

Rural Secretariat

and

Strategic Social Plan

Annual Report

April, 2003 - March, 2004

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OVERVIEW OF THE RURAL SECRETARIAT

THE RURAL SECRETARIAT

The Rural Secretariat was established in February 2004. This Annual Report covers an 11 month period of implementation of the Strategic Social Plan as well as the initial establishment of the Rural Secretariat. The current vision, values, structure and program areas reflect those developed for the Strategic Social Plan (SSP). The year 2004-2005 will be a transition year to allow for the full development of the Rural Secretariat.

During the 2003-04 year, the Rural Secretariat had up to 18 staff: 1 ADM (permanent position), 7 contractual staff in the Confederation Building and 10 contractual staff in the six SSP Regions. Staff provided overall direction and support for the implementation of the SSP, including internal and external communications, budget preparation and monitoring, general administration and operations support, departmental liaison, liaison with and support for the SSP Regional Steering Committees, research coordination, coordination of activities related to the social audit, and support for the work of the Premier's Council.

OVERVIEW OF THE STRATEGIC SOCIAL PLAN

In 1998, Government approved a five year Strategic Social Plan for the Province: People Partners and Prosperity. The Strategic Social Plan (SSP) became government's umbrella policy for social development initiatives. The SSP provides a long-term perspective and does not deal with specific changes to individual programs and services.

VISION

The Strategic Social Plan states:

“Our vision for Newfoundland and Labrador is of a healthy, educated, distinctive, self-reliant and prosperous people living in vibrant, supportive communities within sustainable regions.”

VALUES

The Strategic Social Plan is guided by the following values:

Self-reliance Equity Social justice
Collaboration Fairness

GOALS

The Plan's broad, long-term social development goals for the Province include:

1. Vibrant communities and regions in which people actively participate in their collective well-being.
2. Sustainable regions based on strategic investment in individuals, families and communities.
3. Self-reliant, healthy, educated individuals and families living in safe, nurturing communities.
4. Integrated and evidence-based policy development and monitoring as the foundation for the design, delivery and evaluation of social development programs and services.

LINES OF BUSINESS

1. The SSP promotes and fosters the linking of social and economic development; investing in people; prevention/early intervention; co-ordinated, client-centered service delivery; partnerships; and community capacity building.
2. SSP staff work with departments, boards and partners to ensure that policies, programs and services are coordinated and that there is no duplication in service.
3. While the SSP is not responsible for the provision of programs or services, each of the SSP Regional Steering Committees receives annual implementation funding. This funding supports the implementation of the SSP through local projects and initiatives.
4. The SSP committed Government to complete a Social Audit by the end of 2003. During 2003-2004, work was completed on developing key social and economic indicators and an external evaluation of the impacts of the SSP on the way government does business.

SHARED COMMITMENTS

The primary clients for the Strategic Social Plan are the people and communities of the province. Stakeholders to the Plan include government departments, regional committees and the Premier's Council on Social Development.

Throughout 2003, the Strategic Social Plan Office worked with internal and external partners to develop a common understanding and commitment to priorities e.g. what social and economic indicators did individuals, organizations and agencies most want to see changed in five years.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS AND PRIORITIES

The Strategic Social Plan was intended to be a process that would significantly impact the way in which government conducted its business. The benefit of linking social and economic development was clear, as was the value of having regional perspectives, the need for more effective partnerships both internally and externally, and the need for much more horizontal policy and program design.

PARTNERSHIP DEVELOPMENT - INTERNAL

Evidence of the implementation of the vision and principles of the Strategic Social Plan within government can be seen through several initiatives including the following:

- Model for the Coordination of Services to Children (Education, HCS, HRLE, Justice)
- Inter-Departmental Committee on Supportive Housing (Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation, HCS, HRLE, Justice)
- Violence Prevention Initiative
- Consultative approach to the review and redesign of Income Support and Employment legislation in HRLE
- Inter-Departmental Committee for the development of a labour market strategy
- Development and implementation of the Strategic Health Plan
- Inter-Departmental support for the development of key social and economic indicators for the Province
- Inter-Departmental Committee on Gambling
- Inter-Departmental Committee on Family Breakup, Income Support and Social Housing.

PARTNERSHIP DEVELOPMENT - EXTERNAL

The province is divided into six SSP regions: Northeast Avalon, Avalon, Eastern, Central, Cormack-Grenfell and Labrador. Implementation in each region is supported by a Regional Planner who works with a Regional SSP Steering Committee. Committees consist of representatives from health, education and economic zone boards, as well as representatives of federal, provincial and municipal governments and other agency partners. Each activity undertaken at the SSP Committee level represents a collection of partners combining efforts, resources and skills to address particular problems. All activities are focused on increasing understanding and evidence in particular areas or building the capacity of communities.

LABRADOR SSP REGION

The Labrador SSP Committee has focused on four priority areas. Within each area several partners have been involved in the various activities.

Recreation

Lead agents: Inuit Peoples Agreement, Tourism Culture and Recreation, Labrador and Aboriginal Affairs, HRSD, SSP, Mushuau Innu Band, Inuit Municipal Councils, Community Mobilization Program, Community Services Council, Labrador Métis Nation, Economic zones, Grenfell Regional Health Services, Health Labrador Corp., Labrador Literacy and Action Network, Canadian Cancer Society, Hospital Auxiliary and others.

- **The Torngat Recreation Commission** - a partnership between all six communities on the north coast of Labrador has resulted in over 300 individuals accessing either a travel subsidy or training such as coaching clinics, dealing with conflict, communications, etc.
- **The Healthy Communities Project** in southern Labrador sponsored two joint planning sessions and a variety of workshops designed to increase skills of over 60 individuals in managing recreation programs in communities.
- **The Central Labrador Volunteer Network** successfully hosted a volunteer appreciation week which acknowledged the contribution of over 100 volunteers and provided opportunities for volunteer groups to jointly learn new skills and access training.

- **Labrador Youth Online** continued to promote the successes of youth in the Labrador region and provide information to youth. Over 15,000 internet hits were recorded.

Human Development/Recruitment and Retention

Lead agents: School District 1, Department of Education, Health Labrador Corp, Health Canada, Labrador Inuit Health Commission, Labrador Inuit Association, College of North Atlantic, Memorial University, Labrador Institute, Department of Human, Resources, Labour and Employment, SSP, Grenfell Regional Health Services, HRSD.

- A **Baseline Report on Human Development** was completed, outlining the issues pertaining to four life cycle stages (early childhood development, secondary education, post-secondary education and employment) and the challenges that Labradorians encounter as they progress through these stages.
- Preliminary work began on developing a strategy to assist individuals and families to deal with **Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder**.
- **Integrated Nursing Access Program** – Curriculum was developed and funding secured for an innovative, culturally relevant Bachelor of Nursing Program to help address nursing shortages in Inuit communities. The program is to be delivered starting in January 2005.

Health

Lead agents: RCMP, Innu and Inuit Health Commissions, SSP, Health Canada, Health Labrador Corp., Grenfell Regional Health Services

- Two **White Stone Suicide Prevention Training Courses** were held, one for Innu communities and one for Inuit communities. Thirty-three youth educators were trained to deliver suicide prevention workshops.
- **Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST)** was provided to 17 individuals including persons of Innu origin and persons working in the Innu communities of Sheshatshiu and Natuashish.

Community Safety and Security

Lead Agents: Labradorians for Peaceful Communities – Violence Prevention Initiative, Labrador Literacy and Action Network, SSP, Libra House Shelter, RCMP, Community Mobilization Program.

- At a region wide planning session community members decided to host a series of **information based video conferences** on various programs and legislation (e.g. Roots of Empathy Program, Youth Criminal Justice Act) to increase community awareness of programs and services available in Labrador.

CORMACK-GRENFELL SSP REGION

The Cormack-Grenfell SSP Committee has focused on the following priority areas.

Developing and Retaining Human Resource Capacity and Social Capital

- **The Human Resources Data Collection and Strategy Development Initiative** - is specific to Western and Northern Newfoundland and is designed to provide factual information to support decision making about career education and labor-market strategy development. In partnership with the NL Statistics Agency, surveys were administered to high school, post secondary, adult basic education and expatriate Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. Industry sector consultations were also completed. Results will be analyzed and distributed and will inform strategy development in 2004-05. *Lead Agents: Labor Market Development Agreement, Human Resources and Skills Development Canada, Dept. of Innovation, Trade and Rural Development, College of the North Atlantic, School Districts 2, 3 and 4, Dept. of Human Resources, Labor and Employment, and the Community Education Network.*
- **The Canadian Manufacturer's and Exporters (CME) Increasing Awareness of Skilled Trades Initiative** - The CME has identified that a major shortage of skilled trades persons will exist in this province within 10 years. A partnership was formed to determine junior high school (Grade 7 and 8) students' awareness of skilled trades and career choices. Ten interactive centers with labor market information on skilled trades, which were identified as pertinent to this region, were developed and pre and post tested with 19 schools in this region. Results will be available in late 2004. *Lead Agents: Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters Association, Women in Resource Development Cormack-Trails School District*

(#4), College of the North Atlantic, Long Range Regional Economic Zone Board, Marine and Mountain Zone Corporation, Depts. of Youth Services and Postsecondary Education, Innovation, Trade and Rural Development, Human Resources, Labor and Employment and Grenfell College, MUN.

Integrated Policy, Program and Service Delivery

- **A Youth Service Provider Forum** was held in September, 2003. More than 100 service providers for youth ages 14 to 29 attended this 2 day event in Corner Brook. Highlights were the discussions and identification of issues and priorities for youth and youth services as well as presentations about the demographic profile of youth in the region, best practices in providing services from a social and economic perspectives, and career development. *Lead Agents: Health and Community Services Western, Humber YMCA, Department of Human Resources and Employment, Grenfell Regional Health Services, Community Education Network, FINALLY! and Humber Economic Development Corporation and Human Resources Development Canada.*

Building Community Capacity

- In 2003-04, there have been many successful initiatives because of people and groups working together, such as the Volunteer Network, and Caregiver networks in Humber Valley and St. Anthony. A key initiative was **the Positive Images / Social Marketing project** to promote the region and increase awareness of social and economic development. A variety of communication tools were developed resulting in over 100 headlines in local media, such as the **News at DAWN**, a tabloid newspaper and a poster contest for children in Grade 1 and 4 in which over 350 children and 16 schools participated. *Lead Agents: The region's five zone boards, Development Alliance of Western Newfoundland (DAWN), FINALLY! , Grenfell College and the Labor Market Development Agreement/ Human Resources Development Canada.*

Population Health Approach

- The School District 3 Partnering Initiative is a primary prevention initiative directed towards strengthening family, school and community relationships and providing children and families with a positive start in the school system. A Master of Social Work student from The School of Social Work, Memorial University identified the conditions for effective social work practice within a school setting. Based on these findings, a one year school social work position

was introduced to determine the feasibility of establishing preventative school social work positions within the elementary school system. This position is supported by the Securing Our Future initiative with the Community Mobilization Program, National Crime Prevention Strategy, and Justice Canada.

- Another Master of Social Work student from the Maritime School of Social Work at Dalhousie University addressed gaps in service delivery with the re-organization of services between Health and Community Services and Human Resources and Employment. The findings from this work contributed to the development of a client liaison position and the subsequent identification of 2 pilot sites to introduce this position for the purpose of strengthening referral networks and linkages between families, communities and service providers.

Lead Agents: Health and Community Services Western, Human Resources, Labor and Employment, and the Humber Economic Development Board, School District 3, C.C.Loughlin Elementary School, and St. James All Grade School.

CENTRAL SSP REGION

The goals of the Central Region Steering Committee for the SSP are to:

- Link social and economic development
- Coordinate service delivery
- Encourage and build partnerships to address regional needs
- Involve communities in the SSP and promote community growth and well-being.

For 2003-2004, SSP Central focused on the following priorities:

Early Childhood Development

- An **Early Childhood Development (ECD) Project** was established, to link regional initiatives with appropriate research, promote early childhood programs and services to target groups, improve referrals to pre-natal services, and promote collaboration and coordination between regional ECD stakeholders. A regional profile of young children and families is being compiled, and an inventory of services developed. An ECD Forum was held in June 2003 and a follow-up forum is planned for Fall 2004. *Lead Agents: Dept of Health and Community Services, Health and Community Services Central, Central*

East and West Health Institutions Boards, Family Resource Centres Association, Dept of Human Resources Labour and Employment, Districts 5 and 6 School Boards.

- A **Specialized Services Research Project** was undertaken, to promote seamless service delivery between health and education agencies in Central NL, for children with speech-language needs. Recommendations were made on ways to improve service delivery and reduce waiting lists. Specific recommendations have been addressed by individual agencies. Follow-up activities are now being planned for 2004-2005, to improve cross-sector screening procedures, communications and transfers, and to improve awareness of parents and others about speech language services and early intervention. *Lead Agents: Districts 5 and 6 School Boards, Central East and Central West Health Boards, Health and Community Services Central*

Youth

- An **After-school Bussing Pilot Project** was introduced in four areas in response to concerns expressed during community consultations about the lack of transportation in rural areas for youth, and their inability to participate in extracurricular activities at schools. Preliminary results indicate that students take advantage of the extra bussing, access homework assistance and other supports to improve their grades, and enable those schools to offer more recreational and community-based programs in under-serviced areas. *Lead Agents: Strategic Social Plan, Depts. of Human Resources Labour and Employment, Tourism, Culture and Recreation, Health and Community Services, Youth Services and Postsecondary Education.*
- A **Student Transition/Career Education Pilot Project** was introduced in two Central Region schools in September 2003, to enhance and support career-planning resources for students. Training, development and resources were provided to participating school staff, and the pilot was intended to help youth identify their strengths and interests, potential career paths and possible avenues to help them reach their goals. An evaluation will be completed in Fall 2004. *Lead Agents: College of the North Atlantic, Districts 5 and 6 School Boards, Dept. of Human Resources Labour and Employment, Human Resources and Skills Development Canada, Centre for Distance Learning and Innovation, and pilot schools: Exploits Valley Greenwood – Grand Falls-Windsor and Lewisporte Collegiate.*

Community Capacity Building

- The **Joining Forces Human Resources Project** continued with Phase II from September 2003 to June 2004, based on research and recommendations from Phase I about ways to improve recruitment and retention practices for professionals in the health and education sectors. Activities included additional research, development of quality of life promotional materials, training and information-sharing. *Lead agents: College of NA, Depts. of HRLE, INTRD, Districts 5 and 6 School Boards, MUN, Health and Community Services Central, Central East and West Health Institutions Boards.*
- **Collaborative planning** with the Community Services Council resulted in the establishment of a Central Region Volunteer Resources Centre (Gander) through CSC, and joint planning for volunteer training activities for 2004-2005.
- A **New World Island (NWI) School Site Development Initiative** was undertaken to plan for the development of a new K-12 school as a community school. Partnerships, funding and in-kind support were successfully pursued for program development to meet the needs of local communities. The school opened in September 2004. *Lead agents: Primary Health Care Initiative, Health and Community Services Central, NWI School, Twillingate-NWI Development Association.*

EASTERN SSP REGION

In June, 2003 the Regional Steering Committee held a strategic planning forum and set priorities for the Eastern SSP Region.

Building and Enhancing Community Capacity

- The **Facilitating Community Partnerships Pilot Initiative** is working with communities in two areas - Placentia West on the Burin Peninsula and Musgravetown-Lethbridge on the Bonavista Peninsula. The ultimate intent is to build collaboration among clusters of communities in rural regions to help develop more effective ways of providing services and sharing resources.
- Work includes the establishment of a Senior's Club, a Community Access program site, providing community access to educational resources and doing joint planning for recreation activities.
- *Local Leadership teams: representatives from provincial and municipal governments, health, school and economic boards, youth, seniors and rural development associations*

- A **Regional Volunteer Network** has been developed to help match community organizations and potential volunteers.
- Beginning in April, 2004 individual organizational profiles will be completed for voluntary organizations in the Eastern SSP region and placed in an on-line database “Volunteer Opportunities Eastern” at www.envision.ca. Community-based organizations will subsequently be able to update their own on-line profiles.
- Potential volunteers will see which organizations are in need of volunteers and the particular skills sets that are sought.

Lead Partners: Discovery Regional Development Board, Schooner Regional Development Corporation, Human Resources Skills Development Canada, Health and Community Services Eastern Board and the Community Services Council.

Fostering Life Long Learning

Lead Partners: Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation, Human Resources Skills Development Canada, Neighborhood of Friends Tenant Association, Vista Family Resource Centre, Health and Community Services Eastern Board, Department of Human Resources and Employment.

- Facilitation of new partnerships and funding has occurred to establish a new Family Literacy Centre in Clarendville with outreach to the communities of Swift Current, Little Hearts Ease and Hickman’s Harbour. This Centre will provide support to children and families on issues of early literacy, early childhood programming while building family capacity.
- **Career planning surveys** completed during the Spring of 2003 targeted junior and senior high school students as well as students attending post secondary institutions within the Eastern SSP region. Local school boards, regional economic development boards and the College of the North Atlantic have completed an analysis of the findings and recommendations have been made to the Education Sub-committee for the development of a joint youth career planning strategy for the Eastern Region.
- Facilitation of partners has occurred to help develop planning around early childhood, literacy, a youth career centre in Marystown, and youth mentorship.

Promoting Health and Well-being

Lead Partners: Eastern Region’s Wellness Coalition, Vista School District’s Nutrition Working Group, Regional Safe Schools/Safe Communities Committees.

- **Promoting Healthy Food Choices** - in 2003-2004, the SSP partners in health and education worked together to increase the availability of affordable healthy food choices and a broad range of physical activities in schools.
- **Regional Safe Schools/Safe Communities Committees** – SSP participated in anti-bullying action plans to help reduce violence in schools and in the community.

AVALON SSP REGION

This committee has identified four strategic directions to guide their activities:

Prevention and Early Intervention

- **Early Childhood Development and Literacy** - A comprehensive Regional Profile, developed in August 2003, pulls together an inventory of available services that enhance early childhood development and literacy. *Lead Partners: Eastern School Board, Health and Community Services – Eastern Region, Avalon Health Care Institutions Board, Department of Education, College of the North Atlantic and Family Resource Centers.*
- **Speech Language Pathology** - Regional data have identified unmet need for speech-language pathology services for pre-school children in this region. A Working group has identified challenges and proposed solutions to the Steering Committee. *Lead Partners: Avalon Health Care Institutions Board, Eastern School Board, Human Resources, Labour and Employment, and Health and Community Services – Eastern Region.*

Community Capacity Building/Community Engagement

- A **regional conference** was held in November 2003 to highlight successful community development initiatives and engage community leaders. *Lead Partners: Memorial University, Mariner Resource Opportunities Network, Avalon Gateway Regional Economic Development Inc., Irish Loop Development Board, and Department of Innovation, Trade and Rural Development.*
- A **Communications Plan** was prepared by Perry and Butland Communications in November 2003. *Lead Partners: Department of Innovation, Trade and Rural Development and Irish Loop Development Board.*

Human Resource Development

- Preliminary data compiled on **career development services** identified gaps within the region.
- **Student Debt Forum** – Key stakeholders from Zone 17 were brought together to discuss student debt. A list of recommendations was developed and presented to government agencies and departments for consideration. *Lead Partner: Mariner Resource Opportunities Network.*

Recreation for All

- The long term goal of this initiative is both social and economic - to host an Avalon Games as a way of bringing communities together, building leadership skills and creating economic opportunities. *Lead Partners: Mariner Resource Opportunities Network, Avalon Gateway Regional Economic Development Inc., Irish Loop Development Board, Department of Innovation, Trade and Rural Development, Department of Tourism, Culture and Recreation, Health Canada, Eastern Wellness Coalition, Health and Community Services – Eastern Region, Avalon Health Care Institutions Board, Federation of Municipalities, Eastern School Board and Department of Education.*
- A **regional inventory of recreation infrastructure/capacity** is being completed in partnership with local economic development boards. The inventory will be widely available to communities.

NORTHEAST AVALON SSP REGION

The main focus of work for the Committee has been:

Early Childhood Development

Lead agents: Community Centre Alliance, Janeway Children's Health and Rehabilitation Centre, Dept of Education, Provincial Association of Childcare Administrators, Health and Community Services, St. John's, Avalon East School District, Community Representatives (2), Dept of Health and Community Services, Family and Childcare Connections/Assoc. of Early Childhood Educators, Federation of School Councils, Dept. of Human Resources Labour and Employment, Daybreak Parent Child Centre.

- A **profile of Early Childhood Development (ECD)** is being completed which includes both community and neighbourhood-level data on children aged 0-6 and their families. The profile provides the basis for the forthcoming integrated strategy on ECD for stakeholders in the region which will involve prevention and early intervention approaches.

Poverty

Lead agents: Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation, Salvation Army, Newfoundland and Labrador Statistics Agency, Memorial University, Kids Eat Smart Foundation, Health and Community Services, St. John's, Human Resources Labour and Employment, Women Interested in Successful Employment.

- Similar to the ECD strategy, a **profile of poverty** in this region is being completed which includes both community and neighbourhood data on key well-being indicators, such as income, education and employment. This profile serves as the basis for developing an integrated strategy to address root causes of poverty.

Neighbourhood Data and the Community Accounts

Human Resources and Skills Development Canada, Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation, Health and Community Services, St. John's, Avalon East School District, Capital Coast Development Alliance (Zone 19), Community Centre Alliance.

- The Region has been closely involved with the Community Accounts Team in the development of **neighbourhood-level data** for urban areas of the province. These data form an essential part of the evidence base required for the ECD and Poverty strategies. The ultimate intention is that these data will be included in the Community Accounts (www.communityaccounts.ca).

MEASURING OUR PROGRESS

INDICATORS OF WELL-BEING

A set of core indicators of social and economic well-being has been developed in collaboration with departments and Regional Committees. These indicators are being used to identify priorities and support the development of evidence-based decision-making, and to monitor progress in achieving desired results.

Long term change takes years to achieve. However, evidence indicates that social progress is being made. Benchmark documents available at

<http://www.gov.nl.ca/rural/TOCftgu.asp>

presented a snap-shot of the socio-economic status of the province. Those data showed significant progress in a number of key areas, most notably in health status and education levels. Demographic changes, employment and income levels show less improvement. Overall, rural areas show less positive social and

economic development than urban areas. The indicators also clearly show the direct linkages between education, health status, and employment: employed, educated people are healthier, and educated people have higher incomes.

LEARNING STUDY

In 2003, as part of the Social Audit, an external assessment of whether government had started doing business in a more collaborative way to address social change was conducted. The study concluded that progress has been slower than originally envisioned, but expectations were probably too optimistic. Although the social plan approach was a mere five years old, the SSP was beginning to bring about fundamental changes in the way government conducts business. The Learning Study report was publicly released on February 13, 2004 and is available at www.gov.nl.ca/ssp/learningstudy/default.asp

Some highlights of the report include:

- Some community partners report they are seeing more opportunities for collaboration and greater respect for process.
- Social and economic development activities are starting to be integrated, especially at the regional level.
- Unique solutions to regional and community issues are being identified. Changes achieved to date are remarkable, given the issues are complex, deeply rooted and multi-generational.
- Achievements are being made with prevention and early intervention goals.
- All interviewees highly endorsed the need to continue working towards a long term vision and strategy to address social and economic development in the Province.

Overall, the report is considered positive, noting that progress that has been made in the areas of partnership, regional collaboration and integrated approaches to economic and social development.

The report does indicate areas for improvement, many of which are in keeping with public government commitments such as:

1. more cohesive programming across departments, with coordinated investments among government departments and with other orders of government;
2. reduced duplication in programs and services;
3. regional and local solutions to economic and social development;

4. collaborative governance; and
5. improved accountability

WORK WITH COMMITTEES USING EVIDENCE

The SSP Office has been heavily involved with the Regional Steering Committees in the building of capacity to use evidence in planning and decision-making, and in ensuring greater accountability and continuous program improvement. The staff provides technical advice and support to local research, program design, and evaluation initiatives and also analytical and research capacity supporting partnership development in the regions.

COMMUNITY ACCOUNTS OF THE NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR STATISTICS AGENCY

The key economic and social data required for evidence based decision making are provided through the Community Accounts. The Community Accounts were developed specifically to support the implementation of the SSP and to allow for the Social Audit and bring together a range of information on topics such as income, education, health and employment to give a picture of the social, economic and demographic well-being of communities, regions and the province as a whole. This innovative tool has received national recognition for its ability to organize critical data in one accessible place.

Access to shared, reliable data is critical to evidence-based decision making. The ability to track progress over time allows for effective evaluations of the outcomes of programs and services. If government and community organizations are to be accountable for making change, we need evidence to develop effective programs, target limited resources, and to report on results. Work continues to ensure that the Community Accounts reach their full potential. Data being collected in government departments are increasingly included in the Community Accounts and while the data are accessible, it is most useful if there are analysts to interpret them.

Over 1500 departmental officials, SSP Steering Committee members and community organizations received training in the use of Community Accounts throughout the year.

THE PREMIER'S COUNCIL ON SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

The Council provides advice and guidance to government on the implementation of the SSP. Council members are community representatives appointed by the Premier on recommendation by the Lead Minister for the Strategic Social Plan. Members are selected to provide a diverse mix of perspectives and experience. They serve as individuals rather than as representatives of their respective organizations. Members are selected based on criteria such as: regional representation, knowledge of social and economic development issues, a willingness to commit the time to Council and ability to represent special interest groups (e.g., youth, disabled).

OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES AHEAD

The Rural Secretariat faces a number of challenges:

- ensuring an effective transition from the SSP to the broader mandate of the Rural Secretariat;
- finding ways to link economic and social development priorities and work strategies;
- targeting the limited financial and human resources available in the Rural Secretariat to their best advantage;
- working with communities to understand the social and economic trends that are impacting rural/urban areas;
- building strong and effective partnerships among government and communities organizations; and
- fostering collaboration between urban and rural areas to maximize the potential of both.

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

The Rural Secretariat budget includes funding to support the Premier's Council on Social Development, 6 Regional Steering Committees, Community Accounts, Newfoundland and Labrador Statistics Agency, and the office within Confederation Building.

FISCAL YEAR 2003-04 (UNAUDITED)

	Actual Expenditures	Estimates Amended	Estimates Original
Salaries.....	1,119,110	1,187,100	1,239,100
Employee Benefits.....	4,457	5,500	5,500
Trans & Communication.....	202,535	240,000	240,000
Supplies	23,832	25,000	23,000
Professional Services	86,634	94,300	94,300
Purchased Services	61,073	97,300	97,300
Property, Furnishings & Equipment.....	3,706	5,000	5,000
Grants & Subsidies.....	199,574	240,000	240,000
Information Technology	87,029	105,800	55,800
TOTAL.....	1,787,950	2,000,000	2,000,000

