issues.

What is particular or special or unique about the issue of poverty for children and for youth?

- Youth live in families generally, so view things in the whole and resist fragmenting peoples lives
- Poverty excludes people from participating fully in the benefits of society

How does understanding the way we mobilize and build solidarity in combating poverty?

- Understand that everyone comes to the “table” with their world view, work on building strong relationships with people from different world views
- Ask yourselves: “Who’s at the table?” “WHY?”
“Who’s not at the table?” “WHY?”

Betty also provided handouts on anti-racism and systemic oppression and the role White power and privilege in building solidarity.

Dennis Howlett

Dennis Howlett is currently the Executive Director of the National Anti-Poverty Organization. Prior to assuming this position in February of 2004 he was the Team Leader, Canadian Justice program of KAIROS: Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives where he was responsible for programming on health care, refugees, poverty, ecological justice and aboriginal rights.

From 1993 to 2001 he was the National Coordinator of TEN DAYS for Global Justice, an ecumenical development education program which involved a network of some 180 local groups in community education and action on a variety of global justice issues. While at TEN DAYS he served on the Steering Committee of the Canadian Ecumenical Jubilee Initiative and played a key leadership role in the successful campaigns for cancellation of Third World debt and for Canadian ratification of the Kyoto Protocol on Climate Change. He also served on the board of TransFair Canada and organized a campaign promoting fair trade certified products such as coffee and tea.

From 1973 to 1993 he worked for the Ecumenical Coalition for Economic Justice (formerly called GATT-Fly). Highlights of his work at ECEJ included leadership of non-governmental action initiatives at the World Food Conference, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development and other UN conferences, development of the "Ah-hah Seminar" methodology for popular education and action strategy planning, leadership in the campaign against the Canada-US Free Trade Agreement as co-chair of the Action Canada Network Communications and Education Committee, and facilitation of community education and input on environmental impact assessment processes for the West Patricia Land Use Plan in North Western Ontario and the Low Level Flight Training Base in Labrador.

He is currently a member of the Board of Directors of the Canadian Health Coalition and a member of the Steering Committee of the Canadian Make Poverty History campaign. He was also a founding director of the Centre for Social Justice and the Canada Asia Working Group.

Dennis is a graduate of the University of Toronto (B.A.) and the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (M. Ed.).

He has written several books including: Ah-hah! A New Approach to Popular Education (Between the Lines, 1982) and From Resistance to Transformation: Coalition Struggles in Canada, South Africa, the Philippines and Mexico (Canada-Philippines Human Resources Development Program, 1996)

Speaking Notes

Poverty different in N & S

- In the South, material poverty is much deeper. Half the world's population survives on less than \$2 a day.
- But the poor are the majority in many countries in the South, and though they are often oppressed and discriminated against, they do not experience the same level social exclusion as the poor in the North.
- In the North, poor are a minority, so while material level of poverty is not as deep, social exclusion is greater. In the North relative poverty is often more important than absolute level of material poverty.

Discrimination based on income

- Social discrimination based on income and social status in Canada is still very prevalent.
- Unlike other forms of discrimination such as sex, race and disability, discrimination based on income and social status is not clearly prohibited in law in most Canadian jurisdictions.
 - Discrimination can be institutional (banks & landlords, access to justice and the courts, etc.) social (poor bashing in media or by politicians) or personal.

No clear legal or social sanction against discrimination against poor

- We have a hit and miss record on getting courts to recognize income and social status as equality and discrimination issues under the Charter.
- While racist or sexist comments by politicians or other public figures does not go unchallenged, poor bashing is still tolerated.
- We need to get discrimination based on income and social status added to Charter and provincial Human Rights legislation and we need to challenge poor bashing.

Lower rungs on social ladder have been cut off

Poverty used to be a transitory experience for most people. Many were able to climb out after a few months or years.

- But now several of the bottom rungs on the social ladder have been cut off, making it much more difficult for poor to climb out of poverty.
- Youth and newcomers to Canada are most affected and poverty is growing for these people.
- Youth burdened with debt from student loans, newcomers' qualifications and experience not recognized.

A job is no longer a way out of poverty

- Lower starting salaries for youth and new entrants to job market.
- Low minimum wage leaves low paid workers far below poverty line.
- Increase in non-standard employment – part-time, contract, seasonal, “self-employed” means more working poor.
- We need to make the minimum wage a living wage and update labour standards.

Barriers to employment

- Lack of affordable, quality child care is a major barrier to employment.
- Lack of flexibility and supports to employment in social assistance system.
- Lack of recognition for foreign credentials and work experience. Lack of good quality jobs because of Canada pursuing a low-wage, free trade economic development strategy.
- We need child care, more supportive social assistance system and a knowledge-based economic development strategy.

The extent & depth of poverty

- The extent of poverty depends largely on the state of the economy and the level of unemployment. The # of people who are poor is relatively unchanged in recent years. But

despite relatively good economic times the rate of poverty and unemployment has not dropped as much as it should have.

- But the depth of poverty has grown in recent years because of low minimum wages and low level of social assistance and restricted access to EI. (e.g. Welfare income for “single employable” range from 20% of poverty line in NB to high of 44% in NL)
- Depth of poverty makes it much more difficult to climb out.
- Minimum wage needs to be raised to \$10/hour and indexed and social assistance rates increased; EI improved.

Face of poverty -Who is poor?

- Poverty a bit like musical chairs. The way our economy and society is structured there are fewer chairs (good jobs) than people.
- Training and employment preparation programs may help certain people get the available chairs.
- But the fact remains there aren't enough chairs, and some people will end up poor.
- People of color, newcomers, aboriginal people, women, youth and disabled and their children are the ones most likely to be poor.

Growing Gap

- Growing gap between rich & poor threatens to undermine social cohesion. Wealth is also a problem.
- Rich have fewer places where they interact with poor and understand what life for them is like.
- And more and more all the key decisions in society affecting life of poor are made by the rich.
- We need to restore progressive tax system and improve redistributive policy measures.
- We also need to create places where people of different incomes can meet and know each other. Mixed social housing development, mixed neighbourhoods a priority.

Economic & social costs of poverty/social exclusion

- As a society we are not benefiting from skills and experience of newcomers, youth and other excluded groups.
- Population health outcomes would be much better if we had less poverty and cost savings could be realized by health care system.
- Investment in poverty reduction, education, creation of good jobs can contribute to more stable, sustainable and better economy.

Social inclusion/social solidarity

We can work for social inclusion and social solidarity by:

- Respecting the dignity of those who are poor; involving them in leadership and decision-making.
- Working for inclusion of income and social status as prohibited grounds for discrimination.
- Challenging poor bashing as strongly as we would challenge racism or sexism.
- Create quality jobs, raise minimum wage, reform labour standards.

- Remove barriers to employment; create child care.
- Reduce depth of poverty by raising assistance rates, improving EI, restoring enforceable standards.
- Restore progressive tax system; improve redistributive measures such as Child Tax Benefit.
- Defend universal programs such as medicare, public pensions, access to education.

We all benefit from social inclusion and social solidarity.

Laurel Rothman

Laurel Rothman is the Director of Community Building and Social Reform at the Family Service Association of Toronto. Laurel also serves as the National Coordinator of Campaign 2000, a non-partisan national coalition of more than 90 organizations committed to securing the implementation of the 1989 federal all-party resolution "*to seek to achieve the goal of eliminating poverty among Canadian children by the year 2000*". Partners include a breadth of organizations, for example, Canadian Institute of Child Health, Canadian Teachers' Federation, Canadian Auto Workers, Canadian Housing and Renewal Association, Ontario Inter-faith Social Assistance Review Coalition, Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario and the Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care.

Laurel brings 30 years of experience as a professional, volunteer, advocate and consumer in the community services field. She has worked in the voluntary sector, municipal and provincial governments, and the union movement in direct service, planning, policy development and advocacy. As (past) president of the Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care and Skills for Change, she broadened her knowledge about the diversity of Ontario's communities. From her thirteen years of work at the City of Toronto, she deepened her knowledge of and commitment to building and sustaining healthy communities.

Laurel is a frequent media spokesperson on issues of children's well-being. She also has published articles in professional journals and magazines including *Child Welfare*, *Women and Environments* and the *Canadian Review of Social Policy*.

Born in Ohio, Laurel completed her M.S.W. at the University of Pittsburgh and emigrated to Canada in 1971. She lives with her family in Toronto.

POLICY AND RESEARCH PERSPECTIVES

The presenters had been asked to address the following themes:

What do you see as the most important intellectual sources or perspectives contributing to our understanding of social inclusion? Are we in the process of developing a “made in Canada” version of social inclusion?

What are the most important intellectual or conceptual challenges in developing our understanding of social inclusion? What present or future dangers do you see in the social inclusion discourse?

What are some of the immediate policy issues that can be better framed within a perspective of social inclusion? What kind of research agenda would help deepen our understanding of inclusion?

Moderator:

Alina Chatterjee, Scadding Court Community Centre

Alina Chatterjee is the Director of Development and Community Engagement at Scadding Court Community Centre. An alumna of the Maytree Leaders for Change Program, she has experience in developing and implementing community-based projects in the non-profit sector. Alina has worked for COSTI Immigrant Services with the Job Search Workshops Program and at Alexandra Park Community Centre, after leaving her former employment at Citizenship and Immigration Canada. A strong advocate of anti-racism and equity, Alina also provides training and facilitation in areas of anti-racism education. As a community-based researcher, two recent reports she co-authored and authored respectively provide some insight into the work being done around alternative social planning and community leadership. Alina currently sits on the board of the Council of Agencies Serving South Asians (CASSA) and now on the City of Toronto’s Working Group on the Status of Women.

Presenters:

Jean Kunz, Policy Research Institute

Doris Rajan, Roeher Institute

Ted Richmond, Laidlaw Foundation

Jean Kunz

Dr. Jean Lock Kunz is associate project director with the Policy Research Initiative (PRI). Her focus is on new approaches for addressing poverty and exclusion. She is the principal organizer for the recent PRI conference titled: Exploring New Approaches to Social Policy. Prior to joining the PRI, Jean was Chief, Labour Market Policy at the Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC). She has written extensively on issues relating to immigration, multiculturalism, race relations, labour force participation, youth, and media. Some of her work include *Unequal Access: A Canadian Profile on Racial Differences in Education, Employment and Income* (Canadian Race Relations Foundation), *Immigrant Youth in Canada* (Canadian Council on Social Development), and *Media and Minorities: Representing Diversity in a Multicultural Canada* (Thompson Education Publishing, with Augie Fleras). Prior to joining the Public Service, Jean was senior research and policy associate with the Canadian Council on Social Development, primarily responsible for the

establishment of its capacity on cultural diversity research. Jean obtained her Master's in Sociology at the University of Toronto and a PhD from the University of Waterloo.

Doris Rajan

Doris has a Masters of Social Work degree, with a specialization in the area of Social Policy, Research and Administration from Carleton University. For over 15 years Doris has been working as an independent consultant working on a variety of community development, social advocacy and social research projects with a number of academic and community-based organizations. Her areas of concentration have been in the anti-violence, anti-racism and disability rights movements. Specific communities of focus have been immigrant and refugee communities, people from diverse ethno-racial backgrounds, First Nations, people with intellectual and other disabilities, older and mid-life women's issues.

As an educator Doris has taught community development courses at the following post secondary institutions. For five years she taught at George Brown College "Feminist Community Action" and "Women, Race & Class". At Centennial College a course called - "Community Intervention" for two years and more recently in the Disability Studies program as a sessional instructor at Ryerson University.

From 1998 to 2001, Doris worked as the Central East Regional Organizer for the Ontario Women's Health Network. She has been working with L'Institut Roehrer Institute since 1998 and in January 2002 she became Director of Public Education and Social Development at The Institute. Doris assisted Dr. Tanis Doe of the University of Victoria, B.C., on a research project for the Status of Women on Women's Access to Sustained Employment with Adequate Benefits: Public Policy Solutions, targeting single mothers and women with disabilities.

She is just completed work with Ontario's Cross-Sectoral Violence Against Women Strategy Group a broad Social policy and systemic province wide response to the issue of violence against women.

Doris has an extensive list of academic, public, and community-based publication credits to her name, along with various training manuals and resources.

In her other life, Doris is a professional actress and an emerging playwright and screenwriter. She has completed work with Governor General award winner Guillermo Verdecchia and the Playwright's Unit of Cahoots Theatre on a new play entitled "*God I Love You People*" and enjoyed the many productions of her one-woman play *Doris Does Damage*, later made for television and entitled "*Doris Does Damage Live at Second City*". She has just finished the first draft of the screenplay entitled "Born in Canada", aiming for production in 2006. She worked as the Creative Consultant assisting director Pierre Tetrault in the making of his documentary *This Beggar's Description* for the National Film Board of Canada.

Speaking Notes

Canada's Community Inclusion Initiative

- Success factors for inclusion
- Challenges
- Directions for inclusion – practise & policy

- A research agenda towards inclusion
- Aspects of this inclusion work, that are particularly Canadian

What was the initiative about?

- National Strategy for Integration of Persons with Disabilities – de-institutionalization initiative
- The Community Inclusion Fund – began 1997
- Participatory Action Research – began 1999
- national research effort

The government of Canada, under the National Strategy for the Integration of Persons with Disabilities, implemented a deinstitutionalization initiative.

Aimed at closing institutions where people with intellectual disabilities had been segregated and warehoused, bringing them back into the community.

In 1997 the Community Inclusion Fund (CIF) was launched with the aim of strengthening local community capacities to support the inclusion of people with intellectual disabilities and their families.

Community partners include the Canadian Association for Community Living, provincial/territorial Associations for Community Living, and People First of Canada. Various provincial/territorial government departments partner and contribute to projects under the initiative.

While each of these particular experiences were linked together under the umbrella of a common conceptual framework within the context of a pan-Canadian initiative, each was designed and delivered in manners that were unique and responsive to local priorities and issues and utilized methods that were applicable and acceptable to communities at a local level.

PAR - In 1999 the Community Inclusion initiative embarked on a national research effort which used the Participatory Action Research methodology or approach towards evaluation of the community development work to-date. CACL contracted the Roeher Institute to coordinate and lead this community research effort.

The purpose was to examine the activities of CI, with those involved in the delivery of these activities – designing and implementing the information collecting process

All with the ultimate aim of improving our work towards more inclusive communities, that is What works? Why does it work? What doesn't work and why not?

The partners ...

- The Canadian Association for Community Living
- Provincial/Territorial Associations for Community Living
- People First of Canada

An association of family members and others working for the benefit of persons who have an intellectual disability in Canada.

It is a large federation of 10 provincial and 3 territorial Associations and hundreds of local

associations throughout the country.

People First of Canada is a national self-advocacy organization that represents people who have been labelled as having a “mental” or intellectual disability. It is run totally by people with intellectual disabilities. There are also provincial and territorial People First organizations and many local bodies as well.

What is it?

- There is a *Participatory* element – all relevant parties together
- A *Research* element - in examining current actions
- An *Action* element - to actively change and improve them

The research agenda actually serves as a vehicle or strategy itself for advancing inclusion on the many different levels - local community level, provincial/territorial and nationally. Because PAR happened at these many different levels.

And since the research was designed to identify:

- Partnerships and networks
- Useful resources
- Info on the impact of activities, in a qualitative way
- Info on the impact and extent of project activity reach - in a quantitative way
- Gaps in services and supports and
- Outreach to communities that experience additional barriers to inclusion in addition to disability
- These learnings were shared, revised, built upon and developed - all towards improving inclusion strategies

success factors for inclusion

1. “Community Building” as the Foundation
2. Partnerships and Coalition Building
3. Self-Determination
4. Communicate the Vision & Promote Knowledge and Actions
5. Advocate for Policy and System Changes
6. Long Term Resources and Sustainability

By the year 2002, we found through PAR research, that we have identified things that seem to be present in communities that the provinces, territories and PFC themselves have identified as being successful.

We followed this up with Community Visits or Profiles. These visits allowed us, the researchers to witness the working of successful community building at a local level.

What makes a community successful? There were 6 Key Success Factors:

1. The 1st factor is when the foundation of the work uses a community building, or community development or community capacity building approach. That begins with the community determining the initiative and thus community ownership of the work is a common characteristic of inclusive communities. Good CD approaches acknowledge diversity – go beyond disability – through outreach, communication and in terms of who the project is suppose to be “for”. The project becomes “for” the whole community.

2. When there are notable Partnerships and Coalition Building occurring, such as inter-sectoral work, multi level government networking, partnerships with other community-based organizations, making linkages with other social justice seeking movements.

3. The 3rd factor is the promotion of the Self-Determination and Confidence Building of Individuals, Families, and Other Partners. It is not just the community that needs to feel self-determining to be successful, but the individuals involved need to also.

4. The 4th factor of success is when there is communication of what we are doing, why we're doing it, and how for example through public awareness work, creating opportunities and forums to hear families and individuals speak about their experiences or when the project workers go out in the field to talk about what we is being done and why

5. The 5th factor is when there is an element of Advocacy for Policy and System Changes. Here there is an understanding that we need to address exclusion at the macro level, i.e. policy and the way sectors are structured that serve to exclude people and/or not allow them to participate fully in society and offer reforms.

6. The 6th area is when an initiative works towards the Attainment of Long Term Resources and Sustaining the activities over the long term.

recipe for inclusion ...

Take the following key elements:

- Rooted at the local level
- Responds to individual needs
- Self-determining
- Community defined plans

stir it up with these key approaches ...

- Forums with diverse partners
- Use of media
- Volunteers
- Hear stories
- Funding - Leveraged, Individual Funding, Sustainable

*The results of this year also identified and affirmed key **approaches** that work:*

- Forums and events that bring a diversity of people together
- The use of all types of Media to tell stories
- The use of volunteers
- Hearing the stories, told by people themselves – eg. « Inside Out » BC
- Funding that involves - Leveraging of funds, or Individual Funding, and sustainable Funding

what that means on the individual level ...

- Be proud of themselves
- Learn about their skills
- Form real relationships
- Self determining
- Utilize those skills in meaningful activities

on the community level...

- Given info on inclusion
- True community building
- Develop partnerships
- Given tools and resources

We have also learnt that people in the broader community are receptive to inclusion when they are :

- Given the information that assists them in embracing the principles of inclusion;
- Given adequate time to engage in community building efforts that result in successful community responses ;
- Develop partnerships and participate in inter-sectoral coalitions; and are
- Given the tools and resources to implement community based plans of action

challenges ...

- Economically excluded
- Effecting social inclusion
- Effecting political inclusion

People do not feel like true citizens even though, we start at the community level with individuals and families and people are feeling included at the community level

But not as true citizens. Why?

What is missing is that people are still held back from full and equal access to economic participation, i.e. in terms of the income and disability support system that is out there, and access to employment and education etc...

All intrinsically related to, and effecting people's very real social and political inclusion.

directions for inclusion – practise & policy ...

Invest in activities that are...

- Based on the needs of the community
 - Community ownership
 - Benefit all people in community
 - Promote self determination
-
- The social capital analysis - helps us to understand the accomplishments, impacts and future directions of CI
 - The analysis views particular types of social networks and resources as “capital” in relation to their capacity to enable positive outcomes – in this case, social inclusion
 - Through PAR we were able to demonstrate that positive inclusive outcomes were based on specific investments choices of ACLs and PF organizations.
 - When we spoke of success factors – these were certain social investments that yielded positive inclusionary outcomes/results

PAR results have told us that communities experience increased inclusion when Community Inclusion dollars were invested in activities that :

Are based on the needs of a community

- And thus ensure community ownership from their inception to delivery.
- Targeted and would benefit all people in the community, not just people with disabilities and their families. The benefits of inclusion are reciprocal in nature and thus encourage individuals to invest in certain types of social networks.
- Focused on the promotion of individuals and families self-determination and confidence building

Social Capital Model

Determinants of social capital formation:

e.g. financial

Social Networks that convey social capital:

- 1) What networks look like, e.g. community ownership, benefit all people, promote self-determination
- 2) How they work, e.g. partnerships, cross-sector, coalitions

Complimentary Resources, e.g. P/T resources, in-kind contributions

Network Outputs, eg. Inclusive Education policy, PSAs, manuals/guides

Opportunity Structure

Positive Inclusive Outcomes, eg.

Incl. Ed. implemented in schools (Ont), expanded to Manitoba

Broader context

towards inclusion ...

- Build on our community level success
- System and policy change

work on multiple levels ...

- Families and individuals need tools
- Community engagement
- Need resources for capacity building
- Government investment
- Working with other national organizations

What are the multiple levels or dimensions of community that need connection?

Families need tools to be empowered so do individuals - Training sessions. Tell them what their rights are. Families and individuals don't get empowered by just wanting it to happen.

They need more.

- **Community engagement** -We need to involve communities in the policy process and systems change to effect larger change at the national level
- **Need resources** for training and capacity building cross major sectors. Widening networks – While we have experienced some limited success, we must increase our efforts toward widening the network of those who support our goals – Public Awareness work towards transforming our values and attitudes.
- **Gov't investment** – involves making the Government Accountability for the policies that are already there. They need to understand that it is only through

consistent investment in communities that inclusion works, so that means more sustainable dollars and inter-ministerial strategies.

- **Lastly working with and collaborating** with other national organizations (i.e. CMHC, CNIB, Seniors, immigrants, health related).

A Canadian community level model of inclusion? Eh? understanding social inclusion...
We have moved over the span of 7 years of implementing a PAR process for our CI activities - from largely describing activities, noting some broad national themes

To where we are today at the identification of clear, distinct, elements of successful inclusion at the local level. That we are now able to even further detail upon examination of local communities of excellence throughout the country

We are delineating and presenting a model of community inclusion that is not only applicable throughout the country, but that can be applied to various other excluded or marginalized groups in Canada or maybe globally.

I think what makes this model particularly Canadian is not the generic or key strategies or the approaches for inclusive communities - but how these “look” in the Canadian context. So for example: you always need self determination, community ownership, the use of media etc. But how that happens, will be different in different countries and settings. The most obvious is the funding element – where work is framed by provincial/territorial and federal funding responsibilities. The type of partners we connect with are specific, related to how our society is organized and here there are regional differences across our country.

John McKnight talks about inclusion hinging on one’s ability to contribute. He feel that the right to contribute is at the core of how communities are built.

He feels that everyone has a gift and everybody can contribute their gift. This is the way people can become powerful and the way a community becomes powerful.

My interpretation of this is that inclusion for him, was asking society to be organized so everyone can contribute their gift. “An invitation to contribute all people’s gifts jas to be constructed”

*“ We must construct an invitation for all people to contribute their gift”
John McKnight*

Ted Richmond

Ted Richmond has a Master's degree in evaluation and policy analysis from OISE, University of Toronto. He has an extensive professional background in immigration and settlement research and policy work, and has served in a volunteer capacity on numerous community boards and advisory committees as well as with many community-academic research partnerships.

Ted's research and policy interests include the service and equity implications of changing ethnoracial demographics, the restructuring of funding for community services, and community-based approaches to program evaluation. Currently Ted works at Laidlaw Foundation as Program Coordinator, Inclusive Communities for Children, Youth and Families.

Speaking Notes

Main points: not definitional but research challenges from a social inclusion perspective (acknowledge work done by various Canadian research and policy people addressing social inclusion)

Start with a few references to definitional elements: Laidlaw working papers (see handouts and website), OPC "feeling and reality of belonging", social inclusion as political and rooted in the struggle against exclusion (Saloojee, Omidvar)

What are some of the research and policy challenges we face in moving beyond this initial work?

Two issues I think are worth noting, although I will not dwell on them here. One is the danger of a social inclusion discourse becoming just another piece of the rhetorical arsenal employed by government to lull us to sleep while no new resources are provided to combat exclusion. While this may be to a certain extent inevitable if the notion of social inclusion continues to be popularized, given the dynamics of government bureaucracies, we should still be vigilant in criticism to minimize this threat. The second is the danger pointed out by various of my colleagues such as Uzma Shakir, of CASSA, that social inclusion becomes a terminology for assimilation, something so focused on real or desired commonalities that the reality of legitimate difference is denied.

More specific challenges I pose today are as follows:

1) how do we understand both the growth of poverty amongst working people in Canada in terms of both specific mechanisms of discrimination and more universal trends towards a bi-polar labour market?

On the one hand there are so many specific mechanisms by which certain groups are streamed into the lower end of the labour market e.g. by gender, immigrant status, visible minority status, etc.

On the other hand there is a steadily-growing "bottom end" of the labour market in Canada due to falling real wages, more precarious work, exploitation of vulnerable workers including youth, women and immigrants without status etc. (see for example Ron Saunders of CRPN and John Shields of Ryerson)

How do we describe both the specific and the general features of this trend in a way that does justice to its complexity and identifies appropriate policy solutions? I suggest we are still far from having solved this problem e.g. look at current limits of the policy discourse on skilled immigrants, or urban Aboriginals in this regard

2) any practical movement towards inclusion in policy terms requires appropriate indicators. What is not measured as we know does not “count” as a problem and therefore does not receive attention or resources. We know this, and there has been lots of work done in this area in the last five years, ranging from the Atkinson Foundation’s work around “Reality Check” towards more appropriate indicators based on existing data to the work by OPC and APG on developing inclusive indicators through community dialogue.

But the fact is this work is still divided into very different streams, particularly between process-oriented projects which have not yet produced usable indicators and more data-focused projects which are little known in the communities. These streams need to come together to produce usable, inclusive indicators. Example: measuring employment success for newcomers.

3) how do we develop what could be called an “asset-based” approach to social inclusion rather than one of detailing the extent and nature of deprivation? Examples from the current crisis of settlement and settlement service providers in Canada (reference to documents by CASSA and PROMPT on Smart Settlement and re-examining employment equity). What does this have to do with notions like social capital, and the social economy? Perhaps most important, what does this have to do with what we call “social citizenship” – how can we mobilize the political resources of excluded communities without simply appealing to people to participate in traditional electoral behaviour? These are important and relevant topics that we are exploring today...

THE SOCIAL ECONOMY

The presenters had been asked to address the following themes:

What is your understanding or working definition of “the social economy”, or what is the closest equivalent term that you prefer to use such as “community economic development”?

What is special or unique about your community’s contribution (e.g. Quebec, urban Aboriginals, continental African newcomers, etc.) to the social economy movement in terms of practical experience, or policy perspectives, or other assets. What are the unique challenges faced by your community in developing the social economy?

What role should the various levels of government play in developing the social economy?

How does or how would development of the social economy (or community economic development, etc.) contribute to combating social exclusion and building social inclusion?

Moderator:

Carolina Gajardo, COST Immigrant Services

Carolina Gajardo is a community developer and program manager with 24 years of experience, who specializes in the development, training and implementation of programs and educational materials in the area of cross-cultural communication, assessment and intervention, advocacy and counseling skills in her commitment to improve settlement services for immigrants and refugees. She is presently involved in several community committees that address the issues faced by homeless people and poverty related social issues. She is presently managing the COSTI North York Housing Help program.

Presenters:

Jacques Caillouette, University of Sherbrooke

Raymond Michah, African Canadian Social Development Council

Michael Toye, Canadian CED Network

Jacques Caillouette

Jacques Caillouette is professor of social work at Sherbrooke University in Quebec. His specialisation is the field of Community Intervention, Community Development and services organization for disabled people. Interested by the social movement in Quebec, he wrote many articles on social and citizen movement, community organizations and relation between those community organizations and social economic enterprises, notably in the Eastern Townships region, in Quebec. He is now working on a research treating of the practices in CLSC (Local center of Community services) in seven sub regions of the Eastern Townships in Quebec. During the spring 2004, he was invited for three weeks as a guest professor at the Faculty of Social Work of the University of Toronto.

Speaking Notes

SOCIAL ECONOMY AS A TOOL OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

We make a link between social economy and community development. And when we speak of development we take both, at the same time, social and economic dimensions. Regarding the questions received for the panellists, it is interesting that we invite them to link the notion of social economy to the other notions like community economic development. Personally, when we speak of social economy, we have the community development in mind. In Quebec, in the 80's, we saw people from community organizations in poor districts of several cities starting to invest the space of economic development, but with a purpose of social development. We are not referring here to the economy for the economy, but rather to the economy as a way to serve social development.

What is interesting with social economy is the implication of the civil society in the process itself of community development, a process which works at the same time onto the social, economic, politic and cultural spheres.

A DEMOCRATIC DEVELOPMENT

A central characteristic for us in the social economic movement in Quebec is its will to respond to a democratic impulse of inclusiveness and participation. By social economy, we refer to the economic activities but also to the process of their implantation. Concerning those activities, we see them responding to social needs in the communities. In an inclusive way, the social economy creates in one hand new services for people and in the other jobs for those people. A good example of that would be the implantation of the day care services in Quebec. They give to women a place to send their kids allowing them to work. Moreover, they create jobs for women, jobs that have been recognized with time by the society (formation in college, trade union ...).

Concerning the process of implantation, we conceptualize the social economy as an economy emerging from the social, that is to say, from the mobilisation of citizens who want to create economic activities in, for and with their community. It is a way to construct the community from the bottom in an optic of democratic participation, of civic commitment.

AN INTERSECTORIAL SPACE

Finally, in the term social economy, we see a new way to work with the social on one side and with the economic on the other. The thought of social economy invites to create intervention with an intersectorial perspective. The social and the economic mixed together create new holistic ways to intervene on social problems. For example, to respond to the problem of social integration of people suffering from mental health, we have to address the question of work, which belongs to the economic field. We have to develop an economic mechanism to respond to a social problem which implies a partnership between the actors of the social and those of the economic. In the opposite, in an economic field as the one of the unemployment, we have to introduce the social to help people to integrate the work sphere.

THE SOCIAL ECONOMY WITHIN THE MARKET AND BEYOND IT

The space of social economy does not limit itself to enterprise using market as a way of profitability. There is the market and the non market social economic. In an inclusive way, Community organizations in Quebec are perceived as belonging to social economy because they produce goods and services and create jobs, knowing moreover that they do not use the market as a way of funding. But this perspective even if we see it at the origin of the sector of social economy is not lived by the actors. Practically and politically, community organizations are structures appearing the more often as different from the social economy enterprise, which the government programs define with market mechanisms.

Raymond Micah

Raymond currently serves as executive director of the African Canadian Social Development Council. He has held Senior Program Consultant, Team Leader and Manager positions with the Ontario Government and Canada Revenue Agency, following community development and managerial roles in the non-profit sector. In his community life, Raymond has co-founded and provided leadership to two community organizations, and has contributed to cross-cultural engagements in community activism.

He holds a Master's in Political Science from Queen's University, and is the author of academic publications on development and the role of leadership in social transformation.

Speaking Notes

THE SOCIAL ECONOMY

What is your understanding or working definition of “the social economy”, or what is the closest equivalent term that you prefer to use such as “community economic development”?

- We understand the social economy to be that segment of the economic realm which promotes economic activity and economic dynamism among social groups that possess identifiable common challenges that could be addressed, at least in part, through the success of their members in the economic sphere.
- As such, while the social economy involves the engagement of individuals from economically-marginalized or otherwise vulnerable social groups in the general pursuit of economic gain, the goal of the social economy is not the promotion of profit for its own sake, but to address identifiable challenges of given populations through the facilitation of their economic well-being.
- From the point of view of the social goals underlying the facilitation of such economic enterprise and success within discrete communities, both the terms “social economy” and “community economic development” would suffice.

What is special or unique about your community's contribution (e.g. Quebec, urban Aboriginals, continental African newcomers, etc.) to the social economy movement in terms of practical experience, or policy perspectives, or other assets. What are the unique challenges faced by your community in developing the social economy?

- The African Canadian community, and the continental African Canadian community specifically, has the special circumstance of being particularly disadvantaged by poverty and systemic barriers to entry into the economic realm in Canada, yet possessing of many of the key success factors to economic enterprise.
- Specifically, African Canadians live under double the poverty rate of the general population. This is partly because the kind of work they generally get does not pay:
 - In the very heart of Canada's economic engine, Toronto, African Canadian men earn 22.5% less than the average for all males; and African Canadian women earn 32 % less than the average for all females.

- And this is not a reflection of differential levels of education or other such qualifications.
- Thus, African Canadians generally have many a motivation to enter and succeed in the economic realm.
- Indeed, studies indicate that they have very strong push and pull factors for wanting to get into business.
- Continental African Canadians also generally come from socioeconomic circumstances on the African continent that would appear to prepare them well for a take off - if only the right combination of supports could be offered them:
 - Many made their living through economic enterprise prior to coming across – whether it is the civil servant who moonlighted brokering economic transactions, the teacher who made a good chunk of her income from buying and selling on the side, or the street hawker who peddled razors for a living, the community is full of individuals with experience in business, albeit in a different cultural environment.
- For all these individuals in the community, then, Canada appears to be just ripe for their success.
- Alas, where do they get the capital to get going, in this highly commercialized environment?
- And where is the social capital they could draw on to enter the closed doors of bountiful opportunity?
- This notwithstanding, it is encouraging that in many small pockets across the African Canadian community, many individuals are still trying – as occasional caterers, seamstresses, tailors, private barbers or hairstylists.
- But the formal, organized, and consistent access to the market for their products and services continues to be lacking. As is the ability to achieve operational scales that are economically viable.
- This is where the social economy comes in: The deliberate facilitation of success for individuals from communities living in circumstances such as our own.

What role should the various levels of government play in developing the social economy?

How does or how would development of the social economy (or community economic development, etc.) contribute to combating social exclusion and building social inclusion?

- Governments and social mission foundations could do much to develop the social economy.
- With appropriate controls, community organizational funding and revolving capital funds could be made available to facilitate economic enterprise within communities such as the continental African Canadian community.
- Our research into the sense of social inclusion in the continental African Canadian community has pointed out that barriers of access to capital is one of the key factors contributing to a profound sense of social exclusion of our community in Canada.

- The promotion of the social economy through tangible and sustained measures is therefore crucial to the attainment of social inclusion for all.

Towards a New Social Economy Paradigm: The State as Social Entrepreneur

- Hitherto governments, in particular, have eschewed the responsible and sustained role they can play to facilitate the social economy - particularly with respect to the facilitation of the economic engagement of marginalized individuals.
- Where governments have dared to facilitate community economic development, they have generally been reticent about supporting such individuals and more comfortable with supporting business development initiatives that are directly carried out by corporate entities, such as community cooperatives and non-profit entities that seek to generate surplus through the employment of vulnerable individuals who might otherwise find it difficult to gain employment.
- Even when governments have supported community cooperatives and economically-involved social mission corporate entities, they have generally done a poor job of it: they have either not provided sufficient funding support, or have been all too ready to pull out at the earliest signs of business trouble!
- In part, this is because government units administering such support programs are typically staffed by individuals with little or no direct business experience.
- It is also partly because the government staff are required to assess the risks to the funding provided according to the same standards that are applied to regular government funding to the non-profit sector generally.
- Thus while, as example, challenges around sales, cash flow, supply and logistics, etc., are normal headaches a business would encounter and seek to overcome, government staff who become aware of these risks are more apt to consider them too risky to stay the course, and typically act to bail out much sooner than a corporate investor would.
- This course of action is pursued especially when government staff feel at risk of being embroiled in public controversy or “scandal” around the “success” of a funding program whose very expectations do not fit the environment in they are to be met!
- Yet, such precipitous action often happens just about the time when the state most needs to demonstrate the quality that is most intrinsic to the entrepreneurial pursuit: the capacity to take risks while working to achieve desired gains.
- To promote and sustain the social economy, then, governments would need to learn to become much more entrepreneurial than they have hitherto.
- But, the state must necessarily become a particular kind of entrepreneur: a social entrepreneur.
- By this we mean an entrepreneur whose *raison d’ete* is to risk capital not for purposes of direct return on investment in the form of profit, but for purposes of gaining the societal benefit of enabling otherwise marginalized individuals to enter and achieve marketplace success that could be used to address the social and other challenges economic marginality engenders.

- Just as important and within limits, the state, as compared to the average private investor, is in a vastly superior circumstance to facilitate the economic dynamism and success of marginalized individuals: the risk of its own bankruptcy from its social economy investment is relatively low; and every investment it makes in these circumstances goes to stimulate general economic activity and, ultimately, increased tax revenues - even if the direct recipient of the investment goes bankrupt.
- Thus, particularly in eras such as these, when governments enjoy budget surpluses, the relatively modest investments the state can make as a social entrepreneur, are both good for the social economy and good for the overall health of the economy and, ultimately, government revenues.
- A whole new philosophy, with attendant changes in anticipated outcomes for state support for the social economy, is therefore required, if the state is to act as forthrightly as it should as a social entrepreneur.
- This philosophy would also need to address the orthodoxy that makes it possible for state officials to secure comfort mainly or only when dealing with social economy actors that are social entities and not business-oriented, marginalized individuals.
- Indeed, the new possibilities opened up by the rethinking in this field include the creative establishment of a nexus that links the state as social entrepreneur, community economic organizations as social organizers, and the communities' marginalized individuals as economic actors in their own right.
- In such reorientation and nexus lies the real hope for the Canadian social economy and the business-oriented individuals on the margins.

Key Recommendation

- In light of the foregoing, the African Canadian Social Development Council would recommend the establishment of a Social Entrepreneurship Fund by the various levels of government, based on the proposed nexus.
- These funds would provide investment capital for individual business initiatives by business-oriented, marginalized individuals, whose activities would be organized through organizations seeking to facilitate community economic development in their communities.

Michael Toye

Michael Toye is currently Community Learning Program Director with the Canadian CED Network, managing the Pan-Canadian Community Development Learning Network, a 2-and-a-half year project examining the links between CED and social inclusion. He has been involved with CCEDNet since the fall of 2000 in various capacities. Prior to CCEDNet, he was a member and helped develop two worker co-operatives that provide research, consulting and training in fields related to community economic development and the social economy. He lives in Warwick, Québec, where poutine was invented in 1957.

SOCIAL CITIZENSHIP

The presenters had been asked to address the following themes:

For the groups or communities with which you are working, what are some of the main obstacles to meaningful participation in democratic political life?

What have you been doing to overcome these obstacles? What are some of the successes you can identify and the lessons you can share?

What are some of the possible immediate and practical changes that would facilitate active social citizenship particularly in terms of resource allocation and policy changes?

From your experience and perspective what is the relation between trying to get excluded groups into the existing political process and working to change the ways we understand democratic citizenship?

Moderator: Sangeeta Subramanian, Toronto Regional Immigrant Employment Council

Sangeeta Subramanian has over a decade of experience in the not-for-profit sector, primarily in South and South-East Asia. She has worked and consulted with international agencies such as Ford Foundation, Population Council, United Nations Population Fund and International Council for Management of Population Programs with the primary focus on policy, advocacy and capacity building of grassroots organizations to design and implement more effective programs. Sangeeta is currently the Project Manager for The Mentoring Partnership at Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council (TRIEC). Prior to joining TRIEC, Sangeeta was the Executive Director of the South Asian Women's Centre in Toronto. She is also the President of Council of Agencies Serving South Asians (CASSA) and serves on the Policy and Research Committee of Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants (OCASI).

Presenters:

Rick Egan, Modernizing Incomes Security for Working Age Adults

Jean Ann Ledwell, NAPO Board of Directors

Amanuel Melles, Inclusive Cities Canada

Marjan Montazemi, Maytree Foundation

Rober Obonsawin, Aboriginal Peoples Council of Toronto

Rick Egan

I have been the Community Development Coordinator at St. Christopher House for 10 years now. In that capacity I have had lots of opportunities to work with participants and volunteers on a wide range of issues that limit their ability individually and collectively to improve individual and social conditions. I have been fortunate at St. Christopher House to have a wide range of opportunities to explore different special projects exploring alternative and community based approaches to a wide variety of social and economic problems including Community Economic Development, television documentaries, Social Audits, Alternative Banking, Digital Divide as well as being a member of different networks and coalitions working on systemic advocacy. Most recently I have been a

part of the Community Undertaking Social Policy team at St. Christopher House, responsible for ensuring that low income communities in the St. Christopher House catchment and beyond are fully engaged in our Income Security Reform Initiative.

Speaking Notes

St. Christopher House

St. Christopher House is a multi-service community centre serving west downtown Toronto. St. Chris has programs for all age groups and serves low-income people from diverse ethno-racial and linguistic groups such as Portuguese-speaking and Vietnamese seniors, newcomers from Sri Lanka, China, Latin America and Eastern Europe as well as First Nations people and other diverse Canadian-born community members. Programs include after-school programs for children and youth, drop-ins for homeless and socially isolated people, employment supports, newcomer supports, literacy, a wide range of supports to homebound seniors and various community development projects. Despite the name, St. Chris is not a religious organization in any way.

St. Chris and Social Citizenship

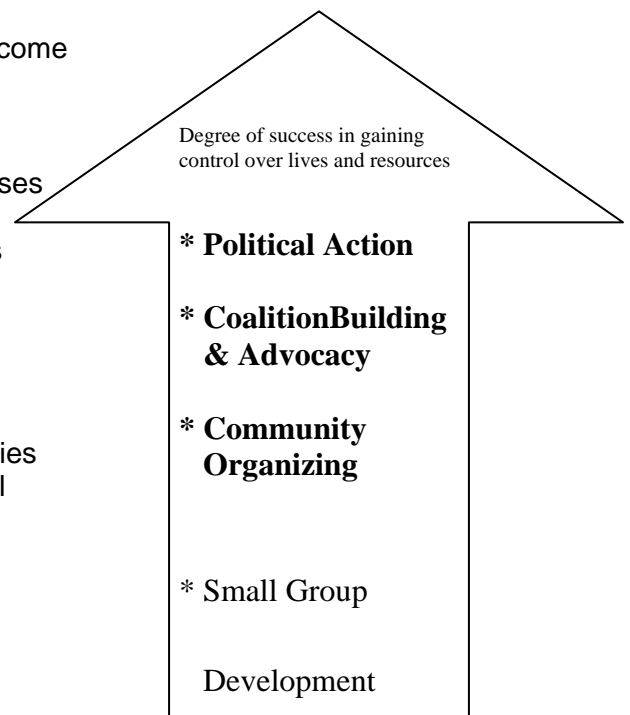
“To be successful, community organizations must reflect the needs and views of all members, users and stakeholders in their communities: “the strength of their decision-making lies in their ability to be representative and inclusive”.

Throughout our history there have been many barriers that limited meaningful participation in community life. Specifically:

- ethno-racial background
- financial status
- education level
- physical or mental ability
- religious and faith-based beliefs
- gender
- sexual orientation
- age

St. Christopher House has worked with people to overcome these barriers using an Empowerment Model throughout a Continuum of Services and Activities

- direct political action through various political processes
- interorganizational networking and cooperation
- advocacy to influence private & public policy choices
- group development
- community outreach and education
- needs assessment and issue identification
- networking and advocacy
- self-help and peer support groups
- validate that individuals are not alone in their difficulties
- enhance self-image as capable, worthy and powerful
- individual counsel and education
- crisis intervention
- referral



The desire to be socially engaged is often inherent and instinctive for many members of our community. It is a skill and a capacity that needs to be nurtured and supported. For some of our community it's learning how to transfer their knowledge and experience into a new or broader context. For others it's overcoming personal experiences and circumstances that have compromised their belief in themselves, others or the state.

Some people are able to jump right from a personal problem to join in political processes that address systemic barriers that contribute to their problems. Others work through a progressive steps that start with people participating in decision making processes that affect them directly, to decision making processes that affect them and others associated with different programs at St. Chris directly, to decision making processes that affect the whole House or neighbourhood and finally to broader political processes.

Where did Community Undertaking Social Policy (CUSP) project come from?

Towards the end of the 90s St. Chris began to question the effectiveness of our model. Our capacity to support social engagement and citizenship was in part a reflection of external

Restructuring of the state resulted in significantly fewer resources for vulnerable populations and the sectors supporting them. Policies such as deficit reduction, downloading and recasting social problems as personal faults and deficiencies resulted in more people with more complex problems with fewer options and opportunities to overcome barriers. Further, people who came to St. Chris became less willing, able and supported to engage in political processes. Some feared the threat of violence, harassment and loss of benefits/funding associated with political expression. Others questioned our collective ability to shift political or public attitudes through public education/protest. Finally, the loss of broader leadership from within academia, government and national/regional groups which had had been eliminated or moved to the margins as "special interests groups" left us all a bit adrift.

Collectively our community and our sector seemed to be operating in "survival modes." Our political, intellectual and moral leadership had been cast in the public sphere as reactionary and stale. At St. Chris we needed something that would refocus and reenergize us and perhaps have a greater impact at a systemic level. Throughout the 90s we could only speculate about our impact. Our success could not be measured by the impact social action had on the policies and programs that governments were implementing. Our success was limited to preventing potentially worse dimensions of policies and programs that were floated by government, which were never implemented as a result of collective action. The community and staff of St. Chris were not prepared to abandon the political processes we knew such as Town Halls, letter writing campaigns and election campaigns etc, but we needed to augment them with something else.

Governments of the day in the realm of public policy were not particularly interested in hearing what people directly affected by their social reforms had to say. Most public policy was being shaped from political textbooks representing a particular ideology or imported from another jurisdiction reflecting a particular ideology. We had been working for many years to bring the mountain to Mohammed, maybe we should bring Mohammed to the mountain. While we continued to work to improve the benefit structure supporting low income communities, we began to look at how we can make peoples incomes and resources go further.

What is CUSP?

Community Undertaking Social Policy was initiated to bridge the gulf between the lived experience of low income people and those developing public policy. To do this we imported a senior policy-maker into our frontline agency for a few months. The model is based on an “artist in residence.” The goal is to establish a dialogue between the policy world and frontline and community worlds for purposes of mutual learning. The Atkinson Foundation has provided financial and developmental support to this the project. Richard Shillington, a tax and finance expert based in Ottawa was our first CUSP “fellow” in 2001 and John Stapleton formerly an income maintenance policy expert from the Ministry of Community and Social Services has been our second “fellow” since 2003.

St. Christopher House and our CUSP fellows working directly with low income participants in our programs have accomplished to date:

- with Richard Shillington, we pointed out to the Ministry formally known as HRDC that upward of 200,000 low-income Canadian seniors who were eligible for the federal Guaranteed Income Supplement were not receiving it. As a result, HRDC has contacted these seniors and now more than 70,000 of them are now receiving GIS.
- We have raised awareness with community members, the public, the media and with provincial and federal governments about some of the perverse consequences arising from the interactions of income security programs and tax policies. This “stacking effect” for some low income people face effective marginal tax rates approaching/exceeding 100 per cent.
- We have raised awareness of the problems that RRSPs and other registered savings vehicles create for low income people. John Stapleton has worked with us to design a more appropriate alternative, a form of a Tax Prepaid Savings Plan called a Registered Development Savings Plan (RDSP) that would protect the assets of low-income people who are cycling in and out of employment and welfare. The RDSP is under review by the Federal Department of Finance and the Ministry of Community and Social Services.

To date, St. Christopher House and CUSP fellows working directly with low income participants in our programs and in the broader community based service sector have:

- organized and facilitated 12 multi-stakeholder focus groups to encourage shared analysis of our income security system (Income Security strategies for Working Age adults) . These groups ranged from 8 to 22 people and most had a good mix of policy experts, frontline social service agency staff, low income people and interested community members at large. Most of the focus group members had already participated in either an interview or community workshops that help prepare and formulate the options for reform that were discussed in the focus group. Over 300 low income people participated in discussions about how we could improve our income security system.
- formed a great partnership with Maytree Foundation’s Leaders for Change program. Maytree sponsored a group of community leaders to work with us organizing and facilitating outreach and facilitating groups in community settings across the city. In particular, the Maytree Leaders for Change group helped us reach people from newcomer and immigrant groups.

- Currently we are in a partnership with the Toronto City Summit Alliance to draw in even more depth and diversity of stakeholders interested in modernizing our income security programs. This initiative called Modernizing Income Security for Working Age Adults picks up on the themes, ideas and debates that were formulated in the focus groups with the hope of forming a broad consensus of civil society on income security reform that governments will be more likely to adhere to.

St. Christopher House Learnings from CUSP

For St. Christopher House staff involved in this project, the philosophy of building bridges and dialogue between different life experiences is a part of our community development model (almost since our inception in 1912) that we had drifted away from and needed to return to with new emphasis at the social action level. We recognized that we were putting most of our efforts into bonding between vulnerable and marginalized groups but little effort in bridging other interests and stakeholders in our community.

In the first phase of our CUSP project we were working predominantly with people who are part of the St. Chris community. We were surprised and encouraged by the support of volunteers from the world of business who embraced and helped refine the ideas and solutions that emerged from the CUSP fellows and community members. The CUSP Technical Committee, as they were known, comprised largely of people from private enterprise helped open different government doors and helped advocate for the changes that took place. It reaffirmed for us that peoples' real stories can still move individuals who do not directly benefit from social programs. People generally were inspired to reengage in social action by breaking down the silos of our ideas, experiences and our social connectedness.

In the second and third phase of the CUSP project we learned that it is still possible to interest people from many different backgrounds in a discussion of income security issues even when no political party has it high on their agenda. The feedback from all participants was almost entirely positive. They felt they learned a lot from participating in the process and reported a broadened understanding of the issues.

Almost everyone appreciated the opportunity to talk about these issues with the different kinds of "expertise" and experiences that were at the tables. A large number of people talked about how their ideas and opinions were influenced by others and that they appreciated the opportunity of being able to inform others.

Unlike some larger public debate and engagement that tend towards rhetoric, people involved in the focus group process were able to move very well between personal experience and attitudes to very complex systems analysis. There are still differences, but there was enough common support for the overall goal that people were willing to really listen to each other and identify areas where they felt there needs to be more discussion and analysis to really understand each other.

St. Chris also learned about the need to look for the "2nd hand smoke – how does this issue affect me" of any social policy issue. John Stapleton has been particularly effective in demonstrating some of the limits of our past advocacy strategies on social policy. We now better recognize when and how to communicate with people who have different interests e.g. people far removed from the low income individuals with whom we work. At the same time, St. Chris still recognizes the value of participating in some

strategies which are primarily about breaking down individual isolation and creating solidarity between communities with a shared experience.

We also learned that collectively we have a good understanding and knowledge of social policy, but as individuals we have gaps in our understanding and knowledge. Specifically we have learned that many of us in the social services sector do not have a solid grasp of economics either at the macro level or the individual level.

In part the process humbled us. In recent years we had more often than not spoke on behalf of the low income community as adverse policies and conditions were imposed on our sector. We learned that as advocates for our community we did not accurately reflect the diversity of opinion and experience within our own community. At times we have likely (unintentionally) misrepresented many of our community by bypassing community dialogue critical to effective social citizenship. When given the opportunity, community members demonstrated an incredible capacity to engage in public policy debates with complex social and economic relations and provided the stories and analysis that took us straight to the heart of the problem. As discussed, there are multiple barriers to inclusion, but the common denominator throughout all the factors influencing depth and duration of exclusion is attachment to the labour force.

See learnings about our income security system at:

<http://www.stchrishouse.org/get-involved/community-dev/income-sec-work-adults/>

Frontline agencies draw analysis from the stories and patterns of the lived experiences of community members in our micro-environment while policy-makers have more macro-level view and more emphasis on quantitative data. Our CUSP experience shows that it is possible and it is enriching to combine both approaches. Our direct service work with community members is improved when we know more about how social programs are operate. More importantly, frontline and community experience improves social policy and programs design and implementation.

Recomendations

CUSP has been a rewarding experience for St. Christopher House and the community it serves. Beyond the changes it has contributed to at a public policy level (and hopefully changes still to come) and its impact on low income members of our community who have benefited directly from the changes, CUSP has helped reinvigorate our community and our organization. New community leaders have emerged as a result of being a part of CUSP

It wouldn't have happened if the organization had treated social engagement and social citizenship as secondary to the direct services that dominate our organization. Direct service is often the main doorway to opportunities for social engagement for vulnerable and marginalized, but it requires dedicated staff resources and community resources in order to seriously facilitate social citizenship. Finding and allocating dedicated resources to social action will not happen unless the board and senior staff make it an organizational priority. This is not an easy choice given that there are many immediate needs that are inadequately resourced. We need to constantly challenge ourselves internally about the excuses for not being engaged in social policy development. The excuses are compelling, especially the excuse that workload on staff is already heavy

and getting involved in social policy is an additional burden. As valid as the workload problem often is, we do have to be vigilant for signs of paternalistic “gatekeeping” by staff – by this we mean when we as staff decide which, if any, social policy opportunities we will make available to the community members they serve. People have to be part of solutions that affect them. Failing to do so results in the incoherent and uncoordinated array of programs that we currently experience. The best argument for including everyone in our social policy development is what was created without their participation. What could be a comprehensive “safety net” is limited to being a collection of programs that often create disincentives to active citizenship and interact with each other to cancel any cumulative impact they could have.

Social Citizenship requires more than goodwill and good intentions. Funders need to be persuaded of the merit of participating in democratic processes as a component of any problem facing individuals and communities. In the short term, finding and working with individual donors and foundations like Atkinson and Laidlaw may provide the base on which to build organizational and community capacity.

There is a lag between initiating and solidifying a solid base for community action, but as organizational intentions become clear, there are many individuals that are looking to support initiatives at this level. Some of the general public and low income people involved in our CUSP project found common ground in their shared critique of charitable and bureaucratic responses to social problems and are looking to support CUSP like initiatives that are located in neighbourhoods and civil society more generally.

We have been fortunate in the CUSP case to be supported to fund most of the real cost of social engagement. Excluded communities face exceptional barriers, not the least of which is they can't afford the time and energy associated with most social change processes. In the CUSP approach, almost everyone participating in the process was being paid by someone. Similarly low income community members who participate were paid. Other access issues such as safety, translation, transportation and family responsibilities were attended to as well. Where we lacked insufficient funding initially we worked with groups or programs that are already pre-existing to piggy back resources in the host program designed to help overcome access issues.

Frontline agencies need to systematically capture stories and ideas from community members. Frontline agency staff and community members need more opportunities and practice to tell their stories so that the stories and the insights and ideas in those stories will be heard, understood and appreciated by a broader audience.

New Understanding of Democratic Citizenship

A new understanding of Democratic Citizenship is really old ideas which are even more compelling for new times. The fundamentals are the same, but the strategies need to reflect our current socio-economic context. Like in the past, if people are given the opportunity, invited and supported to participate fully and in meaningful and safe ways then people will respond in kind. It means moving discussions and debates beyond the usual suspects that gather within their social and economic networks to having informed discussions that move out of defending and justifying political ideologies. Our successes to date are as much about risking that people from different social positions can find commonality if there is a safe and respectful setting for those conversations. We had

focused most of our efforts on creating solidarity between different groups of vulnerable and marginalized communities. We had ignored whole groups of social and political civic leaders who we assumed were totally aligned with the political leadership we “blamed” for exacerbating exclusionary public policies and practices that dominated our organizational efforts in recent years.

Democratic Citizenship requires taking a risk and trusting that the communities you serve when given a chance are their own best representatives in the public arena. It is necessary to create an environment where people can both recognise and respect difference and discover and affirm their commonalities.

There is still a long way to go. The debate still centres around fairness and creating “equal opportunities.” Moving the discussions of social citizenship beyond “equality of opportunity” and towards “equality of conditions” is a bigger leap for many people. The difference is that it is more possible to have that debate now. Instead of people tuning out when poverty and exclusion emerge, ideologies do not dominate. Ideas, experiences and stories are more central to the discussion.

There is growing recognition that “inclusion” is more than a nice and generous aspect of our collective wealth and prosperity. Inclusion is a precondition of our societies ability to remain prosperous and healthy. The growing gap between rich and poor and a failure to support people to achieve their potential will not serve us well as our country continues to evolve socially and economically. There is a well documented crisis looming in public financing associated with the baby boom generation ageing. As a society, if we do not find ways to include everyone in the solution, we all will bear the consequences of our failure. The CUSP process (so far) gives reason for hope.

Jean Ann Ledwell

Jean Ann, a professional adult educator and librarian, has spent the last twenty five years working with both ecumenically and citizenship based social justice groups. Her most significant involvements have been with women's, anti-poverty, disability, peace and global education groups. Jean Ann's life experience of seeing differently ... "seeing with her nose" as she says, is of particular relevance to her participation here today.

Speaking Notes

5 minute Reflections on Social Citizenship

Current reality/framework within which we find ourselves today: one of widening inequality at home and elsewhere and of deepening ideological polarization in neo-liberal, globalizing context.

Let me speak first about resistance - the resistance I experience when asked to speak to social citizenship from a disability perspective

The assumption of commonly shared characteristics and experiences, indeed of a "disability community" is not one that I can easily make: people are first and foremost unique individuals, with unique personalities and personal circumstances. Associational,

interest group identity is chosen and secondary ... engaging, enabling ...essential ... but membership in such groups can not be, and is not the definer of our identity as persons, as citizens.

It has long been a concern of mine that so called "identity" based politics often leads to silo formation and fragmentation and the playing off of vulnerable people against one another ... and ultimately, as has been said in a slightly different political context, creates a situation wherein all the minorities never make a majority! So, let me be clear that I am speaking from a human perspective, and from a particular sub-set of circumstances and experiences within that perspective.

(A couple of brief but telling personal stories about trying to participate in elections in recent years followed)

Now, these experiences are just the tip of the iceberg, but they should speak to you of the failure of communication, of not being heard or understood, of not being recognized as mattering, of not being respected, of not experiencing belonging there at all! They should give you a little insight into just how challenging it is for someone who sees differently to exercise even the right to vote ... or the option to volunteer in political campaigns - two key components of a party based electoral system. They should alert you to the fact that the socially conditioned and institutionally accepted and reinforced attitudes and actions of fear and ignorance are still THE major obstacle preventing participation in all sorts of family, communal, social, economic, cultural and civic activities by persons whose way of understanding and communicating and knowing and moving and BEING in the world differs in some way from those so called "normal" people (how I loathe that word!) on whose psych-physical characteristics - and for whose benefit - the world is currently organized.

Acceptance of, honoring of, valuing of human diversity, human differences, otherness is still THE major challenge to all forms of participation. Genuine, humble acceptance of the human in all its fragility, vulnerability, and yes, mortality is ultimately at issue. Today we are being urged to preserve natural biodiversity but somehow biodiversity seems not to be inclusive of the human varieties!! How ironic! How tragic! Related to this, and again, obvious in the small stories I shared, is the refusal of current power holders and brokers to accept that rights and entitlements accrue to ALL citizens, not just to those in whose image and interest they were customized! Have we really come very far from the citizen as the white, property holding male? Begging, pleading for and even having to go to the Human Rights Commission and the law courts in order to exercise the basic rights of being a citizen are still the order of the day ...even the legislation we have (Charter Section 15 etc.) is difficult to enforce in the absence of the values and attitudes I referred to earlier.

Being able to participate as a citizen also and perhaps firstly means having access the personal and communal resources, knowledge and opportunities to choose and use the goods and services and supports needed to LIVE with dignity in our society, to live in the ordinary sense of the word, to be self-determining, to have personal agency in egalitarian, mutually respectful social relationships. At present this is FAR from the case: most social systems and their bureaucracies seem bent on obscuring, even denying essential knowledge, goods and services and socially legislated supports to many vulnerable citizens ...be it Income Security, WSIB, EI, disability pensions,

whatever; moreover, they frequently totally usurp the individual's right to self-determination in even the most minute aspects of daily life relative to those services or supports, and often make them available only to the extent that the person submits to endless interrogation and examination of the most invasive and offensive sort.

Social citizenship, to quote Catherine Frazee, is indeed precarious for many of us! Perhaps the majority of us!

Notes:

Read or listen to Catherine Frazee on this issue. She spoke of precarious citizenship at the Dialogue on Citizenship, Ryerson, 2002. It is available on the Ryerson website.

Reread Ruth Levitas' paper on the Laidlaw website; read Penny M Leonard's Information for Citizenship: Policies and Politics of Promoting Welfare. Policy Press, 2003

Amanuel Melles

Amanuel Melles is the director of organizational capacity building at the United Way of Greater Toronto. Amanuel brings an extensive experience of encouraging the creative development of organizations and communities. Prior to joining the United Way of Greater Toronto, Amanuel worked in various management roles in the settlement, community health and social service sectors.

Amanuel's past volunteer roles include those with the Ontario Council for International Cooperation, Distress Centres Toronto, the Community Social Planning Council of Toronto, the African Canadian Social Development Council and the Toronto Regional Immigrant Employment Council.

He presently co-chairs the Inclusive Cities Canada's Toronto Civic Panel and is a member of the Toronto Community Foundation's Council of 100. Before coming to Canada, he spent ten years in research and academia in Eritrea and several other countries in Europe, the Middle East and Africa.

Marjan Montazemi

Speaking Notes

Presentation: abcGTA, a new project of The Maytree Foundation -

I am here today to present a new practical project of the Maytree Foundation aimed at addressing the lack of diverse representation on the boards of public institutions in the GTA. This new initiative is called: abcGTA. Our key target groups are: agencies, boards and commissions (abcs) at the municipal, regional and provincial levels, as well as universities, colleges, hospitals and other such institutions.

This project has been designed as part of a continuum of Maytree projects and initiatives related to social citizenship and citizen engagement especially in the context of leadership. This interest stems from a commitment to:

- 1) changing the face of power and governance
- 2) accelerating the leadership potential of newcomer citizens in the GTA.

abcGTA's objective specifically is to promote inclusion of immigrant and visible minority voices at the decision-making level.

One of the key components of the abcGTA project is to compile a roster of at least 100 candidates from diverse backgrounds who are willing, able and interested in serving on boards of public institutions. To create the roster, we have developed a thorough application process.

To date, we have collected more than 90 applications from qualified candidates from across sectors from around the GTA, individuals who have been active engaged citizens as volunteers, boards members or staff in their neighbourhood centres, in ethno-specific organizations, with immigrant and refugee-serving agencies, or their school councils.

One thing that they have in common is their interest and shared commitment to make their contributions at a broader scale and at the next level. And they are ready for that challenge.

It is important to stress that the candidates have taken the time to fill in a rather thorough application form despite the fact that they are already very busy with their many professional and volunteer commitments. They have taken the time to do this because they recognize that GTA's diverse voices are not represented at the decision-making level. Most people we have talked to about this initiative, they say: it's about time we do this!

Why haven't they applied to public boards themselves? Some have, a few successfully, others have been turned away. A majority did not know about the process to get on the public abcs. There are perceptions that:

- applications to these boards are not open to the general public
- appointments are made based on political affiliations (ie political patronage)
- appointments are made based on who other board members know rather than any interest in reaching out to broaden their networks
- There are questions: How do we even apply? How do we find out about vacancies? What are the chances for us to be interviewed if we are not personally known by the nominating committee?

For a few who have tried to apply:

- either they were not called to be interviewed
- or acknowledgements of their applications were received a few months to a year after their initial application and many months after appointments had been announced
- or they were invited to be interviewed, however they were not selected without being given a reasonable answer
- those who were not selected at the interview level had questions about the composition of the interview panel (and its lack of diverse representation)

The list of real and perceived barriers is unfortunately rather long.

At the individual institutional level, a change in organizational culture is required. Organizations have to openly acknowledge their commitment to diversity at the decision-making level by going out of their usual way. Take a hard look at how they conduct

outreach, how they share information, what information they share, their selection criteria, who makes the selection of candidates, how the selection is made. They have to make an effort towards real inclusion once diverse appointments are made, to avoid tokenism and to engage different voices and perspectives around the table.

If institutions are concerned about inclusion, then one of the first steps especially at the municipal and provincial level is to conduct a survey on the current composition of abcs. This baseline information will be critical to monitor progress.

Our understanding is that the city of Toronto has already conducted such a survey of their abcs. The reports should be released soon. This kind of information, the analysis, along with a commitment to establishing targets, will be key to promoting inclusion at board levels.

One of the objectives of this project is to highlight the capacity of diverse leaders as civic leaders. We count on your support from our allies in the community and within our target institutions. We expect that public institutions will meet us half way. Social citizenship does not happen in a vacuum.

CLOSING REMARKS

Julie Mathien is a Policy Development Officer at the City of Toronto and Co-Chair of the Inclusive Communities for Children, Youth and Families Pilot Program. Julie provided some brief closing remarks and thanked the panelists and moderators for their contributions, and the participants for their questions and comments.

Julie also thanked by name the various staff, volunteers and other colleagues who had helped with the organization of this event.