



Strengthening Canada's Communities / Des communautés plus fortes au Canada

Youth and Work Advisory Summary

November 7th, 2006

Communities Represented on the Advisory Committee: Trail, Hazelton, Victoria, Sunshine Coast, Greenville, Whitehorse, Bamfield, Vancouver, Prince Rupert

Sectors Represented on the Advisory Committee: CED, Youth, Environmental, Co-operative, Technological, Governmental, ED, Health

Summary of Advisory Calls

The age range that constitutes youth for this project is 18-30, though we find that many of the youth we work with then work with even younger youth in turn.

Role of the Advisory Committee

The main goal of the committee is to help guide the design of this process so that it is relevant to the Youth CED engagement and employment strategies going on in their communities. Ideally the committee will be able to indicate communities that should be targeted by the project to ask for a letter of intent, as well as to suggest criteria that would be helpful when choosing the communities. This particular group of people was contacted because of their involvement with youth, rural youth, northern youth, and/or are youth themselves, working in a rural community. There are also participants from various sectors including environmental and co-ops, who work with young people in these fields because of the interest from both the CED and Environmental sector to actively engage in the conversations around connections between the two movements.

The "Workshops/Sessions"

Because each community is likely to be at a different stage of development, what format the workshops/sessions take will depend on each community. For some communities this may be a relationship building exercise, just getting stakeholders

talking and connecting or just pulling youth together. Some communities may already have done visioning together, others may have an action plan ready and it's a question of getting it moving.

The outcome and tangible objective hoped for is at least an action plan for the community - ideally between generations, but at least with the youth, that can be shared along with lessons learned of other communities participating. Depending on capacity, this could extend to outside communities as well.

Who facilitates this planning will depend on the particular community's capacity. Farrar is the main resource. Where there is interest she is excited to facilitate. However the more appropriate role may be as a joint or support facilitator if there are already experienced and appropriate leaders from the community. Creativity in this area is encouraged.

Link of Project to CED

Participants are excited that the project is linked within CED, not just traditional labour market development. When visioning, there tends to be a deficit assessment instead of an asset assessment. The concept of CED is still quite cutting edge in many rural areas of BC, but young people especially tend to understand it. The focus becomes more about the growth and capacity of a community, about its future.

Capacity building could be an objective of the project. An example would be to create these plans in conjunction with youth in communities, particularly if that hasn't been done before. As the four communities move their work forward, that movement and the lessons learned could be documented and shared with the rest of the group - capacity building is sharing lessons. This could be a very creative process, doesn't have to be a report.

In Hazelton, the youth work being supported is very linked to CED. There has been a community visioning process and youth engagement is directly part of it. The definition of CED is very different from traditional labour market perspectives. Many members of the community don't have the skills for the work, nor are there many employment opportunities, so employment can only happen when it's within a CED context, or through community service (usually volunteer). So when talking about building those skills it often means people leaving the community - yet people are often in that community because of connection to land, place and kin - and these realities don't necessarily connect to the traditional labour market. So the links being made by CCEDNet, between CED and what building employment skills looks like is critical.

Young people up north may not have high level scholastic degrees, for a multitude of reasons, yet do have the capacity to work within their communities. This is relevant to this discussion because of the ability - or lack thereof - of youth to enter the CED workforce, or of access to the tools designed to help them do so.

Community Contacts & Action Plan Funding Opportunities

BC Healthy Communities works on capacity building and support to communities to make the links between issues and youth outreach has been identified as a priority. BCHC has facilitators in five regions of the province. If there's a fit of goals and objectives there may be some support available. One of the areas that will be most useful will be contacts in the communities as well, making sure that all of the stakeholders are involved, who's doing what projects, where there is potential to connect and coordinate with what is already happening - the project is aiming to build on capacity where possible, to enable people to act on their vision.

The Community Youth Development Coalition of British Columbia currently has a call for proposals out. The Coalition is looking to support 7 communities in 2007, for up to \$30 000 each, for organizations that support their policies and principles, a mix between CED and youth development. One of the goals is to build capacity to take on the community youth development principles, also building lessons learned between communities, and building relationships between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities.

UBCM, in partnership with SPARC BC, has issued a call for proposals for community forums -again \$30 000.

Potential Communities

Trail - The Youth Community Development Centre is progressing very well, has been very inclusive of youth and is building relationships with adults. This project has the potential to contribute to action planning around programs and intergenerational dialogue. A facilitator who could offer tools to create that intergenerational dialogue would be excellent.

Whitehorse - BYTE (Bringing Youth towards Equality), Circumpolar Youth Council (an environmental angle, skilled at rallying youth), Ta'an Kwachan First Nation (one of the groups on the fringes).

Hazelton - youth work being supported is very linked to CED. There has been a community visioning process and youth engagement is directly part of it.

Bamfield - the focus is a lot on technology and media with youth. The West Coast Learning Network is active. There is a Community Affairs group with an enormous

number of volunteers, and there is action to build a youth version of the group to boost youth participation.

Prince Rupert and Haida Gwaii were also mentioned as having dynamic youth strategies. Sooke (applied to do youth leadership stuff, a skills development center, through the SEED fund). The Homalco Band, Comox (inquired about a SEED grant for a community capacity building event, with a youth facilitator - including youth by giving them a leadership role within that process.)

Targeting the Proposals

Need to be conscious of differing levels of capacity in communities, there may be some groups that need support even to apply. One criterion in choosing the projects could be supporting youth-led initiatives. There are lots of communities where youth development is a priority, but that development is not led by youth themselves.

Yet it will be important to retain some flexibility around the definition of "youth-led". Based on some members experience, when talking about youth-led, there is still always an adult involved, as a mentor or guide. To acknowledge that youth-led, youth engagement is present but that that may involved adult mentors or a larger organization that houses that youth initiative is critical.

Intergenerational Dialogue, and Challenges

Two communities noted that intergenerational dialogue is needed. There are so many projects, but only so many youth who are interested in participating, so intergenerational education and dialogue would be valuable.

The youth are usually the ones to initiate, but there's a huge gap between the youth that are engaged and those who would really benefit but somehow aren't engaged in it. This isn't necessarily due to lack of opportunity because there are lots of funds, and people are eager to fund youth projects, but more that the youth aren't engaged. The gap seems to be that there are different organizations offering leadership training and youth empowerment, but it needs to happen right in each rural community. The opportunities are offered in larger centers, but youth in rural communities will feel like it doesn't include them - it will take more to get them there. Some communities have youth coordinators, but the gap is still there - has a lot to do with attitude and youth desire to participate. Sometimes it's simple, just making the space for a special youth strategic planning session. This program could fill that gap.

Making it sure that the subject resonates with local youth and knowing the impact on their local community makes an enormous difference. Experience shows specific

planning for their specific community led to ownership of both the discussion and the outcomes.

In Whitehorse the Ta'an Kwachan First Nation could be further engaged. Beginning with the broader youth might exclude this group - though the larger group makes sense in light of the benefits of creating links across the territory.

Engagement is a significant problem in Bamfield as well. Geography is an added challenge. The First Nation community is ten minutes outside of town and the rest of the community is divided by water - just getting people together in the same space is a job! One of the action steps here is to bring high-speed into the community so that video conferencing is an option.

The combination of Employment, CED and Youth Engagement is supported. The points in the brochures comparing employer's obstacles to hiring youth and the expectations of youth were useful. This is another needed discussion.

Logistics of Workshops

The expectation is that each session will engage 30 people. This could happen in different ways. A community may be at the stage to pull all 30 stakeholders, youth and non-youth, together to vision. Or it may need to be a relationship building, leadership workshop with two separate groups. (This is all with a CED, youth engagement and youth employment focus). Or if there even needs to be relationship building between youth, it could be a meeting of ten young people who are generally not as engaged, ten that are, and then a follow up with both and possibly some adult stakeholders. Farrar's interested in being flexible.

The targeted request for proposals may be sent out to more than four communities, but not many more simply because of the available capacity.