

Developing Innovative Approaches for Community Engagement

In the Grand Falls-Windsor - Baie Verte - Harbour Breton Region



Raisa Mirza, Kelly Vodden and Gail Collins
Department of Geography
Memorial University
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Questions and comments are welcomed and can be sent to either Raïsa Mirza or Kelly Vodden at the addresses below:

Raïsa Mirza

Masters Candidate, Department of
Geography,
Memorial University
(709) 864- 8981
raisamirza@gmail.com

Kelly Vodden

Professor, Department of Geography,
Memorial University
(709) 864-8981
kvodden@mun.ca

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Executive Summary

Newfoundland and Labrador is undergoing a period of rapid economic, social and cultural change. With declining populations and downsizing in the fishery, forestry and other sectors, many regions are being forced to reinvent themselves—to imagine new futures. For the provincial government, supporting the survival of rural regions depends on finding innovative and inclusive ways to engage people, in order to increase their capacity to participate in the policy-making processes that will, in part, determine their futures. Effective community engagement should be a first step towards creating the circumstances and opportunities to ensure that rural communities thrive economically, socially and culturally.

While there is growing global consensus on the need for community engagement, there is no standard way to carry it out. This can lead to engagement activities that are ineffective or seem “tokenistic” to the target populations. Governments within Canada and around the world are taking a closer look at the role public engagement plays in the policy-making process by doing long-term studies to evaluate their public engagement strategies and to find innovative new methods and techniques.

During a June 2011 session, the Grand Falls-Windsor - Harbour Breton - Baie Verte Regional Council identified a need for effective community engagement within the region. The Council relies on engagement to keep in touch with local needs and to get feedback on what’s working and what’s not. Yet carrying out engagement activities in the region can be difficult: with a small, aging population and many citizens who work out-of-province on turn-around schedules, the Council found that the same people were being called upon again and again for leadership and volunteer roles, increasing the risk of burnout. The Council also identified the need to develop new methods and techniques to engage groups that are underrepresented in traditional engagement activities—especially youth and young families.

The Regional Council partnered with Memorial University to evaluate the types of community engagement used in the region in the past, and to research and propose innovative new techniques that could be used to more effectively engage residents in the future, giving them a larger role in the policy-making process.

In order to explore the types of engagement used in the past and to identify their strengths and limitations, the researchers set up a series of interviews with community members around the region and members of the Provincial Rural Secretariat who have been actively involved in community engagement activities throughout the province. In conjunction with this research, the team conducted a literature review—of engagement activities nationally and internationally—to identify some best practices, innovative techniques and methods of engagement that could be applied in rural Newfoundland and Labrador. Using the knowledge gathered through the interviews and the literature review, the project carried out two pilot citizen engagement activities in Grand Falls-Windsor. Informed by these three phases of research, the project culminated in a series of recommendations intended to create a more effective public engagement process in Newfoundland and Labrador. The nine main recommendations are listed below (and in an expanded form at the end of the report), but a much more comprehensive list of recommendations is included in Appendix II.

Moving beyond consultation to engagement has many advantages. Public engagement allows real dialogue to take place between the government, the public and community organisations, allowing them to work together to find solutions to complex problems (Lenihan, 2012). Engagement activities also create a sense of community pride. This is important in rural areas, where a strong sense of community identification can be a factor in encouraging youth and young families to stay or return to invest their futures in rural towns.

1. The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador should consider adopting a provincial standard for Community Engagement and establish a series of guiding principles. These principles and standards should be adopted through an inclusive process. The government should consider naming a minister responsible for public engagement and secretariat to support the minister's work.
2. The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, municipalities and community organisations must invest proper time and resources into community engagement methods and practices and work to engage the groups that are currently unengaged or disengaged in decision-making processes that affect these citizens and their interests.
3. Community engagement events should focus using multiple engagement strategies to achieve desired goals.
4. Use technology, arts and media in new and different ways to decrease costs of engaging larger audiences while providing innovation and inclusivity.
5. Partnerships with local organisations are essential to reduce time, and resources spent on engagement processes. Processes should be designed in collaboration with local organisations who understand the contexts and the citizens that are to be reached.
6. Make greater resources available to support leaders in their work and to build the capacity of communities to engage a greater number of volunteers. Youth engagement is especially essential for succession planning in rural communities.
7. Ensure that engagement activities take place in both formal and informal settings in order to get wider feedback and input into the policy making process.
8. Follow-up and feedback is crucial. Community engagement should be looked upon as an iterative processes and not a one time deal. "Reporting back" should be part of all engagement processes.
9. Ensure the engagement process is transparent. Transparency in engagement efforts is essential for citizens to feel valued and to understand how their input and feedback is being used to make decisions.

Community Engagement Project Report

PART 1: INTRODUCTION

Introduction

Newfoundland and Labrador is at a crossroads. For the provincial government, supporting the survival of rural regions depends on finding innovative and inclusive ways of engaging people living in rural areas, in order to increase their capacity to participate in the policy-making processes that will, in part, determine the future of their communities. Effective community engagement should be a first step towards creating the circumstances and opportunities to ensure that rural communities will thrive economically, socially and culturally. Further, community engagement will enable rural Newfoundlanders and Labradorians to take responsibility for collaboratively establishing goals and working together to achieve them.

Issues surrounding rural development are complex; a collaborative approach to policy development is therefore essential. Recognizing the importance of collaboration to finding and implementing solutions to complex problems, Canada's Public Policy Forum launched the Public Engagement Project in 2009 "to explore new ways of thinking about how governments, stakeholders, communities and ordinary citizens can work together." In the resulting 2012 publication, *Rescuing Public Policy*, Lenihan provides five basic principles of collaborative policy development:

1. Good policy is comprehensive: Good policy recognizes the interconnectedness that exists between different fields. Creating policy for big picture issues becomes a societal goal when it is explicitly understood that different fields are deeply interconnected.
2. Real progress requires public participation: Societal goals require more than government action to achieve them. Stakeholders and citizens have a critical role in the understanding and in the solutions of a range of complex issues affecting today's society.
3. Societal goals require long-term planning: Policy processes must be seen as cyclical, aiming at building a long-term working relationship between government, stakeholders and citizens, based on evidence, learning, mutual interest and trust.
4. Every community is different: Even issues that look similar are different in differing communities. As a result, the causes and solutions of a problem will vary by community so public policy must allow for flexibility and implementation at a variety of levels.
5. Members of the public have new expectations: Citizens expect policies will be more transparent and accountable.

Currently, governments within Canada and around the world are taking a closer look at the role public engagement plays in the policy-making process and doing long-term studies to evaluate their current public engagement strategies. In doing so, they are also trying to find innovative methods and techniques for community engagement. During a June 2011 session, the Grand Falls-Windsor - Harbour Breton - Baie Verte Regional Council identified the topic of community engagement in their region as important for the following reasons:

- Most communities have a small population with persons aged 45 years and older. These individuals are getting burnt out [as they form the majority of volunteer organizations, councils, etc.] and there is a need for greater youth involvement.
- Many transient workers, who have turn-around schedules, for example, are unable to be actively involved in community affairs.
- The survival of rural communities depends on involvement.
- The Regional Council relies on engagement as a way to make sure our “finger is on the pulse,” as a validation of our own ideas and recommendations.
- The provincial government does a poor job consulting and engaging communities. But communities [citizens] are interested and want a voice in the formulation of policies and decisions that affect themselves and their communities.
- New ways to engage are needed.

As a result of that session, the Grand Falls-Windsor – Harbour Breton – Baie Verte Regional Council partnered with Memorial University to evaluate the types of community engagement used in the region in the past, and to research and propose innovative new techniques that could be used to more effectively engage residents in the future, giving them a larger role in the policy-making process.

In order to explore the approaches and methods of engagement used in the past and to identify their strengths and limitations, the project set up a series of 34 interviews with members of the communities around the region and members of the Provincial Rural Secretariat who have been actively involved in community engagement activities throughout the province. In conjunction with this research, the team conducted a literature review—of engagement activities nationally and internationally—to identify some good practices, innovative techniques and methods of engagement that would be appropriate for application in rural Newfoundland and Labrador. Using the knowledge gathered through the interviews and the literature review, the project carried out two pilot citizen engagement activities in Grand Falls-Windsor in partnership with the municipality, the College of the North Atlantic and the Exploits Valley Community Coalition (EVCC). The Grand Falls-Windsor pilot project aimed to assess certain practices and methods that had been identified as successful elsewhere in engaging traditionally unengaged groups, namely youth and young families. Informed by these three phases of research, the project culminated in a series of recommendations intended to create a more effective process for public engagement in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Research Questions

This research project had three distinct phases:

Phase I: Understanding the Context

In this phase, through the interviews conducted with individuals in the communities and through a review of literature about the area, researchers gathered information on the population, the economic situation, regional organizations and the type of engagement processes that had been carried out in the past.

Phase II: Literature Review

In the literature review, the researchers looked at different models for engagement and at specific case studies of the types of engagement activities that have been carried out around the world.

Phase III: Pilot Community Engagement Activity

Drawing upon lessons learned from the first two phases, the researchers carried out two pilot community engagement activities in Grand Falls-Windsor aimed at engaging traditionally under engaged groups—youth and young families – in creating the town's community plan.

Throughout the project, the research team posed two main questions:

- 1) What insights can we gather from people past experiences with community engagement in Central Newfoundland?
 - What approaches and techniques for community engagement have been used in the region in the past?
 - What techniques or aspects of these techniques have worked well? What have been the limitations of these techniques?
 - What factors other than the techniques themselves have affected the success of engagement processes (e.g. context, type of issue, available information, etc.)?
 - Have they engaged a broad base of regional citizens or are there groups (including but not limited to specific age groups) whose voices are not being heard?

- 2) What are some of the innovative techniques that have been used elsewhere that could be applied to community engagement in Central Newfoundland?
 - What innovative techniques of community engagement could the provincial government and regional organizations use in the Central West Region to encourage/facilitate greater participation in planning and development of provincial policies that affect the region?
 - How do the benefits and challenges associated with the new techniques piloted in the region differ from those that have been used in the past and how are they similar?

- Do they address some of the limitations of the suite of techniques that have been used in the past? In particular, can the techniques be used to engage groups that have not been engaged in the past?
- What new skills, knowledge or perspectives do participants gain through the use of these techniques?
- How do they perform against Rowe and Frewer’s criteria for citizen participation (described further below), and/or other criteria determined to be appropriate by the research team?

Defining Community Engagement and Its Importance

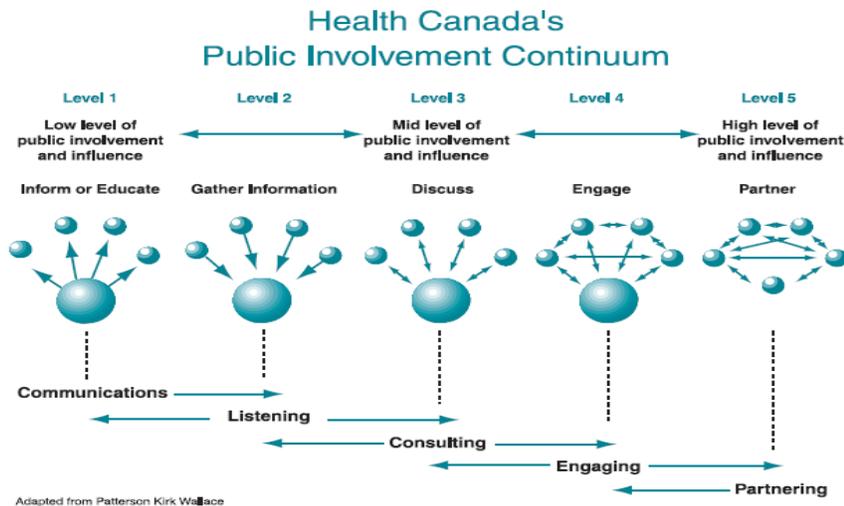
The words “community engagement” or “public engagement” are used by many people to mean many different things, but in general engagement can be represented in any of the following configurations (Montevecchi, 2011):

public		involvement
community	+	engagement
citizen		participation
civic		

This lack of a common definition often contributes to “engagement” being carried out in a way that is unsystematic and inconsistent. The general public often regards engagement as unrepresentative or tokenistic. Therefore, it is important to be clear on what is meant by community engagement in a particular circumstance, and to plan and implement engagement processes carefully. Health Canada’s Public Involvement Spectrum shows how community engagement can take place at various levels (see Figure 1), although true engagement occurs only at the highest levels of public involvement.

Despite widespread agreement that the participation of citizens in decision-making processes is vital, when they are creating policies or programs, different levels of governments, civil society institutions and community leaders struggle to find ways to meaningfully engage with the citizens they represent. Yet policy issues can no longer be solved by a government acting alone; they are often complex issues needing complex solutions that involve the community as a whole.

Figure 1: Health Canada's Public Involvement Continuum



Source: Health Canada (2000) "The Health Canada Policy Toolkit for Public Involvement in Decision-Making." Retrieved January 16, 2012, http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/ahc-asc/pubs/_public_consult/2000decision/index-eng.php

Through engagement the public becomes more informed; furthermore, there is another benefit: stakeholders and citizens are more likely to assume responsibility for the implementation of a plan if they have had a say in its development. Lenihan (2012, p. 52) calls this the Golden Rule of Public Engagement and states, "if governments really want citizens and stakeholders to take ownership of issues, they must engage the public in a real dialogue where all parties work through the issues and arrive at the action plan together." Lenihan adds that engagement can be thought of as a new process for collaboration between governments and citizens that is more "open, inclusive, transparent, accountable, and "bottom-up" (2012, p. 41). Through this process, each community is able to arrive at a solution that is right for them.

Creating policy has become an increasingly complex task. Policy issues can no longer be solved by a government acting alone. Lenihan (2012) suggests that in the past, politics has been dominated by a consumer approach of governance. In this model, the political parties give the public what they want in exchange for their votes and policy-making is largely a competitive process where there are winners and losers. Now problems are beginning to be seen in a more holistic fashion, with the recognition that issues are interconnected and therefore require a multidisciplinary approach. The public also has growing expectations around transparency and accountability that challenge governments to reconsider the process by which new policies are determined. Lenihan (2012) points out that:

- Complex issues don't have simple solutions. The solutions will also be complex and must involve the community or wider public as a whole: the community of interested and affected citizens must take part in identifying the issues and then identifying appropriate solutions.
- Finding and implementing complex solutions requires collaboration, not competition. Real solutions require genuine collaboration between governments and the public, including individual citizens and citizen's organizations.

A major international conference on the topic of community engagement was held in Brisbane, Australia in 2005. Over 2000 delegates from 44 countries attended the joint Queensland Government and United Nations event. At the conference, delegates shared good practices in community engagement, in an effort to make these processes more functional and innovative. The conference culminated in the *Brisbane Declaration for Community Engagement* (see Appendix 1). Its aim was “to act as a catalyst for mobilising the global community and developing common understanding, shared visions and goals” for effective engagement (Queensland Government, 2011). Although this Declaration is non-binding, it allows governments and institutions to become part of a global movement for citizen participation and engagement, thereby increasing the level of participation by individuals, communities and nations and strengthening democratic processes. The elements of this international declaration are taken into account throughout this report and in the resulting recommendations.

Approaches to Engagement – From the Literature Review

As stated earlier, the word engagement is used by many people to mean different things. Members of the Grand Falls-Windsor - Harbour Breton - Baie Verte Regional Council, for example, define community engagement as having the following purposes:

- provides feedback from various interest groups in decision-making, whether with a specific theme and specific groups involved or a wide range;
- involves grassroots organizations, starts at ground level;
- encourages active participation on community issues, events, etc.;
- is intergenerational, involving all ages – youth, family, etc.;
- empowers community members;
- gets different perspectives;
- is a means to an end; it has a purpose; and
- can be initiated by community or by someone outside but is more than just consultations.

In the 2011 report “Literature Review for Central Newfoundland Community Engagement Framework,” Montevecchi suggests that community engagement can be thought of as a multi-level concept with a variety of forms including engagement in policy development partnerships in planning local services, and engagement with programs or initiatives. Engagement can also be thought of as a new process for collaboration between governments and citizens that is more “open, inclusive, transparent, accountable, and “bottom-up” (Lenihan 2012, p. 41).

Montevecchi adds that successful community engagement processes must meet the following criteria:

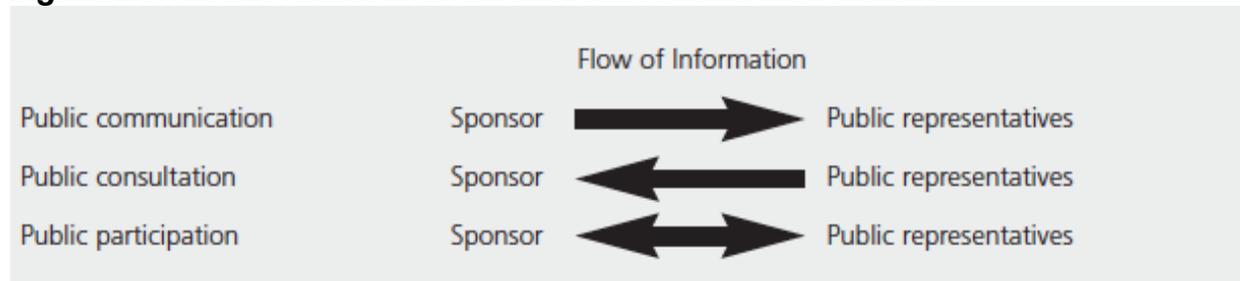
- *Allow citizens to engage in informed discussion* directed at exploration or resolution of an issue
- *Clarify the “community” to engage*, i.e. who is included and who is excluded from a decision
- *Clarify limits on the community’s influence* on the deliberation process; although when higher levels of engagement are sought community voice is not only heard but also incorporated into the decision making process and/or community

members become active collaborators in both identifying and working towards positive change.

Spectrums of Community Involvement

Over the years, many models of community involvement and more specifically community engagement have been developed. Rowe and Frewer (2005) identify three main levels of public involvement based on the direction of information flows between the public and the government (Figure 2). Community engagement should involve two-way information flows.

Figure 2: Three Levels of Involvement Based on Information flows



Source: Rowe G and Frewer L.J. "A Typology of Public Engagement Mechanisms". *Science, Technology, and Human Values* 2005, 30(2): 255.

Another model, Health Canada's Spectrum of Public Involvement (see Figure 1 in the Introduction) identifies five levels of involvement and shows the spectrum of activities that can be involved in engagement and their results. As noted earlier, engagement is located at higher levels of the public involvement spectrum. The Health Council of Canada (2006, 11) states that "citizen engagement is far more active than traditionally passive public consultation in its recognition of the capacity of citizens to discuss and generate policy options independently." The researchers point to Yankelovich's work *Coming to Public Judgement* (as cited in Health Council of Canada, 2006, p. 12) in "which traditional public consultation elicits 'raw' opinions from the public that are often uninformed and irrational." Instead, engagement allows the public to move from raw public opinion to "informed, rational and responsible opinion." The Health Council of Canada relates the following concepts with the "new" public engagement:

- **Accountability:** Interactive and iterative processes of deliberation among citizens (and sometimes organizations), and between citizens and government officials with the purpose of contributing meaningfully to specific public policy decisions in a transparent and accountable manner (Philipps & Orsini, 2003 as cited in Health Council of Canada, 2006).
- **Deliberation:** Act of considering different points of view and coming to a reasoned decision.
- **Development of Partnerships:** Improving relationships between citizens and their governors by emphasizing joint rights and responsibilities with clear links to the achievement of accountability. Lenihan (2012) adds that partnerships must be sustainable and should be formed with organisations beyond the sector that is being addressed. For example, if working on developing policy solutions for community health care—links between health, poverty, culture, immigration and education must be recognized and partnerships with organisations and sectors

working in all these areas must be formed, in order to come up with a long-term solution. Therefore, partnerships must be sustainable and synergistic, with the community evolving toward a *network of networks* (Lenihan 2012, p. 54).

Ideally, community engagement exercises will be part of an overall public engagement strategy. The group doing the organization should make the goals of the engagement clear and explain how the engagement fits into the overall strategy or policy development process. Different goals can be reached through different methods. For example, Figure 3 shows different methods that can be used to inform, consult, collaborate or empower.

Figure 3: Community Engagement Methods Based on Varied Levels of Participation



Source: Healthy Communities Consortium, 2011

It is also crucial to recognize that engagement will take time, effort and investment; communities will not be transformed overnight. Real leadership and drive on the part of various levels of government and community organizations are necessary before this transformation takes place. As relationships develop over time, communication will be based on trust between organisations, governments and citizens. As trust builds groups become more willing to make adjustments and compromises to reach solutions that are needed to serve the interests of the entire community or region.

Evaluating Community Engagement

Montevecchi (2011, p. 27) recommends using Rowe and Frewer’s (2000) evaluation criteria for evaluating the effectiveness of community engagement models. This framework is divided into two categories: acceptance and process criteria (Table 1).

Table 1. Criteria for effective community engagement

Acceptance Criteria	Process Criteria
Representativeness	Resource accessibility
Independence	Task definition
Early Involvement	Structured decision- making
Influence	Cost effectiveness
Transparency	

Source: Rowe and Frewer (2000)

In evaluating what innovative engagement techniques may be most appropriate, Moseley (2010) offers some additional insights. In his assessment of the European LEADER program Moseley (2010) highlighted typical characteristics of innovations that tend to be “most quickly adopted.” Although his study was based on long-term innovative development programs, arguably, these same qualities are necessary in innovative community engagement methods:

- Observable: easily visible by would-be adopters,
- Advantageous: perceived as distinctly more promising than the known alternatives,
- Compatible: consistent with existing values, past experience and current needs,
- Simple: easy to understand and to use,
- Reversible: capable of introduction on a trial basis.

PART 2: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IN CENTRAL NEWFOUNDLAND

The Importance for Community Engagement in Rural Newfoundland and Labrador

Rural Newfoundland and Labrador is undergoing a period of adjustment to changing economic, social and cultural conditions. With growing outmigration and downsizing in the fishery, forestry and other sectors, many communities and regions are being forced to reinvent themselves—to imagine new futures. In response to these changing circumstances, the provincial government is also being forced to make some tough

decisions about how to allocate limited financial and other resources, in order to satisfy competing demands. Community engagement has an important role to play in making these difficult decisions.

Although some public consultation has taken place on certain topics in certain areas, consultation on its own is not enough. The consultative approach asks only for the public to present their views. The issue itself is framed by the government, without any possibility of broadening its focus of discussion and offering no way to link different issues together. This will lead to some advocates feeling that the process itself excluded or marginalized them. Officials, on the other hand, can feel that some advocates are taking positions that are beyond the mandate of this particular consultation. Different citizens or groups are thus presented with a short opportunity to present their views and to “use their time effectively” by arguing only for their cause, although stakeholders will often recognize the necessity for a more rational point of view. This creates competition and extreme points of view and pits organisations that should be working together in adversarial roles. The consultative approach asks for “views” and has no way of holding participants to account for what they say. It is easy for them to exaggerate, embellish, or misrepresent their positions to attract attention. From the government’s point of view, theatrical displays make officials nervous so they start taking defensive action; they will act secretive, controlling and manipulative to silence these extreme voices. Finally, the consultative approach sends the message that action belongs to the government, implying that the “problem also belongs to the government” (Lenihan, 2012, p. 67). Thus, the public is unlikely to assume ownership and responsibility for implementing the solutions.

In a 2007 study (Chafe et al.) on public engagement in decisions about health coverage and resource allocation, the authors point out several limitations in the decision-making process within the health care field.

1. There is a lack of clear legislative guidance about how decisions should be made;
2. Coverage decisions are complex; a number of factors must be balanced and considered and, each element is open to interpretation;
3. Coverage decisions involve choices in which there are clear winners and losers; there is a finite amount of funding to be allocated.

Arguably, these limitations exist not only for decision-making processes within the health care setting, but also apply to education, recreation and economic decisions affecting many rural communities in Newfoundland and Labrador, where a diminishing population and reduced funding are causing major changes in public service delivery. Lenihan (2012) notes that “public engagement is a key part of the solution to these problems. Citizens care about the disorganized and fragmented state of government services. Engaging them in a discussion about this can not only lead to greater alignment of these services, it can make a huge contribution to helping governments align their own internal processes.”

Moving beyond consultation to engagement has many advantages. Public engagement allows real dialogue to take place between the government, the public and community organisations to work together to find solutions to complex problems (Lenihan, 2012). Communities with higher levels of social capital are more effective at addressing

internal and external social challenges. Foster-Fishman (2009) described that a “sense of community fosters shared norms among neighbours and helps to connect them together so they can collectively work together for change.” Citizen engagement can build confidence and accountability in the minds of individuals who may become more willing to contribute their time and energy to communal causes. A collective civic “sense of community” or pride in place is key to creating conditions for vibrant and resilient communities. This process is especially crucial for rural areas, where the recognition of place and “feeling” of a strong sense of community can lead to youth and young families staying or returning to invest their futures in rural towns. Community or citizen engagement is both an “engagement” process and a “capacity-building” process. It can thus be demonstrated that effective and long-term investment in community engagement processes can be crucial component in the survival and flourishing of Newfoundland and Labrador’s rural communities and citizens.

Community Engagement in Rural NL—Learning from Past Experiences

Experiences from the Regional Council

Before beginning data collection the researchers met with members of the Grand Falls-Windsor - Baie Verte - Harbour Breton Regional Council, who are citizens active in the region in various ways and who have extensive experience to offer. Council members identified a number of examples of engagement that had taken place in the region, including:

1. Community planning workshops (e.g. development of Integrated Community Sustainability Plans – ICSPs) and other community/municipal meetings;
2. Engagement in creating community and regional economic plans. For example, Regional Economic Development Boards (REDBs) engage members and other groups in developing Strategic Economic Plans as well as through their Directors meetings and meetings with local groups. The Coast of Bays REDB holds an annual BBQ and aquaculture show case and assisted the Town of Belleoram with their community planning meetings;
3. Life Unlimited for Older Adults (LUFOA) hosted Age Friendly Community meetings and focus groups in Springdale, hosts awareness dinners to disseminate information and conducts surveys;
4. One day conferences for 50+ groups;
5. Rural Secretariat Regional Council held focus groups that were geographically spread and themed;
6. Central Speaks: a 21st century town hall meeting style community forum on long-term care;
7. Health Board meets with town mayors, have adopted a Primary Health Care model with 8 regions that have Community Advisory Committees and Coordinators; researching better ways to engage public and improve citizen participation;
8. Miawpukek First Nation (Conne River): committees with a good cross-section of ages, gender, employed and unemployed, band members and non-band members, annual assemblies, bi-annual portfolio meetings, open council meetings, and focus groups;
9. Bay d’Espoir has cancer benefit events;

10. The provincial government has been involved in budget consultations and consultations in other areas such as education and the Poverty Reduction Strategy.

As shown by this list, a variety of organizations have carried out a range of activities in the Central West region—whether to raise funds, promote specific sectors, create more of a “sense of community” or to get public support for policy development and community or regional plans. These events or consultations have largely been undertaken on an activity-by-activity approach; as of yet, no comprehensive approach has been developed for undertaking community engagement in the region.

Experiences Shared in the Interviews

In September 2011, a series of interviews was conducted with members from communities in the Grand Falls-Windsor - Baie Verte - Harbour Breton Region (specifically in towns in Coast of Bays, and the towns of Grand Falls-Windsor and Springdale, where examples of previous experience in engagement have been identified, as outlined above). The semi-structured interviews were one to two hours in length with individual participants. In one case, two participants were interviewed together due to time constraints, in another case three participants were interviewed together. Interviewees were community leaders and/or selected to provide a perspective from a particular sector of the community, such as youth.

In addition, a group interview and facilitated discussion session was held with fourteen members of the Provincial Rural Secretariat who have been involved in engagement activities in the region and elsewhere throughout the province. This session lasted three hours.

The interviews were designed to seek answers to following research questions:

- What approaches and techniques for community engagement have been used in the region in the past?
- What techniques or aspects of these techniques have worked well? What have been the limitations of these techniques?
- What factors other than the techniques themselves have affected the success of engagement processes (e.g. context, type of issue, available information)?
- Have they engaged a broad base of regional citizens or are there groups (including but not limited to specific age groups) whose voices are not being heard?

During the session with Rural Secretariat representatives a variety of techniques that they have used in the province, along with their strengths and limitations, were identified. Please see Appendix II for a summary of the results of this session.

Limitations of Past Community Engagement Activities in Central NL

Through the interviews conducted with leaders and youth in the Grand Falls-Windsor – Harbour Breton – Baie Verte region, this report identified some limitations of past and current practices in community engagement. These limitations were identified through a range of engagement activities carried out by community groups, municipal governments, school boards and the provincial government. However, in terms of a lack of engagement—interviewees were most frustrated with what they perceived as the provincial government’s failure to conduct adequate community engagement. The limitations—as perceived by the interviewees—were grouped into three main categories.

Timing/Costs

- People were not engaged early enough in the process.
- There was a commonly held perception that policy outcomes had already been decided before the consultation sessions were held, and that, therefore, the sessions were tokenistic and would not change intended outcomes.
- Many events are poorly communicated; people were not notified far enough in advance or the notices were not communicated through the proper medium to reach the stakeholders.
- It is difficult to keep people engaged over a long period of time.
- While citizen commitment is substantial (e.g. travel, time, cost), there is often little or no compensation for out-of-pocket expenses. There is also a perception that people from rural communities are expected to contribute more in terms of time and resources (e.g. travelling time, transportation costs, time away from families) because consultations occur in big centers. Many felt that a lack of funding to support engagement processes was a key factor in certain groups being left out.
- The timing of events is not always properly considered. For example, an event could be scheduled at the same time as another community event such as a meeting or bingo night.
- The same volunteers in leadership positions are approached again and again for engagement events, creating increasing volunteer fatigue.

Control/Follow-Up

- There was often little or no feedback or follow-up after the engagement event took place. Engagement is not seen as an ongoing process but rather as a one-shot deal.
- People don’t understand how a policy might affect them. There is a lack of public education to explain the process and purpose of engagement events.
- Because they don’t know how or if their opinions have affected policy decisions after a consultation, citizens don’t feel their contributions are valued or important.

Method

- Only the “loudest” voices are being heard. This can be due to the lack of facilitation, design of the process or publicity/marketing of the event.
- There was a perception that governments and municipalities solicited the same people and groups for engagement events over and over again, blocking the presentation of new ideas.
- Youth—particularly young men—and young families are being left out.
- Disabled and disadvantaged voices are not being heard.

- Civil society organizations are not being meaningfully consulted about policies that affect the groups they work with and their constituents are not given the chance to voice their opinions.
- There is a lack of funding for engagement processes.
- Engagement events are often done by outsiders who don't plan or discuss the events with community leaders in advance, and don't understand the local culture.
- In some communities, there is a dwindling pool of people willing to take on leadership positions and/or volunteer in rural communities.
- Some leaders are reluctant to let go of their current leadership positions.

It is important to note that there were strengths as well as limitations evident in the past approaches to community engagement in Central West. Some of these strengths are the basis for the recommendations below; others are highlighted in the section on good practices.

Results: Recommendations Based on Past Experiences

The following recommendations are based on the strengths and limitations of past engagement practices identified in the interviews with people in the Grand Falls-Windsor – Harbour Breton – Baie Verte region. Building upon the lessons from previous experiences in the area should lead to more effective engagement processes in the future.

Method

- Partner with local organizations to reduce time and resources spent on engagement processes.
- Make use of community leaders' understandings of their communities/regions.
- Use local facilities and make use of events that are popular and are well attended.
- Partnerships are also vital in areas/regions where resources are scarce.
- Provide feedback and opportunities for dialogue to allow unpopular decisions to be understood and respected
- Provide per diems for transportation and accommodations if participants are coming from far away.
- Provide participants with an accurate understanding of how their input will affect policy or decisions.
- Set realistic goals concerning the engagement activity. Plan who to engage and how. Issues will determine who attends events.
- Frame issues in a way that emphasises the importance of community input.
- Choose appropriate and neutral facilitation methods and processes.
- Have realistic expectations.
- Find a way to reduce the time associated with current engagement processes through the use of innovation or technology.
- Use various methods of engagement and a multi-prong approach.
- Market the engagement process through different avenues, including technology, community channels, community radio, social media and word of mouth.

Structure

- Use informal structures and methods to get the best results. For example, “kitchen table” discussions and having informal conversations in an everyday setting may make people feel more at ease and comfortable in voicing their opinions.
- Work in small, informal groups rather than large, formal group settings. This is especially important in small rural communities where people might be wary of outsiders coming in or might be afraid of expressing their ideas in a setting where their neighbours could be against them.
- Develop/make use of personal connections. People in rural communities may be more comfortable talking to people they know or people they have a connection with. However, for some issues, they prefer to talk with an “outsider” but might prefer a more personal setting.
- Provide follow up after engagement sessions to allow for feedback or to explain how a policy decision was made.
- Engagement requires rules.

Timing

- “Outsiders” or consultants should spend time in the town and introduce themselves in different contexts.
- Engage with people earlier rather than later in the process.
- Understand that an issue may be more sensitive at some times than others.
- Timing is crucial; don’t plan engagement processes that compete with other community events.
- Be aware of what else is going on in the area/region that could affect an engagement event or people’s reaction to the engagement process. Plan engagement processes at different times of the day and more than once in order to reach different population groups.

Capacity-Building

- Contact people personally to show them that their opinions are valued; this increases their own confidence in their own ideas.
- Structure engagement activities to maximize participant growth in skills, experiences and attachment to the region
- Work with communities to explain how policies will affect the area: people will engage if they have a vested interest.
- Ensure the level of engagement is appropriate for the issue.
- Prioritize succession planning and capacity development for community leaders.

SOME GOOD PRACTICES FROM THE CENTRAL WEST REGION

From the information we gathered in the interviews conducted in the region, we selected several examples of good practices that could be used elsewhere.

MIAWPUKEK FIRST NATION BAND COUNCIL

The Miawpukek First Nation at Conne River was established as a reserve under the Indian Act in 1987. The community is recognized as an outstanding example for First Nation communities across Canada; it should also be considered as a leader in fostering an engaged community within the province. The Miawpukek First Nation’s

commitment to community engagement is exemplary and has resulted in a strong and vibrant community that is growing and becoming more prosperous.

The Miawpukek First Nation Band Council uses three levels of engagement when making policy decisions:

1. Lowest level: For small policy level changes
 - The band staff prepare draft policies, which are then read and approved for distribution by council, then mailed out to every household within the community for review;
 - Feedback can be made by mail, at the council office or through the Internet (however, only a third of households have Internet and it is slowing down);
 - Members of the band council disseminate and discuss information in an informal manner at local gathering places, for example, where people go to have coffee.
2. Mid-level: For changing or creating by-laws (municipal) or discussing matters such as salary or hiring policies:
 - Members and staff of the band council disseminate and discuss information at informal gatherings;
 - Focus groups are conducted with people of various ages;
 - The band council hires someone to do a survey with every household (usually the same people are hired each time so people recognize them and feel comfortable with them);
 - Community Assemblies meet twice a year to discuss issues;
 - Once comments have been gathered from all of the steps above, Elders take a look and then it is passed to Council. After it is approved by Council, the final decision rests with the Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada.
3. Highest Level: Changes to municipal code, changes in policies affecting membership, leasing land to non-natives, the Constitution, and the election of a new Chief.
 - The band council mails the proposed policy change to every household;
 - The band council hires someone to do a community household survey;
 - The band council gathers information at informal gatherings;
 - The band council calls a Special Community Assembly;
 - The band council issues personal invitations for small, focus groups with a range of community representation and provides meals and an honorarium for time (although they are slowly working away from this as it creates the expectation of money).

Timing: Providing time for engagement is crucial. For mid-level consultations, the First Nation usually allows anywhere from six months to a year. They must also allow time for membership living outside the reserve (1779 members living off reserve) to give their input. The band council provides feedback from every level of discussion and community members are given the opportunity to respond. This allows for good community buy-in. Citizens don't always agree with the decisions being made, but

because they have been a part of the process, they are able to understand how decisions are made and are more willing to let projects and policies move forward.

Youth: Getting youth involved in community planning and policies is very important to the Miawpukek First Nation. Every grade at the local school has activities related to planning, and pride-related exercises that they can present to the community in yearly events. For example, in Jeopardy Games youth compete using knowledge about their community. The school also has two representatives on Council that receive the same training as adults. Elders and youth are often involved in decision-making because inter-generational knowledge sharing is crucial. Youth are valued and are given a strong voice for their community. This results in a high percentage of youth coming back to live and work in Conne River after completing their education elsewhere.

GRAND FALLS-WINDSOR “WE CAN DO IT CAMPAIGN”

The “We Can Do It” campaign was created by the Community Studies students of the College of the North Atlantic Grand Falls-Windsor campus and ran between February 25th and April 29th, 2011. The campaign was designed to increase community spirit by getting everyone to wear a common t-shirt on Fridays. The students invited businesses, schools and NGOs to buy t-shirts with “We Can do It” written on them and to wear the shirt on Casual Fridays. They used “We Can Do It” as a slogan to promote the idea that the town is able to do more than citizens give themselves credit for. The money collected from the t-shirts was donated to different local non-profit organisations. Businesses around town also offered special deals and discounts for people and families that wore the shirt. The t-shirt was an ice breaker, starting conversations between citizens who did not necessarily know each other. The campaign was very successful in increasing community spirit, and the students are creating another campaign to continue instilling community pride. The campaign is a good example of youth taking initiative and being supported by adult partners within the school and other organizations in the community.

HARBOUR BRETON COMMUNITY YOUTH NETWORK (CYN) YOUTH CENTRE

The Youth Centre in Harbour Breton is a dynamic community organization that is a model for youth engagement in the province. Half of the board members are youth aged 12-17 who are a great source for ideas and for information about programs that are needed in the community. Youth are involved at every level of the organisation but leaders are keen to point out that informal engagement methods are important in gaining the trust of youth. The organization relies heavily on youth volunteers to be accountable for their actions and their programs. As staff members invest time and energy in fostering relationships, the young people gain confidence and start to take, on increased responsibility. To engage youth, it is necessary to give them responsibility and trust. If an organization or engagement process doesn’t allow for real dialogue, young people will quickly pick up on this fact; they are often turned off from traditional engagement processes which they view as tokenistic and patronizing. The Youth Centre is also involved in many community partnerships—in fact, they are seen as playing an essential role in creating a better community.

COMMUNITY RADIO

Community radio initiatives across the province have been associated with increased community pride, better youth-adult interactions and increased capacity-building in areas of leadership development. These channels allow youth to feel a sense of responsibility and to foster a sense of community. See <http://www.ryakuga.org/> for many great examples of community radio initiatives in Newfoundland and Labrador.

PART 3: THE PILOT PROJECTS – EXPLORING OPPORTUNITIES FOR INNOVATION IN COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IN CENTRAL WEST NL

Designing the Pilot Projects

Using the knowledge gathered through the interviews and the literature review of international case studies demonstrating innovative techniques in community engagement (see Part 4), the project carried out two pilot citizen engagement activities in Grand Falls-Windsor in partnership with the municipality, the College of the North Atlantic and the Exploits Valley Community Coalition (EVCC). The Grand Falls-Windsor pilot project aimed to assess certain practices and methods that had been identified as successful elsewhere in engaging traditionally unengaged groups, namely youth and young families.

In designing the pilot engagement activities, we aimed to satisfy Rowe and Frewer's process and acceptance criteria for effective community engagement (see Table 1). We were also guided by Moseley's work (2000) on evaluating the adoption of innovative engagement techniques.

Keeping these criteria in mind, some activities were put into place for two pilot projects in the Central West Region. These pilot projects will be explained in detail in the next sections.

Introduction to the Grand Falls-Windsor Pilot Projects

The MUN research team made the initial contact with the Grand Falls-Windsor – Baie Verte – Harbour Breton Regional Council through the first phase of the project: identifying past involvement in community engagement processes. During this meeting, a future joint project on public engagement was mentioned but nothing concrete was determined. During a subsequent meeting on November 5th, the Regional Council decided to move ahead with a pilot project with the town of Grand Falls-Windsor for a variety of reasons:

- 1) The Regional Council had not yet collaborated with the Town of GFW and was interested in supporting new partners.
- 2) GFW is a regional service center that influences the entire Grand Falls-Windsor-Baie Verte- Harbour Breton region. A successful community engagement pilot session with GFW could be a strong example to municipal councils across the region.
- 3) Engaging youth and young families was a priority for the Regional Council and this desire coincided with GFW's need for engagement with these two groups.

Through discussion with representatives from the Town of Grand Falls-Windsor, the research team learned that the town wanted more public consultation on a new Town Plan that was moving forward. In particular, the town wanted to hear the views of two priority groups: youth and young families. Time constraint was a serious limitation for the pilot projects: comments for the town plan needed to be made within two weeks of the initial start of the engagement partnership.

Based on information from the literature review and the initial interviews, the research team determined that the best strategy was to go to the place where the target group gathers. In this case, we asked the College of the North Atlantic – Grand Falls-Windsor campus and the Exploits Valley Community Coalition if we could have access to some students and families and to invite them to provide their input into the community planning exercise.

Engaging Youth

Community Planner Mary Wong and Linda Brett, Regional Partnership Planner for the Rural Secretariat and Raïsa Mirza, graduate student at the Department of Geography, Memorial University visited five classes at the College of the North Atlantic (CNA). In total, 95 students participated. Linda Brett was present during the first day (three classes). The classes varied. Two were business development classes, two were social psychology classes and one was a regional and community development class. The age of the students also varied from late teens (18-19) to mature adults (a 75-year-old in one class). Although no formal survey was made, approximately three fourths of the students were from the town of Grand Falls-Windsor, while the rest were from the immediate region, with the exception of one or two from outside the province.

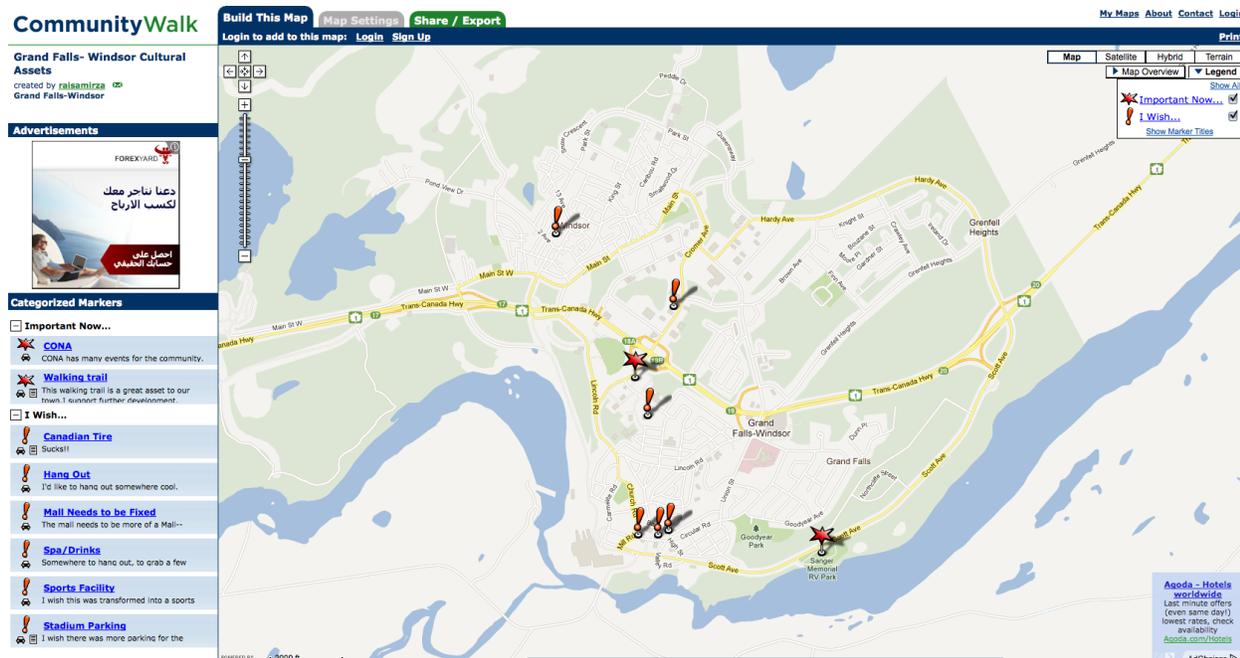
First, depending on the number of students in the classes, the students were broken up into smaller groups and asked to answer the question: “To me, Grand Falls-Windsor is...” A discussion followed, and each group shared their responses with the class. Students had come up with a wide variety of responses. Some of the more common answers follow:

- “GFW is my hometown.”
- “It is the place where I grew up and my home.”
- “Grand Falls-Windsor is my home; it is where my family is.”
- “Grand Falls-Windsor is where I was born. It is what is most familiar but is nothing special.”
- “It is my hometown. I love the overall atmosphere. I love how safe I feel.”
- “GFW is a friendly place. A place to receive an education, to shop, to do certain leisure activities.”
- “GFW gives us a sense of place, a place to call home.”
- “GFW us an opportunity.”
- “clean, peace and pleasant”
- “place that is 1 hour away from my home and is an alternative shopping area for my family and I”
- “It is very family oriented.”
- “CONA is here and allowed me to study here.”
- “...there’s a tragic lack of employment, funds and quality of life.”

- “GFW is a town that needs to re-establish its focus. Needs more tourism, shops and housing. There is resistance to change.”
- There isn’t a sense of together-nests.”
- “It does not have affordable housing.”
- “Town with an aging population, focused on the elderly rather than the young.”
- “Fast growing economy area with potential for even more growth of businesses and residential areas.”
- “Potential to grow with regards to businesses and population.”
- “Feel of a small community with all the resources and available needs of a city, it is not too big but not too small.”

Next, students were introduced to the use of CommunityWalk, an online mapping tool using Google Maps technology, where they could map their favourite places in town or add markers at locations where they wanted new buildings/facilities or modifications. Through discussions facilitated by the researchers, students placed markers on locations that they deemed “Important Now.” Student’s placed other markers where they wanted to see a development; these were titled “I Wish.” The students could also comment on markers that had already been placed on the map.

Figure 4: Grand Falls- Windsor CommunityWalk Markers



Source: http://www.communitywalk.com/grandfallswindsor_community as of January 25, 2012

Limitations

Although the option to add additional markers on the CommunityWalk site was offered in several sessions, only one person actually took the initiative to use the CommunityWalk tool outside of the group activity. Furthermore, the researchers encountered several problems in carrying out the activity: the technology did not always work as planned or demonstrated, Internet speed was inconsistent and clearer directions were needed for how individuals could set up a password and access the tool. Finally, it was often difficult to demonstrate to students how the city would use their

markers or comments to make improvements. Future uses of CommunityWalk should include a list of instructions on how to use it. Facilitators should have a well-planned campaign to encourage students to submit their visions of their community. CommunityWalk could be provided as a link from a Town website. However, the municipality noted its concern that an online forum could quickly degenerate into personal attacks and representatives were wary of using online public forums for citizen discussions. The researchers suggest that the first time the Community Planner or other municipal personnel involved in town planning use CommunityWalk, they explain to citizens why their input is valuable and how it will be used.

Strengths

Students were successfully engaged in the activity. They had not been approached in the past and because they were this time, they truly appreciated that we had taken the time to come speak to them. A total of 43 students signed up for future engagements (by providing their e-mails and speaking with the Community Planner after the class). The town is now waiting for the province's Department of Municipal Affairs (MA) to complete the initial review of Municipal ICSP/Development Regulations. Prior to the public hearing process, the town will address the comments received during the consultations, along with those of the provincial government. The comments the MUN/Rural Secretariat Research Group received from the Community Planner were encouraging and suggested that the sessions had been useful for providing input. Shortly after the consultation with the students at CNA, the Community Planner also contacted the Young Professionals Group of Grand Falls-Windsor for their input. The Planner also met with the Corduroy Brook Enhancement Association prior to the collaboration with the MUN/Rural Secretariat Research Group, and later met with the Rotary Club. Ideally these initial community engagement activities will lead to further dialogue and collaborations between the town and CNA students.

Engaging Young Families

Community Planner Mary Wong and Rural Secretariat Linda Brett participated in a focus group activity with young parents at the Family Resource Centre in Grand Falls-Windsor. Staff at the Family Resource Centre invited the Planner and the Rural Secretariat to join these parents at one of their weekly meetings. The pre-school children of these parents usually have play activities and supervision in another room while the parents engage in adult/parenting conversations. This group meets regularly and the engagement session was designed to reduce any extra commitments for parents with young children. The two hour session included ten participants from the area.

During the focus group, the participants were invited to express their opinions about various aspects of the new municipal plan. The Planner was optimistic about the results from the Focus Group. The group provided the Town Planner with solid information regarding each of "the pillars of sustainability" within the new municipal plan, and expressed an interest in engaging with the Planner during future sessions. Most of the families felt that the town was family friendly and had lots of to offer. Two of the participants had moved to the area recently. Some comments emerged about the need for increasing dialogue between residents residing in the Grand Falls section of GFW and those residing in the Windsor side. The Town of Grand Falls-Windsor should

consider designing community events to bring the two populations together on a more regular basis.

The participants also used the CommunityWalk online mapping software (see Figure 4) to add some markers on things they'd like to see in the municipality or added comments on things they agreed with on previous markers. Participants suggested that if this became a longer term project for Grand Falls-Windsor, the instructions for using the software should be included online.

One lesson learned from this project is that it's important to use different facilitation methods to ensure everyone gets a chance to express their opinion. For example, to relieve a tense atmosphere a facilitator could switch negative dialogue through using techniques that focus on reflection or by breaking up a long session with a coffee break. Overall, the session went well and created a new personal connection between the Planner and the members of a social group that is not often heard from in planning and policy processes. This is a positive direction in community planning.

Evaluation of the Pilot Projects

Acceptance criteria

Influence – The Planner received permission from Council to delay the submission of the municipal plan until all the new feedback has been incorporated into the draft plan. This will be a separate report after all the information has been processed.

Independence- The facilitation was done in collaboration with the Town of Grand Falls-Windsor, the Rural Secretariat and Memorial University. Linda Brett and/or Raïsa Mirza facilitated sessions along with the Town Planner, providing a level of comfort as outside “neutral” voices; this made some people feel more at ease in voicing negative or critical opinions than they might have without an outside facilitator.

Early Involvement – Unfortunately, the sessions were planned with a very short time frame of only two weeks.

Transparency – The Research Group will present this report to the Town of Grand Falls-Windsor and to the two partners for their evaluation of their participation.

Process criteria

Resource Accessibility – The cooperation of community partners, the College of the North Atlantic (CNA) and the Family Resource Centre was essential in allowing the researchers to access the groups they wanted to consult for input into the Municipal Plan. Without their help, this pilot would not have happened in such a short time period.

Task Definition – The researchers explained how the input was being incorporated into the municipal plan to the various groups. More time would have allowed for more feedback, including methods that allow more than one opportunity for involvement.

Cost effectiveness – This project was low cost. It used facilities provided by CNA and the Family Resource Centre and was included as part of a pilot project from the Regional Council. CommunityWalk is a free online community mapping tool. If the Town of Grand Falls-Windsor wants to use it on a long term basis, it can pay a minimal fee to have the program personalized.

Innovation adoption

The pilot project innovations can also be evaluated against Moseley's criteria for innovation uptake (shown in italics):

- *Observable: easily visible by would-be adopters*
 - Partnerships with local organisations;
 - Used an online community mapping software;
 - Direct engagement with groups those are traditionally unengaged or disengaged.

- *Advantageous: perceived as distinctly more promising than the known alternatives*
 - In total, 95 students and 10 families with young children were engaged with very little resources (besides time) being consumed;
 - Allowed for relationships to be established between the town and its citizens;
 - Input from traditionally unengaged or disengaged groups is now being incorporated into the Municipal Planning process.

- *Compatible: consistent with existing values, past experience and current needs*
 - Needs were identified prior to the engagements and partnerships were based on hearing those who are traditional unengaged or disengaged;
 - Meets the values of the town of Grand Falls-Windsor, the Rural Secretariat, etc.

- *Simple: easy to understand and to use*
 - Concepts are easy to use, the Planner is now reaching out to other population groups using similar exercises and techniques
 - Other towns and communities can easily implement these processes

- *Reversible: capable of introduction on a trial basis*
 - The pilot was a trial; a similar project can be introduced within the wider region or into a smaller community, with planning to take account for scale.

PART 4: THE LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Community Engagement in Rural Areas: An International Perspective

Governments around the world have successfully implemented policies aimed at increasing public engagement and capacity building in rural areas. Participatory techniques have been used extensively in developing countries for almost three decades, and industrialized nations have been advocating these processes more and more during the past decade. The following are two particularly successful examples of community engagement policies undertaken by governments, as well as a webinar session held on this topic in the United States:

Case Study 1: Scotland Implements Country-Wide Standards

The government of Scotland views community engagement as an essential tool of modern government: "Inclusiveness in the policy making process is a key principle at the core of the modernizing government agenda." (Scottish Executive, Civic Participation Policy Unit 2000, in *Communities Scotland*, 2007) A common definition for community engagement has been established for in formal settings, while acknowledging that it can also be used and adapted for less formal settings:

Developing and sustaining a working relationship between one or more public bodies and one or more community groups, to help them both to understand and act on the needs or issues that the community experiences (*Communities Scotland*, 2005, p.4)

In an attempt to "improve the experience of all participants involved in community engagement to achieve the highest quality of process and results," the government of Scotland has established **National Standards for Community Engagement**, which are based on a set of clearly defined principles. These were developed with the involvement of over 500 people from communities and agencies throughout the country. The standards allow for national, provincial and municipal governments, as well as community groups, to apply the same basic principles for engagement and allow citizens to know what to expect from them. The National Standards are as follows:

1. **INVOLVEMENT:** We will identify and involve the people and organisations who have an interest in the focus of the engagement;
2. **SUPPORT:** We will identify and overcome any barriers to involvement;
3. **PLANNING:** We will gather evidence of the needs and available resources and use this evidence to agree to the purpose, scope and timescale of the engagement and the actions to be taken;
4. **METHODS:** We will agree and use methods of engagement that fit the purpose;
5. **WORKING TOGETHER:** We will agree and use clear procedures that enable the participants to work with one another effectively and efficiently;
6. **SHARING INFORMATION:** We will ensure that necessary information is communicated between the participants;
7. **WORKING WITH OTHERS:** We will work effectively with others with an interest in the engagement;

8. **IMPROVEMENT:** We will develop actively the skills, knowledge and confidence of all the participants;
9. **FEEDBACK:** We will feed back the results of the engagement to the wider community and agencies affected;
10. **MONITORING AND EVALUATION:** We will monitor and evaluate whether the engagement achieves its purposes and meets the national standards for community engagement.

Source: Communities Scotland (2005). National Standards for Community Engagement. Retrieved from <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/94257/0084550.pdf>

Communities Scotland launched *Better Community Engagement: A Framework for Learning* in January 2007 as a follow-up to the National Standards for Community Engagement. In developing the *Framework*, Communities Scotland recognized that although community engagement processes have become a requirement for many practitioners, often they do not have the necessary skills or abilities to undertake successful engagement programs. Furthermore, this lack of ability has resulted in negative experiences in community engagement: “The report aims to support learning for community engagement; it offers a framework for curriculum development, provides guidance on using the framework, and suggests the elements of a strategy for improving skills and practice in community engagement” (Communities Scotland, 2007, p. 5). The Government of Scotland acknowledges that a modern government based on multiple partnerships with various organisations also needs to support the capacity development of both communities and agencies, in order to enable them to develop skills for engaging with each other (see Table 3). This provides a base for dialogue across institutions and communities to meet the needs of citizens. “Investing both in strong, capable communities, and in staff with the skills to work with them, enables better government” (Communities Scotland, 2007, p. 24).

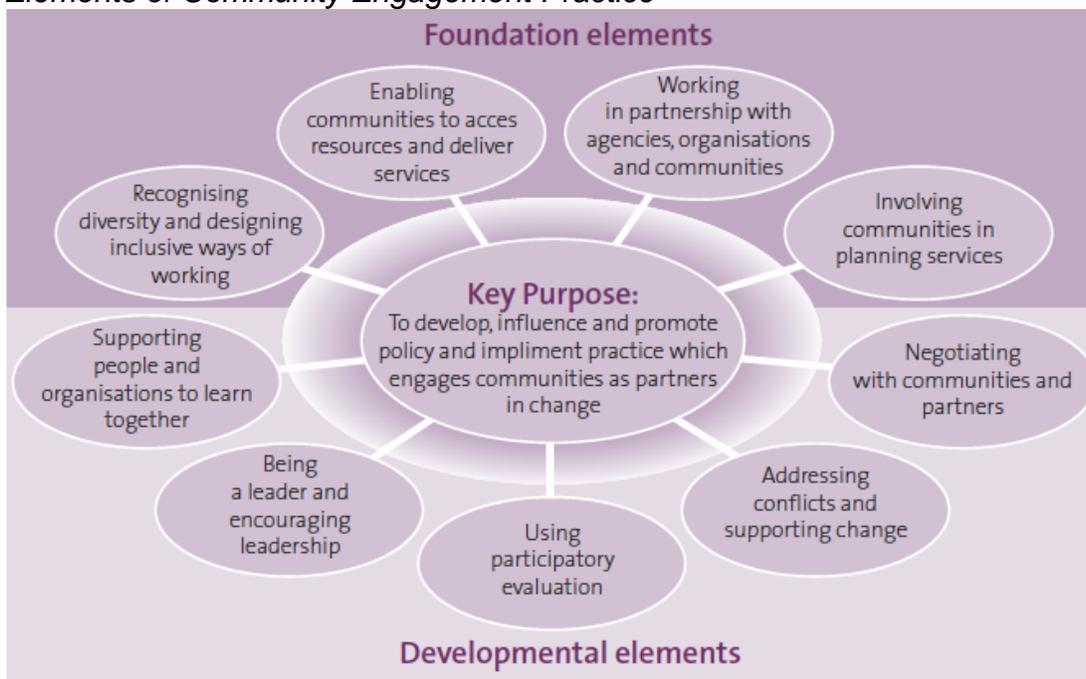
Table 3: Core Skills relevant to community engagement practice

Communication Skills	Process Skills	Planning and Evaluation Skills
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public speaking • Writing skills • Use of a variety of media including information and communication technology • Listening • Feedback • Explanation • Empathy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Motivation • Advocacy • Facilitation • Empowerment • Enabling • Negotiation • Mediation • Support • Leadership • Mentoring • Political Awareness and Judgment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Envisioning outcomes • Investigation • Appraisal • Monitoring • Analysis and interpretation of data • Analysis and interpretation of policy • Reflection • Prioritizing • Financial planning and reporting

Source: adapted from Communities Scotland, (2007) *Better Community Engagement: A Framework for Learning*, p. 12 Retrieved from <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/1046/0055390.pdf>

As part of the capacity building and learning model development exercise, Communities Scotland also identified the fundamental elements of community engagement. These are reflected in Figure 5.

Figure 5: Better Community Engagement: Learning Connection Key Purpose and Elements of Community Engagement Practice



Source: Communities Scotland (2007) *Better Community Engagement: A Framework for Learning*, p. 12. Retrieved from <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/1046/0055390.pdf>

The Linked Work & Training programme is a national development program which operates through ten local demonstration projects, selected to reflect a mix of urban and rural areas in which community engagement capacity delivery programs are currently being undertaken. Through the evaluation of the local demonstration projects, the Scottish Government hopes to provide information and stimulate skill building for community engagement across communities.

Source: Communities Scotland. (2007) *Better Community Engagement: A Framework for Learning*. Retrieved from <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/1046/0055390.pdf>

Recommendations for NL arising from this case:

- Implement a common definition of what community engagement means for Newfoundland and Labrador.
- Select key principles for all those involved in community engagement within Newfoundland and Labrador to implement these processes equally and equitably across the province.
- Invest in meaningful capacity building programs to increase community engagement skills for leaders in communities. Evaluate these programs using participatory evaluation approaches.

- Evaluate community engagement programs using participatory evaluation techniques.
- Spend the necessary time and resources for community engagement and evaluate what is currently being done.

Case Study 2: Queensland, Australia

The Queensland Government implemented the Community Engagement Improvement Strategy in 2002 in an effort to increase the involvement of Queenslanders in government processes and deliberations. This is part of a planned governance approach of *seamless government*—where different agencies work together as a single entity to generate integrated responses to communities' needs. Some specific initiatives include:

- Regional Parliament,
- Internet broadcasting of Parliamentary proceedings,
- ePetitions,
- community cabinets,
- ministerial regional community forums,
- negotiation tables,
- Smart Service Queensland,
- online engagement through a community engagement website,
- Community Renewal Program, and
- implementation of a Community Engagement Improvement Strategy for the public sector.

Government and non-government development practitioners worked together to develop an online series of guides called *Engaging Queenslanders* to provide practical advice for engagement. The series was informed by:

- the Community Engagement Improvement Strategy,
- a government-wide survey that mapped community engagement activities,
- the State of Engagement 2003 and 2004 reports outlining engagement activities in Queensland government agencies,
- a series of community engagement showcase events,
- research, and
- a cross-government review of the Community Engagement Improvement Strategy.

The community practitioners created a specific guide for engaging with rural and regional communities, dealing with the unique situation they are facing, including but not limited to: identifying opportunities, making local connections, and attracting funding to the community. The guide also has a section on the methods and techniques of engagement divided into:

- information-sharing techniques,
- consultation techniques,
- active participation techniques,
- feedback and follow-up,
- celebration, transition and hand-over,
- evaluating engagement activities, and
- managing contractors and consultants.

Some of these techniques will be discussed in later sections.

Although the Queensland Government is committed to effective community engagement and sees the potential benefits arising from these processes, it has acknowledged some of the key challenges:

- working with community expectations,
- increasing public access to information by framing information in ways that are useful to communities and citizens,
- coordinating approaches, including aligning engagement efforts between agencies and sharing and pooling information,
- developing a supportive culture,
- developing skills, knowledge and capability in community engagement,
- developing robust systems and processes,
- managing engagement in the context of government commitments, priorities and cycles,
- clarifying the roles and responsibilities of the public sector, elected representatives, executive government and the Parliament, and
- finding ways to reduce barriers to involvement and reaching out to the unengaged and disengaged.

Source: Queensland Government: Community Engagement Website, Retrieved January 12, 2012 from: <http://www.qld.gov.au/web/community-engagement/>

Recommendations for NL arising from this case:

- Coordinate a province-wide approach to community engagement.
- Ensure that rural communities and regions have skills necessary to tackle community engagement.
- Reach out to unengaged and disengaged groups through partnerships.
- Use different approaches and allow enough time and resources for engagement activities.

Case Study 3: Annenberg Institute’s Webinar “Tackling the Challenges of Rural Community Engagement”

Brown University’s Annenberg Institute held a webinar in July 2011 on the issue of “Tackling the Challenges of Rural Community Engagement.” Four key themes that emerged from the webinar are applicable to communities in rural Newfoundland:

1. Relationships are key to organizing and engagement, and they start with listening.
2. Preconceived notions about the capability, ability, or values of a community or its residents can undermine engagement efforts and should be “left at the door.”
3. Opportunities for partnerships exist, or can be created, in all communities.
4. People will engage around issues that are relevant to them.

As an exercise, the participants proposed that community organizers set up a “listening tour” to build relationships with youth and adults who are traditionally left out of the decision-making process. They note the importance of going to where people are “no matter the distance or the unfamiliarity of the territory.”

Source: Annenberg Institute for School Reform, 2011. Webinar: Tackling the Challenges of Rural Community Engagement. Retrieved from <http://annenberginstitute.org/project/nellie-mae-district-level-systems-change-initiative/webinar-tackling-challenges-rural-commun>

Recommendations for NL arising from this case:

- Develop long-term relations with local organisations.
- Value all citizens, their experiences and their value in decision-making processes.
- Acknowledge that citizens are valued.
- Frame issues in ways that allow citizens to understand why they are important and why they should care.

B. INNOVATIVE TECHNIQUES IN COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Rogers defines innovation as: “an idea, practice or object that is perceived as new by an individual or other unit of adoption. It matters little [...] whether or not an idea is objectively new as measured by the lapse of time since its first use or discovery [...] if the idea seems new to an individual, it is an innovation” (Rogers, 1995, p.11).

Vuarin & Rodriguez) state that “innovation is not an ‘invention’”; in the context of rural development, it is doing something which did not exist before in a particular territory or technical area” (Vuarin & Rodriguez, 1994, p.15). Thus, a community engagement technique or method employed in a new way or applying existing methods to a group that has not previously been exposed to it can be seen as an innovation.

Once again terminology is important. Rowe and Frewer (2000) highlight the problem that different groups can use the same name to mean entirely different processes or, can use different names to mean the same process. They note that more than 100 techniques have been used by different authors. In the following section, we review four categories of engagement techniques and innovative applications, and include examples for each.

USING SOCIAL MEDIA AND ONLINE ENGAGEMENT TOOLS

Some organizations will be more sophisticated than others in their use of social media and online engagement tools. The Internet can be an effective but it takes time and effort to learn how to utilize it to its full potential. Just as the Internet can be used in many ways, so can social media. Much of the community building that used to occur on a local community level is now being transferred to the social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter. This has the potential to enlarge the stage from a local community to a global community. Building relationships through social media can take time, but it can become an important part of a well-developed strategy for community engagement.

Case Study 4: Durban and Online Mapping Technology

The City of Durban, in collaboration with Sustainable Cities, a non-government organization, (NGO), used GreenMaps, an online platform where citizens are able to log on to map out favourite locations, buildings and favourite walking routes across the city. GreenMaps and similar counterparts have been used in different cities across the world for various purposes. GreenMaps can be used as a tool to encourage participation in community development by asking citizens to identify important community assets, for example, or to provide input into future land use in their communities and regions. The Durban case was successful because Sustainable Cities volunteers went directly into classrooms and worked with NGOs to explain GreenMaps and help citizens understand the software. Very specific and clear instructions were available online, the time frame was clear and the link was promoted through different social media platforms, as well as traditional media and posters.

Source: Green Map, "Imagine Durban", Retrieved March 24, 2012 at:
<http://www.greenmap.org/greenhouse/en/user/1217>

Recommendations for NL arising from this case:

- Use online technology and social media to get citizens involved in cost-effective, time saving ways.
- Use facilitators to explain the technology and the process to citizens.
- Use clear and specific instructions when explaining how to use the technology.

Case Study 5: Connecting Island Communities: The Telecentre Movement in the Pacific

The Pacific Online Telecentre Community is a regional approach that aims to counter the isolation faced by Pacific Island communities. Different types of facilities, including community radio initiatives, low bandwidth e-mail centres and high bandwidth VSAT installations, are being used by different countries for a range of community development initiatives. Some examples include:

- In Papua New Guinea, Vanuatu and Fiji, community radio initiatives inform the public on issues such as HIV/AIDS.
- The People First Network of Solomon Islands has e-mail stations that are linked to an Internet café hub in the capital.
- In Niue, there is a network of digital libraries throughout the island country, which also has free public wifi around the island.
- The Pacific Open Learning Health Network has telecentres located in hospitals of ten Pacific Island nations and allows health professionals to connect and remain knowledgeable about their field.

Source: Mathison, S. "Connecting Island Communities: A Regional Approach to Supporting the Telecentre Movement in the Pacific", Papers from the International Conference on Engaging Communities, Brisbane, Australia, 2005.

Recommendations for NL arising from this case:

- Use community radio and telecentres to connect remote rural areas that otherwise might feel isolated from each other.
- Use technology to engage with citizens of rural and remote communities, without having to require them to travel.

Case Study 6: Birmingham City Council (Websites Facilitating Community Engagement)

Policies and strategies for town development have been changing across the UK; and the government has placed new emphasis on the revitalization of community through local governments. Consultation and participation must now be “embedded into the culture of all councils.” Some council requirements include:

- Each locality must produce a community plan.
- Local councils have been given more allowance to enter into partnerships with local community organisations.
- Information communication technology will play a central role in this new community leadership process.
- Internet allows for services to be available to citizens “24 hours a day, 7 days a week.”

The Birmingham City Council website was re-designed to make it easier for citizens to use. The council reorganized information according to seven life themes, including: business and economy; community; environment; health; learning; leisure and tourism; and your council. The most important aspect of the website re-organization is that through the re-organization of information, citizens can quickly locate information without having to understand the complexities of the council’s organizational structure. The improved website is also a “platform for local voices” through interactive discussion groups hosted online. To make it even more convenient, the website is also available on mobile phones and other mobile devices.

Source: Ian Goodwin, “Websites Facilitating Community Engagement? The Case of Birmingham City Council, Papers from the International Conference on Engaging Communities, Brisbane, Australia, 2005

Recommendations for NL arising from this case:

- Design websites citizens can use to easily access information.
- Reorganize government websites to suit the needs of citizens, even if this doesn’t reflect existing government departments.

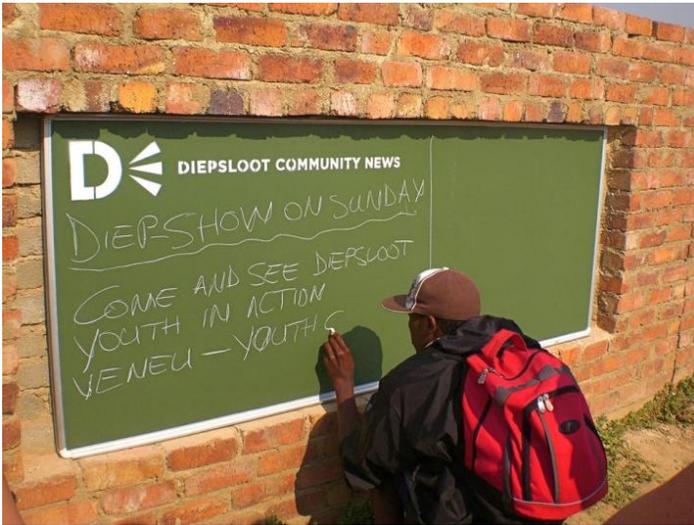
STRATEGIC DESIGN THINKING

Through the creative use of spaces, strategic design is fast becoming a new way of engaging communities. Design-thinking requires commitment, willpower and a touch of boldness to carry forward activities that might appear wasteful or overly creative to traditional decision-makers. These projects are often highly successful and can engage a wide variety of citizens, allowing communities to come together on the issue. However, community buy-in is essential for larger projects, otherwise the project could be viewed as wasteful.

Case Study 7: Candy Chang, TED Fellow

Candy Chang is a graphic designer, architect and urban planner who used strategic design to engage communities in several very successful campaigns around the world. With her team, she has developed various methods to bring communities together in innovative ways, as in the two following examples:

Figure 6: Community Chalkboards in Liberia



Source: Candy Chang, “Community Chalkboard- Flexible Local platforms”, Retrieved March 24, 2012 at <http://candychang.com/community-chalkboards/>

In Liberia, Chang installed of customized site-specific community chalkboards in high-traffic areas and left others portable for flexibility. The chalkboards give residents a free and accessible platform to publicize events, post jobs, ask questions, and self-organize on a daily basis.

Figure 7: New Orleans’s: “I Wish This Was” Campaign



Source: Candy Chang, “I Wish This Was-Civic input on site”, Retrieved March 24, 2012, <http://candychang.com/i-wish-this-was/>

I wish this was: In New Orleans, in an effort to deal with the mass of vacant storefronts, Chang printed out stickers where people could write down what they wanted to see in various locations.

Recommendations for NL arising from this case:

- Use strategic design in public areas as a way to increase engagement.

- Use creative and innovative ways to design and use stickers, posters and pamphlets that can be used to distribute information and to gather the views of citizens.

ARTS AND CREATIVITY IN ENGAGEMENT

Case Study 8: Digital Storytelling in Rural Australia

The Feral Arts community cultural development program – *Rural Communities and Globalisation* – was a three-year program aimed at enhancing collaboration and initiatives in resource management, local governance and education. Through digital storytelling exercises using video, photography and digital multimedia, the program allowed people to explore the multiple layers of ownership and identity associated with “place.” Through *Placeworks* – a suite of software tools being developed and tested in house by Feral Arts as part of its program – the work aimed to develop a common gathering point for local stories, videos, images and songs, building a shared cultural and community history database.

Source: Horton, N. & Moynihan, IM. “Community Engagement through Digital Storytelling,” Papers from the International Conference on Engaging Communities, Brisbane, Australia, 2005

Recommendations for NL arising from this case:

- Use multimedia, photography and video to share stories and other cultural resources, thereby building community pride and cultural capacity.

Case Study 9: Using Music for Community Engagement in Brisbane, Australia

In Brisbane, the organization Lifeline Brisbane, local musicians and recording studios collaborated with a local school to find out what children valued about their community. The collaborators produced a school song as a way to increase pride in an area of very low socio-economic status. The song, which was played on national radio stations, is now a part of school and community celebrations, making children proud of their school and community.

This project was followed by others:

- Through the Alafiah Freedom project, refugee students from detention centres collaborated with mainstream high school students using music as a vehicle to convey their insights on themes such as survival and welcome.
- In Kidz2Kidz, children attending local primary schools composed songs of peace, which have been given as a gift to the children of Iraq.

Source: Procopis, B. “Embracing Principles of Social Justice and Community Development Through Music, Papers from the International Conference on Engaging Communities, Brisbane, Australia, 2005

Recommendation for NL arising from this case:

- Create a sense of community pride and youth spirit by partnering local artists with schools.

TARGETING SPECIFIC POPULATION GROUPS

More often than not, the term “innovative” as applied to techniques of community engagement actually refers to using facilitation techniques that are appropriate for a group or situation. While there are thousands of facilitation techniques and methods that can be used, sometimes doing something as simple as going to the places where your target groups gather can be a successful strategy. Consider what techniques will work best with specific groups you want to target – that can be an innovative approach.

ENGAGING YOUNG FAMILIES: CASE STUDIES

In Scotland, the Scotland Executive Council report states that “dialogue with children, young people and families gives policy makers and service providers the information they need to improve the relevance of their policies and services. [...] while not involving children and young people at the appropriate time can result in wasted or inappropriate use of resources” (Scottish Executive, 2006).

While literature specific to young families is limited, the available literature combined with the results of interviews with people in the region yielded some advice for approaching young families or families with young children for engagement activities:

- They have little time to contribute to “extra” commitments, so make their time worth it. Show how their contribution is being used and why it is useful for them to attend. Tailor the sessions to show them how the issue at hand will affect them directly.
- Have babysitting services available for their children so that they are able to concentrate and relax.
- Events during weekdays in the mornings are most successful (for parents at home with children). Most young children are up early.
- Some families might not have access to transportation; reimburse them for out-of-pocket travel expenses. Consider meeting in easily accessible locations.
- Offer engagement models to allow families flexibility in scheduling.
- Offer activities for children during the engagement intended for parents.
- Network with existing services such a family or community centers where families are likely to visit, to make the consultation more convenient for them.

Case Study 10: Using Photovoice for Community Engagement with Young People and their Families in Edmonton

In an effort to increase the health literacy of young immigrants, refugees and their families, researchers from different faculties from the University of Alberta got together to initiate a community engagement project using Photovoice. Photovoice is a participatory research technique that allows participants to use photography to represent their own perspectives; the researchers or facilitators can then use the photographs to prompt questions later on. The photography and photo-assisted interviews allowed participants to use photography to explore the mechanisms of active/healthy living engagement in their communities.

Source: Higginbottom, G. et al. (2011) *Optimizing Health Literacy and Community Engagement in Relation to Active Living with Edmonton's Newcomer Young People and their Families*. Poster. Edmonton, AB: University of Alberta.

Recommendations for NL arising from this case:

- Use participatory research methods to interact with youth and/or traditionally marginalized community groups, in order to break down barriers to participation.
- Engage youth by allowing them to express themselves through photography and other arts-based techniques.

Case Study 11: Community Partnership for Protecting Children (CPPC) in Portland, Maine

Community Partnerships for Protecting Children (CPPC) is an initiative sponsored by the Center for Community Partnerships in Child Welfare (CCPCW) and the Center for the Study of Social Policy (CSSP). The initiative is national in scope but locally driven. Initially implemented in four cities (Louisville, Kentucky; Jacksonville, Florida; St. Louis, Missouri; and Cedar Rapids, Iowa), other cities have joined the partnership as well, seeing it as a valuable new approach that recognizes that "keeping children safe from abuse and neglect should not be and, from a practical view, cannot be the sole responsibility of public child welfare agencies (Patt, p.7)." The partnership aims to be family-centered; support child protective services policy, practice, and culture change; foster neighborhood networks of support and shared decision-making.

The Portland CPPC began to engage stakeholders in developing a plan for the Partnership in 2005. Numerous committees were formed and engaged in frequent communication and deliberation to develop initiatives that suit Portland's unique characteristics. Now serving all of Cumberland County in Southern Maine, the partnership "is focused on bringing together all available resources to keep children safe and thriving in their own families, neighborhoods, and communities" (www.cppccumberland.org/). A specific goal has been to reduce the number of children entering foster care. Their success is reflected in a reduction of nearly 50% in the number of children entering the foster care system in partnership neighborhoods between 2008 and 2010, with a cost savings of over \$2 million.

Source: Patt, S. *Operationalizing Portland, Maine's Community Partnership for Protecting Children*. Kennedy School of Government Harvard University. Retrieved April 11, 2007. <http://www.cssp.org/publications/child-welfare/community-partnerships-for-the-protection-of-children/a-community-in-support-of-children-and-families-operationalizing-portland-maines-community-partnerships-for-the-protection-of-children.pdf>

Recommendations for NL arising from this case:

- Promoting partnerships between community organisations and the public can result in more effective service and program delivery.
- Use different techniques and focus groups to evaluate current programs to ensure a wide variety of ideas are taken into account at various times and places.

Case Study 12: Living Room Meetings and Brownfields Development in San Diego, California

In southeastern San Diego, The Jacobs Family Foundation and the Jacobs Center for Neighborhood Innovation have been working to increase the interest of residents in community building initiatives to revitalize a 10 acre brownfield. Instead of holding large-scale formal community meetings, they set up a series of engagements in living rooms across the community. Each host would invite their own friends and community, making participants feel more comfortable; this resulted in high attendance rates. This strategy proved so successful that it became a "formal" engagement strategy and allowed the Center to focus on individuals who weren't necessarily community leaders at the beginning of their involvement but who had a potential to become one. Although this strategy worked very well, the Center's Community Building Director, Jacob Barrios warns that well-trained facilitators should be involved in helping people to express themselves in a way that is constructive and moves the dialogue forward. Furthermore, the personal and informal venues allowed for frequent feedback between the Center and the residents, allowing for facilitators to help residents realize their own plans instead of waiting for the government or the municipality to take action.

Source: Jacobs Center for Neighbourhood Innovation, "The Jacobs Center for Neighborhood Innovation's first step for community engagement – the "Living Room Meeting"". Grassroots Grantmakers. 2009. Retrieved from <http://www.grassrootsgrantmakers.org/2011/07/sharing-the-learning-the-living-room-meeting-2/>

Recommendations for NL arising from this case:

- Use well-trained facilitators to assist in moving the dialogue forward.
- Incorporate personal and informal venues in engagement processes and opportunities for frequent feedback rather than "one-off" engagement activities.
- Use "Living Room" meetings as informal ways to involve young families without having to get them to travel with young children.

Case Study 13: Learning Circles for Low Income Families, Canada

A one-year project by KAIROS, a national coalition of church and religious organizations—that aimed to identify tools, strategies, and policies to engage people living in poverty and help reduce and eliminate poverty in Canada—used learning circles an approach to enhancing citizen participation in policy development. Specifically, 55 participants engaged in collective learning circles in the cities of Charlottetown, Montreal, and Victoria.

"Learning circles, were envisioned as 'communicative spaces' where low income residents 'could collectively explore and give voice to their experiences and the barriers they perceive to mobilization'" (Ravensbergen and VanderPlaat, 2010, p. 394). This non-formal adult education approach is a popular mechanism for lifelong learning around topics of personal and professional interest. The circles bring together people who share a common interest and provide a space for them to explore, and possibly take action on, topics relevant to this interest. After some initial planning and the group is set up, members participate in a series of meetings (normally six to ten) with a specific set of goals in mind for what they would like to accomplish in the meetings. In this project, community organizations helped to identify potential participants. This was

followed by workshops that focused on collective issue identification and analysis, and the development of recommendations and action plans. Follow-up meetings were then held to share and reflect on the learning circle experience. The model was found to increase people's knowledge of their rights and ability to stand up for themselves, through collective action and advocacy, for example.

Recommendations for NL arising from this case:

- Provide opportunities (such as learning circles) and spaces for people living in poverty to come together and identify, explore and address issues.
- Create a range of shared community spaces, including gathering places (e.g. internet cafes), artistic places or "cultural sanctuaries," recreation places (including lower priced recreation centers, access to local schools in summer, and bike lanes), green space and community gardens (with sheds and bathrooms), and places for children (e.g. play days).
- Ensure ongoing supportive community structures for advocacy as well - agencies that "work for people" and shift from "policing and judging to supporting."

Source: Frances Ravensbergen and Madine VanderPlaat. "Barriers to citizen participation: the missing voices of people living with low income" *Community Development Journal* Vol 45 No 4 October 2010 pp. 389–403.

ENGAGING YOUTH: CASE STUDIES

Introduction

Designing engagement activities for youth can be very difficult; adults can spend a long time designing sessions that may be met with a lack of interest. When engaging youth it is crucial to be clear about why you are doing the engagement and to have an end goal in mind. If possible, give youth the opportunity to design engagement sessions with their peers: this could help them develop a sense of responsibility. Allowing the young people to design events gives them a way to demonstrate their capabilities to adults, creating an inter-generational feeling of mutual trust--a crucial ingredient in encouraging youth to engage and maintain a long-term involvement in a community.

In *Creating Change*, The Innovation Centre for Community and Youth Development (2004, p. 1) suggests the following methods for creating successful strategies for youth engagement:

- building young people's connections to their own identity, culture, and community;
- recognizing that young people are assets to and experts about their own communities;
- engaging young people as community leaders on issues that matter to them; and
- bringing young people and adults together to work as equal partners.

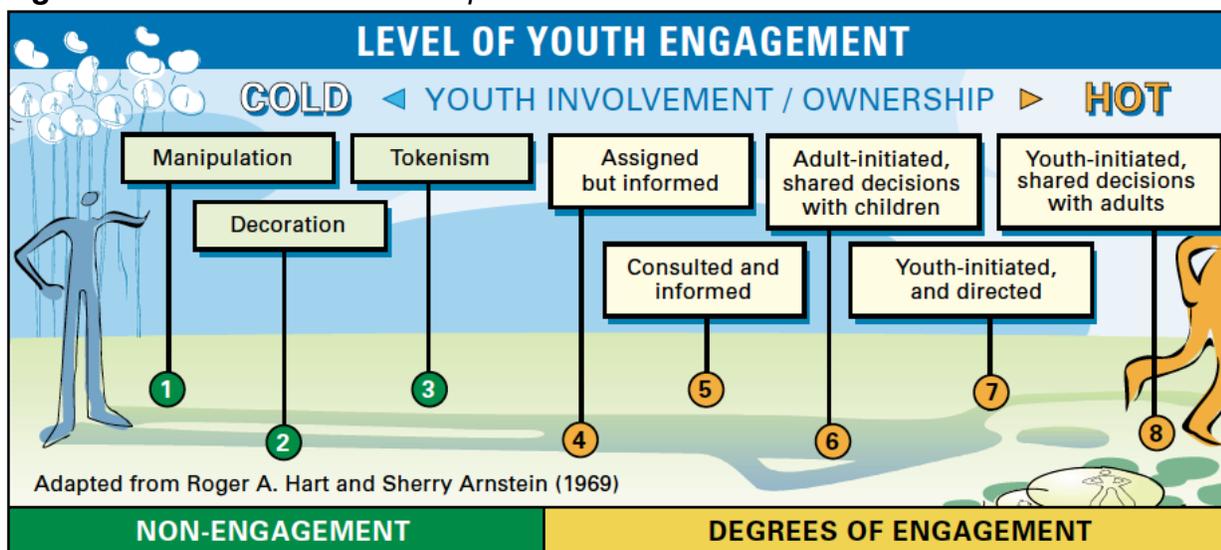
Mullahey et al. (1999, p.7) on behalf of the American Planning Association, highlights the importance of accepting youth as capable partners, and viewing their ideas and inputs at the same levels as adults; otherwise, "many become passive recipients of information rather than people who assert themselves to voice their particular concerns

and viewpoints.” During interviews in the Central West region, youth expressed their discontent with “token” roles where they were asked for input but saw no results. In particular, during facilitated discussion groups in Grand Falls-Windsor, many youth said they felt that the community placed a higher value on seniors than on young people, and that even when they took the time to voice their ideas and opinions, these were rarely considered.

Models of Youth Participation

Roger Hart’s (1992) Ladder of Participation (see Figure 8) for youth is widely used to understand the varying degrees of youth participation that can occur. The lowest three rungs describe situations of non-participation while the remaining four portray varying degrees of participation, with the highest being youth-initiated, shared decision-making with adults. Hart notes that these levels are not meant to suggest that youth must always be at the higher levels, but to show that it is important for adult facilitators to be aware of how their decisions and situational conditions can affect the levels of youth engagement. Finally, he urges adults to support youth to become engaged at the levels where they feel most comfortable, although he suggests avoiding working in the lower rungs of “non participation.”

Figure 8. Hart’s Ladder of Participation



Source: Hart, R. (1992). Children’s Participation from Tokenism to Citizenship. Florence: UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre

Adam Fletcher from The Freechild Project has developed a “Youth Voice Rubric” (see Table 4), expanding on the information in Hart’s Ladder. Fletcher cautions that the Ladder, rather than representing the whole community at once “represents each specific instance of youth voice.” That is to say that youth in a same community or situation can be situated at varying degrees of engagement. (Fletcher is the founder of The Freechild Project, which advocates for youth and encourages youth engagement through a website and by offering facilitation training and workshops.)

Table 4: Youth Voice Rubric by Adam Fletcher

Description	Challenge	Reward of Interaction
1. Adults manipulate youth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth involved have no understanding of the issue but are manipulated to act in a certain way. Youth are consulted but given no feedback. 	Experience of involving youth and rationale for continuing activities.
2: Adults use youth to decorate their activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presence of youth is treated as all that is necessary without reinforcing active involvement. 	Validates youth attendance without requiring the work to go beyond that.
3: Adults tokenise youth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth are used inconsequentially by adults to reinforce the perception that they are involved. 	Validates youth attendance without requiring the work to go beyond that.
4: Youth inform adults	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adults are not obligated to let youth impact their decisions, although youth have the ability to voice their opinion. 	Youth can impact adult-driven decisions or activities.
5: Adults actively consult youth while they're involved	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth only have the authority that adults grant them, and are subject to adult approval. 	Youth can substantially transform adults' opinions, ideas and actions.
6: Youth are fully equal with adults; a 50/50 split of authority, obligation, and commitment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There isn't recognition for the specific developmental needs or representation opportunities for youth. Without receiving that recognition youth lose interest and may become disengaged quickly. 	Youth can experience full power and authority, as well as the experience of forming basic youth/adult partnerships.
7. Youth person driven activities do not include adults in positions of authority; rather, they support youth in passive roles.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth operate in a vacuous situation where the impact on their larger community isn't recognized. Young person driven activities may not be perceived with the same validity of co- led activities. 	Developing complete ownership of their learning allows youth to drive the educational experiences effectively. Youth experience the potential impact of their direct actions upon themselves, their peers, and their larger community.
8: Youth have full equity with adults. This may be a 40/60 split or 20/80 split when it's appropriate. All are recognized for their impact and ownership of the outcomes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Requires conscious commitment by all participants to overcoming all barriers. 	Creating structures to support differences can establish safe, supportive learning environments, ultimately recreating the climate and culture in communities.

Source: Adam Fletcher, The Freechild Project. Retrieved from <http://www.freechild.org/ladder.htm>

Case Study 14: Centre of Excellence for Youth Engagement

The Centre for Excellence for Youth Engagement works with provincial, aboriginal and national governments on issues of youth engagement and provides research on engaging youth. They are partnered with many cities across Canada and are a contributor to Health Canada's Youth Tobacco Campaign. An important component of their mission is to undertake research on youth engagement: on defining it and finding ways to engage more youth in policy, planning and to help them become integrated citizens. The Centre for Excellence for Youth Engagement maintains a website containing a wealth of research and information carried out by the centre and by other agencies involved in youth engagement. You can access it at engagementcentre.ca.

Table 5: Initiating Factors: How and why youth first become engaged/involved

Want to	Need to	Have to
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal interest/ passion/ enjoyment • Professional/personal development/benefit • Boredom • Inspired/encouraged by another person or event • Seeking social networks • Youth friendly environment (e.g. food being offered, good people already involved) • Not satisfied with current state of affairs • Have a voice/make a difference 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sense of obligation • Sense of guilt • Sense of responsibility • Values/Beliefs • Prove something • Norm/natural progression 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family-initiated- parents/guardian signed you up • School initiated mandatory community involvement • Post- secondary application requirement

Source: Centre of Excellence for Youth Engagement. "Process of Youth Engagement". 2003. Retrieved April 11, 2012 from www.engagementcentre.ca/files/pmod_e.pdf

Table 6: Sustaining Factors: What keeps youth engaged/involved

Individual Factors	Organizational Factors	Community and Societal Factors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enjoyment/personal interest/passion • Personal rewards/benefits • Sense of responsibility/commitment/ obligation • Need for acceptance/raise • Values/beliefs • Supportive peers/family • Working towards a goal • Social aspects • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides opportunities • Youth friendly environment • Supportive environment • Role models • Recognition of accomplishments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make significant, sustainable changes in the community • Problems in society and community • Nothing else to do in one's community

Source: Centre of Excellence for Youth Engagement. "Process of Youth Engagement." 2003. Retrieved April 11, 2012 from www.engagementcentre.ca/files/pmod_e.pdf

Table 7: Barriers: What prevents youth from becoming and/or staying engaged/involved

Personal Barriers	School/Family/Organizational Barriers	Community/Societal Barriers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time • Indifference • Disillusionment • Lack of Confidence • Personal limitations • Limited capacity • Unrealistic goals • Life circumstances • Individual personalities • Negative experiences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parent disapprove/don't provide financial support • Organizational environment is not youth friendly • Organizational structure • Activities are not youth friendly • Group dynamics • Limited opportunities • Discrimination • School structure • Limited resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of guidance/support from adults • Lack of opportunities and knowledge of opportunities • Lack of respect for youth • Limited community resources • Ageism • Attitudes • Media

Source: Centre of Excellence for Youth Engagement. "Process of Youth Engagement." 2003. Retrieved April, 2012 from www.engage.mentcentre.ca/files/pmod_e.pdf

Recommendations for NL arising from this case:

- Understand the initiating and sustaining factors as well as barriers for youth Engagement.
- Design youth engagement activities to include youth in the organizing committee and give them a level of shared responsibility. Value the opinions of youth and work with them to understand their needs and realities.
- Do not engage in non-engagement practices which further increase the apathy among youth and makes future engagements less likely to succeed.
- Take the time to invest resources and use different methods to approach and engage with youth of different ages.
- Recognize that “youth” is a broad category. Different techniques will be necessary to approach youth of different ages and backgrounds.
- Partner with organisations such as school, colleges and youth centres and go to where youth gather.

Case Study 15: Toronto Kidsviews or Youthviews

The City of Toronto involved more than 8,000 youth in the preparation for the 1990 official town plan. Many activities were planned for different age groups including:

- a student conference on urban issues;
- a two day workshop, in which teams built a new city neighbourhood using LEGO blocks;
- a survey to identify places, building and neighbourhoods they liked;
- an exhibition of more than 200 paintings, models, plans, essays, murals and poems;
- a role-playing development game in which students prepared a re-development proposal for waterfront lands; and
- an in-class assignment in which students prepared their own official plans.

Source: Centre of Excellence for Youth Engagement. "Process of Youth Engagement" 2003. Retrieved April 11, 2012 from www.engage.mentcentre.ca/files/pmod_e.pdf

Recommendations for NL arising from this case:

- Tailor engagement activities to youth; design activities to cater to their interest and to their methods of self-expression.
- Partner with organizations and schools to reach a wider youth audience.
- Create curriculum that corresponds to certain modules that are being taught in schools at different grade levels to allow classroom and local knowledge to be cross-referenced, making policy development more real for youth.

Case Study 16: Snakes and Ladders Game

In Scotland, Barnardo's Scotland—a charity that helps disadvantaged children and young people—has put a new twist on a classic board game. In this new version of Snakes and Ladders, players use a 10 ft square board game with “snakes” and “ladders” that reflect life experiences. The game was devised to allow young people to overcome isolation and share their life experiences. Different groups and organizations can tailor the game to their own needs. Young people are involved in designing the issues that will be used in each game and for delivering training in how to use it. If you land on a bad life experience, you go down a snake; a good life experience takes you up a ladder. With the support of Barnardo's Scotland, the young people facilitate the use of the game by various community and government agencies—giving them a way to reflect the experiences of their lives to the larger society.

Source: Scottish Executive. (2006). Engaging children and young people in community planning: Community Planning Advice Note. Scottish Executive, Edinburgh Queensland Government.

Recommendations for NL arising from this case:

- Have young people create games for themselves and their peers, in order to allow them to reflect on life experiences and to allow different groups of youth to learn about each other's experiences in a non-threatening environment.

PART 5: LESSONS**LESSONS from Literature:**

- Consider multiple engagements at different times with varying degrees of participation levels.
- A coordinated effort is required.
- Plan ahead of time and be sure about the direction of the activities.
- The governments, municipalities and organisations need willpower to undertake engagement.
- Investing resources into engagement allows for stronger communities.
- Engagement takes time and does not occur in one day or a week. It is a long-term process that governments must commit to in order to gain legitimacy and to allow citizens to have more say in their own futures.
- Monitoring and evaluating engagement is essential.

LESSONS from Field Research:

Method

- Partner with local organizations to reduce time and resources spent on engagement processes.
- Make use of community leaders' understandings of their communities/regions.
- Use local facilities and make use of events that are popular and are well attended.
- Partnerships are also vital in areas/regions where resources are scarce.
- Provide feedback and opportunities for dialogue to allow unpopular decisions to be understood and respected
- Provide per diems for transportation and accommodations if participants are coming from far away.
- Provide participants with an accurate understanding of how their input will affect policy or decisions.
- Set realistic goals concerning the engagement activity. Plan who to engage and how. Issues will determine who attends events.
- Frame issues in a way that emphasises the importance of community input.
- Choose appropriate and neutral facilitation methods and processes.
- Have realistic expectations.
- Find a way to reduce the time associated with current engagement processes through the use of innovation or technology.
- Use various methods of engagement and a multi-prong approach.
- Market the engagement process through different avenues, including technology, community channels, community radio, social media and word of mouth.

Structure

- Use informal structures and methods to get the best results. For example, "kitchen table" discussions and having informal conversations in an everyday setting may make people feel more at ease and comfortable in voicing their opinions.
- Work in small, informal groups rather than large, formal group settings. This is especially important in small rural communities where people might be wary of outsiders coming in or might be afraid of expressing their ideas in a setting where their neighbours could be against them.
- Develop/make use of personal connections. People in rural communities may be more comfortable talking to people they know or people they have a connection with. However, for some issues, they prefer to talk with an "outsider" but might prefer a more personal setting.
- Provide follow up after engagement sessions to allow for feedback or to explain how a policy decision was made.
- Engagement requires rules.

Timing

- "Outsiders" or consultants should spend time in the town and introduce themselves in different contexts.
- Engage with people earlier rather than later in the process.
- Understand that an issue may be more sensitive at some times than others.
- Timing is crucial; don't plan engagement processes that compete with other community events.
- Be aware of what else is going on in the area/region that could affect an engagement event or people's reaction to the engagement process. Plan

engagement processes at different times of the day and more than once in order to reach different population groups.

Capacity-Building

- Contact people personally to show them that their opinions are valued; this increases their own confidence in their own ideas.
- Structure engagement activities to maximize participant growth in skills, experiences and attachment to the region
- Work with communities to explain how policies will affect the area: people will engage if they have a vested interest.
- Ensure the level of engagement is appropriate for the issue.
- Prioritize succession planning and capacity development for community leaders.

LESSONS from the Pilot Community Engagement Projects:

- Partnerships are essential for planning and carrying out engagement activities.
- Time is required to plan engagement activities; two weeks was a very short time to design, implement and process feedback from engagement.
- Reaching out to traditionally unengaged or disengaged groups is rewarding and allows personal connections to develop.
- People feel valued when they are personally contacted to provide advice and feedback regarding policy.
- Breaking up engagement sessions with different types of activities and with breaks reduces any build up of negativity and makes for a less tense atmosphere;.
- Facilitators must be flexible and have the ability to direct conversations in a way that is meaningful, without being authoritarian.
- Although technology is a good way to engage communities, it should be a facilitated process and more than one attempt must be made.

LESSONS from Public Policy Forum:

Don Lenihan's book *Rescuing Public Policy: The Case for Public Engagement*, written as part of a project of the Canadian Public Policy Forum, outlines eight recommendations to help federal, provincial and territorial governments move the public engagement agenda forward. They are outlined here as a reference and because they provide a view that is based on national research that Lenihan conducted over the course of two years:

- Each government should name a minister responsible for public engagement.
- Each government should create a secretariat to support the minister responsible for public engagement.
- Each government should develop an official policy on public engagement.
- Each government should undertake at least one significant pilot project in the near future.
- Governments should work together to develop and test a public engagement evaluation framework.

- Governments, the business community and non-governmental organizations should all work together to raise awareness and help build a strong pan-Canadian engagement community.
- Each government should create a multi-sectoral forum to promote collaboration within its jurisdiction.
- Political parties should engage their membership in a research and dialogue process to assess how public engagement can contribute to the renewal of politics.

PART 6: RECOMMENDATIONS

As a result of the three phases of this research—the literature review, the interviews in the Grand Falls-Windsor – Harbour Breton – Baie Verte region and the two pilot community engagement activities in Grand Falls- Windsor, the Research Group arrived at a number of recommendations designed to enhance the provincial government’s community engagement in Newfoundland and Labrador.

The nine main recommendations, with supporting statements, are listed below. A more comprehensive list of recommendations—including the recommendations from the case studies--follows in Appendix 2.

1. The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador should consider adopting a provincial standard for community engagement that incorporates a series of guiding principles. These principles and standards should be developed through an inclusive process. The government should also consider naming a minister responsible for public engagement and a secretariat to support the minister's work.

After a two year study exploring ways governments, stakeholders, communities and ordinary citizens could collaborate to find solutions to complex problems, Canada’s Public Policy Forum developed eight recommendations for federal, provincial and territorial governments (Lenihan, 2012). Our research for this project supports the importance of the Forum’s top three recommendations: naming a minister responsible for public engagement, creating a secretariat to support the minister and developing an official engagement policy. This is key to moving forward with a public engagement agenda.

The minister would be a voice for public engagement within cabinet and the secretariat would support the minister’s work by providing guidance and support to government departments in their public engagement processes; the secretariat would likewise disseminate information on these processes, so the public will know what to expect. Given the role that the Rural Secretariat has played in community engagement and deliberative dialogue in Newfoundland and Labrador, the Secretariat should be considered as an agency appropriate for fulfilling this role. Together the minister and secretariat should establish a clear expectation that high quality, inclusive engagement practices will become the norm in the province.

The importance of developing standards and principles is well illustrated in an example from Scotland. In an attempt to improve the experience of all participants involved in community engagement, the Scottish Government has established National Standards for Community Engagement. The standards are based on a set of clearly defined

principles developed with the involvement of over 500 people from communities and agencies throughout the country. The standards allow national, provincial and municipal governments, as well as community groups, to apply the same basic principles for engagement. With similar standards for all government agencies and communities, citizens know what to expect when consultations and engagements take place; they understand the process and their role in policy-making. By making engagement a norm, citizens are less wary of participating as they understand the value governments place on the process and on hearing their voice.

2. The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, municipalities and community organizations must invest adequate time and resources into community engagement methods and practices, and work to engage the groups that are currently unengaged or disengaged in decision-making processes that affect these citizens and their interests.

Engagement is more than just informing or consulting on issues. Rather, it requires a certain level of involvement by the target public in initiating and, in some cases, implementing ideas and programs. For this higher level of engagement to occur, the target population must be informed about the issue, have an understanding of the different stakeholders and the processes, and be able to articulate their needs and future vision. Therefore in order for effective engagement to occur, the government must invest resources in assessing current levels of awareness and capacity for engagement and, where needed, the distribution of issue-related information and in developing local leadership with the capacity to engage their communities. In order to remove financial barriers that might prevent some under-engaged groups from taking part in the process, the government should consider providing funding to cover out-of-pocket expenses for transportation, day care and other identified needs. Similarly, extra resources may be necessary to allow communities to educate and design events aimed at specific groups—youth, for example—who are currently under represented. Investing proper resources into citizen engagement processes has proven to be a cost-effective solution for governments and institutions seeking direction and legitimacy in implementing programs and policies that address the real needs of the citizens they serve.

3. Community engagement events should focus on using multiple engagement strategies to achieve desired goals.

Relying on traditional techniques and methods has proven largely ineffective in reaching a wide sampling of the public. For example, while certain citizens might be comfortable speaking out at a public meeting or filling out a survey, others may not feel equipped or be willing to do so. In order to be inclusive, engagement processes must cast a wider net. By using a variety of engagement methods, it is easier to reach a wider audience: Different segments of the population will respond differently to different strategies. In some cases, this might mean using Facebook, in others it might mean visiting people in their homes, or giving people a choice of events held at different times of the day. The type of engagement must be designed to accommodate and appeal to the group being engaged. Lenihan (2012, 40), in his principles of collaborative policy development, advises governments to treat each community on an individual basis. He goes on to say that even issues that look similar are different in differing communities. Therefore, public policy must allow for flexibility and implementation at a variety of levels including flexibility in public engagement approaches.

During a meeting with members of the Rural Secretariat a wide variety of engagement methods that can be utilized were discussed, ranging from informal interviews around a kitchen table to public panel discussions or community radio, and the strengths and weaknesses of each were noted. Also during the research phase of this project, interviews in Conne River showed how the multiple engagement methods used by the Miawpukek First Nation Band Council foster a strong community consensus. The methods used ranged from household surveys to focus groups.

Although using different methods of engagement might seem like a serious strain on resources, engaging a larger proportion of the population by using methods that engage different groups of stakeholders, assures governments of a more effective and more comprehensive public engagement process that truly incorporates the views of their constituents.

4. Use technology, arts and media in new and different ways to decrease costs of engaging larger audiences, while providing innovation and inclusivity.

Traditional methods of community engagement have proven to be largely ineffective in bringing excluded voices to the table. By using technology, arts and the media in new ways, traditionally marginalized groups can be included. For example, some communities are experimenting with the use of technology such as Skype to hold meetings with their members to save time and money that would have been spent on travel. Others are experimenting, using social media sites such as Facebook and Twitter to engage youth. In some communities around the world, strategic design is being used to engage communities through the creative and bold use of public spaces. Websites, community level photography, and community radio are other ways that people are being involved. During the course of the pilot project held in Grand Falls-Windsor, youth at CNA were introduced to an online mapping system called CommunityWalk, a mapping tool using Google Maps technology, where they could go online and map their favourite places in town, or add markers for where they wanted new buildings/facilities or modifications. These methods allow policy-makers to reach a wider sector of the population through new and innovative ways that allow more citizens to be involved in policy-making, while, potentially, decreasing costs for governments and opening lines of communication between these groups.

5. Partnerships with local organizations are essential to reduce time and resources spent on engagement processes. Processes should be designed in collaboration with local organisations who understand the contexts and the citizens that are to be reached.

Local leaders have local knowledge that can inform policy and the design of engagement processes. In order to plan effective engagement events, it is crucial to partner with existing groups in communities who can provide guidance or even take a leadership role in the engagement process. Forming these partnerships early will help ensure that the type of engagement will appeal to the target population. This is particularly true for groups who are currently under-engaged. For example, if youth engagement is the goal, it makes sense to partner with schools or youth groups, while a 50+ club may be a good partner for an event targeted at seniors. Once long-term partnerships have been formed with a variety of local organizations, it will be easier to draw upon their combined expertise to mobilize people for large engagement events.

These organizations can also provide good channels for providing information about events and about the topic of the engagement to their constituents, so people will be able to provide more informed opinions during the engagement process.

In addition to these benefits, local organizations can sometimes provide local facilities where people may feel more comfortable. Local leaders can also introduce consultants or researchers who come from outside the community, easing their way and making community members feel more at ease. Partnering with local organizations will provide access to a valuable body of knowledge and experience about what works and doesn't work in a region.

During interviews conducted for this report, many community leaders highlighted the importance of partnerships in rural areas. Organizations are able to work together to use scarce resources to provide for the needs of their communities, thus ensuring increased community resiliency. It was also mentioned that partnerships and dialogue fostered through engagement allow organizations to reflect and participate in community-building together— which strengthens the “sense of community” and “social capital” in the area. (A sense of community has been identified as a major factor in encouraging young people to return to a rural area while Lee et al. (2005) observe that social capital can promote economic growth and be mobilised for developmental benefits more widely.) Finally, partnerships allow for problems to be viewed through the lens of different groups, which makes organizations more likely to collaborate on addressing issues of common interest- allowing for complex solutions instead of isolated programs.

The Grand Falls-Windsor pilot project was made possible within a relatively short timeframe through partnerships with two institutions CNA and EVCC and with the municipality. This illustrates the importance of partnerships in reaching a diverse audience and allowing engagement projects to move forward, sometimes on very short notice.

6. Make greater resources available to support leaders in their work, and to build engagement capacity in communities to engage a greater number of volunteers. Youth engagement is especially essential for succession planning in rural communities and should be supported and encouraged.

Community leaders are an essential element in the creation and survival of strong rural communities. Leaders in rural communities are subject to many competing demands: they are relied upon in multiple ways by their communities and by outside agencies that contact or consult them as the primary contact for their towns. In order to represent and serve their towns, leaders must have the proper skills and resources to design and implement a variety of community engagement events. Through engagement more volunteers can be encouraged, for example, to contribute to community development. Similarly, resources are needed to train volunteers and to support the work they do in the community, expanding on the work of initiatives such as the Community Capacity Building Program and Office of Youth Engagement.

Planning for leadership succession is crucial in rural communities, but this is not always happening. Despite the obvious benefits of engaging and mentoring youth, Locke and Rowe (2010) point out that "some organizations continue to operate in very traditional

ways and many may have had the same leaders for decades, do not wish or know how to change, or may not want to give up control. This may be unwelcoming to new recruits. It also points out the need for succession planning and relinquishing of responsibility." This is concurrent with the opinions of many of the people who were interviewed for this report, who felt that "many organizations were not welcoming to youth or their ideas", that community leaders must realize that "they are part of the reason why youth are not participating" and "that no one is willing to trust us" (Interviews 2011).

By contrast, the example of Conne River provides an excellent model for engaging youth. Getting youth involved in community planning and policies is very important to the Miawpukek First Nation. Every grade at the local school has activities related to planning and pride-related exercises that they present to the community in yearly events. For example, in Jeopardy Games youth compete, using knowledge about their community. The school also has two representatives on Council that receive the same training as adults. Elders and youth are often included in decision-making because inter-generational knowledge sharing is crucial. Youth are valued and are given a strong voice for their community. This results in a high percentage of youth who come back to live and work in Conne River after they have completed their education elsewhere.

The recognition that mentorship is a critical part of youth engagement within community development is growing and some organizations have dedicated time for mentorship and knowledge-sharing as part of their programs. In fact, when mutually respectful youth- adult collaborations has taken place, "most frequently, adults concluded that their level of involvement in the work at hand increased because of their collaboration with youth: "the emotional connection that youth bring to community and youth-oriented issues tends to spark adult interest" (Brodhead 2006, 16).

7. Ensure that engagement activities take place in both formal and informal settings in order to get wider feedback and input into the policy making process.

While formal settings are appropriate for some consultation events, information from the literature review and from interviews conducted in the region show that in order to capture a wide range of public opinion, governments must ensure that engagement activities also take place in informal settings where the participants feel more at ease and comfortable speaking. During the pilot project in Grand Falls-Windsor, members of the research team made contact with students at the College of the North Atlantic (CNA) and young families at the Exploits Valley Community Coalition (EVCC) family resource centre. In these places the research team could interact with members of groups that are often under engaged, and would not necessarily attend formal events held at another location. Many members of disadvantaged groups cannot get to formal hearings or choose not to go for a variety of reasons including: mobility issues, a lack of money for transportation, a lack of time, or a fear that they don't adequately understand the issues and will be ridiculed or harassed when speaking in public. Thus, in order to conduct inclusive consultations and engagement events, it is essential for government to include informal events that take place in familiar surroundings where people feel at ease.

8. Follow-up and feedback is crucial. Community engagement should be looked upon as an iterative processes and not a one time deal. "Reporting back" should be part of all engagement processes.

An engagement process can be thought of in the short, medium and long term and can have different goals and objectives for each step. The earlier that citizens can be brought into a process, the more responsive they usually will be; however, it is essential to go back to them to validate any answers, recommendations or policies that are created as a result of their input.

During the interviews conducted for this report, people stated that they felt that outcomes had already been decided before the consultation or engagement process began. They felt that the engagement process was merely "tokenistic." As a result, they were less likely to take part in future events. Several things need to be done to combat this perception: people must be notified about the events far in advance, they must be educated about the process and they must be given feedback about how their opinions and ideas were used. If an unpopular decision was made after a consultation, people must be informed of how and why this decision was made and how their point of view was taken into account.

Providing feedback after consultations and answering any questions about decisions that have been made is crucial to building trust and creating the kinds of long-term relationships that will allow for effective community engagement and capacity building. People must be thanked for their participation and know their input was valued. By moving beyond consultation to engagement and partnerships, ideally opportunities are created for citizens to be part of implementing solutions as well as devising them.

9. Ensure the engagement process is transparent. Transparency in engagement efforts is essential for citizens to feel valued and to understand how their input and feedback is being used to make decisions.

How engagement processes shaped policy (or not) should be explained to the community once the decision-making period is over. The public and the government have growing expectations related to transparency and accountability. This new way of thinking is also challenging the processes through which new policies are determined. By making the design of the engagement events transparent—that is, by explaining who is being consulted, how they are being consulted and why—people can have more confidence in the process. They will be able to perceive that an engagement event is genuine and not a tokenistic process (a perception some people have expressed about past events).

Public education about the process of engagement will inform people about what to expect and will help manage their expectations of outcomes. Whatever the outcome, reporting back is essential to the creation of a transparent process. As stated previously, it is also important to report back and answer questions when a consultation does not result in an outcome that many people desired.

Real solutions require genuine collaboration between governments and the public. By engaging communities in finding problems but not in finding solutions, governments are taking away the impetus for communities to find local solutions to problems. By

ensuring a more transparent process, governments and community leaders can drastically increase community buy-in for projects and find innovative solutions that focus on creating partnerships for change and not communities that are reliant on top level officials to solve their problems.

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APPENDIX I

Brisbane Declaration

We, representatives of countries and communities, including Indigenous peoples, international institutions, national, state and local governments, academic institutions, and business and civil society organizations from across the world, participating in the International Conference on Engaging Communities, held at Brisbane, Australia, from 15 to 17 August 2005,

1 *Acknowledge* the universal interest and importance of community engagement, founded in the inherent dignity of people and the values, rights and responsibilities of all people expressed in the Universal Declaration on Human Rights.

2 *Welcome* the Seoul Declaration on Participatory and Transparent Governance¹ in its call for all actors² in societies to work together to expand and promote participatory, transparent governance for the benefit of their people.

3 *Underscore* that community engagement is essential to the achievement of the Millennium Declaration including the Millennium Goals for Development.

4 *Express appreciation* for the efforts of the United Nations and its specialised agencies in helping to advance the practice of community engagement and support of greater participatory and transparent governance.

5 *Express appreciation* to the Government of the State of Queensland, to the Indigenous peoples for their welcome to country, and to all the people of Queensland, Australia for hosting the inaugural International Conference on Engaging Communities.

6 *Express appreciation* to the other Australian governments, tertiary institutions and organisations that have sponsored and partnered in the organisation of this gathering, to the staff and volunteers, and to all those who have through participation shared their expertise and experience to build greater understanding, capability and commitment to the practice of community engagement.

Community Engagement

7 *Affirm* that community engagement is critical to effective, transparent and accountable governance in the public, community and private sectors.

8 *Recognise* that community engagement is a two way process:

- by which the aspirations, concerns, needs and values of citizens and communities are incorporated at all levels and in all sectors in policy development, planning, decision-making, service delivery and assessment; and
- by which governments and other business and civil society organisations involve citizens, clients, communities and other stakeholders in these processes.

¹ The Seoul Declaration on Participatory and Transparent Governance made at the Sixth Global Forum on Reinventing Government at Seoul, Republic of Korea, 24-27 May 2005.

² The 'community' or all 'actors in society' are all those who are potentially affected by or have an interest in an issue, decision, service delivery or evaluation, and include government, businesses, trade unions, civil society organisations, non-Government organisations and individual citizens.

- 9 *Affirm* that effective engagement generates better decisions, delivering sustainable economic, environmental, social and cultural benefits.
- 10 *Also recognise* that effective community engagement enables the free and full development of human potential, fosters relationships based on mutual understanding, trust and respect, facilitates the sharing of responsibilities, and creates more inclusive and sustainable communities.
- 11 *Further recognise* that meaningful community engagement seeks to address barriers and build the capacity and confidence of people to participate in, and negotiate and partner with, institutions that affect their lives, in particular those previously excluded or disenfranchised.
- 12 *Further recognise* that inclusive engagement requires that Indigenous peoples and the poor and marginalized, are adequately resourced to participate meaningfully in the broader community and that they have a stake in the outcome and benefit equitably as a result of being involved.
- 13 *Endorse* the core principles of integrity, inclusion, deliberation and influence in community engagement:
 - Integrity – when there is openness and honesty about the scope and purpose of engagement;
 - Inclusion - when there is an opportunity for a diverse range of values and perspectives to be freely and fairly expressed and heard;
 - Deliberation – when there is sufficient and credible information for dialogue, choice and decisions, and when there is space to weigh options, develop common understandings and to appreciate respective roles and responsibilities;
 - Influence – when people have input in designing how they participate, when policies and services reflect their involvement and when their impact is apparent.
- 14 *Recognise* the availability of a wide range of methods and technologies, including new and emerging tools associated with the internet, to facilitate appropriate and effective community engagement.
- 15 *Affirm* the value of education, ongoing monitoring and evaluation, and knowledge sharing about active citizenship and community engagement processes and outcomes.
- 16 *Draw attention* to the materials and recommendations of the specialized panels and workshops which supplement this Declaration.

Next steps

The participants from all over the world at this conference:

1. *Request* the Host Country to bring to the attention of the General Assembly of the United Nations the Declaration of this inaugural International Conference on Engaging Communities so that it may provide leadership globally for its promotion and implementation.

2. *Further call on* international institutions as well as national, provincial and local governments to give effect to the values and principles of this Declaration.
3. *Express* support for more dialogue between international institutions and others with the people of the world about issues of global interest, and the availability of digital and other means to support such interaction.
4. *Encourage* the tertiary sector and other public and professional organisations to facilitate research and teaching, policy and practice development, organizational development, evaluation and networking to sustain the learnings and connections created at this inaugural International Conference on Engaging Communities.
5. *Further encourage* the private sector and civil society organisations to implement practical and meaningful ways to be responsive to, representative of, and enabling of the participation of citizens, clients, communities.
6. *Note* with appreciation the willingness of the Queensland Government to support knowledge-sharing and capacity-building for community engagement and to be involved in the follow-up to this Conference.
7. *Request* the United Nations, building on the success and legacies of this Conference, to assist countries and communities to foster effective community engagement practices by supporting research and training, and documenting successful outcomes and disseminating these widely.

APPENDIX II: List of All Recommendations from Cases in the Document

RECOMMENDATIONS BASED ON PAST EXPERIENCES

Method

- Partner with local organisations to reduce time and resources spent on engagement processes.
- Make use of community leaders' understandings of their communities/regions.
- Use local facilities and make use of events that are popular and are well attended.
- Partnerships are vital in areas/regions where resources are scarce.
- Provide feedback and opportunities for dialogue in order to allow unpopular decisions to be understood and respected
- Provide per diems for transportation and accommodations if participants are coming from far away.
- Provide participants with an accurate understanding of how their input will affect policy or decisions.
- Set realistic goals of engagement and plan of who to engage and how.
- Use appropriate and neutral facilitation methods and processes.

Structure

- Use informal structures and methods to get the best results. For example, “kitchen table” discussions and having informal conversations in an everyday setting may make people feel more at ease and comfortable in voicing their opinions.
- Work in small, informal groups rather than large, formal group settings. This is especially important in small rural communities where people might be weary of outsiders coming in or might be afraid of expressing their ideas in a setting where their neighbours could be against them.
- Develop/make use of personal connections. People in rural communities may be more comfortable talking to people they know or people they have a connection with. However, for some issues, they might prefer to talk with an “outsider” but would prefer a more personal and personable setting.
- Provide follow-up to engagement sessions to allow for feedback or to explain how a policy decision was made.

Timing

- “Outsiders” or consultants should spend time in the town and introduce themselves in different contexts.
- Engage with people earlier rather than later in the process.
-
- Understand that an issue might be more sensitive at some times than others.
- Be aware of what else is going on in the area/region that could affect an engagement event or people’s reaction to the engagement process.
- Do engagement processes at different times of the day and more than once to be able to reach different population groups.

Capacity-Building

- Contact people personally to show them that their opinions are valued and to increase their own confidence in their own ideas.

- Structure engagement activities to maximize participant growth in skills, experiences and attachment to the region
- Work with communities to explain how policies will affect the area: people will engage if they have a vested interest.
- Ensure the level of engagement is appropriate for the issue.
- Prioritize succession planning and capacity development for community leaders.

Recommendations for NL arising from the case of Scotland:

- Implement a common definition of what community engagement means for Newfoundland and Labrador.
- Select key principles for all those involved in' community engagement within Newfoundland and Labrador to implement these processes equally and equitably across the province.
- Invest in meaningful capacity building programs to increase community engagement skills for leaders in communities.
- Evaluate community engagement programs using participatory evaluation techniques.
- Spend the necessary time and resources for community engagement and evaluate what is currently being done.

Recommendations for NL arising from the case of Queensland, Australia:

- Coordinate a province-wide approach to community engagement.
- Ensure that rural communities and regions have skills necessary to tackle community engagement.
- Reach out to unengaged and disengaged groups through partnerships.
- Use different approaches and allow enough time and resources for engagement activities.

Recommendations for NL arising from the Annenberg Institute's Case:

- Develop long-term relations with local organizations.
- Value all citizens, their experiences and their value in decision-making processes.
- Acknowledge that citizens are valued,
- Frame issues in ways so citizens can understand why they are important and they should care.

Recommendations for NL arising from the Durban case:

- Use online technology and social media to get citizens involved in cost-effective, time saving ways.
- Use facilitators to explain the technology and the process to citizens.
- Use clear and specific instructions to explain technology.

Recommendations for NL arising from the Telecentre Movement in the Pacific:

- Use community radio and telecentres to connect remote rural areas that otherwise might feel isolated from each other.
- Use technology to engage with citizens of rural and remote communities, without having to require them to travel.

Recommendations for NL arising from the Birmingham City Council case:

- Websites can be a useful way for citizens to get access to information. However, website design is crucial.
- Information should be re-organized to fit the need of citizens and not necessarily reflect existent government departments.

Recommendations for NL arising from Candy Chan case:

- Use strategic design in public areas as a way to increase engagement.
- Design innovative stickers, posters and pamphlets to distribute information and gather the views of citizens in a creative way.

Recommendations for NL arising from the Digital Storytelling case:

- Build the cultural capacity and pride of communities by sharing stories and other cultural resources through multimedia, photography and video.

Recommendations for NL arising from the case of Music and Engagment:

- Create a sense of community pride and youth spirit by partnering local artists with schools.

Recommendations for NL arising from the Photovoice case:

- Use participatory research methods to interact with youth and/or traditionally marginalized community groups, in order to break down barriers to participation.
- Engage youth by allowing them to express themselves through photography and other arts-based techniques.
- Use participatory research methods to interact with youth and/or traditionally marginalized community groups, in order to break down barriers to participation.
- Engage youth by allowing them to express themselves through photography and other arts-based techniques.

Recommendations for NL arising from the Community Partnership for Protecting Children (CPPC) case in Portland, Maine.

- Promote partnerships between community organisations and the public to create more effective service and program delivery.
- Use different techniques and focus groups to evaluate current programs to ensure a wide variety of ideas are taken into account at various times and places.
-

Recommendations for NL arising from : Living Room Meetings and Brownfields Development in San Diego, California

- Use well-trained facilitators to assist in moving the dialogue forward.
- Incorporate personal and informal venues in engagement processes and opportunities for frequent feedback rather than “one-off” engagement activities.
- Use “Living Room” meetings as informal ways to involve young families without having to get them to travel with young children.

Recommendations for NL arising from the Learning Circles for Low Income Families in Canada case:

- Provide opportunities (such as learning circles) and spaces for people living in poverty to come together, and name, explore, and address issues.
- Create a range of shared community spaces, including gathering places (e.g. internet cafes), artistic places or “cultural sanctuaries,,” recreation places

(including lower priced recreation centers, access to local schools in summer, and bike lanes), green space and community gardens (with sheds and bathrooms), and places for children (e.g. play days).

- Ensure ongoing supportive community structures for advocacy as well - agencies that “work for people” and shift from “policing and judging to supporting.”

Recommendations for NL arising from the Case of Centre of Excellence for Youth Excellence:

- Understand the initiating and sustaining factors as well as barriers for youth engagement.
- Design youth engagement activities that include youth in the organizing committee and give them a level of shared responsibility.
- Value the opinions of youth and work with them to understand their needs and realities.
- Do not engage in non-engagement practices which further increase the apathy among youth and makes future engagements less likely to succeed.
- Take the time to invest resources and use different methods to approach and engage with youth of different ages.
- Recognize that “youth” is a broad category. Different techniques will be necessary to approach youth of different ages and backgrounds.
- Partner with organisations such as school, colleges and youth centres and go to where youth gather.

Recommendations for NL arising from Toronto Kidsviews:

- Tailor engagement activities to youth and design them to cater to their interests and methods of self-expression.
- Partner with organisations and schools to reach a wider youth audience.
- Create curriculum that corresponds to certain modules that are being taught in schools at different grade levels, allowing for classroom and local knowledge to be cross-referenced making policy development more real for youth.

Recommendations for NL arising from the Snakes and Ladders Game:

- Have young people create games for themselves and their peers, in order to allow them to reflect on life experiences and to allow different groups of youth to learn about each other’s experiences in a non-threatening environment.

APPENDIX III: List of Community Engagement Methods Identified by the Rural Secretariat Planners

1. **Meeting on their turf:** Conducting informal interviews with a targeted audience in locations where they normally meet

Targeted audience: Community leaders, community developers, researchers, or politicians

Those not accommodated: Anyone who is not a part of the targeted group

Advantages	Possible Limitations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishes a comfortable and open atmosphere in familiar settings • Supports a free-flowing discussion • Reduces cost • Reduces logistical organization requirements but and still produces desired information • Reduces time wasted by those not central to the discussion theme • Provokes and generates new ideas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lowers group size • Challenges data validity • Encourages group think; members of a group often think similarly so how do you access opposing views? • Tends to overshadow views of other “stakeholders” • Attracts grand standing • Gets sidetracked to other topics

2. **Learning event:** Hosting a learning event to build organizational or community capacity

Targeted audience: Existing organizations and community members and/or groups who want to learn and to whom you are trying to encourage greater involvement

Advantages	Possible Limitations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthens member’s understanding of new tools • Increases learning and cross-organization dialogue • Demonstrates a path to action • Increases knowledge in community & instills confidence to move forward • Builds networking • Reinforces relationships • Gives opportunity for those who are interested but have no means to communicate on this topic. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involves a time commitment • Requires financial backing • Necessitates facilitation knowledge and skill • Needs credible and knowledgeable instructor/ guest speaker • Limits number of participants per event • Does not guarantee change • Lacks interaction

3. Establishing formal groups with set mandates: Examples are Community Advisory Councils, or Regional Councils

Targeted audience: An appointed or elected group with broad geographic and interest representation for long-term input on a particular topic or issue

Those not accommodated: Non-appointees

Advantages	Possible Limitations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides an informed group • Knows the discussion topic • Accesses opinion easily • Has common interests/goals • Builds knowledge/skill to solve complex problems • Helps to form external partnerships • Can include many people from different regions • Looks at long term plans/engagement, structured to be able to organize this • Provides established working groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Includes selected individuals • Builds biases • Misses valuable input from people not affiliated with a group • Can encourage group think • Skewed from public opinion • Lacks ability to solve complex issues that require more diverse representation/multiple partners. • Used as a buffer between organization and public

4. Drama, role playing: Often used to increase understanding of an issue; often used to demonstrate emotions

Targeted audience: Those involved in the issue or those that can influence the issue

Advantages	Possible Limitations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is interactive • Crosses barriers (e.g. language, culture, disability) • Highlights complex issues in a simple easy to understand manner • Provides a visual message • Opens dialogue that may have never been considered otherwise • Keeps participants engaged • Involves people at an emotional level and can gain long-term commitment • Creates interest • Is creative • Makes a longer impression on participants • Provides a tactile learning style • Leads to action 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can limit personal experience • Places participants outside their comfort zone • Is a complicated process • Creates difficulties in capturing information • Is time consuming • Needs skilled leadership • Viewed as academically soft compared to traditional approaches • Is awkward for some participants

5. **Personal Interviews:** Used by researchers and reporters

Targeted audience: Knowledgeable people, experts in the field, and people well experienced with the issue

Advantages	Possible Limitations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides individual responses • Allows participants to express opinions in their comfort zone • Permits the use of open ended questions • Encourages in-depth discussions • Collects expert opinions • Customizes interviews • Allows specific questions for specific people/key topics • Collects multiple perspectives/stories • Documents substantial information on the topic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Biased • Encourages participation • Consumes time • Increases cost • Challenges standardization as interviewer may: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ change questions mid-stream ○ not think of questions pertinent to the time ○ not ask the right questions ○ participant may not respond well to answers on the spot • Can use multiple interviewers and approaches • Is not anonymous; people may not provide their true views/opinions • Draws conclusions from a limited number of respondents; difficult to predict trends • Requires substantial data analysis

6. **Panel Public Consultation:** This approach is often used by different levels of government; for example, budget consultations.

Targeted audience: General public, municipal and regional organizations, and vested interest groups

Those not accommodated: Those that are apathetic, are unable to travel, have low literacy, or are challenged by the date or time of day consultation is offered; the silent majority

Advantages	Possible Limitations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gathers a large number of opinions • Provides opportunity to speak/present to senior gov't officials/ministers • Creates positive optics; gives the impression that officials are listening • Is easy for people; there is no pressure to speak • Is familiar to many 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does not guarantee knowledgeable participants • Limits two-way dialogue/discussion • Requires participants to speak their opinions in front of everyone • Limits engagement • Lacks accountability; politicians can change their views to save face • Seems to provide lip-service only • Encourages ranting • Allows vested interest groups to dominate • Provides little or no feedback to participants on their input • Creates competition between participants • Encourages wish listing

7. **Modified version- 21st Century Town Hall Meeting:** This approach is often used by political parties, unions, communities, provincial or regional organizations, planners.

Targeted audience: Community and stakeholder representatives

Those not accommodated: Ideally no one; gaps can be identified if representative does not attend then utilize another process to reach that identified gap.

Advantages	Possible Limitations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Permits real time discussions • Creates energy and enthusiasm as the event is big/exciting/new and different • Is democratic • Offers multitude of ideas/solutions • Allows for every participant to have their say • Shares discussions points/opinions of many in real time • Provides a proven/tried methodology • Is very time efficient • Is interactive, inclusive, participatory • Covers many topics in a short period • Affects attitudes on engagement process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increases time and effort to select the right questions • May not effect change; representatives are a relatively small number of the community affected • Increases difficulty in attracting participants; process requires representative participation • Limits theming to 10 which may miss an important point • Constrains success by capacity of facilitators and theme teams • Has time constraints • Is expensive • Needs access to technology

8. **Surveys/Questionnaires:** Used by researchers, organizations, and all levels of government

Targeted audience: Provides a broad net that can target stakeholders of any topic

Those not accommodated: Individuals with low literacy, lack of interest, or access to technology, depending on distribution methods used

Advantages	Possible Limitations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creates a large amount of data in a short time period • Produces a standardized format; same questions are asked to all • Permits broad distribution • Is inexpensive compared to other methods • Is a familiar/known tool • Provides flexibility; people can complete at their convenience • Simplifies communications • Allows anonymity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Permits no discussion • Allows no interaction • Often provides low response rates; difficult to get people to participate • Requires skilled design to obtain useful responses • Needs substantial time to analyze data • Perceived as “truth” but extremely difficult to eliminate all bias in design and interpretation • Raises questions about reliability and validity • Is not taken seriously by some

9. **Small Group/Kitchen Table Discussions:** Often used by grassroots leaders and politicians

Targeted audience: Typical audience is older adults

Those not accommodated: People in the community who are less well known

Advantages	Possible Limitations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improves comfort level • Promotes open discussion • Engages hard to reach individuals • Reduces intimidation • Stimulates closer conversations • Creates a trusting atmosphere • Provides informal conversation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risks being sidetracked or dominated by one or two people • Reduces perception of being taken seriously or being of value • Restricts number of participants; it is difficult to engage large numbers • Requires substantial time • Opens the possibility of being one sided without all pertinent attendees • Influences decision making by small number of people • Challenges validity when obtaining from a small sample

10. **Printed or Electronic documentation:** Can be in the form of presentations, news articles, or brochures

Targeted audience: General public not literacy challenged

Those not accommodated: Literacy challenged individuals

Advantages	Possible Limitations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Produces well-considered materials • Increases feelings of accomplishment and satisfaction • Reaches a large audience • Presents alternate views and options • Is a familiar technology/tool • Lasts longer and can be accessed more than once • Is based on fact/research • Provides content to stimulate more in-depth communications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attracts the already decided • Produces long and boring documents • Risks over-simplifying issues • Presents biased views • Presents one-sided opinions • Is not participatory • Is costly and few may read it • Outdates quickly

11. Multiple Interactive Engagements: Very few organizations use this approach since it requires building engagements from earlier events.

Targeted audience: Generally start with small groups and then involve larger audiences

Advantages	Possible Limitations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Able to collect theme ideas • Builds upon previous sessions • Keeps people interested • Increases participant comfort levels as they become familiar with sessions • Increases possibility of resolving issue • Verifies/confirms and challenges recommendations/actions/solutions • Tackles complex issues • Increases flexibility to make adjustments/ improve recommendations as engagements proceed • Delves deeper into previously discussed topics • Builds momentum towards action • Allows people to learn new ideas and reflect how that impacts lives/values 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is very time consuming • Requires a consistency in people participating • Is expensive • Requires HR support • Places high demand on organizations • Can be emotional • Requires tenacity • Creates a reluctance to begin “endless” meetings/talking

12. Rallies/Walks/Marches:

Advantages	Possible Limitations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourages informal conversations • Engages large numbers of people • Is focused • Is democratic • Changes from grassroots' influence • Draws public and government attention to issues • Influences change • Empowers participants • Stimulates interest; participants encounter many different opinions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Depends on research • Is prejudiced • Fosters self-interest

13. Community Radio/TV/Video: Used by rural societies all around NL.

Targeted audience: General public

Those not accommodated: Citizens who chose not to listen; self-selection

Advantages	Possible Limitations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivers key points to many people • Stimulates people to ask questions • Shares community stories • Identifies community issues • Generates a feeling of fun and novelty • Encourages inclusivity • Builds on-going participation through call-ins, panel discussions and interviews • Engages different people in the community besides usual participants • Increases citizens' sense of pride • Opens two-way communications through call-ins/ interviews/ questions • Encourages openness when one is visible to the audience • Creates a lasting influence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Causes confusion • Accommodates rants • Limits communications if using one directional flow of information for TV or video • Offers the audience one aspect of the story • Presents the danger of airing controversial opinions and non-truths • Is time consuming • Intimidates some participants • Presents an opportunity for anything to go wrong; it's live radio

14. **Asset Mapping:** Identifying the physical, social, cultural and environmental assets of a community or organization

Targeted audience: Well-rounded representative groups

Advantages	Possible Limitations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develops capacity • Builds unity and attitude • Allows groups to work with what they have • Is accessible to all • Captures various viewpoints • Provides a positive approach • Maps the physical, social and environmental aspects of a community • Helps people recognize the value of their assets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Needs knowledgeable participants • Provides a venue to grand stand • Requires managing conflict • Encourages participants to view situation through rose coloured glasses • Depends on groups' ability to plan when determining asset usage • Is difficult to map social/quality data • Requires an understanding of assets

15. **Social Media- Facebook, Twitter:** This approach is best used when incorporated with other processes or marketing events.

Targeted audience: Generally people think of a younger cliental; however, this demographic is shifting upward.

Those not accommodated: Individuals without access or the understanding of technology

Advantages	Possible Limitations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low cost • Wide reach • Quick/instant response time • Attractive to youth and others • Minimizes travel • Accessible to just about everyone 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Challenges validity of information • Limits access for some • Questions accuracy • Causes controversy • Attracts the same people • Creates confusion if conflicting or too much information is circulated • Raises confidentiality issues

16. **Focus Groups:** Researchers and consultants often strategically select groups to contact participants. It requires a skilled facilitator who understands the issue well.

Targeted audience: Knowledgeable individuals

Those not accommodated: Persons not well known

Advantages	Possible Limitations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has a strong topic focus • Selects participants • Focuses on specific topics • Stimulates participants to generate new ideas from others input • Collects data manageably • Allows in-depth discussion on details • Engages people most knowledgeable about topic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is narrow in scope and is not open to other topics • Encourages group think • Is not representative of larger community • Is biased by presenter/consultant • Influences how other member think • Needs a topic which is a focus of interest

17. **Citizens Jury:**

Advantages	Possible Limitations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is different/interesting and can be used as an alternate approach • Increases participatory engagement on key social/environmental/etc. issues • Is time/topic specific • Permits people to make informed recommendations • Requires careful expert selection • Disbands after issue is resolved • Takes the time that's necessary to resolve the issue 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is binding • Uses a small group • Is time consuming • Needs qualified facilitators • Is costly

18. Written Submissions:

Advantages	Possible Limitations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presents an argument • Backs up claims that change is needed in a particular situation • Is most successful when used with other methods; e.g. rallies and petitions • Is lasting; includes historical data • Provide key insights to complicated issues • Collects perspectives of certain groups • Provides opinion without outside influence • Provides a voice when difficult to present in person • Requires a response since document is a written record 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May not contain valid information • Is not interactive • Lacks two-way discussion • Is time consuming to produce; often with limited gain • Reduces the opportunity to clarify points/ask questions/fully understand the background • Encourages an alternate form of grand standing • Is biased • Is ignored and becomes meaningless • Necessitates a high quality of writing

19. Traditional Town Hall Meetings: This is considered a good approach if done well as people can develop the “habit” of attending over time.

Advantages	Possible Limitations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourages everyone to attend • Permits multiple perspectives • Involves grassroots organizations • Engages those interested in the topic • Ensures inclusivity • Is a familiar concept • Builds momentum • Supports democratic principles and is considered by some to be a necessary community process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risks of grand standing • Is time consuming • Lacks a new ideas • Becomes “bitch” session • Intimidates some participants • Attracts the same persons • Creates division within community • Opens opportunity for hostility • Turns-off potential contributors • Tends to follow majority rules- not effective if room is divided

20. Submitted Petitions:

Advantages	Possible Limitations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allows lots of people to contribute • Raises awareness about an important community issue • Gathers support with little effort in a short period of time • Builds considerable influence if large number of names are submitted • Provides low impact on decision makers • Opens up discussions • Supports democratic process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides no opportunity for dialogue • Is not well received by government • Applies pressure for people sign; sometimes persons sign to get rid of the individual • Allows compliancy -People just sign for the sake of signing • Wastes people's time as petitions are easily ignored • Presents one point of view • Questions credibility • Needs answers to questions but doesn't allow the public to become informed

21. Major Community Event: for example, 9/11 or Come Home Year

Advantages	Possible Limitations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accesses large groups of people of all ages • Promotes inclusiveness • Identifies issues not previously considered • Builds interest and enthusiasm • Attracts outliers; that is, those who may not typically participate • Tolerates different views • Provides opportunities to discuss varied topics • Builds community spirit • Rallies people to gain support for further action • Creates community pride • Empowers residents to support initiative 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lacks focus • Provides no interactive purpose • Lacks intent or purpose • Generates a sense of fun but doesn't identify an issue or action • Involves others in planning • Makes it difficult to collect information from participants

22. Open Space without an agenda:

Advantages	Possible Limitations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is Inclusive • Covers any topic • Is open to all • Promotes flexibility • Is creative • Explores topics of interest for participants • Empowers group • Allows key themes to emerge • Evolves to meet needs of participants • Requires little organizing for convenor • Addresses participant needs in a timely manner 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Able to drift off topic • Incurs expensive logistics; traveling to the same place requires financial and time commitments • Allows grand standing • Lacks limits which can result in nothing being decided • Attracts the usual suspects; can be dominated by knuckle-heads • Is difficult to focus or reach agreement • Open to rambling/unfocused conversations • Presents challenges to collect opinions/information

23. Hanging around where people collect naturally: For example, a grocery store, pool hall or Tim Hortons

Advantages	Possible Limitations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides an informal setting where people feel comfortable • Allows easy access • Is not structured • Gathers ideas from target group well • Gives a strong understanding of where people are coming/speaking from • Generates random topics otherwise not considered • Generates themes and you can learn what's a "hot" issue • Encourages grassroots involvement and is not intimidating 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limits attendance to people who are at those places • May not discuss what the researcher is interested in • Requires a flexible and focused researcher • Takes time • Intimidates some • Makes others feel uncomfortable • Requires very skilled interviewer