

**LEARNING STUDY**  
**Has Government Started Doing Business as**  
**Envisioned by the Strategic Social Plan?**

**Final Report**  
**December 15,2003**



**JANE HELLEUR & ASSOCIATES INC.**

## The Vision, Values and Goals of the Strategic Social Plan

### The Vision

*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.*

### The Values

*Self-reliance  
Collaboration  
Social Justice  
Equity  
Fairness*

### The Goals

*Vibrant communities and regions in which people actively participate in their collective well-being*

*Sustainable regions based on strategic investment in individuals, families and communities.*

*Self-reliant, healthy, educated individuals and families living in safe, nurturing communities.*

*Integrated and evidence-based policy development and monitoring as the foundation for the design, delivery and evaluation of social development programs and services.*

## Executive Summary

The Strategic Social Plan (SSP) entitled ***People, Partners and Prosperity: A Strategic Social Plan for Newfoundland and Labrador, 1998***, represents a significant social development initiative of the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador. This report entitled, *A Learning Study*, provides analysis of changes occurring in the way government is conducting its business in implementing the SSP goals. It is intended as a learning, or formative study, to guide further development and approaches, procedures and monitoring systems required to ensure SSP implementation success. The Learning Study focuses on the SSP's first three goals. The fourth goal is the focus of separate work that will be undertaken at a future date.

It was understood that implementing the goals of the SSP involved a process that would bring about fundamental changes in the way government operates, creating expectations for partnership with community agencies and decentralizing both the provision of services and choices around delivery. In order to accomplish this, fundamental changes in the way government operates would be necessary.

This Executive Summary provides a synopsis of the process undertaken in this study. It includes a description of the major thematic areas that were explored and the key findings relating to the Learning Study's objectives. Recommendations are made relating to the SSP's design, implementation and strategic investment.

## Methodology

A Document and Literature Review (available as a separate document) was undertaken to determine whether organizational and philosophical changes as articulated in the SSP were reflected in the planning documentation, minutes and reports of government departments and regional steering committees (RSCs) from the period leading up to the Learning Study.

A total of 119 individuals were interviewed as the basis for assessing the extent of changes in the way government is conducting its business as envisioned by the SSP. These interviews occurred as follows:

- Context Interviews were held with eight key individuals who had been involved in the early design and development of the SSP. These interviews served as a foundation for future explorations with those who are engaged in the SSP's implementation;
- Interviews were then held with 21 representatives of nine government departments, followed by interviews with each of the six RSCs. A total of 24 RSC representatives participated in these telephone and in-person interviews. These structured interviews explored SSP progress under major themes embedded in the SSP;
- In-person interviews were held with eight representatives of community-based agencies in St. John's as a basis for understanding how these agencies perceive progress in the SSP's implementation; and

- Finally, eight Learning Discussion Groups were held in four regions (Northeast Avalon, Central, Cormack-Grenfell, and Labrador) and involved 58 individuals. For each group, 25 individuals were invited with the expectation that not all would be able to attend. Four Learning Discussion Groups were held with regional representatives of provincial and federal government departments and regional boards. Representatives of community-based agencies attended the remaining four Learning Discussion Groups. These Learning Discussion Groups focused primarily on participant suggestions for the future successful implementation of the SSP.

Seven major themes were explored in interviews and form the basis of this report. These themes are embedded in the SSP and include:

### **Partnerships**

Within the SSP, partnership approaches are significant, embracing the integration of social and economic policy, harmonizing programs and services, harnessing stakeholder and community involvement, strengthening channels for regional input in policy development and decision-making, and implementing regional strategies on a coordinated, client-centred basis. These partnerships were meant to be fostered between, and among:

- Different provincial government departments;
- Government and regional boards including, health institution boards, health and community services boards, school boards and regional economic development boards (REDBs);
- Provincial, federal and municipal governments; and
- Government and the community.

### **Prevention and Early Intervention Strategies**

This refers to a process for identifying regional and community social and economic problems in a proactive manner and developing programs and services that address root causes. Strategies at the local or regional levels are intended to more effectively achieve social development through policy and program/service redesign. Successful prevention and intervention strategies have a number of hallmark characteristics:

- A flexible framework which allows service delivery to be highly adaptive to meet local or individual needs;
- A policy framework which permits decision-making to occur at the delivery level;
- The involvement of a broad range of service providers working in partnership to consider the multiple issues and to achieve a holistic response that best serves the immediate and long term needs of the recipient;
- Coordinated provincial, federal and municipal investments; and
- The coordination and placement of these services to permit participation by the broadest range of beneficiaries.

### **Access Standards and Quality of Services**

In the SSP, government envisioned that departments would break down or eliminate barriers to needed services, particularly for vulnerable populations such as children, women, persons with disabilities and the elderly. This goal speaks to the importance of equity as a value in the SSP – there is an assurance of equitable availability of services for all people in the province. More specifically, the SSP's implementation would ensure:

- Developing standards to ensure adequate levels of service for health, education, justice, housing, social services, recreation and employment; and
- Working with regional and community officials to eliminate the barriers to service where regional issues impact on both access to and the quality of service.

### **Community-Based Service Delivery**

This refers to a way of delivering programs and services through community agencies, thus achieving greater flexibility and effectiveness and developing shared responsibility for well-being. The intent is to move from institutional and direct delivery approaches within government to a community-based delivery model. Through this process, community capacity is enhanced.

### **Integration of Social and Economic Development**

Employment is viewed as a fundamental link between social and economic development, underscoring the development of business and industrial opportunities in communities. This requires:

- Investments to address the root causes of problems that create barriers to education, training, health and wellness;
- Ensuring that choices are available for youth and that opportunities for a highly-skilled labour force exist, and
- Ultimately, re-designing the income support program to focus more on active support for moving people to employment while continuing to meet their basic needs.

### **Coordinated Investments**

Coordinated investments were envisioned between the provincial government and its federal and municipal counterparts and with regional and community-based organizations to achieve the outcomes identified in the SSP. In addition, coordinated investments with the federal government were desired to achieve social and economic development, consistent with long-term regional and provincial economic plans. Of particular emphasis was:

- The creation of an employment program in the community-based sector to provide new employment opportunities;
- Matched federal/provincial economic development agreements and programs to create employment consistent with REDB economic plans;
- Coordinated social and economic development objectives; and

- Continued focus of the Labour Market Development Agreements on local labour market and business development needs.

### **Labour Market Development Strategy**

This strategy was intended to address regional labour market development issues by:

- Identifying emerging private-sector employment opportunities and the long-term development strategies being pursued in REDB strategic plans;
- Identifying the range and extent of employment creation opportunities within the community-based sector and how these opportunities could be enhanced; and
- Developing a human resources strategy for preparing people to participate in long-term development for each region, both as entrepreneurs and as employees.

### **Key Findings**

Significant achievements in the way business is conducted within government have been recorded. Working partnerships have been established within RSCs and a culture shift is felt to be occurring within government departments, some more than others. The Departments of Human Resources and Employment (HRE) and Health and Community Services (HCS) were cited as making significant strides in modeling the SSP, while others such as Justice and Education were felt to be lagging behind other departments. Partnerships are enabling a focus on the SSP's vision, values and goals. Clear examples exist of new initiatives that are achieving prevention and early intervention goals; providing equitable access to services; and using integrated approaches to social and economic development. Unique solutions to regional and community issues are being identified and pursued. This is an evolving process, one that is gathering strength as RSCs further develop their partnership capacity.

Through the process of the Learning Study the following major findings were identified:

- Progress is evolving more slowly than envisioned by the SSP. This is especially so for government departments and less so for RSCs.
- Departments and RSCs identify insufficient resources as an impediment to meeting the complex needs in communities and regions. Given the province's current fiscal position, an increase in resource allocation is unlikely, therefore an increased focus on coordinating investments among government departments, and between the provincial, federal and municipal governments will be necessary. In addition, government departments must work more collaboratively to enable joint investments based upon more integrated business planning, both at the provincial and regional levels.
- The province has been highly adept at leveraging federal initiatives with targeted funds for the development of programs and services consistent with the SSP goals. It is through these funds that many of the successes identified in this report have been achieved. Indeed, of the

indicators of success identified through the Learning Study, many are the result of federal funding. Other frequently cited initiatives, such as the Individual Student Support Plan (ISSP) and the Violence Prevention Initiative, pre-date the SSP. Clearly, there are opportunities to further strengthen focus on cross-departmental initiatives.

- Stronger accountability is required to ensure government departments are conducting business consistent with the SSP's vision, values and goals. Clear expectations for departments must be continually communicated and actively monitored. In addition, recognition systems must be introduced that provide an incentive for achievements and best practices to be realized.
- While the RSCs have undertaken projects to achieve early wins, more significant efforts are now required to address systemic social and economic development issues in regions, consistent with regional priorities, by using solid evidence as a basis for planning. Government departments must ensure that they are actively connected with, and supportive of this work.
- Community-based agencies, a key partner envisioned by the SSP, highly endorse the SSP's vision, values and goals. However, they desire much more inclusiveness as further implementation unfolds and require greater funding supports to deliver community-based programs that are responsive to individual client and community needs.

The SSP is a mere five years old and is attempting to bring about fundamental changes in the way government conducts business. The changes envisioned by the SSP are transformational versus incremental. All this considered, incremental changes achieved to date are remarkable, especially when one considers that some of the issues being addressed generally require multi-generational responses.

Has government started to use partnership approaches as a way of conducting business consistent with the SSP? The answer is a qualified "yes" though changes have only begun and much more coordinated effort is required. The following recommendations are intended to spur the changes in the way government conducts business consistent with the SSP.

## Recommendations

### SSP Design

1. That government's Committee of Deputy Ministers take a more active leadership role in creating a stronger accountability focus for government departments by establishing expectations for departmental business planning, policy development, program design and development, and annual reporting that is aligned with the SSP's vision, values, goals and actions.
2. That the Social Audit also focus on the sufficiency of accountability measures for program outcomes within government departments and for initiatives undertaken with its partners, including with community-based agencies.

3. That cross-departmental partnership approaches be supported by standard memoranda of understanding that, at a minimum, document the expected contribution from each partner and their roles and responsibilities for policy development, program design, delivery, implementation and evaluation.
4. That clear links be established between the soon-to-be established Joint Government/Voluntary, Community-Based Sector Committee and RSCs as a basis for building coordinated efforts and partnership approaches with the community-based sector as envisioned by the SSP.
5. That the SSP Office and the RSCs develop communications strategies aimed at generating greater awareness of the SSP's vision, values and goals and of progress being achieved, for staff of government, regional boards, partner organizations and community-based agencies.
6. That recognition systems be developed to acknowledge the efforts of government departments, regional boards, partners, community-based agencies and volunteers for significant contributions to implementing the SSP.
7. That government departments and their regional partners significantly intensify their efforts to develop access and service quality standards for regional services, as there is little evidence, other than within the Departments of Health and Community Services and Human Resources and Employment, that plans are underway to address access and quality service standards in an integrated manner; a key driver of the SSP's design.

### **SSP Implementation**

8. That stronger communication and mutual accountability links be established between government departments and RSCs as a foundation for evidence-based, coordinated investment decisions in prevention and early intervention strategies.
9. That the Literacy Branch of the Department of Education seek active involvement with the RSCs as a basis for supporting their efforts in making strategic regional investments in literacy programs.
10. Recognizing that RSCs are still in the infancy stage of development, that new time-limited targets be established between RSCs, regional boards and government departments to conduct comprehensive regional assessments of volunteer capacity, resources for social development, gaps in community capacity, and barriers that confront vulnerable populations.
11. That a formal process for RSCs to bring forward items for action to government departments be developed that enables timely communication of what processes and actions are being pursued to address regional issues.



12. That consideration be given to developing a training program on “best SSP practices” as a means of improving government staff capacity for working together to develop integrated approaches in service design and delivery.

### **Strategic Investment**

13. That government pursue the option of developing a single integrated social and economic plan for the province as a basis for achieving the level of coordinated investment decisions envisioned by the SSP. A timeline for achieving this goal should be determined with the input of RSCs.
14. Recognizing that long term investments in prevention and early intervention strategies may not reap benefits for some time, that strong evidence-based decision-making be the accepted basis for these investment decisions. This will also require that wherever possible, project funding be replaced by core funding to enable strategies and goals to mature.
15. That a user-driven, coordinated model for service delivery be developed for families, seniors, persons with mental illnesses, and other vulnerable groups who must interface with multiple organizations to access needed services.
16. That while Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC) regional staff are key partners in RSCs, RSCs also consider the merits of expanding federal government involvement, both through broader HRDC representation, and through other federal government departments such as Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (ACOA), Department of Fisheries and Oceans, Health Canada, Industry Canada and Agriculture Canada.
17. That RSCs, while having identified priority areas for action, might also take a more active role in coordinating long term development strategies as a basis for investment decisions for regional services and infrastructure. Such plans might also serve as a basis for monitoring progress in social and economic development.

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## 1.0 Introduction

The Strategic Social Plan (SSP) entitled ***People, Partners and Prosperity: A Strategic Social Plan for Newfoundland and Labrador***, represents a significant social development initiative of the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador. Released in 1998, it envisions a healthy, educated, distinctive, self-reliant and prosperous people living in vibrant, supportive communities within sustainable regions. In introducing the SSP, government also committed to report on progress through a Social Audit. This audit is a long-term process to measure progress in three outcome areas identified in the SSP: general well-being; employment and economic security; and community stability.

The Social Audit is comprised of four phases, with the first two being complete:

*Community Accounts*, launched in September 2001, is an online system that allows users to retrieve and analyze data for communities and regions in Newfoundland and Labrador. It is intended to translate SSP vision, values and goals into measurable indicators that will enable quantitative analysis of the social and economic landscape of the province. For the first time, this powerful, “one-stop” tool brings together statistical data from a large number of sources that were previously available only in pieces, and for limited users.

*From the Ground Up*, takes the SSP’s vision and translates it into a series of key social and economic indicators, such as health, education, employment and income to measure regional and community well-being. These indicators are used nationally and internationally to measure well-being, thus making it possible to compare social and economic development of Newfoundland and Labrador to other jurisdictions.

*A Learning Study*, the focus of this report, is an analysis of changes occurring in the way government is conducting its business in implementing the goals of the SSP. It is intended as a learning, or formative study, to guide further development and approaches, procedures and monitoring systems required to ensure SSP success.

This report, a component of the third phase of the Social Audit, focuses on the first three goals of the SSP. The fourth goal is the focus of separate work being undertaken. This report summarizes the findings of interviews with individuals who have been instrumental in formulating the SSP. It also includes interviews with: representatives of key government departments who have had a role in the SSP’s implementation; representatives from each of the six SSP RSCs; representatives from selected community-based agencies, and participants of learning discussion groups.

The fourth and final phase will examine program outcomes. By using a number of rigorous program evaluation tools focused on program outcomes, it can be determined what is working, why, and for whom.

## 1.1 Learning Study Advisory Committee

A Learning Study Advisory Committee guided the Learning Study and approved the methodology plan, provided advice and guidance, and provided feedback on project deliverables. The Learning Study Advisory Committee members were:

Dr. J. Douglas May	Professor, Memorial University of Newfoundland
Dr. Michael Murray	Associate Dean of Community Health, School of Medicine, Memorial University of Newfoundland
Mary Reid	Executive Director, Independent Living Resource Centre
Alison Earle	Assistant Deputy Minister, Strategic Social Plan Office
Donna Crozier	Manager, Research and Analysis, Strategic Social Plan Office
Carla Woodworth-Lynas	Manager, Social Audit, Strategic Social Plan Office

## 1.2 Format of this Report

This report summarizes major findings grouped under seven themes. These following themes are embedded in the SSP and served as the primary focus of interviews:

- Partnerships;
- Regional prevention and early intervention strategies;
- Regional services – access and quality;
- Community-based delivery;
- Integrated social and economic development;
- Coordinated investment; and
- Labour market development strategy.

Within each theme, the nature of the work being undertaken is described, followed by observations from interviewees regarding indicators of success and future opportunities to help spur further changes in the way government conducts its business. Finally, a summary of the strengths and weaknesses of the SSP's implementation to date is provided, an analysis of quantitative data collected, and recommendations to strengthen the future implementation of the SSP.

## 2.0 Overview of Methodology

### 2.1 Literature and Document Review Report

The *Literature and Document Review Report*, available as a separate document, was intended to provide a context for *The Learning Study* and therefore did not comprise an exhaustive review of all activities and initiatives being undertaken by the RSCs or government departments. Rather, the *Literature and Document Review Report* contained a synthesis of documents under the main categories of:

- Foundational documents that led to the creation of the SSP;
- Process documents that were instrumental in supporting the SSP process;
- Departmental publications that were influenced by the SSP or consistent with the SSP's vision, values and/or goals;
- Departmental Annual Reports;
- Regional Steering Committees documents, including minutes and major reports; and
- Regional Economic Development Boards (REDBs) work plans.

### 2.2 Questioning Framework

The *Request for Proposals* provided the key SSP goals, objectives and actions as the focus of *The Learning Study* in the form of question themes. Seven major themes were explored in interviews. These themes are embedded in the SSP and include:

#### **Partnerships**

Within the SSP, partnership approaches are significant, embracing the integration of social and economic policy, harmonizing programs and services, harnessing stakeholder and community involvement, strengthening channels for regional input in policy development and decision-making, and implementing regional strategies on a coordinated, client-centred basis. These partnerships were meant to be fostered between, and among:

- Different provincial government departments;
- Government and regional boards including, health institution boards, health and community services boards, school boards and economic development boards;
- Provincial, federal and municipal governments; and
- Government and the community.

#### **Prevention and Early Intervention Strategies**

This refers to a process for identifying regional and community social and economic problems in a proactive manner and developing programs and services that address root causes. Strategies at the local or regional levels are intended to more effectively achieve social

development through policy and program/service redesign. Successful prevention and intervention strategies have a number of hallmark characteristics:

- A flexible framework which allows service delivery to be highly adaptive to meet local or individual needs;
- A policy framework which permits decision-making to occur at the delivery level;
- The involvement of a broad range of service providers working in partnership to consider the multiple issues and to achieve a holistic response that best serves the immediate and long term needs of the recipient;
- Coordinated provincial, federal and municipal investments; and
- The coordination and placement of these services to permit participation by the broadest range of beneficiaries.

### **Access Standards and Quality of Services**

In the SSP, government envisioned that departments would break down or eliminate barriers to needed services, particularly for vulnerable populations such as children, women, persons with disabilities and the elderly. This goal speaks to the importance of equity as a value in the SSP – there is an assurance of equitable availability of services for all people in the province. More specifically, the SSP's implementation would ensure:

- Developing standards to ensure adequate levels of service for health, education, justice, housing, social services, recreation and employment; and
- Working with regional and community officials to eliminate the barriers to service where regional issues impact on both access to and the quality of service.

### **Community-Based Service Delivery**

This refers to a way of delivering programs and services through community agencies, thus achieving greater flexibility and effectiveness and developing shared responsibility for well-being. The intent is to move from institutional and direct delivery approaches within government to a community-based delivery model. Through this process, community capacity is enhanced.

### **Integration of Social and Economic Development**

Employment is viewed as a fundamental link between social and economic development, underscoring the development of business and industrial opportunities in communities. This requires:

- Investments to address the root causes of problems that create barriers to education, training, health and wellness;
- Ensuring that choices are available for youth and that opportunities for a highly-skilled labour force exist, and
- Ultimately, re-designing the income support program to focus more on active support for moving people to employment while continuing to meet their basic needs.

### **Coordinated Investments**

Coordinated investments were envisioned between the provincial government and its federal and municipal counterparts and with regional and community-based organizations to achieve the outcomes identified in the SSP. In addition, coordinated investments with the federal government were desired to achieve social and economic development, consistent with long-term regional and provincial economic plans. Of particular emphasis was:

- The creation of an employment program in the community-based sector to provide new employment opportunities;
- Matched federal/provincial economic development agreements and programs to create employment consistent with zonal economic plans;
- Coordinated social and economic development objectives; and
- Continued focus of the Labour Market Development Agreements on local labour market and business development needs.

### **Labour Market Development Strategy**

This strategy was intended to address regional labour market development issues by:

- Identifying emerging private-sector employment opportunities and the long-term development strategies being pursued in REDB strategic plans;
- Identifying the range and extent of employment creation opportunities within the community-based sector and how these opportunities could be enhanced; and
- Developing a human resources strategy for preparing people to participate in long-term development in each region, both as entrepreneurs and as employees.

These question themes required further detail and elaboration to obtain the information to support a thorough analysis of the progress of implementation. They were further developed using the following questioning framework (see Master Question Bank, Appendix 1).

1. What is the current status in your department or organization with respect to this SSP objective?
2. How have you achieved the progress to date?
3. What difference has it made to the way you do business for the delivery of services and/or programs?
4. What barriers existed, or were encountered?
5. What learning has occurred as a result of your efforts?
6. What are your future plans? What future goals do you have for continued improvement?

## **2.3 Interview Guide**

The Master Question Bank served as the basis for an Interview Guide (Appendix 2), which developed to assist interviewees and group participants to prepare for interviews. It was



provided to individuals in advance of the scheduled interview and was customized so that only those questions relevant for an interviewee or group were contained in their Interview Guide.

The Interview Guide focused on the qualitative information to be gathered during each interview. In addition, six quantitative questions were included, using a seven-point Likert scale, to provide data as a test or validation of the qualitative responses. These questions were not provided in advance of the scheduled interviews.

## 2.4 Interviews

Eight “context” interviews were held with individuals whose knowledge and input provided a foundation for *The Learning Study* (Appendix 3). These interviews were therefore structured differently from the formal data-gathering interviews.

Interviews were then held with 21 representatives of nine government departments prior to the interviews with the RSCs. For departmental interviews, initial contact was made to the deputy minister to identify the appropriate individuals within their department best able to address the questions contained in the interview guide. For the RSCs, initial contact was made with each of the regional planners with a request that they consult with their chairperson to determine who should be present for the interview. A total of 24 RSC representatives participated in these in-person and telephone interviews.

Two group interviews with representatives of community-based agencies, each with four participants, were planned using the same processes and tools as described above. Scheduling difficulties resulted in only one group interview. The remaining community agency interviews were conducted on a one-on-one basis.

## 2.5 Validation of Interviews

Following each interview, transcripts were prepared as a validation process to ensure accurate representation of factual information and confirmation of the views that emerged from the interview process. This also provided an opportunity for interviewees to clarify and amplify issues and concepts discussed during the interviews and to add additional information. Assurances were given to interviewees that the transcripts would not appear in the study’s report, but would be provided to the SSP Office.

## 2.6 Learning Discussion Groups

From November 14 to 19, eight two-hour learning discussion groups were held in St. John's, Gander, Grand Falls-Windsor, Corner Brook and Happy Valley/Goose Bay and were attended by a total of 58 participants. For each group, 25 individuals were invited with the expectation that not all would be able to attend. Four of the discussion groups were held with representatives of community-based agencies and the remaining four were held with regional staff of government departments and boards (Appendix 4). The purpose of the Learning Discussion Groups was to explore:

- The impact of the SSP upon organizations;
- Whether or not changes in the way government is conducting its business have been detected;
- The strengths and weaknesses of the SSP's implementation, including barriers that are being experienced; and
- Requirements for future directions and actions to ensure the successful implementation of the SSP.

## 2.7 Limitations and Constraints of Methodology

A number of limitations and constraints emerged which affected the study's timelines and planned methodology.

### **Timing**

The study commenced in late July 2003, a time when many are on summer holidays. Consequently, while some context interviews were possible, it was not until after the Labour Day holiday that a majority of departmental interviews were scheduled. Anticipation of an election call also diverted the attention of many departmental participants and may have impacted the priority they placed on this study, with subsequent impact on scheduling. The anticipated election may have also sensitized interviewees to emphasize certain issues and de-emphasize others. However, while these issues were a reality, the impact on the ability of some key individuals to fully participate is unknown.

For both government departments and RSCs, two-hour interviews were requested. In some cases, this amount of time was not available and the reduced timeframe may have impacted the quality and depth of information required for this study. However, the opportunity to schedule additional meetings, even beyond the initial two hours, was offered by both the departments of Human Resources and Employment (HRE) and Health and Community Services (HCS), which proved necessary, given those departments' significant mandates.

### **Complexity of issues**

The issues explored in the interviews were complex, requiring a deep understanding of and experience with both the history of the SSP, its development phases and implementation. For the most part, the level of detail sought was not always provided, perhaps because the information does not yet exist. The SSP is still in the early phases of implementation and all participants acknowledge that this is a long-term plan. While interviewees were probed for meaning and relevance, the substantiation often remained at a high, philosophical level rather than at the detailed level sought in the interview guide, which in itself may be a reflection of the nature of changes that has occurred.

Conflicting views were expressed regarding the scope and nature of SSP implementation in individual departments and certainly, there were disparities in perceptions about the progress to date. The information provided in validated departmental transcripts was accepted as provided, and no attempt was made to reconcile these discrepancies.

### **Selection of interviewees**

In some cases, the deputy minister and/or assistant deputy minister(s) was identified to be interviewed, and in other cases, this was delegated to directors. Scheduled meetings sometimes went ahead, but often without the originally intended interviewees. For this reason, the consultants' ability to control both the quality and quantity of information from some government departments may have been affected. On average, the number of interview participants was limited to two individuals, though with the Department of Justice, there were five individuals.

The RSCs also varied in selected interviewees, ranging from two to eight individuals. In all cases, the RSC Chairperson and Regional Planner were present.

The number of interview participants, regardless of their connection to the study, changed the dynamics of the interview, with the larger groups tending to cover a broader range of subjects but without more detailed information.

In addition, all interviews with individuals located in the St. John's area occurred in person, while the remaining interviews occurred by telephone conference calls. Quality information was collected using both methods. All learning discussion groups were held in person.

### 3.0 Partnerships

The SSP's implementation should be accomplished through partnerships. Within the SSP, partnership approaches are significant, embracing the integration of social and economic policy, harmonizing programs and services, harnessing stakeholder and community involvement, strengthening channels for regional input in policy development and decision-making, and implementing regional strategies on a coordinated, client-centred basis. These partnerships were envisioned to occur between, and among:

- Different provincial government departments;
- Government and regional boards including, health institution boards, health and community services boards, school boards and regional economic development boards (REDBs);
- Provincial, federal and municipal governments; and
- Government and the community.

#### 3.1 Partnership Approaches within RSCs

*"In our partnership, there are no hidden agendas: people do not wear a single hat and we pursue a shared goal."*

CORMACK-GRENFELL REGION RSC

All RSCs reported that initial efforts were placed on learning to work together as partners. They struggled to understand their collective partnership responsibilities as well as their individual roles within that partnership. A facet of these early first steps required an understanding of what the SSP really meant, including becoming conversant with the concepts of social and economic integration, capacity-building, and evidence-based decision-making.

The involvement of the REDBs already in place in the regions, was actively sought. Most RSCs report that initially, the REDBs were unable to see the link between their economic mandates and social development. They now embrace the need for the social and economic integration and are avid supporters and participants in social and economic development. Similarly, most RSCs reported that the nationally-established mandate of Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC) has affected regional discussions regarding the integration of social and economic integration. While HRDC regional representatives appreciate the significance of the SSP to the province, they are primarily responsible for implementing programs linked with federal priorities.

Several RSCs reported that there was initial skepticism regarding their role. Some partners held the view that the SSP would become just another layer of bureaucracy, without the active support of government. For most RSCs, the process of forming clear mutual understanding about the roles and responsibilities of partnership took almost a year to clarify, yet this process

was seen as contributing an invaluable component to building mutual commitment. For all RSCs, the process of working together in a collaborative way has been resolved, but new approaches are likely to continue to evolve.

The phased-in approach to launching the RSCs, and the time invested in creating productive partnerships, has resulted in RSCs being at different stages of development. With the exception of the Northeast Avalon RSC, some RSCs undertook certain projects or activities to achieve early wins. The Northeast Avalon RSC wanted data to support their priorities. This approach was chosen to better understand what intervention would be most effective in addressing root causes. In the Labrador RSC especially, there was reluctance to engage in further study of community needs, rather there was a strong push for early action.

A common process feature of all RSCs was the establishment of strategic plans and identification of priority areas for action, consistent with guidelines provided by the SSP Office. All RSCs reported that this contributed enormously to achieving focus and unifying action. However, RSCs are in the early stages of harnessing their partnership capacity and leveraging their collective abilities to devise solutions which address root causes on priority issues. Consequently, meaningful indicators of the success of partnership approaches are only now emerging.

*"We hold our partners accountable. However, they can be flexible and fluid in how they do the things they say they will do."*

LABRADOR RSC

All RSCs are further ahead in forming productive partnerships than are their counterparts in government departments. While the RSC structure and objectives have made partnership formation imperative, no similar requirement existed among government departments. Consistently, HRE, and to a somewhat lesser extent, HCS were cited for employing the best partnership strategies to addressing systemic social and economic development issues. Some RSCs noted that provincial government departments, particularly Education, are not fully appreciative of the work that is undertaken by RSCs. They point to the need for better communication to build trust and confidence in the RSC process.

RSCs also identified the invaluable role of their regional planners and the SSP Office as critical factors in their success. Regional planners are the glue that holds the partnership together and are working tirelessly to support the RSCs. The SSP Office is viewed as being enabling and supportive, particularly in interfacing with central government departments to resolve issues that require intervention, both on individual departmental and interdepartmental levels.

### **Indicators of Success**

- The RSCs have been in place for approximately three years. All have completed their initial planning, have identified priority areas for action and are implementing strategies to deal with these issues. There is a deepened understanding of the role of each partner and the

constraints and barriers they individually face. The process of working together has been resolved.

- All RSCs are making sure the right partners are at the table. In the Northeast Avalon RSC, a process for the recruitment of members from the voluntary sector was undertaken which resulted in four members being selected from this sector. All RSCs continue to emphasize the need for individual partners to take a “whole” system view to respond to regional and community needs. Consequently, there is a prevailing imperative for partners to “take their hats off” – an appreciation of the “magic of the partnership” that results.
- Some RSCs exist in parts of the province where there are distinct sub-regional identities and have been successful in overcoming these potential competitive barriers.
- RSCs see their role as facilitators of change rather than as implementers of change. RSCs have had to clarify their mandate with their communities and continually remind stakeholders that they are not funding agencies for particular projects.
- A real attempt is made by RSCs to ensure that partnership representatives are in positions of influence within their own organizations. The value of having decision-makers at the table has increased the capacity for changes at the broader macro level, either within government departments or within regional boards.

### **Future Opportunities**

- The RSCs are constituted with organizational representatives who are already very busy people. There is a limited number of people who are in positions of influence to participate in the SSP process and there is a real danger of burnout of these individuals. In at least one case, a RSC Chairperson has experienced tension regarding the significant time the RSC takes away from day-to-day organizational responsibilities. While no solution was offered by RSCs, more active recognition of RSC members’ commitment, particularly those who serve as volunteers, may be required from the organizations they represent, as well as from senior levels of government. Furthermore, stronger support may be required from government departments where their representatives serve on RSCs.
- RSCs reported that their boundaries are not aligned with those of institutional health care boards, health and community services boards, school districts and some other regional delivery structures of the federal and provincial governments. This creates complexity in designing regional intervention strategies. It has been suggested that boundaries could be more closely aligned in the future.
- Geographical distances within some regions require that some RSC meetings be held via teleconference and videoconference. Not only is this an issue with respect to the availability of technology, it was also felt to be a barrier in creating close connections among RSC

partners – an essential ingredient in harnessing partnership potential and creating a sense of collective ownership.

- Even though assistant deputy ministers were assigned to RSCs, several RSCs noted that government representatives, particularly those at the assistant deputy minister level, do not consistently attend meetings. This weakens a vital communications link and diminishes perceived support. As another example, the Department of Justice is frequently asked to have representatives attend RSC meetings and planning sessions. They have not been able to comply with this request, as the department has no field staff around the province.
- The RSCs were deliberately constituted with senior regional staff of government departments and boards. While some RSCs have now engaged community-based agency representatives as partners, there may be further opportunities to engage staff in regional community-based agencies and possibly even business representatives.

### 3.2 Partnership Approaches Between Government Departments

Partnership approaches take on a different meaning within government departments. In some cases, as with HRE, HCS and Youth Services and Post-Secondary Education (YSPSE), the development and use of partnerships with other government departments is seen as the “way to do business.” There is a clear expectation that better policy and program results will be achieved through collaboration on mutually undertaken strategies. In other departments, partnerships take on a different flavour — one that focuses on limited consultation with other departments to obtain feedback on departmental policy planning initiatives.

*“We are guided by the assumption that we cannot move forward unless we connect with people.”*

DEPARTMENT OF  
HUMAN RESOURCES AND EMPLOYMENT

cases, as with HRE, HCS and Youth Services and Post-Secondary Education (YSPSE), the development and use of partnerships with other government departments is seen as the “way to do business.” There is a clear expectation that better policy and program results will be achieved through

During departmental interviews, few individuals were able to comment on the strategic directions being pursued by other departments. The exception was the HCS strategic plan entitled, *Healthier Together: A Strategic Plan for Newfoundland and Labrador*, which was widely circulated and read within government. While all interviewed departments were aware that departmental plans can be accessed through government’s website, it cannot be assumed that department officials are making use of this medium to create shared understanding of the directions individual government departments are pursuing.

Partnerships formed between departments tend to be ad hoc and project-specific in nature. Good examples are the Homelessness Initiative, the Wellness Initiative, the Violence Prevention Initiative, and the Strategic Literacy Plan. These initiatives require cross-departmental consultation and collaboration to devise and implement strategies. Some departments, such as Justice and HCS, have significant legislative mandates that have traditionally not been well suited to partnership approaches. For example, in HCS, child protection, childcare, adoptions, foster care, and youth corrections programs are oriented

towards meeting legislative requirements. Similarly, the Department of Justice, with a significant legislative mandate, has operated as a fairly closed department. Increasingly, there is recognition of the need to create constructive partnerships with other departments in order to address underlying issues and systemic problems that drive the Justice system.

With few exceptions, during departmental interviews, there was a general sense that “other departments needed to catch up” in their efforts to work collaboratively as partners. Perceptions of one department’s partnership arrangements are not necessarily seen in the same

*“Working with people and bringing them together is not so much a barrier as it is a process. Some government departments are not used to this process, but this is breaking down. The key is good discussion processes.”*

DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRY, TRADE AND  
RURAL DEVELOPMENT

light by other departments. This was especially the case for the Departments of Justice and Education which were seen by others as lagging behind in demonstrating active support and involvement in the SSP.

Nonetheless, all government departments acknowledged that barriers are beginning to break down and government departments are starting to “think the SSP way.” Just as with the RSCs, the process of building partnerships is evolutionary. It must be based upon mutual understanding of each others’ roles and trust that each partner will contribute equally to resolving cross-departmental issues.

The Department of Labrador and Aboriginal Affairs, because of its mandate to provide good governance in Labrador, has an advocacy and coordination role that has resulted in achieving efficiencies and some latitude in the application of other departments’ policy. It is interesting to note that this has been achieved through effective partnerships for service delivery in the region that in many ways, mirrors the work of the Labrador RSC. The existence of this duplication of effort by the Department and the Labrador RSCs was identified and acknowledged as a current reality in the region.

### Indicators of Success

- Government departments, while at different stages in their use of partnership approaches, are more cognizant of their value. Departments report that more collaboration occurs now than before the implementation of the SSP.
- There is a more concerted effort to engage other departments in initiatives that have cross-departmental implications. This is especially the case for HRE and HCS.
- In some specific cases, there are clear examples of cross-departmental efforts to collaborate and support initiatives. For example, several government departments agreed to contribute funds for an upcoming literacy survey to support an over-sample of regional data.



## Future Opportunities

- The process of cross-departmental partnerships is being improvised or re-invented. While this is a valid method of learning, success can be leveraged through identifying best practices and devising new models for policy development and program planning. Treasury Board's Centre of Learning and Development might offer solutions for training in this regard. Recently, they developed a course on public consultations which consolidates some of the best practices from several successful government public consultation processes.

- It was suggested that cross-departmental partnership approaches might require support mechanisms such as standard memoranda of understanding as a way of retaining corporate memory. This is especially important as key individuals transfer to other positions without leaving documentation that supports the work that has been completed or is underway. Additionally, it was suggested that a structure that mirrors the RSCs might be required to support meaningful collaborative efforts among central government departments.

*“Through partnerships, you achieve a good reality check - to identify the real problems, find the best solutions, increase commitment, better define roles and improve coordination.”*

WOMEN'S POLICY OFFICE

- One department observed that there are often difficulties in designating a lead department. This might be a reflection of the extraordinary time and effort it takes to develop partnerships (similar to the RSC partnership development process). It was noted that the daily demands of core traditional priorities might perpetuate traditional responses and possibly even preclude working with other departments. More than one context interviewee observed that government does not generally reward “thinking outside the box.” Productive partnerships require real contributions from each partner and this is not always forthcoming. While RSCs suggested a structure similar to their own should be implemented within government to facilitate partnership approaches, at least one government department indicated this would be perceived as another level of bureaucracy that would be resisted.

*“The Strategic Health Plan consciously embraced the principles and goals of the SSP. We directly incorporated the SSP values. This was good public policy.”*

DEPARTMENT C  
HEALTH AND COMMUNITY SERVICES

- Departments reported there is no real consequence for “not doing it the SSP way.” Some government departments, particularly Education and Justice, were singled out as being entrenched in a traditional way of conducting business and lacking the capacity to “re-tool” consistent with the SSP. A lack of central accountability means that efforts to find new ways of doing business consistent with the SSP is highly dependent on a department's executive leadership. In the absence of leadership, vision and commitment, the impetus for

discovering new ways of conducting business will be limited. As a minimum, mechanisms to link funding to the SSP's goals and actions could be developed.

- A fundamental tenet in those programs which aim to change behaviour suggests that what gets rewarded, gets repeated. Currently, within government, there is no requirement for reporting initiatives that are consistent with the SSP's principles and values. Consequently, recognition of these efforts occurs by accident rather than by design. Until new ways of doing business are firmly entrenched within government departments, formal systems of accountability and recognition will be required.
- While Provincial Cabinet submissions require evidence-based support for new initiatives, there may be opportunities for clearer links with the SSP goals if submissions are vetted through the SSP Office, in much the same way that Women's Policy Office (WPO) monitors gender inclusive analysis for submissions. A secondary benefit of this vetting process might enable the SSP office to facilitate linkages between departments working on similar or complementary initiatives and to ensure compliance with the SSP lens.
- There were mixed views regarding the requirement for a separate implementation funding envelope for cross-departmental initiatives. Some contend that access to separate funds is necessary to provide an impetus for cross-departmental planning, in much the same way as what has been provided for the RSCs. Others feel that resources to support these initiatives must be found from within existing budget allocations. This latter view is believed to be consistent with the realities of the province's fiscal position and the directive to find new ways of conducting business, a principal motivation for creating the SSP. The view was expressed, quite adamantly, that a stronger emphasis on the SSP way of doing business is required, and must be communicated from the highest levels of government.

### 3.3 Partnership Approaches Between Government and Community-Based Agencies

Partnerships between government with regional boards and the community-based voluntary sector were envisioned by the SSP as a way to enable and mobilize collective efforts to resolve social and economic problems in regions and communities. Government departments cited numerous examples of partnerships that exist with community-based agencies. While some of these examples are consistent with the intent of the SSP, others would be better described as business arrangements for program delivery.

*"Partnerships with government and other organizations are much more fully developed than in the past."*

CANADIAN MENTAL HEALTH  
ASSOCIATION

For example, the Choices For Youth Program is an example of an effective partnership approach that was supported by HRE, Health and Community Services - St. John's Region, the federal government, and Choices for Youth, a community-based agency. As a result of this program, a new transitional

housing shelter for young males and office space for area agencies providing youth services will be co-located at a single site, enabling highly integrated service provision. The nature of this partnership is substantially different from simple business arrangements because it brings together a range of services and offerings that singly, would not satisfy the need. It is through collaboration that a comprehensive solution is achieved – the whole truly is greater than the sum of its parts. This is different from partnership arrangements whereby a government department awards grant funding to a community-based agency. While these arrangements are commendable, the level and nature of the investment in such an alliance is less strategic than the partnership arrangements envisioned by the SSP.

During the interviews with community-based agency representatives, two distinct views emerged regarding the nature of partnership approaches between government and community-based agencies.

One view is that government does not fully understand partnership approaches, and at best, only partially “gets it.” These interviewees contend that government consults by convenience, and only as a basis for formulating strategic approaches to program design. These community representatives argue they have not been consulted in later stages of program design and implementation, which is where they believe they can also offer practical and relevant expertise. They pointed to the Supportive Housing and Wellness initiatives which were developed interdepartmentally, a lost opportunity for wide engagement of community-based organizations. These interviewees noted that the Social Policy Advisory Committee’s community-based consultation process that led to the creation of the SSP was an exceptionally positive experience. However, they also noted that government then closed the process by controlling the writing of the SSP. These representatives therefore, feel a high degree of cynicism regarding government’s approach to partnerships.

Other community-based representatives have a much more positive view. They believe that government’s partnership approaches with the community-based sector are significantly more developed than they have been in the past. They believe that some departments, such as HCS and HRE are much more responsive, and as a result, closer to the grassroots. They reported being listened to, particularly with respect to the Social Assistance Legislative Review process and on housing issues. These interviewees reported observing the beginning of a culture shift within government, but noted that this is an evolutionary process that requires more training and reinforcement within government. These community-based representatives also noted that while changes are occurring within government, the most significant change is occurring within regions through the RSC process.

The recommendations from the Premier’s Council on Social Development’s 2002 report entitled, *Building Community Partnerships*, is currently paving the way to improving the relationship between government and the community-based sector. The report acknowledges the important role this sector can play as a strong catalyst for individual involvement, for identifying and addressing local needs and for strengthening community development. An interim Joint

Government/Voluntary, Community-Based Sector Committee is now being formed with the mandate to develop a process for forming a permanent committee that represents both government and the community-based sector. It will address a six-point action plan to:

- Raise awareness of the voluntary sector within government;
- Develop a greater knowledge base of the sector;
- Address the financial needs of the voluntary sector;
- Support organizational and human resource development in the voluntary sector;
- Coordinate and redesign employment programs, and
- Mobilize wide, broad-based public involvement.

### **Indicators of Success**

- Government has demonstrated its capacity for meaningful engagement and partnership approaches with community-based agencies.
- A culture shift among managers within government departments regarding their partnership approaches is being observed by some community-based agencies.

### **Future Opportunities**

- There are opportunities to further engage community-based partners in the additional work related to actual program, service and implementation design to achieve desired levels of program responsiveness on a client and community basis.
- Government might consider developing a protocol, in partnership with community-based agencies, regarding initiatives and strategies that will be pursued with community partners and those that must remain within the domain of government.
- While the SSP has created opportunities for greater engagement of community partners, there is now an increased expectation that more collaboration and consultation will occur and less tolerance for instances where opportunities are missed. Government departments will need to be more proactive in identifying these opportunities.

## 4.0 Regional Prevention and Early Intervention Strategies

Within the SSP, prevention and early intervention strategies refer to a process for identification of regional and community social and economic problems in a proactive manner and the development of programs and services that address root causes. Strategies at the local or regional levels are intended to more effectively achieve social development through policy and program/service redesign.

Successful prevention and intervention strategies have a number of hallmark characteristics:

- A flexible framework which allows service delivery to be highly adaptive to meet local or individual needs;
- A policy framework which permits decision-making to occur at the delivery level;
- The involvement of a broad range of service providers working in partnership to consider the multiple issues and to achieve a holistic response that best serves the immediate and long term needs of the recipient;
- Coordinated provincial, federal and municipal investments; and
- The coordination and placement of these services to permit participation by the broadest range of beneficiaries.

These strategies, while intended to address social issues primarily, underscore the linkages between social and economic development. Repeatedly, it was reported by contributors

*“People are starting to look more long-term – moving away from ‘project’ thinking to long-term approaches that lead to sustainability.”*

EASTERN RSC

throughout this process that fundamental social needs must be addressed to enable individuals and groups to fully participate in their economic well-being. Further, this view was widely held, whether the reference was made to social issues such as substance abuse – where fairly direct mediation could occur with measurable outcomes – or to more complex issues such as early childhood development issues, where

the impact of mediation might not be measurable for many years to come. In both cases, it was believed that effective responses had a positive economic as well as social consequence.

The RSCs and government departments recognize that poverty can only be addressed through integrated economic and social development approaches. There are commendable initiatives underway to alleviate the effects of poverty, most notably the *Income Support & Employment Act* and numerous initiatives enabled through the *National Child Benefit*.

The *Income Support & Employment Act* will enable HRE to offer flexible income support and focus on prevention. The *Act* will enable both the extension and advancement of payments to support clients to implement their career plan, provided that the plans meets certain conditions.

The *Act* takes a proactive approach to removing barriers, and will also include a requirement that basic rates be reviewed every three years and the legislation itself, every five years.

As a priority for the future, HRE recognizes it must focus on youth who have early contact with income support to intervene quickly to help turn around a person's circumstances.

RSCs have identified priority areas for action that address root causes within regions. These are consistent with the SSP goals and place an emphasis on early childhood intervention strategies to alleviate negative factors that may affect their future health and economic well-being.

The province's Strategic Literacy Plan was released in 2000, with the Department of Education's Literacy Branch taking the lead role. There are efforts underway in St. John's to enable community centres to develop their own literacy plans, and with some SSP subcommittees regarding early childhood literacy strategies. This process is unfolding without the benefit of solid evidence on the extent or nature of literacy problems – a strategy in opposition to SSP principles. Jurisdictional issues were identified, particularly between the Departments of HCS and Education with respect to early childhood development. The Department of Education noted that education programs for school age children are substantially different from those for very young children and that tensions sometimes exist regarding departmental responsibilities for the development of programs that meet the needs of both preschool and school-age children. Combined with federal government restrictions regarding how funds are used, concern was expressed that many young children are not being properly identified for prevention and early intervention.

#### 4.1 Prevention and Early Intervention Strategies within RSCs

RSCs have established strategic plans that place the highest priority on prevention and early intervention programs to address the needs of children. Early childhood development programs that ensure all children have equal access to the necessary services to achieve their full potential, regardless of family background and ability, rank as a primary goal within each region.

Prevention and early intervention, as principles, are embraced as fundamental, strategic directions within the mandates of the RSCs. Wherever possible, the RSCs are bringing resources together to respond to needs in a preventative manner. In some regions,

*“Organizations which once did not see their connection to prevention and early intervention now support these initiatives. They see the connection.”*

EASTERN RSC

considerable effort has been expended to quantify and understand the nature of issues so that strategies would enable long-term solutions. In other cases, a project approach has also been undertaken to enable some early successes. For example, in the Avalon RSC, the partners

contributed funding to support the continuation for a position for Child Care Services (within HCS, St. John's Region), which has subsequently enabled the establishment of several childcare centres.

*Community Accounts* is frequently cited as the foundation for decision-making on prevention and early intervention strategies. This source has provided quantitative data for RSCs to enable formulation of strategies with greater confidence.

Several RSCs cited the implementation of the SSP as the catalyst for active prevention and intervention programs, because the process brought people together within the community for the first time. While there was common awareness of issues, the SSP process provided the first opportunity for a unified approach to solving problems, often in a manner that was more cost-effective and focused than was the case for previous efforts. RSCs report feeling empowered when they mutually discover that others have the same issues as they do.

RSCs have formed task forces or sub-committees to study issues and to propose recommendations to the RSC. In some cases, as with the Labrador RSC, an ambassador is appointed to champion the initiative with community partners to achieve comprehensive solutions and buy-in.

Family resource centres have played a central role in front-line intervention for at-risk children and families by providing parenting skills aimed at developing parental knowledge of how to

*“This (location decision regarding family resource centres) was an example of the best use of an evidence-based approach. The communities which might have lobbied for the Centres to be located in one area over another, were very accepting of the final decision”.*

CENTRAL RSC

nurture a developing child. Support has been provided largely through the volunteer sector within communities to assist parents’ understanding of their own needs and to develop confidence in parenting to meet the needs of their children. In the Eastern Region, early literacy programs have been delivered through the family resource centres in a partnership that involves the local school boards, the regional health board and HRDC. This was a 12-month project intended to establish a network of parents

and community organizations that would carry on the program once the funding ended. The program has been successful and is ongoing despite the cessation of funding, though the need for additional resource support requirements was identified.

The Canada-Newfoundland and Labrador Protocol on Youth Employment was formed to create opportunities for young people to better respond to economic realities in their communities. Within Newfoundland and Labrador, the Protocol has provided a means for preventing those who are considering dropping out of school or assisting young people who are unemployed or underemployed. Under the terms of the Protocol, cooperative learning opportunities for young people to work for a period of time as part of their schooling have been created. Participants have been provided with employable skills that expose them to the workforce in such a way that encourages pursuit of education as a means of ensuring future self-sufficiency.

Other programs, such as the Violence Prevention Initiative, involve a very broad coalition of agencies and departments to generate awareness and sensitivity towards issues as a means of prevention. These initiatives are less frequently cited at the regional level as examples of prevention strategies, suggesting that they have yet to have impact at the regional or community level, or that they are not truly “partnered.” This is especially the case in the Labrador Region.

Further evidence of the integration of social and economic development can be found in the degree to which the REDBs are participating in prevention programs. Many now have social objectives as part of their annual strategic plans. In many cases, the plans relate to youth employment programs that are intended to help young people remain in communities and to earn income. RSCs report very effective working relationships with their REDBs, many of which initially saw no direct link between their activities and those of the RSCs. Now they are active and committed participants in the SSP process within their regions.

### **Indicators of Success**

- RSCs feel that they have achieved success in delivering a number of prevention initiatives thus far. In the case of the Northeast Avalon RSC, emphasis has been placed on evidence gathering as a first activity to guide priority setting. Success has come about in large part because of the SSP process, which has brought people together to discuss problems and to arrive at collective solutions. Having high-level representatives on the RSCs, who have the authority to act on issues, has helped tremendously.
- The SSP has provided communities with tools to enable better understanding of the root causes of problems. Better data to enable this analysis is seen as going hand-in-hand with developing long-term solutions. *Community Accounts* has provided a foundation for an evidence-based approach, which will enable more targeted investments of efforts and funding.
- There is a high level of engagement in many regions from the volunteer sector and community organizations for involvement in prevention strategies, bringing significant professionalism and practical knowledge of their clients’ needs. There is an enormous commitment being made by these groups and the RSCs are feeling a sense of optimism and pride in their capacity to find and own the solutions to their problems.

### **Future Opportunities**

- The pay-off for prevention and intervention strategies may not be known for some time. In many cases, these programs are in their infancy and the exact nature of the outcomes has yet to be quantified. Significant opportunities exist to generate major impacts, particularly in programs developed for children where the outcomes may not be known, perhaps for years. For this reason, the desire for immediate results as a justification of program costs and the commitment to long term programs and solutions that reap long-term benefits must be balanced.



- Despite the commitment of community agencies and volunteers, the lack of resources has limited the capacity to create fundamental and permanent solutions. RSCs and community partners are closer to the problems and can therefore bring greater understanding to root causes. Evidence-based approaches, accompanied by adequate supports, often enable community-based agencies to deliver programs with greater sensitivity than government can achieve by itself. This requires mutual trust and a reasonable accountability framework.
- Project funding encourages short-term thinking and prevents community groups and others from developing longer-term, comprehensive, prevention and intervention strategies. Creating buy-in at the federal level to regional and provincial priorities is critical to ensure that adequate funding is available to address intergenerational illiteracy, child poverty and health issues as well as economic development.
- Some interviewees noted that the use of evidence is, at times, superficial or focuses more on symptoms as opposed to the root causes of problems. As a result, prevention and early intervention programs might only produce incremental impact or may not contribute to a strategic focus on real problems in regions.
- There are future opportunities for RSCs to work with municipalities to coordinate investments that target prevention and early intervention plans. This too will be an evolving process as RSCs develop their partnership capacities.

#### **4.2 Prevention and Early Intervention Strategies within Government Departments**

Departments cited the implementation of a range of early intervention and prevention initiatives which have been undertaken since the implementation of the SSP, or which were strongly influenced by SSP values and goals. As these programs are at different stages of implementation, their effectiveness may not yet be known, but department officials strongly believe that, with time, their effectiveness will be demonstrated and measured.

The Early Childhood Development Initiative (ECDI) brings together the Departments of HRE, HCS and Education in partnership with federal counterparts to address the needs of young children within families. While the ECDI has a broad, population health focus, its specific goal is to address the physical and intellectual development of the province's youngest citizens through such programs as mother-baby food programs (prenatal care), healthy baby clubs (infant nutrition and immunization), early intervention services (parenting/family support) and kinderstart (early literacy and education).

Under the ECDI umbrella, the Department of HCS has worked with RSCs to establish and strategically locate family resource centres to deliver these programs in high need areas.

The Individualized Student Support Plan (ISSP) is a streamlined process that brings together partners to better meet the needs of students with special learning needs so that they may receive services from health, education and other professions in a coordinated manner. The Community Youth Network offers an array of programs for children aged six to 18 who are living in, or at-risk of living in poverty. The services offered enhance young people's opportunities for participation in social and economic development by focusing on learning, technology education, human dynamics, employability skills, and mental health services through a partnership with the departments of HCS, HRE and Education, as well as HRDC. Similarly, "Stay in School" and career development programs are aimed at preventing young people from dropping out of the education system prior to completing their education. The Department of YSPSE funds and directs a host of youth-related employment strategies that are carried out in partnership with a range of community agencies.

The Department of Justice has funded a family therapist position at the Whitbourne Youth Centre to work with incarcerated young people and their families. The objective of the program is to provide counselling for the young offender as well as family-centred counselling that may also prevent younger siblings from future encounters with the Justice system. Both programs have been funded under a cost-shared agreement under the federal government's *National Child Benefit* program. The Department undertakes these programs to ensure best possible opportunities for troubled youth to achieve their full potential, with efforts to identify and mediate high-risk clients. However, it should be noted that these programs have yet to bring in the participation and involvement of other departments, potentially pointing to a missed opportunities for multi-departmental approaches.

The Youth Criminal Justice System has brought about new philosophies with respect to the management of youth in trouble. Currently, there is no formal process in place for identifying repeat offenders that come into contact with the Justice system when there is no formal charge laid or subsequent incarceration. To implement effective prevention strategies, a system-wide process is required to capture warning occurrences, particularly for repeat warnings, so that partners in the Justice system (police, social workers and family counselors) may identify and intervene with repeaters before they become involved in criminal activity that does result in more serious legal and personal consequences.

The Violence Prevention Initiative is a multi-departmental strategy aimed at creating awareness of the impact of violence on individuals particularly those most vulnerable. The impact is both psychological as well as social and economic. The Safe and Caring Schools Initiative is addressing the problem of bullying in schools.

The Wellness Strategy, being led by HCS, is one of the key elements in the Strategic Health Plan. The strategy is being developed by 26 government and non-government representatives, involving province-wide analysis and developing action plans around fundamental health issues that are intended to educate individuals regarding healthy choices and activities to ensure one's physical, emotional, and economic well-being. The investments are intended to result in

improved health and ultimately a reduction in health care costs related to preventable diseases. It is also anticipated that the strategy will improve overall health and contribute to reducing disparities and barriers to good health.

Different government departments have significant strategies (such as the Strategic Health Plan, the Strategic Literacy Plan and the Wellness Strategy) as well as numerous initiatives (such as the Violence Prevention Initiative and the Homelessness Initiative) that are developed to address specific needs. However, the link between different departmental strategies and initiatives is not obvious, possibly indicating a need for greater coordination among departments of their strategies and initiatives, particularly those that relate to SSP goals.

### **Indicators of Success**

- Departments are implementing a range of early intervention and prevention initiatives that appear to have been influenced, in whole or in part, by the SSP. Some pre-date the SSP, but embody SSP principles. Of particular note are the family resource centres where individuals can access a range of programs aimed at prevention and early intervention. Departmental partnerships with community-based agencies have been formed to deliver programs such as parenting and early literacy programs.
- Programs with targeted federal funds are enabling a focus on prevention and early intervention, including the *National Child Benefit*, the Wellness Strategy, the Primary Health Care Transition Fund, and the Strategic Literacy Plan. These initiatives represent coordinated investments between the provincial and federal governments.

### **Future Opportunities**

- While new initiatives are underway, it is difficult to assess if initiatives are the direct result of the SSP, of the availability of federal funding, and/or the result of productive discussion and joint planning between provincial government departments. While the Departments of HRE and HCS reported that such relationships exist, the existence of other similar joint planning processes in other departments are less evident, particularly in Education and Justice. This may point to the need for stronger expectations that departmental planning processes not occur in isolation and that strong linkages are created between departments regarding the development and implementation of strategies and related initiatives.
- Those programs that have a legislative mandate are more challenging from a collaboration perspective because they require responses that are dictated by a legislative process. Yet, it is through partnership activities that real movement can occur on prevention and intervention initiatives. This requires a careful balancing of need for public accountability, adherence to legislative requirements, and flexibility and responsiveness that is harnessed through collaborative processes.

- Those programs that have targeted federal money appear to have the greatest potential for success. Programs where provincial partners are unable to contribute resources tend to move forward more slowly. However, there are examples, such as the Violence Prevention Initiative and the ISSP process which might serve as examples where changes can occur without federal investments. More effort is required to ensure these two often-repeated examples are not the only available examples on a “go forward” basis.
- Core funding from government to community agencies is being increasingly replaced by specific project funding. Evidenced-based reporting from these agencies might ensure return for government’s investments, and might also identify opportunities for pooling resources for more targeted returns.
- User-driven, coordinated models for integrated service delivery could be developed to assist children in the transition to adolescence and adulthood, to assist clients who experience mental health issues, for seniors required to deal with multiple agencies, and other groups who must relate to multiple agencies. Obviously, this would require multi-agency coordination.

#### 4.3 Prevention and Early Intervention Approaches Between Government and Community-Based Partners

Some community-based agencies report improvement in both coordination and delivery of programs as a result of the SSP. The engagement of members of the community has resulted in increased mutual understanding of each other’s realities. While there is an atmosphere of increased trust, some feel that there are opportunities for greater inclusivity.

*“Bringing all the partners together to find a solution for a child allows them to see the whole range of issues that contribute to a problem, and that the child is likely not a ‘bad kid.’”*

STELLA BURRY FOUNDATION

The Homelessness Initiative is frequently cited as a successful collaboration between the community and both levels of government to provide short-term shelter to homeless people. Providing shelter is one of the first steps toward addressing fundamental poverty issues and facilitating a person’s capacity to meet their basic needs.

Community-based agencies have identified the decision to leave the *National Child Benefit* payment intact without income support clawbacks as a good example of government’s ability to listen and respond to community opinion. Early discussions had indicated that the provincial portion would be clawed back from income support clients. However, the community addressed the issue directly with government and the decision was reversed. This was considered a positive outcome that demonstrated government’s commitment to addressing poverty issues as part of a prevention strategy.

Both department officials and community members have cited the ISSP as a successful initiative because of its holistic approach to assess the complete range of student needs. The

program attempts to address fundamental and causal factors in a student's performance. Difficulties may be encountered at the delivery level if the student and his or her family are not involved as full and respected partners, and if sufficient resources are not available to provide the prescribed program.

Community-based agencies report that within some government departments, most notably HCS and HRE, there is tacit agreement to work together whenever possible. Some agencies report a culture shift at the management level. At the same time, they question the sufficiency of the work that has taken place within government to change the way people work. Community agencies question whether front-line government staff are committed to the principles of prevention and early intervention, or if they are sufficiently empowered with the authority to respond in ways that would support prevention and early intervention.

### **Indicators of Success**

- The Peterview Multipurpose Centre (developed through a community-based agency, Your Strength is Our Strength) is an example of community members coming together to provide a range of intervention and other services to meet their needs.
- The decision not to claw back the *National Child Benefit* demonstrated to community agencies that government's commitment to address fundamental poverty issues was genuine. It further convinced them that government was listening and could act on community advice.
- Community agencies cite a significant positive change in housing policy and approach to housing issues. For example, there is greater sensitivity and understanding that lack of housing can exacerbate other social issues, especially those affecting children.
- The decision within HCS to redirect funds from an already restricted home care budget to provide for enhanced care for special needs clients within the St. John's region has helped prevent an already difficult situation from worsening. Without these supports, care for these clients – many of whom have complicated mental health issues – could not be met by community resources alone.

### **Future Opportunities**

- Partnerships with community agencies offer benefits to government departments in that agencies can often create more open, trusting relationships with their clients. At the same time, these agencies are attempting to meet multiple demands such as actively seeking grant funding. Departments must balance the need for accountability for outcomes achieved and the need for sensitivity to the demands and challenges that community agencies face. At the same time, additional work is required to measure the effectiveness of investments through outcome-based evaluations.

- Community-based agencies suggest that adding additional community development officers with a mandate to facilitate multi-community collaborations and initiatives within regions would contribute to increased community capacity and grassroots mobilization.
- Some community-based agencies expressed concern that not all relevant players are able to participate in the development of regional strategies and the subsequent plans and strategies put in place by RSCs may not have consensual endorsement. They further question whether the programs that are cited as successful prevention and intervention strategies are the ones that were really needed. Some members of community agencies express concern about this and feel that there is a need for wider consultation.
- Project funding does not enable community agencies to develop strategies that address root causes. This makes it difficult to capitalize on proactive prevention and early intervention plans. There is concern that government is too “bottom line” oriented and that the accountability requirements do not take into consideration the long-term nature of prevention and intervention programs.
- Moving care into the community must be accompanied by supports in order to prevent clients’ return to institutional care. The objective to de-centralize program delivery and move it to the community level may enable more responsive and relevant prevention and intervention strategies, but there must be financial resources available to respond to needs at the local level.

## 5.0 Regional Services – Access and Quality

One of the central objectives of the SSP has been to develop the means by which government departments break down or eliminate the barriers to needed services, particularly for vulnerable populations such as children, women, persons with disabilities and the elderly. Defined standards reflect agreement about the need for coordinated efforts to ensure adequate levels of service for health, education, justice, housing, social services, recreation and employment are maintained throughout the delivery process. Where regional issues impact on both the access to and quality of service, departmental officials work with regional and community officials to eliminate the barriers to service whenever and wherever possible.

This goal speaks to the importance of equity as a value in the SSP – there is an assurance of equitable availability of services for all people in the province. It also suggests that government will make efforts to provide regions with the necessary supports to increase their potential for sustainability and self-reliance. This will enable government to move from an institutional or direct delivery model to a community-based delivery model, recognizing that services may be pooled in certain localities where their placement is strategic with other services, and infrastructure is in place to serve the region effectively.

The challenge has been to provide essential services in a fair and equitable manner while maximizing social and economic development in ways that are both logical and cost-effective. An evidence-based approach to choices around placement of services is intended to support decisions about investments to strengthen the community-based sector for service delivery. These decisions naturally focus on those communities where the placement ensures responsiveness to local and regional needs. Community involvement must ensure that proposed solutions are both workable and feasible.

Ensuring equitable access also involves removing barriers that impede individuals from achieving greater self-reliance. This has meant reducing the disincentives to employment and improving the access to career development, training and employment support programs for individuals and groups in need of such programs. It has also involved putting supports in place so people who experience barriers (childcare needs, transportation, language interpretation and sign language) can access services. Greater availability of literacy and basic life-skills programs in communities is intended to assist people to make informed choices and to achieve their potential. Though this evidence suggests disincentives have been reduced, these barriers have not been eliminated.

There was little evidence that departments have established tangible access and delivery standards. All acknowledge the need to improve services and remove barriers to access, but only HCS and HRE are establishing measurable service delivery and access goals.

## 5.1 Improving Access and Quality of Services by RSC Committees

Each of the RSCs has acknowledged that building community capacity is an essential element in their ability to improve access and enable delivery of services at the local level. Developing the human resources of each region, either by capacity-building through training and development or through programs that focus on retention and recruitment of professionals remain cornerstones in RSC strategic plans.

Use of the evidence-based approach has played an essential role in decisions around the placement of services. In the early days of SSP implementation in regions, many community leaders involved in the process saw their participation as a means for ensuring that their community got a “piece of the SSP pie” and the commitment to regional development was seen as secondary. Since then, commitment has shifted as the benefits of collective development have become obvious. The placement of a family resource centre in the Central region relied heavily on data supplied by a research project that gathered information to support decisions about location of services. This had been an issue of some debate that, in the end, was widely accepted because the choices were supported by independent, quantitative data.

*“People are not going to move to an area where they won’t have access to services.”*

Recreation and access to recreation facilities is seen as a vital element in prevention and early intervention for a range of community needs: for general economic and community development; to provide outlets that enable young people to make healthy use of recreational time; for the development of community leadership in remote communities; and as part of community wellness strategies. To respond to these needs, several RSCs have identified recreation as a priority and improvements to existing facilities and creation of recreation programs are aimed at increasing access. This is most true in remote parts of the province where there are few recreation opportunities outside of the school setting. The creation of the Torngat Recreation Commission has secured training for recreation directors, which has greatly improved and increased the range of offerings in remote communities. As a second benefit, the Labrador RSC reports that this training has been a boost of confidence for these directors who now feel a stronger sense of ownership within the community and are assuming leadership roles in non-recreation related areas within communities.

While there have been some improvements in access to health care and mental health needs, most RSCs report that there is not a lot of evidence to suggest that an appreciable difference is being experienced. Many cite examples that would suggest vulnerable individuals continue to be underserved. This has been most true in the health care sector around issues of home support, especially in cases of clients experiencing mental health problems. RSC members suggest that established government practices, including access standards, must be defined and adhered to unless there is a well-identified reason to do otherwise.



Many in the regions feel that, too frequently, services are being provided on a crisis management basis. The nature of funding has not sufficiently supported the development of long-term strategies, and decisions are often made on the basis of the availability of resources and are not coordinated at the regional level. Others cite examples to suggest there is a lack of coordination with community agencies that result in people having to go “door-to-door” in search of support. This is especially true with special needs children and clients with mental health issues. In general, RSCs suggest that the availability of consistent, long-term funding for support programs and prevention services for children is not sufficient to meet the needs.

Access to training and education presents challenges in all regions. Many suggest that there is still much to be accomplished by school districts to enable greater access for children with disabilities. There is agreement that inaccessibility of Level I adult basic education is an impediment to greater self-reliance for some individuals and that decisions around placement of these programs have not always been strategic.

Some RSC members have suggested that government must better understand how they work, including the issues and limitations regional staff experience in providing services and delivering programs. RSCs contend they have developed an operating environment and culture that is different from government. Others report a lack of cohesion around strategic plans by various

*“We are striving to connect, but we only have so many people.”*

CORMACK-GRENFELL RSC

government departments with resulting conflict around strategies. Within the health care sector, RSC members report that health boards decide what services are going to be offered, and perceive few changes or the development of strategies regarding regional access standards. Consideration of access may occur at the planning stage, but is not always evident when it comes to implementation and delivery.

There are geographic and social divides that impact access. Obviously, the distance one lives from the community has an impact on access by virtue of proximity to services. Both the Northeast Avalon and Avalon RSCs struggle to find the balance between urban and rural issues with respect to access.

### Indicators of Success

- In a number of regions, the availability of timely assessment and evaluation of children’s needs by speech language pathologists has involved long waiting periods. The need for specialists trained in this profession has been extreme in the Central region, supported by a research study that showed some children’s needs were not being met, even though there was a range of services being offered by two departments. Research to find ways to improve speech language pathology services to pre-school and school age children is now being completed within the Central region. The shortage of trained professionals and the disconnect between the services offered by the Health and Community Services board and the school district has meant that children were experiencing unacceptable waiting periods or no service at all. Recommendations range from improved methods and consistency in

assessment and case reporting, as well as improved recruitment strategies for speech language pathologists.

- The Northeast Avalon RSC has created substantial data to support their strategic planning and priority setting in the region. This has contributed to the development of comprehensive plans to target access issues on a number of priority areas.
- The youth-serving agencies, REDBs and government departments are working together in the Eastern, Cormack-Grenfell and Avalon RSC's to provide enhanced programs for young people. This has included programs for at-risk young people who were dropping out of school or were unemployed. These programs included stay-in school incentives, co-op work experience programs, career counselling and placement of social workers in schools to provide a range of support services.

### **Future Opportunities**

- There is an opportunity for enhanced coordination of departmental strategic planning through more timely consultation with the RSCs. Ideally, this would take place prior to drafting departmental plans and would enable both parties to achieve agreements about access standards, delivery mechanisms and priorities. It would also permit a better understanding of each other's realities.
- Recreational space is at a premium or is non-existent in many communities. Adaptive use of public buildings would respond to the shortage of recreational facilities in many communities. The need for such space underscores many wellness initiatives and prevention strategies for young people who need space to play, especially during the winter months. There is a need to ensure all school district boards provide evening access to their schools consistent with Department of Education policies and guidelines.
- Many RSCs identify the need for a formal process to bring forward items for action to appropriate departmental officials, with a communication strategy attached to the process. The current process for actioning items would benefit from analysis and clarification between the RSCs and government departments when issues around access and services are raised. The link between RSC planning and action items and the manner in which they are actioned within government is not clear.
- Members of RSCs have suggested that some members of the public service (and the public generally) would benefit from an awareness program about the true nature of the hardship which some individuals and communities experience in Newfoundland and Labrador. They suggest that there is a lack of sensitivity to the realities and impact of poverty in families and that this impacts on the quality of services provided. To paraphrase one respondent, "The literacy issue will not be served by criticizing people for not buying books." The need for poverty relief in some areas is very real and exists in both urban centres and rural areas.

## 5.2 Improving Access and Quality of Services by Government Departments

Reducing barriers to access and establishing minimum service standards is reflected in most departmental strategic plans, suggesting that there is common understanding and agreement about the need for client-focused approaches. The Strategic Health Plan includes appendices that specify targets for service delivery that are concrete and measurable. They include a list of indicators such as waiting times for diagnostic and surgical procedures that enable them to assess their progress and be publicly accountable for achieving these targets. Similarly, the new *Income Support & Employment Act* requires that HRE establish services and access standards to measure performance.

Within the Department of Justice, which has generally operated as a relatively closed department, victim services advisory committees have been formed, consisting of government personnel and community agencies to undertake programs for seniors and anti-bullying programs in schools in partnership with the Department of Education.

Delivery of programs by engaging community agencies has the potential to greatly improve

*“Access, equity and barriers to service are chicken and egg issues. We can develop plans, but if there are no resources to implement them, then this poses obvious limitations.”*

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND  
COMMUNITY SERVICES

access and in theory, improve the quality of service, by providing solid feedback to government regarding those services that are effective as well as those which are not meeting needs. This has also been served by consolidating offices to offer more seamless service delivery and reduction in the time required to access necessary services. Many department officials acknowledge that clients can be more comfortably

served by community-based organizations where there is likely a stronger identification with client needs in an atmosphere of trust.

The success of such devolutions to the community level relies heavily on the capacity within the regions to deliver on programs, and department officials acknowledge that this capacity varies widely throughout the province. This becomes a challenge to departments as they struggle to achieve strategic objectives across the province when the infrastructure, which might enable improved and more cost-effective access at the community level, is inconsistent. Community-based organizations do not always have the infrastructure to assume the responsibility for program delivery at the regional level and are often struggling to manage a host of priorities, including their own sustainability.

This is made more complex by the fact that support to the community-based sector has evolved from providing core grant funding to a more project-based approach. This provides departments with greater opportunities for short-term financial accountability, but ultimately contributes to uncertainty within the sector and impacts community organizations' capacity to undertake long-term programs and planning.

Concern was expressed that the transfer of program delivery must also be accompanied by a shift of funds that have been attached to programs. There are those within the community-based sector who also feel that the community cannot accept responsibility for complex service programs without some accompanying resources to do the work. All agree that access standards are very resource-driven and the issue of equity from region to region will continue to be a major challenge.

### Indicators of Success

- There have been major strides in the development of programs that enable people to move from income support to employment. These have been identified by undertaking ground-breaking approaches to engaging the community and individuals in ways that are meaningful and productive. The *Income Support & Employment Act* will enable HRE to develop more flexible income support programs that focus on prevention and a shift from income support to employment support. This will enable staff to work more closely with clients and community agencies to create greater attachment to the labour market.
- Regional co-location of a diverse range of departmental and community agencies such as ITRD, REDBs, and tourism associations has brought business and information capacities under one roof in some regions which means that clients can find regional, provincial, and federal services in one location. These represent strategic attempts to improve accessibility and make offices user-friendly. This same level of service is a fundamental principle applied through the use of technology and access in libraries, and through 23 business centres located across the province.
- The Victims of Violence initiative involved a wide range of individuals from departments, regional staff and community-based agency personnel to identify needs and develop responses and better coordinate services to victims at the regional level. The objective has been to resolve problems at the individual or community level. To address the tremendous demand for services, para-professionals have been trained within remote communities to improve response times within the Justice system. This has greatly reduced the time it takes to bring matters to trial.
- Understanding the realities of regional differences challenges departmental policymaking, yet principles of improved access must be achieved wherever the needs exist. In remote Labrador communities, the shortage of teachers has been a serious problem affecting the delivery of basic educational needs for students. A loosening of restrictions on retired teachers has enabled them to meet the needs in communities where they reside and has permitted local school districts to ensure that appropriate teacher-pupil ratios offer the best possible access to education for their students.

## Future Opportunities

- A more integrated approach to budgeting might permit more streamlined approaches. A process that enables joint review of budgets at the government department level and new ways of creating alignment and integration of economic and social development investments might result in better quality decisions, greater efficiencies, and better access to integrated services.
- Finding a balance between the need for engaging community-based agencies as mechanisms for delivery while maintaining public accountability for the use of funds, will be a continuing challenge for departments. To achieve this, continuing dialogue and training on both sides will be necessary.
- A similar process might occur at the regional level. A greater focus on outcomes is necessary to achieve the goal of evidence-based approaches. This might identify where investments have been most effective, and where the data would support future budgeting decisions.
- Government departments require more coordinated efforts to identify, reduce and eliminate barriers experienced by vulnerable client groups. Additionally, access standards that are reflective of the province's fiscal capacity and of regional needs could be developed, published and monitored as there is little evidence, other than within HCS and HRE, that efforts are underway to develop access standards and quality services in an integrated manner.

### 5.3 Improving Access and Quality of Services between Government and Community-Based Agencies

Some community-based agencies report that the past five years have seen the best working relationships ever between government and community agencies. They suggest that there has been real movement towards greater inclusivity and collaboration and which is meaningful and productive. People are eager to be a part of solutions and are willing to provide the needed supports at the community level.

Community-based agencies generally reported that there is an acceptable level of respect for the work that they do and some major successes have been achieved. However, agencies feel that there is a lack of front-line coordination and considerable overlap and gaps in service continue to exist, particularly in the provision of literacy and parenting programs. A number of agencies report that there is excellent collaboration occurring at the senior bureaucratic levels, but that same spirit of cooperation is not evident with government staff on front-line delivery. In some cases, it is believed that this may reflect a need for training, while others maintain that a complete re-design of service delivery is required to achieve access goals.

*“The redesign of service delivery might be better understood if certain groups were on the RSCs. For example, representatives from the Women’s Centres are not represented on the RSCs. They only come in at the project level.”*

STATUS OF WOMEN COUNCIL

The high quality of leadership that is coming from the SSP Office is appreciated but would benefit from increased resources. In particular, community-based agencies report the need for community development personnel to encourage greater grassroots mobilization and cooperation between communities for common goals. The objective would be to use these positions to facilitate the building of capacity among

communities by better focusing and capitalizing on a collective pool of assets and expertise.

All community agencies report that the access to services in rural and remote regions lags behind those in urban centres. Several agencies question the choice of representatives on RSCs. They believe that membership could be extended to those in grassroots organizations and women’s centres as a means of building capacity and creating greater access through more rational re-design and re-direction of services.

The funding approach undertaken by the federal government provides the provinces with a “basket of services.” This allows each province to select a range of federal services and programs to meet the regional needs, however, the contents of the “basket” change from budget to budget. As well, provinces are not able to take everything that is available in the basket, but instead may select those programs that add up to the provincial allocation. This process offers no guarantee of improved access or equity for provinces like Newfoundland and Labrador where the needs are great. Community agencies also suggest that additional investments in community development are needed to respond to fundamental systemic issues that cannot be addressed within the existing resource base of six regional planners in the field.

### **Indicators of Success**

- HRDC’s Homelessness Initiative was frequently cited as a program that has truly met the needs of an underserved community and has improved access to one of the most basic human needs. This initiative has been successful in providing short-term shelter, however, the more fundamental issue of providing long-term solutions for permanent housing options has yet to be addressed.
- Mental health clients, particularly those in rural and remote regions, represent a population that is particularly challenging to serve. There has been sharing of home support funds to successfully meet the needs of some of these clients. The new Mental Health Strategy, once released, will be a catalyst for change with re-organization of services to increase access through community case management and home support. High-needs mental health clients are being served through a web of services provided under a project model that involves government, community agencies and the Waterford Hospital in St. John’s. This has

resulted in successful community placement of these individuals who alternatively would have had to be served through the corrections system at a much higher cost.

- The Choices for Youth program has recently received both provincial and federal government funding to expand the scope of its operations. With the co-location of St. John's area youth-serving agencies at a new site under Choices for Youth, access to coordinated services will be enhanced, in an environment that is designed to remove physical and psychological barriers to access.

### **Future Opportunities**

- Improvements in service delivery and access might be achieved if resources were directed towards training programs that assist community groups and individuals better understand the needs of the clients they serve. Volunteers in communities now find themselves engaged in the provision of services that frequently require a level of professional knowledge they do not possess. In those regions where the human resources are stretched or non-existent, investment in training and development of service providers on the ground will be necessary, if government wishes to maintain reasonable access and quality standards from region to region.
- Training might also improve the capacity of both government department staff and their community counterparts to establish techniques for working together and to develop balanced approaches to serve the needs of clients. Communication from senior bureaucratic levels to front-line delivery staff is needed to understand where disconnects exist in the transition from philosophy to actual service delivery. Greater emphasis on understanding the ways in which the community sector can be engaged to improve access is needed within government.
- It has been suggested that creating regional volunteer centres would also provide enhancements to the support network in communities and might improve the delivery of services through identification and training of volunteer human resources. This may be an attractive approach if it does not add to costs associated with additional layers of bureaucracy. People may need training to participate fully in community development in some regions.

## 6.0 Community-Based Delivery

Community-based service delivery, as envisioned by the SSP, refers to a way of delivering programs and services through community agencies, thus achieving greater flexibility and effectiveness and developing shared responsibility for well-being. The intent is to move from institutional and direct delivery approaches within government to a community-based delivery model. Through this process, community capacity is enhanced.

*“There are clear benefits in investing in community-based agencies. They can closely identify with client needs and issues. Trust is formed and this means clients can be more comfortable being served.”*

DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES  
AND EMPLOYMENT

There are multiple examples of how this is occurring. One of the most exciting is a partnership enabled by HRDC’s Homelessness Initiative which addresses youth homelessness in St. John’s by providing a shelter for young males, co-located with a multi-agency youth services site, both linked to new transitional housing options for youth within the community. Of relevance to this study is the leadership role Choices for Youth will undertake.

This non-profit, board governed, community-based agency will assume the leadership role for management of this unique arrangement.

Also within HRE, the Single Parent Employment Support Program (SPESP) enables the provision of childcare, transportation and employment support to single parents who would otherwise not be able to avail of employment and training opportunities. This incentive is free of employment earning claw backs and is administered by a community-based agency, the Single Parents Association of Newfoundland and Labrador (SPAN). This represents a proven, example of successful community-based delivery which now has the potential for expansion to other provincial jurisdictions.

Similarly, also in St. John’s, a renewed focus for HRE’s program, New Beginnings, a supportive employment program, is underway by transferring governance and management responsibility to the Stella Burry Foundation. In addition, HRE supports another forty plus community-based agencies for the provision of employment preparation programs to assist unemployed clients. The Department of Education’s Literacy Branch annually allocates approximately \$250,000 to support early childhood literacy targeting children ages six and under and their families. Another \$300,000 (through the Literacy Development Council of Newfoundland and Labrador) is directed towards adult literacy program delivery. These annual funds are directed to community-based agencies as the delivery agent. HCS also allocates substantial funds, again in the way of grants, to support community-based delivery of programs and services.

However, it is difficult to determine if such investment in community-based agencies as a means to deliver programs and services has substantially changed as a consequence of the SSP. Departments report that funds are granted annually, and increasingly on a project basis, rather than through core operational funding. This ultimately prevents community-based agencies



from conducting their own strategic planning to secure the human resources to implement projects, knowing in advance that a project's longevity might only be a single year. Consequently, community-based agencies report they are "constantly chasing grant funding" to maintain operations and infrastructure, an activity that diverts attention away from building capacity to meet community and client needs. The sustainability of some community-based agencies is an on-going concern that diverts the attention of their governing boards from their true mandates.

Community-based agencies also perceive that government is downloading services without attaching adequate resources to address the clientele being served. Cynicism regarding government's intent to shift to community-based delivery models was apparent during the interviews with some agencies.

Departments themselves report concerns regarding their investments in community-based agencies. For example, it was noted that many agencies are linked to national bodies that articulate strategies and priorities that may not always be a good fit with provincial objectives. While government departments do not want to place onerous demands on community-based agencies for demonstrating outcome-based evidence of their programs and services, knowing the limitations on human and capital resources, they are nonetheless accountable for the investment of public funds.

Equally important is the assurance that funds are applied to programs that make a real difference for the intended clientele with anticipated outcomes being met. Altogether, on an annual basis, government departments distribute \$43 million directly to community-based agencies, much of which is in the form of project funding. It may be time to determine if more targeted investments in community-based agencies could reap better returns – a critical assessment of how things get funded and what they accomplish is required. For example, in fiscal year 2002/03, Early Childhood Literacy Grants in the amount of just over \$256,500 were awarded to forty-four different projects at an average grant allocation of \$5,800. While each grant recipient undoubtedly made the most of their funds, one must wonder if more targeted, focused investments might better leverage the capabilities of community-based agencies.

### **Indicators of Success**

- Government departments continue to support community-based agencies, with several new initiatives underway.
- There is a continued recognition among government departments that investments in community-based organizations are the right mechanism for connecting with clients, especially for vulnerable clients who may be intimidated by government processes.

- The work of the Joint Government/Voluntary Community-Based Sector holds the potential to meaningfully address the issues limiting better utilization of community-based agencies.

### **Future Opportunities**

- Those interviewed were not able to demonstrate that there has been a significant change in investment levels in community-based agencies as a means of achieving greater flexibility and effectiveness for service and program delivery. Indeed, community-based agencies report they feel more vulnerable as a result of a shift from core funding to project funding, as well as the overall decline in available grant funding.
- There may be merit in examining if the pooling of grant funding, both within individual departments and cross-departmentally, could result in more targeted, focused investments to achieve the goals envisioned by the SSP.

## 7.0 Integrated Social and Economic Development

A basic tenet of the SSP is the inextricable link between social and economic development. Employment is viewed as a fundamental link between social and economic development, underscoring the development of business and industrial opportunities in communities. This requires investments to address the root causes of problems that create barriers to education, training, health and wellness, as well as ensuring that choices are available for youth and that opportunities for a highly-skilled labour force exist. Acknowledging this, it was envisioned that government would re-design the income support program to focus more on active support for moving people to employment while continuing to meet their basic needs.

*“Some of our partners are co-located. One cannot overestimate the ‘power of coffee’ as this is an ideal opportunity for people to talk, share information and challenge each other.”*

CORMACK-GRENFELL REGIONAL  
STEERING COMMITTEE

As discussed elsewhere in this report, an acceptance of the integration of social and economic development is taking root within and among government departments and within RSCs. This has not been an easy, intuitive process, and has taken longer for economic departments and REDBs than for the social departments and their regional counterparts.

HRE has played a significant role in developing policies and programs that link social and economic development. The social assistance legislative review process has been completed and a new *Income Support & Employment Act* is ready for proclamation. The review process itself is held in high regard by community-based agencies and the RSCs as the process was inclusive, open, and entirely consistent with the SSP’s values and goals. The new legislation recognizes the barriers encountered by people at the margins of society and shifts the emphasis from income support to employment support. The department now employs 35 career development specialists who focus on identifying and removing barriers to employment. These positions did not exist prior to the release of the SSP. In addition, the introduction of a new payment system within HRE is anticipated to enable current financial assistance staff to work more intensely with clients to help achieve greater attachment to the labour market. This work represents a good example of how government has invested in and adapted social programs to reduce barriers to education, job training and work.

*“At the zonal (economic development board) office level, a tremendous amount of work gets done around the kitchen table. This is a reality of community-based development work”.*

DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRY,  
TRADE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

ITRD has been working with the REDBs and the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (ACOA) to build community capacity through leadership development programs. In the field, staff members approach projects from a community development perspective, by bringing together people from different government departments and community-based agencies. While this was originally challenging

because of “compartmentalization” of fields of experience, relationships are now much easier

and there is a willingness to work cross-departmentally. The department views its role as being one of “facilitation” and sees community-based agencies as being primary delivery agents.

The Strategic Partnerships Initiative is a high-level forum for government, labour and business to discuss evolving economic and related strategic issues confronting the province. It is supported by a steering committee that serves as a “work horse” and a secretariat that provides technical resources to undertake economic and social analysis. At each of these levels, business, labour and government are working together to build consensus for solutions to improve the province’s ability to address economic opportunities and challenges. This Initiative holds the potential to create conditions conducive to economic growth and to build coordinated interventions among government departments, business and labour to capture this potential.

Within YSPSE, there is a clear emphasis on youth employment. The Federal/Provincial Youth Employment Protocol that addresses the needs of at-risk youth for training, education and employment assists with these employment programs. In addition, the Student Investment and Opportunity Corporation creates employment opportunities for post-secondary students and ensures that students, particularly those in rural areas, have attachment to the workforce. There are numerous other programs that are delivered through community-based agencies which are funded by YSPSE and the federal government. However, of note is a program entitled Regional Economic Development and Schools. The aim of this program is to: support schools and school districts and enable them to consider their development within the local community; assess their needs and compare them to those of the regional economic zone; develop plans that assist in the transition of their students; and implement initiatives based on the awareness of local economic opportunities in keeping with REDB strategic economic plans. These are good examples of integrated initiatives that address youth unemployment.

Evidence of the integration of social and economic development also exists within HCS, and is particularly evident in the Provincial Wellness Strategy. The strategy recognizes that improvements in social, economic and educational development are important factors that will contribute to individual health and well-being. It also recognizes that effective solutions are best achieved when the community is fully involved.

*“The multi-generational experience of social assistance is a major issue and will require big, big changes. This is a 10, 15, and even 20-year process.”*

EASTERN RSC

RSCs see clear evidence that integrated approaches to economic and social development are emerging. For example, the Southern Labrador REDB is taking the lead role in the Healthy Communities Project and in Nain, the recreation director is taking on a leadership role in advocating for the need for a community development officer within the Inukshuk REDB.

Other examples within RSCs reflect the shift in thinking that has occurred within some committee members. While they are all now active partners in pursuing integrated approaches to economic and social development, this clearly was not the starting point within most regions.

For example, some RSCs reported that some members felt only economic development interventions would build sustainable regions and communities. However, now there appears to be a shared view that both economic and social development must occur in tandem. There is an understanding and commitment to working towards economic and social integration. However, several interviewees also noted that social development, on its own, would not lead to economic sustainability.

However, there are barriers which RSCs have identified. HRDC, at the regional and provincial level, are seen as being committed, but federally, the emphasis is upon economic development and job creation at the exclusion of social development. Within regions, there are huge geographical areas with districts and communities that have diverse needs. Even in the Northeast Avalon RSC, the rural/urban split adds complexity to addressing diverse needs. There is recognition that approaches must be modified based upon unique community and sub-regional characteristics.

RSCs also reported that their regional progress is often hampered by the lack of consistent cross-departmental support for social and economic integration. When government intervention is requested, frustration has been expressed about the apparent lack of accountability back to the RSCs with timely responses. RSCs believe government departments do not fully understand the RSC mandates and that this hampers planned initiatives.

RSCs, even the most established, recognize that their approaches to integrated economic and social development are still in an infancy stage. All reported that the SSP, as an evolving process, is gathering strength and community support – essential ingredients for sustainable changes in the way people think and work.

### **Indicators of Success**

- Employment is viewed as a basic link between social and economic development. There is also recognition that communities must be involved in removing barriers to education and training and health and wellness.
- YSPSE, in cooperation with federal government partners, is implementing programs that address youth employment, including for youth at risk.
- HRE has led a highly successful public consultation process that has enabled the preparation of a new *Income Support & Employment Act* that is highly endorsed and supported by RSCs and community-based agencies. In addition, the department is taking additional measures to achieve a greater focus on employment support.
- RSCs fully embrace the link between social and economic development, and partners who were initially skeptical, are emerging as active supporters.

- ITRD's field staff have a primary focus on community economic development approaches, which are closely aligned with the mandate of RSCs.
- The introduction of *Community Accounts* and *From the Ground Up* offer important elements for monitoring progress in regional economic and social development and will serve as powerful tools for regional planning and regional service and investment decisions.

### **Future Opportunities**

- Though there is good support from HRDC at a regional level, federal policies do create some disconnects with their provincial counterparts and with RSCs. However, while RSCs generally referred to HRDC's role in economic development and job creation, the scope of HRDC's mandate is much larger and could be explored for opportunities for further engagement. Additionally, opportunities may exist with ACOA, Health Canada, Fisheries and Oceans, Industry Canada, and with the Rural Secretariat of Agriculture Canada. These areas might be further explored to achieve alignment in long-term economic development plans among the provincial and federal governments as well as with the REDBs.
- RSCs continue to build their own internal capacity and to create greater community awareness of their mandates. As this continues to occur, RSCs may face increasing pressures on their staff's ability to respond to the range of integrated social and economic issues within their geographically large and diverse regions.
- RSCs feel that central government departments do not fully understand and support their efforts to achieve social and economic integration. Central government accountability for responding to issues that are identified by RSCs could be strengthened.
- RSCs feel there is a need for greater awareness within government of the role of RSCs with regard to SSP implementation and that there should be stronger expectations for departments to work cross-departmentally.
- Links between social and economic development need to be endorsed in government and community-based agencies, following the lead of the RSCs. The participation of community-based agency representatives in the SSP process is a key requirement for facilitating their involvement in this important work.
- RSCs, while having identified priority areas for action, might take a more active role in coordinating long-term development strategies as a basis for investment decisions for regional services and infrastructure. Such plans might also serve as a basis for monitoring progress in social and economic development. The 'project' approach may have helped to create some momentum around early SSP implementation, but this strategy may need re-thinking to ensure that the real priorities in the region are being addressed through solid evidence-based approaches.

- Government's Strategic Partnerships Initiative, while enabling business, government and labour to work together to respond to the economic issues that confront the province, also requires alignment among government departments. This may point to the need to integrate the SSP and the Strategic Economic Plan to enable greater cross-departmental alignment.

## 8.0 Coordinated Investments

The SSP envisioned coordinated provincial investments with its federal and municipal counterparts and with regional and community-based organizations to implement prevention and early intervention plans, and more broadly, to achieve the outcomes identified in the SSP. In addition, coordinated investments with the federal government were desired to achieve social and economic development, consistent with long-term regional and provincial economic plans. Of particular emphasis was:

- The creation of an employment program in the community-based sector to provide new employment opportunities;
- Matched federal/provincial economic development agreements and programs to create employment consistent with zonal economic plans;
- Coordinated social and economic development objectives; and
- Continued focus of the Labour Market Development Agreements on local labour market and business development needs.

### 8.1 Coordination with the Federal Government

A key tool for coordination has been the Labour Market Development Agreement (LMDA), which has enabled service provision through a co-managed process involving HRDC, key government departments, and regional and community partners. The LMDA takes a long-term development approach to facilitate economic development, job creation, and training consistent with real economic development opportunities. There is a three-way formal partnership in place between the REDBs, the provincial government, and the federal government that involves an annual review of progress on a range of issues. However, during the course of this study, the federal government has decided to no longer fund economic development programs and this will affect the future ability of community-based organizations to engage in this process. In addition, some government departments detect the federal government is moving away from cost-shared programs and cooperation agreements with provinces and regions, which have previously funded community involvement in economic development.

All RSCs have an HRDC partner at their table, though in the Labrador RSC, additional federal government participation is occurring through Health Canada and Indian and Northern Affairs. There is recognition that these partners are constrained by federal policy and are reluctant to provide any flexibility to programs for fear of potential repercussions for setting precedents outside the scope of their mandates. Around the RSC tables, there is tension between the principles of equity and equality.

There is a prevailing view within RSCs and provincial government departments that the federal and provincial governments are not aligned in their priorities. There was a shared sentiment that relationships must improve to achieve greater coordination.



## Indicators of Success

Compared to five years ago, there is limited evidence that the level of anticipated coordinated investment decisions between the federal and provincial government has changed in nature or substance. Nonetheless, there are two important indicators of success:

- The provincial government has been able to capitalize on federal government initiatives to tailor provincial and regional program and service delivery responses; and
- Regionally-based federal government partners are active participants in the RSCs, which is where support and engagement is emerging.

## Future Opportunities

- There is disconnect between federal government funding guidelines and the realities of different needs within provinces. The “basket of services” approach offered is intended to permit provinces to choose those elements required, but the basket has shrunk considerably.

- There is clearly much more work to be done between the provincial and federal government to create greater alignment of investment decisions. Federally-funded programs, while significant enablers, are designed by the federal government with the province responding in accordance with program funding guidelines.

*“There is no federal policy on the integration of social and economic development. Provincially, we are more advanced than the federal government.”*

NORTHEAST AVALON RSC

- Continued promotion of the SSP and engagement of regionally-based federal government representatives, primarily through HRDC, but also through ACOA, Fisheries and Oceans, Industry Canada, Health Canada and the Rural Secretariat of Agriculture Canada, is required to build stronger cohesion for regional and community responses.
- As noted elsewhere in this report, there are also opportunities for provincial government departments to further coordinate their own investments to meet social and economic objectives.

## 8.2 Coordination with Municipalities

The Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of Municipalities (NLFM) is represented on four of the six RSCs and it appears that the Central RSC, the first RSC to be established, has had the most direct involvement with municipalities. The Eastern and Northeast Avalon RSCs have reported an increasing interest of municipalities in the SSP process. However, both RSCs feel that only now are they ready to become more actively involved with municipalities, particularly since, over time, the role of municipalities in the SSP has become more clearly defined.

In 2002, the Central RSC conducted four municipal information sessions, held with joint sponsorship by the NLFM, HRDC, ITRD, and the REDBs. These sessions served as an opportunity for communities to learn about the Central RSC partnership and the resources available to them. Furthermore, the sessions established a foundation for future partnerships with municipalities to advance the SSP goals.

An ever-present theme during the interviews with government departments, RSCs and context interviews was around the issue of community sustainability. While the SSP specifically references a goal for "...sustainable regions, based upon strategic investment in individuals, families and communities," there are fears within some municipalities that they will be consumed if they become involved in the SSP process and partner with other communities for shared services and resources. This will be a challenge for RSCs as they move forward. Clearly, municipalities have a role in supporting community-based programs that build self-reliant, healthy and educated individuals living in safe, nurturing communities, but within the context of making prudent strategic regional investment decisions.

### **Indicators of Success**

- RSCs and municipality representatives are beginning to embark on a process of engagement, primarily through information sessions.

### **Future Opportunities**

- As RSCs continue to develop strategies to deal with identified priority areas, there are opportunities to ensure municipal representatives are engaged either through: involvement on subcommittees; community information sessions; and/or other consultation and partnership arrangements.
- The issue of community sustainability in regions is real and must be addressed through open dialogue regarding strategic approaches to investment decisions.

## 9.0 Labour Market Development Strategy

The SSP envisioned a labour market strategy to address regional labour market development issues by:

- Identifying emerging private-sector employment opportunities and the long-term development strategies being pursued in REDB strategic plans;
- Identifying the range and extent of employment creation opportunities within the community-based sector and how these opportunities could be enhanced; and
- Developing a human resources strategy for preparing people to participate in long-term development strategies for each region, both as entrepreneurs and as employees.

### Current Status

The Labour Market Development Strategy is being developed by an interdepartmental committee led by HRE. As the strategy is still being developed, it is not available for review for this study. It is intended to be a broad, public policy document that will focus on building effective human resources responses to meet skills development needs, fostering better utilization of the labour supply potential, and building a highly responsive education system that spans the entire life cycle. Interviewees suggested that the strategy development process has resulted in greater awareness of the need for better-integrated economic and social development in ways that reflect the balance required on both sides of the development equation. As such, the strategy is expected to emerge as an integrative force for public policy and program and service delivery.

## 10.0 Learning Discussion Groups

The learning discussion groups provided an opportunity to learn from regional staff and partners and community-based agencies regarding their perceptions of the SSP's impact upon their own organizations, changes in the way government is conducting business, barriers that impeding implementation progress, and suggestions for future directions and actions to support the SSP's continued implementation.

### RSCs as a forum for change

Participants of the learning discussion groups, particularly those in Gander, Corner Brook and Happy Valley/Goose Bay were highly appreciative of the enhanced level of cooperation and communication that has occurred within regions as a consequence of the SSP. The RSCs were seen as being an instrumental forum for facilitating regional discussions of regional issues, for identifying service delivery gaps and duplication, and for the formation of networks of people who are addressing common issues. Of particular note was the unqualified appreciation of the unique skill sets of the RSC regional planners who are viewed as catalysts who embrace community development and involvement as cornerstones for their work.

*“Before the SSP, everyone was doing their own thing. There was no shared commitment. Now, the SSP provides a shared focus.”*

CENTRAL REGION  
LEARNING DISCUSSION GROUP

Happily, the RSCs were seen as being an instrumental forum for facilitating regional discussions of regional issues, for identifying service delivery gaps and duplication, and for the formation of networks of people who are addressing common

The networks and initiatives that have been undertaken by RSCs were cited as being positive illustrations of the successes emerging as a result of the SSP. While the formal initiatives undertaken by the RSCs were cited as positive examples of the RSCs capacity to spur change, other more subtle, but equally powerful examples were also provided. These are symbols of success that are not necessarily reported, but which emerge as a result of connections being made. Both these examples illustrate “firsts,” something that could not have occurred three years ago. For example:

- A connection facilitated by a regional planner that resulted in a parenting skills session as part of a conference hosted by voluntary community leaders – a conference that would not have been possible three years ago; and
- Arrangements for an additional after school bus run in a south coast community has enabled children to participate, for the first time, in after school programs.

As a forum for change, participants in the St. John's area were less endorsing of the SSP. This is likely the result of the strategic decision made by the Northeast Avalon RSC to initially invest in obtaining good data as the basis for decision-making rather to invest in projects. Projects sponsored in other regions have helped achieve visibility for the RSCs, but this visibility is less evident in the St. John's area. Nonetheless, participants of both St. John's discussion groups endorsed the SSP's vision, values and goals. While the need for additional funding to support

the SSP was expressed in many learning discussion groups, this sentiment was particularly vocal in the St. John's community partners discussion group.

### **Impact of the SSP on regional organizations**

With regards to the impact of the SSP upon participants' organizations, there was a prevailing view that there is a new awareness of their interrelationship with other organizations. There is a sense that "something new is happening" and of emerging norms of consultation, inclusion, and of a broad systems view. There is increased intolerance of unilateral actions and an expectation for accountability for decisions that are not perceived to be consistent with the SSP's goals and of the priority areas identified by RSCs.

There was a consistent view that prior to the SSP, regional organizations dealt with each other in isolation, diminishing the potential for multiple organizations to diagnose and discuss issues. Problems were addressed on a symptom basis rather than on a root cause basis. Professionals reported a greater sense of pride and satisfaction in working in partnership with other organizations to address issues than was the case prior to the introduction of the SSP.

While progress in achieving coordination in youth programming generally, and the consolidation of efforts for regional recruitment and retention of professionals in the Central and Labrador RSCs was occurring, a void in coordinated efforts to provide greater coordination of services for seniors in both the Cormack-Grenfell and Labrador regions was identified. Greater integration in social and economic development was believed to be occurring at the RSC level, but less so within sub-regions.

Both regional staff and community-based agencies noted that the overlap of organizational boundaries within regions continues to be an issue. Examples were given of the added complexity of the different boundaries of the provincial and federal government departments, school districts, REDBs, HCS boards, and institutional health care boards. Some organizations, such as HCS boards and REDBs serve on more than one RSC. Participants wondered if more focused efforts could be perused through a provincial county system. The exception is the Central RSC where there is greater congruence in organizational boundaries, a characteristic that is felt to be a positive enabling force.

### **Desire for greater inclusiveness**

Regional staff and partners noted there is a desire for greater inclusiveness – managers of government departments and partner organizations want more information regarding the activities of the RSCs and most indicated they want to become actively engaged in the process of change. Similarly, community-based agencies feel that while the RSCs have engaged regional government departments, there is now a need to more actively and meaningfully engage community agency representatives. In the St. John's community agency discussion group, this was a key recurring theme.

## Perceptions of changes in the way government is conducting business

While regional staff and partners noted there are changes occurring in the mindsets of regional organizations, changes in the way central government departments operate are less evident.

Among government departments, silos were said to be continuing, though less so in some government departments. Red tape and bureaucracy were noted as being barriers that frustrate regional progress in initiatives, such as the desire to achieve greater coordination of speech language pathology services within regions. In literacy programs, grant funding was not always seen as being congruent with community needs, with one case being cited where a joint agency submission for funding was unsuccessful. In the Gander discussion group, there was concern

*“Social departments of government cannot write themselves out of their SSP responsibilities as a result of existing policy – they need to change the policy.”*

CORMACK-GRENFELL REGION  
LEARNING DISCUSSION GROUP

expressed that the Department of Education seemed to be unaware of the Joining Forces Project, a Central RSC initiative aimed at addressing recruitment and retention issues, particularly for education and health boards. These perceived disconnects perpetuate a sense that central government is not aware of the initiatives being undertaken in regions. Furthermore, learning discussion group participants also noted that social departments tend to focus on applying existing policy rather than explore how existing policy can be changed to achieve desired changes.

## Suggestions for future directions and actions

A number of suggestions for the future implementation of the SSP were offered as follows:

- Stronger recognition systems are required to support changes being achieved by government departments, RSCs and volunteers.
- Strong accountability measures within government departments are required to support changes in the way government is conducting its business. Accountability measures should include obligations to increase communication, to more actively become aware of RSC initiatives, as a basis for increased support for regional decision-making, and to compel departmental progress reporting for issues that are elevated to government departments for policy review.
- More resources are required to support the work of the RSCs, specifically for additional regional planners.
- Greater awareness of the SSP and of RSCs to communities, departmental staff and community-based agencies is required.

*“Regional Steering Committees need more time. It is an evolutionary process. There are no quick fixes, but we are establishing a process and trying to tear down silos.”*

LABRADOR REGION  
LEARNING DISCUSSION GROUP

- Greater inclusiveness of the community-based agencies in the SSP and RSC is desired by these agencies. Staff of regional partners also desire greater involvement in the work of RSCs through subcommittee and network structures.
- Though training in the use of *Community Accounts* was noted as being excellent, some participants identified the need for additional training.
- User-driven, coordinated service delivery models are required for seniors (within Cormack-Grenfell and Labrador RSCs) and for families.
- Within the Cormack-Grenfell region, there is a desire for more coordinated investments in parenting programs as programs through multiple agencies are felt to be occurring in isolation of each other.
- The boundaries of boards within regions could be revisited to achieve greater congruence and more efficient decision-making at the regional level.

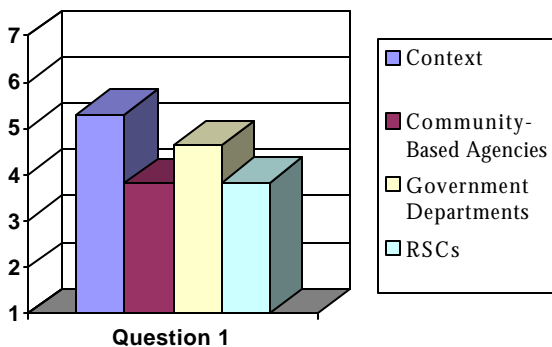
## 11.0 Analysis of Quantitative Data

*The Learning Study* has been largely qualitative, with respondents providing their opinions about SSP implementation on a range of topics. To support this information and to provide an objective rating of the status of the SSP implementation, six statements were read to participants. They were asked to rate their agreement with the statement using a scale of 1 to 7 where “1” meant that they strongly disagreed with the statement and “7” which meant they strongly agreed.

Four groups of respondents have participated in this study. They include key individuals involved in the early stages of SSP design (referred to as context interviews), government departments, RSCs, and community-based agencies. The following reflects the range of responses on the six questions.

**Question 1:** Compared to five years ago, government has changed the way it conducts business consistent with the SSP’s principles and values.

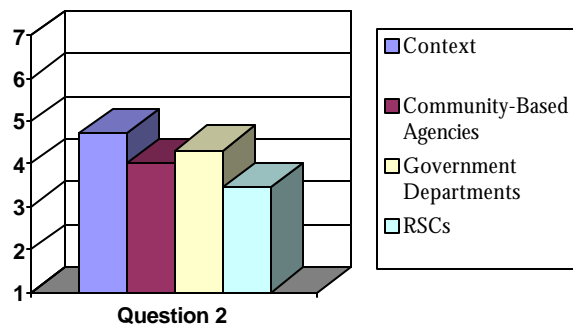
Not surprisingly, context interviewees gave this question the highest ranking (avg. 5.3) with



community agencies and RSCs giving the lowest ranking for this statement (avg. 3.8). Community agencies and RSCs are perhaps focused on the gaps in government services and have the most acute sense of needs within the community that may continue to be underserved. They therefore bring a more critical analysis to this statement. Those closest to the front-line may be the last to see distinct changes in the way government conducts business, even though changes may

be occurring. Context interviewees are perhaps the furthest from front-line delivery and therefore take a broader perspective on this issue. Conversely, department staff see advances in their modes of operation (avg. 4.6).

**Question 2:** Compared to five years ago, individual government departments have changed the way they conduct business consistent with the SSP’s principles and values.

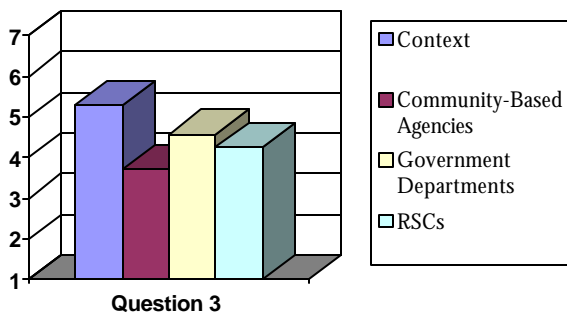


The wording of this statement gives respondents an opportunity to qualify or provide insights into their answers to question 1. This statement elicited responses such as, “It depends on the department,” indicating that there are some who are further along than others. Several RSCs actually gave



two rankings in this statement, separating those who they believed had made little progress (Education and Justice avg. 1.0) to those who were more advanced (HCS and HRE, avg. 4.9). The average ranking for question 2 dropped from that of question 1 for respondents in departmental interviews (avg. 4.3), and in context interview (avg. 4.7). The community groups gave an average ranking of 4.0. This may suggest that most respondents feel that government as a whole has improved processes, but individual departments may lag behind.

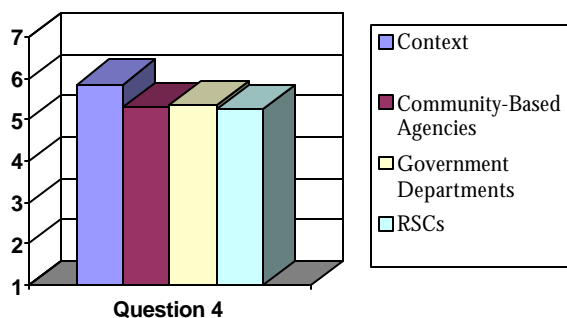
**Question 3:** Government departments have adopted the vision of the SSP into their departmental planning and strategies.



This question probes more deeply, asking respondents to consider whether SSP principles are evident in departmental planning. Here again, RSCs felt the need to split responses into a low performance ranking of 2.0 to a high performance ranking of 4.5. Again, HCS and HRE were referenced in the higher ranking. The community agency ranking (avg. 3.7) was accompanied by comments such as, "... plans are not shared

with us..." or, "...on paper only." RSCs and community agencies both expressed reservations about the real commitment to the SSP in departmental planning. Departments gave a ranking in the middle of the range (avg. 4.6) with one department (Education) indicating stronger agreement with the statement (7.0).

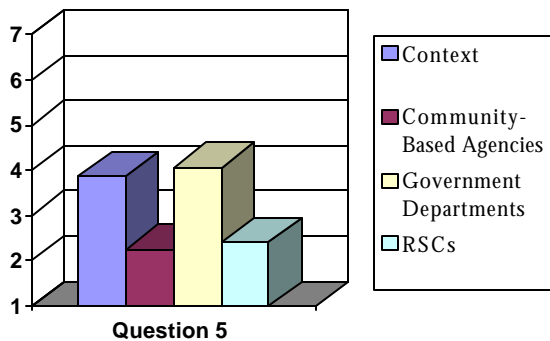
**Question 4:** The SSP is effective in facilitating government/community partnerships and community capacity building.



For the most part, this statement elicited high rankings which speak to the value participants place on the SSP process. This is supported in the qualitative interviews, where there is strong agreement about the value of the partnerships that have developed through the SSP implementation process. The overall average (5.4) indicates that there is general agreement about the effectiveness of the SSP

for its contributions to partnership development and community capacity building.

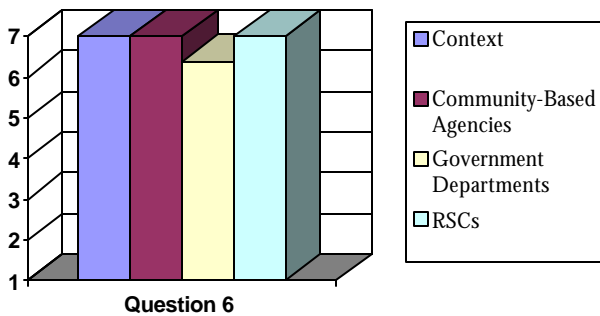
**Question 5:** The SSP vision, values and goals guide the work of people at all levels within government.



The operative word in this statement is “all.” It is included to ensure that respondents would really have to consider whether a ringing endorsement of the SSP in action within government is deserved. RSCs (avg. 2.4) and community agencies (avg. 2.3) in general, gave a low ranking in connection to this statement. Some singled out the social departments as having truly embraced SSP values in their work while other departments may be lagging behind. Government

departments ranked themselves more highly than others (avg. 4.1), but there was general agreement that there is considerable opportunity for movement on this issue. Those in context interviews gave an average ranking of 3.9, also pointing to the opportunity for improvement.

**Question 6:** The SSP as a strategy is important to the future of our province.



RSCs, community agencies and context interviewees were unanimous in their very strong agreement with this statement (avg. 7.0). Government departments also gave the statement a high ranking, although a little lower (avg. 6.4). This might suggest that they see the SSP as important, along with a number of other initiatives. Their perspective is perhaps affected by their knowledge of the complexity of change from within government, and of the diverse

and challenging nature of issues in the province.

## 12.0 SSP Strengths, Weaknesses and Recommendations

### 12.1 Strengths

The most significant strength of the SSP is the forum it provides for people to come together to investigate and address regional issues in an integrated manner. A culture shift is beginning to emerge. The SSP is successfully driving an understanding of the need for integrated social and economic development and evidence-based decision-making to address these issues. The introduction of *Community Accounts* and *From the Ground Up* will become powerful enablers of good evidence-based decision-making, monitoring and progress in social and economic development.

The creation of the RSCs represents a key enabling mechanism. While one government department suggested that the RSC structure should not be necessary to bring together regional public servants and board representatives, the RSC structure has in fact provided the necessary impetus for more collaborative approaches between all participants. Although the process of developing a “working” partnership approach within RSCs has been a time consuming one, it was necessary work. This reflects a process of dialogue and mutual discovery that develops shared meaning and builds capacity. RSCs have had to approach their work in their own unique ways and this will result in unique approaches and solutions to generational issues that exist within their regions. However, some core consistencies have been achieved through the efforts and support of the SSP Office.

RSCs are only now able to build on their early planning and wins to address more systemic issues. RSCs acknowledge this and feel their new capacities will bring about the changes envisioned by the SSP. Consistently, the skills and commitment of regional planners were noted as being key strengths. These are vibrant, talented resources that are truly valued by their RSC members. Additionally, the SSP Office is seen as being an important integrative force to resolve cross-departmental issues for RSCs.

Within government departments, collaborative practices are emerging, though clearly more advanced in some departments more than others. Indeed, several community-based agencies have observed that a culture shift is emerging within government.

Departments view the SSP as an important integrating force that will result in better coordination, better investments, and better access to services and programs that produce desired outcomes. Some departments appreciate the good work that is arising from the RSCs, though there was also evidence that some departments are more appreciative of this work than others.

Strong leadership within departments appears to be an important factor in departmental progress to change the way government conducts business. HRE and HCS in particular were consistently noted as being good examples, where leadership support is enabling progress in

achieving the SSP's vision and goals. RSCs note that the consistent presence of departmental officials who have the authority to act on issues in their committees is helping enormously.

There is evidence to support that there is progress being achieved as envisioned by the SSP, particularly SSP objectives and actions in these areas:

### **SSP Design**

- Effective partnerships have been formed within RSCs to design programs that are responsive on a client and community basis;
- There is a focus on prevention and early intervention, especially for children, youth and those receiving income support;
- Within HCS, there is progress in creating access standards and HRE will be developing access standards as part of the provisions of the *Income Support & Employment Act*;
- RSCs have been addressing access barriers, particularly in the area of recreation and access to speech language pathology;
- A Labour Market Development strategy is in the process of being developed;
- Among government departments and within RSCs, there is a deepened appreciation of the need for integrated social and economic development;
- YSPSE, HRE and the federal government are offering coordinated programs aimed at addressing youth unemployment;
- The *Income Support & Employment Act* has been redesigned using an inclusive consultation process that community-based agencies have endorsed. This is an *Act* that enables HRE to reduce the effects of poverty;
- A Strategic Literacy Plan has been developed and grants are awarded to support literacy programs; and
- Investments in community-based agencies are enabling basic life-skills education.

### **SSP Implementation**

- Strong partnerships are emerging with partners at the provincial, regional and community levels, and are being fostered with HRDC;
- RSCs have undertaken assessments of the characteristics of their region as the basis for priority setting and for future partnerships with Regional Boards as a basis for decision-making; and
- Team-based approaches are emerging in initiatives such as the multi-agency location with Choices for Youth, and the new Primary Health Care Initiative.

### **Strategic Investment**

- Through the Social Audit process, the introduction of *Community Accounts* and *From the Ground Up* represent processes/mechanisms to enable monitoring of progress in regional social and economic development;
- Coordinated investments with the federal government initiatives have enabled prevention and early intervention supports for children and families and for tuition vouchers for youth

at risk. In addition, family resource centres have a population health focus and offer healthy baby clubs and other programs to support families; and

- The Department of Justice is focusing on restorative justice and alternative dispute resolution, and RSCs are assuming a role in recreational initiatives.

## 12.2 Weaknesses

While progress is being made in implementing the SSP, changes in the way government is conducting its business is occurring more slowly than envisioned. This may be due to the fact that no major organizational or administrative changes were introduced at the time of SSP implementation that would encourage and/or enable new ways of working together. Consequently, where collaboration and cooperation are occurring, it is often taking place despite the realities of an organizational and financial structure that doesn't support these efforts and may at times even be obstacles to working together.

### **Cross Departmental Planning**

The reality of the province's fiscal capacity will mean that new funds to support initiatives will likely not be sufficient to address all of the priority issues identified by departments and RSCs. This will require a stronger imperative to reallocate existing resources in new ways.

The planning and budgeting cycle within government departments and their regional offices is still occurring in silos, without the benefit of collaboration among departments or within regions. Achieving the outcomes envisioned by the SSP will require targeted investments that must occur within existing available resources. Good business planning within government departments that actively embraces the SSP goals might also be beneficial.

Stronger accountability is required to ensure government departments are doing business consistent with the SSP approach. Currently, there are no meaningful mechanisms for holding departments accountable for operating in silos or resisting opportunities for partnership approaches. For the future, consideration must be given to developing effective recognition and accountability for performance consistent with the SSP way.

### **Streamlining governments' investment strategies**

The extent of coordinated investments envisioned by the SSP, among government departments and between the different levels of government, has not yet occurred as a result of the SSP. However, much of the progress that has been achieved in the SSP's implementation has occurred as a result of federal priorities and targeted federal funds. Interestingly, many of the success initiatives that interviewees cited, have targeted federal funds attached to them, with the exception of the Violence Prevention Initiative and the Individual Student Support Plan process, both of which were initiated prior to the implementation of the SSP. These two initiatives illustrate that effective responses are possible without targeted federal funds.

### **Collaborative, longer-term strategic plans**

A project mentality has taken hold within Newfoundland and Labrador at the provincial, federal and community levels. Community groups are experiencing the loss of longer-term

sustaining funds at the very point at which they are being asked to do more and assume greater responsibilities. In addition, there is a commonly held view that suggests that the SSP is not about “quick fixes” and is intended to seek long-term solutions – a view that is incongruous in a funding atmosphere which does not support that. With the emphasis now on projects, organizations are forced to find ways to re-invent themselves in order to qualify for funds – a process which is not conducive in many ways to both long-term planning and to evidence-based management. If government wishes to actively engage the community-based sector with funding that is distributed on a project basis, then there must be continued efforts to communicate as equals with community partners in order to understand each other’s priorities. Strategic planning must involve both groups to establish one common plan. When common understanding of goals can be determined in consultation with each other, the resulting allocations can be applied to achieve the strategic goals of the region.

### **Community responsibilities**

Communities and their municipalities have inherent responsibilities within the SSP. Communities have a responsibility to become active participants in social and economic development and to support individuals who assume a leadership role. While communities have a democratic role and responsibility for advocating for services to meet legitimate unmet needs, the fiscal capacity of the province must be acknowledged. A mindset change within communities is needed, one that permits the exploration of regionally-based services offered on the basis of access standards. The RSCs have a role to play in engaging municipalities within their regions and creating community capacity for embracing new service delivery models within regions and for related infrastructure investment decisions.

### **Change management and communication strategies**

Undertaking a change of this magnitude within government will take many years and will require dedicated leadership. It will require an enormous shift within the culture of government. Many in the community and within government have expressed concerns about a lack of understanding of the SSP throughout all levels of the provincial government.

A lack of training within government has been repeatedly cited as a significant gap in SSP implementation. Many acknowledge that within some government departments, there is tremendous support and “buy-in” at the deputy, assistant deputy and director level but beyond that, front-line staff are not often fully aware of the SSP, do not know what it means to the province and certainly have only passing knowledge of how it might affect them as they do their jobs. This becomes a problem when they are expected to understand and deliver on collaborative programs of which they have no knowledge, and which often require them to change the manner in which they do their work. Many community agencies report that front-line staff often have no knowledge of agreements that have been made between community agencies and deputy ministers. This suggests that there are communication needs not being met within departments and that there is no process for building and sharing SSP implementation right down to the front-line. Many within government feel that there is insufficient

communication about the SSP to help the average employee understand the process and see where the successes have occurred.

Training is an issue in the community-based sector as well. The decreasing availability of human resources in rural Newfoundland and Labrador presents a major challenge for government as it tries to build capacity to enable a higher standard of access in the regions. There are a very large number of volunteer boards in this province, all trying to meet the needs of the communities they serve. This volunteer contingent is relatively small and their numbers are shrinking as people age. How will new and existing programs be delivered if the front-line volunteers burnout and there is no one to replace them? Training of others to increase the capacity of communities will need to occur to maintain the resources necessary to deliver on the programs cost-effectively.

More communication in all forms has emerged as a theme during the interviews. There is a need to celebrate the successes and use them to demonstrate to others how to work together. A sustainable internal communication strategy is needed to support better understanding throughout government. Many people in communities still feel disconnected from the decision-making process and wish there were more frequent opportunities for real consultation. Some RSCs feel that they have yet to create a process for actually working “with” government. They wonder what impact their planning has on decisions made by government. There needs to be a more formalized process to tie items requiring action, with some form of tracking and mechanism for follow-up. This need reflects the evolution of government processes as everyone learns how to do business in ways that support SSP goals and values.

The following examples amplify some of the challenges to successful and more rapid implementation:

### **SSP Design**

- Despite the intention to encourage collaboration and cooperation between government departments, the departmental budgeting process is not supportive of this strategy;
- There is no way in which to account for cost-sharing strategies as part of a budgeting process;
- There is no formal process or models for government departments to work together. The establishment of Memoranda of Understanding would assist in supporting clear understanding of each partner’s goals, objectives and contributions;
- No formal training or educational components were developed within the design that might help build commitment and understanding within government departments; and
- The design did not offer rewards for adopting SSP principles into planning, nor was there any consequence for not incorporating SSP vision, values and goals into operational plans.

### **SSP Implementation**

- RSCs report a lack of process within government to action and follow through on issues brought to the departmental level for response. This appears to be especially the case for the Department of Education; and
- A change management strategy that includes training and communications might help ensure smoother, more rapid implementation within government.

### **SSP Investment**

- Many feel that the SSP is insufficiently resourced, given the scope and expectations of what it is intended to accomplish in the province; and
- Project-based funding does not encourage the long term thinking required for SSP implementation. Recognizing the economic realities within the province, close cooperation and communication with RSCs and community-based agencies will be necessary to ensure that available funds are used in the most targeted, strategic manner.



## 12.3 Recommendations

### SSP Design

1. That government's Committee of Deputy Ministers take a more active leadership role in creating a stronger accountability focus for government departments by establishing expectations for departmental business planning, policy development, program design and development, and annual reporting that is aligned with the SSP's vision, values, goals and actions.
2. That the Social Audit also focus on the sufficiency of accountability measures for program outcomes within government departments and for initiatives undertaken with its partners, including with community-based agencies.
3. That cross-departmental partnership approaches be supported by standard memoranda of understanding that, at a minimum, document the expected contribution from each partner and their roles and responsibilities for policy development, program design, delivery, implementation and evaluation.
4. That clear links be established between the soon-to-be established Joint Government/Voluntary, Community-Based Sector Committee and RSCs as a basis for building coordinated efforts and partnership approaches with the community-based sector as envisioned by the SSP.
5. That the SSP Office and the RSCs develop communications strategies aimed at generating greater awareness of the SSP's vision, values and goals and of progress being achieved, for staff of government, regional boards, partner organizations and community-based agencies.
6. That recognition systems be developed to acknowledge the efforts of government departments, regional boards, partners, community-based agencies and volunteers for significant contributions to implementing the SSP.
7. That government departments and their regional partners significantly intensify their efforts to develop access and service quality standards for regional services, as there is little evidence, other than within the Departments of Health and Community Services and Human Resources and Employment, that plans are underway to address access and quality service standards in an integrated manner; a key driver of the SSP's design.

### SSP Implementation

8. That stronger communication and mutual accountability links be established between government departments and RSCs as a foundation for evidence-based, coordinated investment decisions in prevention and early intervention strategies.

9. That the Literacy Branch of the Department of Education seek active involvement with the RSCs as a basis for supporting their efforts in making strategic regional investments in literacy programs.
10. Recognizing that RSCs are still in the infancy stage of development, that new time-limited targets be established between RSCs, regional boards and government departments to conduct comprehensive regional assessments of volunteer capacity, resources for social development, gaps in community capacity, and barriers that confront vulnerable populations.
11. That a formal process for RSCs to bring forward items for action to government departments be developed that enables timely communication of what processes and actions are being pursued to address regional issues.
12. That consideration be given to developing a training program on “best SSP practices” as an effort to improve government department staff efforts of working together to develop integrated approaches in service design and delivery.

### **Strategic Investment**

13. That government pursue the option of developing a single integrated social and economic plan for the province as a basis for achieving the level of coordinated investment decisions envisioned by the SSP. A timeline for achieving this goal should be determined with the input of RSCs.
14. Recognizing that long term investments in prevention and early intervention strategies may not reap benefits for some time, that strong evidence-based decision-making be the accepted basis for these investment decisions. This will also require that wherever possible, that project funding be replaced by core funding to enable strategies and goals to mature.
15. That a user-driven, coordinated model for service delivery be developed for families, seniors, persons with mental illnesses, and other vulnerable groups who must interface with multiple organizations to access needed services.
16. That while HRDC regional staff are key partners in RSCs, RSCs also consider the merits of expanding federal government involvement, both through broader HRDC representation, and through other federal government departments such as ACOA, Department of Fisheries and Oceans, Health Canada, Industry Canada and Agriculture Canada.
17. That RSCs, while having identified priority areas for action, might also take a more active role in coordinating long term development strategies as a basis for investment decisions for regional services and infrastructure. Such plans might also serve as a basis for monitoring progress in social and economic development.

## 13.0 Conclusions

The SSP is a mere five years old and is attempting to bring about fundamental changes in the way government conducts business. The changes envisioned by the SSP represent transformational versus incremental changes. Just the same, incremental changes achieved to date are remarkable, especially when one considers that some of the issues are complex, deeply-rooted and multi-generational.

Even community partners, often the harshest critics, have observed that the SSP has led to more opportunities for collaboration and greater respect for processes. There is a genuine appreciation of the changes government is trying to make and an understanding that desired changes will take more time. Efforts to date are seen as beginning steps that must now be brought to a new level for partnership approaches that are more inclusive.

The RSCs are more advanced in their thinking regarding partnerships than are government departments. The RSCs are only now emerging from their formative stages yet they have developed the capacity to address more substantial systemic issues. Expectations may have been overly optimistic that partnerships developed through the SSP, in a five-year time span, would have accomplished more in the way of coordinated investments, identification and elimination of access barriers, and more responsive regional programs and service delivery.

Government departments are also moving towards greater coordination and integration at the policy and program level, with some departments clearly ahead of others. Further work is required to strengthen cross-departmental approaches, including the implementation of cross-departmental planning and budgeting processes. Accountability and recognition systems are also required that promote a compelling case for working in the SSP way.

Has government started to use partnership approaches as a way of conducting business consistent with the SSP? The answer is a qualified “yes,” but it has only begun and a much more coordinated effort is required.

## Appendix 1: Master Question Bank



# **LEARNING STUDY**

*Has Government Started Doing Business as  
Envisioned by the Strategic Social Plan?*

## **Master Question Bank**



**Jane Helleur & Associates Inc.**

**August 12, 2003**



Question	Related SSP Goal	Related SSP Objective	Related SSP Action
1. Are programs and services flexible such that community partnerships can be responsive on a client and/or community basis? (1.1c)	Vibrant Communities and Regions in which people actively participate in their collective well-being	Effective government and community partnerships which provide support to individuals families and communities	Government will build flexibility into programs and services so that community partnerships can be responsive on a client and/or community basis

What?	1. What community partnerships exist to date?
How?	2. Describe the process you have used to date to form and nurture community partnerships?
What Difference?	3. In what ways have partnerships resulted in greater flexibility in the provision and delivery of programs and services on either an individual and/or community basis? a. What examples and/or documentation exist to support this greater flexibility?
Barriers?	4. What if any barriers or difficulties did you experience and/or are continuing to experience?
Learnings?	5. How have your experiences shaped the way you conduct business? a. Where are the future opportunities for continued improvement?
Future Plans?	6. What future plans do you have for building stronger flexibility and responsiveness? What is occurring to make this possible?

Question	Related SSP Goal	Related SSP Objective	Related SSP Action
<p>2. Has government partnered with Regional Boards to develop regional prevention and early intervention strategies? (3.3a)</p>	<p>Self reliant, healthy, educated individuals and families living in safe, nurturing communities</p>	<p>Reduced social and health problems through community prevention and early intervention initiatives in all regions</p>	<p>Regional boards, acting as regional partners with Government, will develop regional prevention and early intervention strategies which will guide government and community decision making</p>
<p>3. Has government, in co-operation with its regional partners, continued to implement programs and services aimed at prevention and early intervention, including (3.3b):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Child welfare reform, such as supports for families and regional/community-based service delivery</li> <li>▪ Early childhood enrichment, such as parent development programs, resource centres and links to the school system</li> <li>▪ Coordinated youth services, such as community service participation for tuition vouchers and a youth employment strategy taking into consideration zonal strategic economic plans</li> <li>▪ Population health initiatives, such as healthy baby clubs, school meal programs, self-help groups and nurse practitioners</li> <li>▪ Crime prevention initiatives, such as community-based policing, greater emphasis on restorative justice and alternative dispute resolution</li> <li>▪ Recreational initiatives, such as lifelong “active living” programs and youth at risk programming</li> </ul>	<p>Self reliant, healthy, educated individuals and families living in safe, nurturing communities</p>	<p>Reduced social and health problems through community prevention and early intervention initiatives in all regions</p>	<p>Government, in co-operation with its regional partners, will continue to implement programs and services aimed at prevention and early intervention, including: child welfare reform, such as supports for families and regional/community-based service delivery, early childhood enrichment, such as parent development programs, resource centres and links to the school system, coordinated youth services, such as community service participation for tuition vouchers and a youth employment strategy community-based policing, greater emphasis on restorative justice and alternative dispute resolution, recreational initiatives, such as lifelong “active living” programs and youth at risk programming.</p>

4. Has government coordinated its investments with its federal and municipal counterparts and with regional and community-based organizations to implement regional prevention and early intervention plans? (3.3c)	Self reliant, healthy, educated individuals and families living in safe, nurturing communities	Reduced social and health problems through community prevention and early intervention initiatives in all regions	Government will seek to coordinate its investments with its federal and municipal counterparts and with regional and community-based organizations to implement these regional prevention and early intervention plans.
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What?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What processes are now in place to develop regional prevention and early intervention strategies to respond to social and health problems?</li> <li>2. What processes are in place to coordinate regional prevention and early intervention investments with municipal and federal governments?</li> <li>3. What mechanisms are in place to monitor progress?</li> </ol>
How?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. How has the objective of early intervention and prevention been reflected in community decision-making?</li> <li>5. How is the coordination of investments assisting in more effective and/or comprehensive prevention and early intervention strategies?</li> <li>6. How have these objectives been reflected in planning processes?</li> </ol>
What Difference?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>7. What examples exist to demonstrate regional capacity to achieve this goal?             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. What milestones or critical success factors are available that might demonstrate that new processes are achieving the goals and objectives as laid out in the SSP?</li> </ol> </li> </ol>
Partnership?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>8. Has Government been pursuing a partnership approach in implementing this goal?             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. With whom and with what level of success?</li> </ol> </li> </ol>
Barriers?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9. What if any barriers or difficulties did you experience and/or are continuing to experience?</li> </ol>
Learnings?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>10. How have your experiences shaped the way you conduct business?             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Where are the future opportunities for continued improvement?</li> </ol> </li> </ol>
Future Plans?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>11. What future plans do you have for the development of regional prevention and early intervention strategies? What is occurring to make this possible?</li> </ol>



Question	Related SSP Goal	Related SSP Objective	Related SSP Action
5. Has government developed strategies to improve access to services at the regional level? Access standards for key services? To what extent have they been implemented? (1.4c)	Vibrant Communities and Regions in which people actively participate in their collective well-being	Regional service investments which are consistent with long-term development opportunities	Government will develop strategies to improve access to services at the regional level and develop access standards for key services
6. Have departments developed access standards for key services? Have departments identified barriers to access and developed strategies to address barriers and to improve access and service quality? (3.1a)	Self reliant, healthy, educated individuals and families living in safe, nurturing communities	Improved access to, and the quality of, essential services in the areas of health, justice, social services, housing, education and employment supports	Each department on an on-going basis will: (a) define standards for service accessibility in terms of eligibility, distance, time and affordability; identify existing barriers to access, including historical discrimination and vulnerability to abuse and violence, which have placed women and other vulnerable populations at a social and economic disadvantage; and develop specific strategies to eliminate barriers and to improve access and service quality
7. Have access and quality service standards been addressed in an integrated manner? (3.1b)	Self reliant, healthy, educated individuals and families living in safe, nurturing communities	Improved access to, and the quality of, essential services in the areas of health, justice, social services, housing, education and employment supports	b) Government will ensure that standards of equitable access and quality service are addressed in an integrated manner

What?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What strategies are in place to improve access to key services at the regional level?</li> <li>2. What efforts have been pursued to address access and quality service standards in an integrated manner?</li> </ol>
How?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. To what extent have access standards been developed? How has this been achieved?</li> <li>4. To what extent have they been implemented? How has this been achieved?</li> <li>5. What process did you use to identify and address access barriers for vulnerable individuals and groups? For service quality?</li> </ol>

What Difference?	6. What examples exist to demonstrate regional improvements in greater access to services? For reducing barriers for vulnerable individuals? a. What milestones or critical success factors can you point to that might demonstrate that new processes are achieving the goals and objectives as laid out in the SSP?
Partnership?	7. Has Government been pursuing a partnership approach in implementing this goal? a. With whom and with what level of success?
Barriers?	8. What if any barriers or difficulties did you experience and/or are continuing to experience? a. What, if any new barriers have emerged and how have they been addressed?
Learnings?	9. How have your experiences shaped the way you conduct business? a. Where are the future opportunities for continued improvement?
Future Plans?	10. What future plans do you have for the development of regional standards for access to services? What is occurring to make this possible?

Question	Related SSP Goal	Related SSP Objective	Related SSP Action
8. Has a labour-market strategy for the province that addresses regional labour market development issues been developed? Implemented? (2.1a)	Sustainable regions based on strategic investment in individuals, families and communities.	A labour market which supports economic development in the private and community-based sectors.	Government will develop a labour-market strategy for the province to address regional labour-market development issues. This strategy will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- identify emerging private-sector employment opportunities considering the long-term developments strategies advanced in the zonal strategic economic plans;</li> <li>- identify the range and extent of employment creation opportunities within the community-based sector and determine how long-term employment in that sector could be created; and</li> <li>- develop a human resource strategy focused on preparing people to participate in long-term development strategies for each region as entrepreneurs and employees.</li> </ul>

What?	1. Describe the status of the provincial strategy that addresses regional labour market development issues. 2. Describe the major elements of the provincial strategy.
How?	3. How has (or how will) this strategy link with opportunities and strategies of zonal economic plans? 4. How has (or how will) this strategy respond to opportunities in the community-based sector? 5. How has (or how will) this strategy link to a human resources strategy to prepare people within regions as entrepreneurs and employees?
What Difference?	6. How has (or how will) the provincial strategy assist partners in their efforts to make strategic investments at the regional level for individuals, families and communities? a. What milestones or critical success factors can you point to that might demonstrate that plans and investments are achieving the goals and objectives as laid out in the SSP?
Partnership?	7. Has Government been pursuing a partnership approach in implementing this goal? a. With whom and with what level of success?

Barriers?	8. What if any barriers or difficulties did you experience and/or are continuing to experience?
Learnings?	9. How have your experiences shaped the way you conduct business? a. Where are the future opportunities for continued improvement?
Future Plans?	10. What future plans do you have for the development of a provincial strategy to address regional labour market development issues?

Question	Related SSP Goal	Related SSP Objective	Related SSP Action
9. Has government coordinated and integrated provincial and federal investments to achieve social and economic integration and taking into consideration long term regional and provincial economic plans? (2.2a)	Sustainable regions based on strategic investment in individuals, families and communities.	Employment generation strategies in the private and community-based sectors through coordinated federal-provincial partnerships and investments	Government will seek to coordinate and integrate provincial and federal investments to achieve social and economic integration. These strategies will take into consideration long term regional and provincial economic plans. In particular it will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. seek to secure federal participation, together with the province, in an employment program in the community-based sector. The purpose will be to invest in community-based approaches matched to social development goals, while providing new employment opportunities;</li> <li>ii. seek to match federal/provincial economic development agreements and programs to employment generation objectives, taking into consideration zonal strategic economic plans;</li> <li>iii. establish coordinated social and economic development objectives in any new federal/provincial labour-market development and social development agreements and programs;</li> <li>iv. continue to focus the existing federal/provincial Labour Market Development Agreement on local labour-market and business development needs.</li> </ul>
10. Has government in partnership with the federal government addressed youth unemployment using integrated initiatives? (2.2b)	(2.) Sustainable regions based on strategic investment in individuals, families and communities.	Employment generation strategies in the private and community-based sectors through coordinated federal-provincial partnerships and investments	11. Government in partnership with the federal government will address youth unemployment using integrated initiatives, such as: increasing support to community-based organizations and businesses to cultivate youth entrepreneurship; instituting school-to-work and work-to school transition programs which emphasize employment opportunities in new sectors of the economy.

What?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What level of coordination and integration has been achieved between the provincial and federal levels of government with respect to social and economic integration?</li> <li>2. What level of integration has been achieved between both levels of government to provide employment programs for youth?</li> </ol>
How?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. How have the provincial and federal governments worked together to achieve the goals of social and economic</li> </ol>

	development? To create employment?
What Difference?	<p>4. How have (or how will) the coordinated provincial and federal investments achieve desired economic and social integration? Long-term impacts?</p> <p>a. What milestones or critical success factors can you point to that might demonstrate that plans and investments are achieving the goals and objectives as laid out in the SSP?</p> <p>5. Have investments in youth entrepreneurship increased support for community-based organizations and businesses?</p> <p>a. In work-to-school transition programs?</p> <p>6. What milestones or critical success factors can you point to that might demonstrate that plans and investments are achieving the goals and objectives as laid out in the SSP?</p>
Partnership?	<p>7. Has Government been pursuing a partnership approach in implementing this goal?</p> <p>a. With whom and with what level of success?</p>
Barriers?	8. What if any barriers or difficulties were experienced and/or are continuing to be experienced?
Learnings?	<p>9. How have your experiences shaped the way you conduct business?</p> <p>a. Where are the future opportunities for continued improvement?</p>
Future Plans?	<p>10. What future plans do you have for the development of a provincial strategy to address regional labour market development issues?</p> <p>a. For integrated activities aimed at youth?</p>

Question	Related SSP Goal	Related SSP Objective	Related SSP Action
<p>12. Has government invested in and adapted social programs to enhance economic development and reduce barriers to education, job training and work? (2.3a)</p>	<p>Sustainable regions based on strategic investment in individuals, families and communities.</p>	<p>A qualified labour force participating in a range of employment opportunities.</p>	<p>Government will invest in and adapt social programs to enhance economic development and reduce barriers to education, job training and work by:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. making strategic investments in education and employment programs,</li> <li>2. taking into consideration zonal strategic economic plans,</li> <li>3. redesigning income support programs to promote and provide incentives for active participation in the labour force, including support for training and education;</li> <li>4. assisting individuals to participate in post secondary education by improving availability and affordability;</li> <li>5. providing employment generation opportunities which target such groups as youth, women, persons with disabilities, seasonal workers and long-term unemployed people;</li> <li>6. providing supportive policies and programs to assist people to meet their family responsibilities so that they can become and remain employed.</li> </ol>
<p>13. Has government redesigned the income support program to focus on more active support for people moving to employment? To improve delivery efficiency? To ensure that basic needs are met? (3.2a)</p>	<p>Self reliant, healthy, educated individuals and families living in safe, nurturing communities</p>	<p>Individuals and families who are able to address basic needs and achieve self-reliance.</p>	<p>Government will redesign the income support program to focus on more active support for people moving to employment. The redesign will also improve the efficiency of the program's delivery, as well as ensure that the basic needs of people who need to rely on income support are met.</p>

What?	1. To what extent has government invested in and adapted social programs to enhance economic development? a. To reduce barriers to education, job training and work? b. Has the redesigned income support program been implemented as planned?
How?	2. Where have these investments been made? 3. Have investments taken into consideration zonal strategic economic plans? 4. How has the redesigned income support program improved efficiency? Met the basic needs of people?
What Difference?	5. How have (or how will) these investments assist individuals to participate in education and employment programs? a. For targeted groups such as youth, women, persons with disabilities? Seasonal workers, and long-term unemployed people? b. In making post-secondary education more available and affordable? c. In implementing supportive policies that enable people to meet their family responsibilities while employed?
Partnership?	6. Has Government been pursuing a partnership approach in implementing this goal? a. With whom and with what level of success?
Barriers?	7. What if any barriers or difficulties did you experience and/or are continuing to experience?
Learnings?	8. How have your experiences shaped the way you conduct business? a. Where are the future opportunities for continued improvement?
Future Plans?	9. What future plans do you have for the development of programs to support employment participation? 10. To meet the basic needs of people who rely on income support?



Question	Related SSP Goal	Related SSP Objective	Related SSP Action
14. Has government continued to establish supports to alleviate the effects of poverty, especially on children and families? (3.2b)	Self reliant, healthy, educated individuals and families living in safe, nurturing communities	Individuals and families who are able to address basic needs and achieve self-reliance.	Government will continue to establish supports to alleviate the effects of poverty, especially on children and families.

What?	1. What measures has government taken to alleviate the effects of poverty, especially on children and families?
How?	2. How has the re-design of income support programs responded to the effects of poverty on families, especially children?
What Difference?	3. How are these programs encouraging a long-term goal of self-reliance while still addressing basic needs? a. What milestones or critical success factors can you point to that might demonstrate that supports are achieving the goals and objectives as laid out in the SSP?
Partnership?	4. Has Government been pursuing a partnership approach in implementing this goal? 5. With whom and with what level of success?
Barriers?	6. What if any barriers or difficulties did you experience and/or are continuing to experience?
Learnings?	7. How have your experiences shaped the way you conduct business? a. Where are the future opportunities for continued improvement?
Future Plans?	8. What future plans do you have for the continued development of supports to alleviate the effects of poverty?

Question	Related SSP Goal	Related SSP Objective	Related SSP Action
15. Has government supported the provision of literacy and basic life-skills education for people in need? (3.2c)	Self reliant, healthy, educated individuals and families living in safe, nurturing communities	Individuals and families who are able to address basic needs and achieve self-reliance.	Government will support the provision of literacy and basic life-skills education to assist people in need to make informed choices and to become self-reliant.

What?	1. What has been accomplished to provide an increased range and scope of literacy and basic life skills educational opportunities within communities?
How?	2. How has the issue of literacy and basic life skills been addressed?
What Difference?	3. What, if any early indicators do you have that these programs and supporting people to address their basic needs and achieve self-reliance? a. What milestones or critical success factors can you point to that might demonstrate that supports are achieving the goals and objectives as laid out in the SSP?
Partnership?	4. Has Government been pursuing a partnership approach in implementing this goal? a. With whom and with what level of success?
Barriers?	5. What if any barriers or difficulties did you experience and/or are continuing to experience?
Learnings?	6. How have your experiences shaped the way you conduct business? a. Where are the future opportunities for continued improvement?
Future Plans?	7. What future plans do you have for the provision of literacy and basic life-skills education?

Question	Related SSP Goal	Related SSP Objective	Related SSP Action
<p>16. Has government partnered with the Regional Boards to (1.2a):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Identify and assess available resources for social development in each region</li> <li>▪ Assess the nature and extent of voluntary agencies and volunteer activity in each region</li> <li>▪ Identify gaps in community capacity to plan and deliver services to match SSP objectives</li> <li>▪ Develop and implement mechanisms to ensure community participation in problem identification and decision-making</li> <li>▪ Develop community leadership capacity</li> <li>▪ Work to eliminate gender specific barriers that confront women and to ensure full and equal participation of all disenfranchised persons in society</li> </ul>	<p>Vibrant Communities and Regions in which people actively participate in their collective well-being</p>	<p>Communities prepared to partner with Government to identify problems and improve delivery of social programs at the regional level.</p>	<p>The Regional Boards, including the Health Institutions Boards, the Health and Community Services Boards, School Boards and the Economic Development Boards, acting in the role of regional partners with Government will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ identify and assess the available resources for social development in each region;</li> <li>▪ assess the nature and extent of voluntary agencies and volunteer activity in each region;</li> <li>▪ identify gaps in community capacity to plan and deliver services to match Strategic Social Plan objectives;</li> <li>▪ develop and implement mechanisms to ensure community participation in problem identification and decision making;</li> <li>▪ develop community leadership capacity, work to eliminate gender specific barriers that confront women and ensure full and equal participation of all disenfranchised persons in society.</li> </ul>
<p>17. Has government partnered with Regional Boards to (1.3a):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Facilitate involvement of voluntary agencies</li> <li>▪ Coordinate integrated responses to local needs</li> <li>▪ Coordinate the multipurpose use of government and community owned infrastructure</li> </ul>	<p>(1.) Vibrant Communities and Regions in which people actively participate in their collective well-being</p>	<p>Coordinated, efficient and effective service delivery which makes the best use of regional and community resources.</p>	<p>Regional Boards acting as regional partners with Government, and in cooperation with community-based groups, will: facilitate involvement of voluntary agencies, coordinate integrated responses to local needs through community services, voluntary resources, and federal and provincial programs, coordinate the multi-purpose use of government and community-owned infrastructure to support community action.</p>

What?	1. What partnerships exist that are aimed at identifying and assessing resources and capacities within regions and communities?
How?	2. How have these partnerships been instrumental in developing and implementing mechanisms for community participation in problem solving and decision-making? 3. How have these partnerships been instrumental in identifying gaps in community capacity? In developing community leadership capacity? In elimination of gender specific barriers and other barriers that affect the equal participation of disenfranchised persons? In offering integrated responses to local needs? 4. How have these partnerships been instrumental in facilitating the multipurpose use of government and community owned infrastructure?
What Difference?	5. What, if any early indicators do you have that these partnerships have been effective? a. What milestones or critical success factors can you point to that might demonstrate that partnerships with Regional Boards are achieving the goals and objectives as laid out in the SSP?
Barriers?	6. What if any barriers or difficulties did you experience and/or are continuing to experience?
Learnings?	7. How have your experiences shaped the way you conduct business? a. Where are the future opportunities for continued improvement?
Future Plans?	7. What future plans do you have for developing Regional Board partnerships to build stronger community capacity? 8. What future plans do you have that will ensure optimal use of government and community owned infrastructure?

Question	Related SSP Goal	Related SSP Objective	Related SSP Action
18. Has government directed its funding of the community-based sector towards strengthening implementation of the SSP and community-based service delivery? (1.3b)	Vibrant Communities and Regions in which people actively participate in their collective well-being	Coordinated, efficient and effective service delivery which makes the best use of regional and community resources.	To the extent possible, Government will direct its funding of the community-based sector towards strengthening implementation of the Strategic Social Plan and community-based service delivery.
19. Has government made progress in moving from institutional and direct delivery approaches to a community-based model? (3.1c)	Self reliant, healthy, educated individuals and families living in safe, nurturing communities	Improved access to, and the quality of, essential services in the areas of health, justice, social services, housing, education and employment supports	Wherever practical Government will move from institutional and direct delivery approaches to a community-based delivery model. The development of community capacity will be supported to ensure that effective, quality services can be delivered through community-based approaches.

What?	1. What strategies and examples exist which demonstrate that Government is directing its funding to the community-based sector as one means of strengthening the implementation of the SSP? 2. What progress has been made in moving program delivery from institutional to community-based models of service delivery?
How?	3. Has this resulted in greater collaboration, with the benefit of improved, targeted program delivery in the regions? 4. Has strategic and targeted application of funding resulted in greater capacity at the community level? 5. How was this achieved? What process is in place to ensure that efficiency and quality objectives are met?
What Difference?	6. Has this resulted in enhanced services and greater accessibility to them? What examples can be provided? 7. What, if any early indicators do you have that a shift to community-based models has been effective? a. What milestones or critical success factors can you point to that might demonstrate that community-based models are achieving the goals and objectives as laid out in the SSP?
Barriers?	8. What if any barriers or difficulties did you experience and/or are continuing to experience?
Learnings?	9. How have your experiences shaped the way you conduct business? b. Where are the future opportunities for continued improvement?
Future Plans?	10. What future plans do you have for directing funding to the community-based sector and in shifting from direct institutional and direct delivery models?

Question	Related SSP Goal	Related SSP Objective	Related SSP Action
20. Has government supported regional and community partners in the use of team-based approaches to addressing local issues through coordinated, client-centred delivery of services? (1.1b)	Vibrant Communities and Regions in which people actively participate in their collective well-being	Effective government and community partnerships which provide support to individuals families and communities	Regional and community partners, with support from Government, will use team-based approaches to achieve solutions for local issues through coordinated, client-centred delivery of services.

What?	1. What specific team-based approaches have been implemented as a means to achieving solutions for local issues? For achieving coordinated client-centred delivery of services?
How?	2. How are these team-based approaches supported to ensure they are able to achieve coordinated, client-centred delivery of services?
What Difference?	3. Has the team-based approach resulted in enhanced coordination of services? Enhanced client focus? What examples can be provided? 4. What, if any early indicators do you have that team-based approaches have been effective? a. What milestones or critical success factors can you point to that might demonstrate that team-based approaches are achieving the goals and objectives as laid out in the SSP?
Barriers?	5. What if any barriers or difficulties did you experience and/or are continuing to experience?
Learnings?	6. How have your experiences shaped the way you conduct business? a. Where are the future opportunities for continued improvement?
Future Plans?	7. What future plans do you have for addressing local issues through a team-based approach featuring greater coordination and client-centred focus?

Question	Related SSP Goal	Related SSP Objective	Related SSP Action
21. Has government consolidated and coordinated delivery of services to maximize effectiveness and efficiency, consistent with social development objectives? (1.4b)	Vibrant Communities and Regions in which people actively participate in their collective well-being	Regional service investments which are consistent with long-term development opportunities	Government will consolidate and coordinate delivery of services to maximize effectiveness and efficiency, consistent with social development objectives.

What?	1. What consolidation and/or coordination of services has occurred as a means of maximizing effectiveness? Efficiency? Within government departments? Across government departments?
How?	2. What processes are in place that enable the identification of consolidation/coordination opportunities? How is progress tracked?
What Difference?	3. What, if any early indicators do you have that consolidation and coordination approaches have been effective? a. What milestones or critical success factors can you point to that might demonstrate that these approaches are achieving the goals and objectives as laid out in the SSP?
Barriers?	4. What if any barriers or difficulties did you experience and/or are continuing to experience?
Learnings?	5. How have your experiences shaped the way you conduct business? a. Where are the future opportunities for continued improvement?
Future Plans?	6. What future plans do you have for addressing consolidation and coordination opportunities?

Question	Related SSP Goal	Related SSP Objective	Related SSP Action
22. Has government been increasing its use of multi-sectoral approaches? (3.1d)	Self reliant, healthy, educated individuals and families living in safe, nurturing communities	Improved access to, and the quality of, essential services in the areas of health, justice, social services, housing, education and employment supports	Government will build on current initiatives that use a multisectoral approach, such as the Model for Coordination of Services to Children and Youth and the Provincial Strategy Against Violence.

What?	1. What multi-sectoral approaches are in place?
How?	2. How are decisions made regarding the viability of multi-sectoral approaches? 3. How are multi-sectoral partners engaged? 4. How are multi-sector approaches supported?
What Difference?	5. What, if any early indicators do you have that multi-sectoral approaches have been effective? a. What milestones or critical success factors can you point to that might demonstrate that these approaches are achieving the goals and objectives as laid out in the SSP?
Barriers?	6. What if any barriers or difficulties did you experience and/or are continuing to experience?
Learnings?	7. How have your experiences shaped the way you conduct business? a. Where are the future opportunities for continued improvement?
Future Plans?	8. What future plans do you have for increasing the use of multi-sectoral approaches? To making current approaches more effective?



Question	Related SSP Goal	Related SSP Objective	Related SSP Action
23. Has government put processes/ mechanisms in place to monitor progress in regional economic development? Have new regional service and infrastructure investments been planned/implemented consistent with identified long-term development strategies for each region? (1.4a)	Vibrant Communities and Regions in which people actively participate in their collective well-being	Regional service investments which are consistent with long-term development opportunities	Government, in cooperation with Regional Boards, will monitor progress in regional economic development, build upon the work of the Economic Development Boards and plan new regional service and infrastructure investments consistent with identified long-term development strategies for each region.

What?	1. What processes and mechanisms are in place to monitor regional economic development progress?
How?	2. How are long-term development strategies identified and carried out in ways the ensure adherence to original intent? 3. How are Regional Boards involved? 4. How are decisions made regarding the viability of regional service and infrastructure investments? 5. How is progress monitored?
What Difference?	6. What, if any early indicators do you have that government processes and mechanisms are effective? a. What milestones or critical success factors can you point to that might demonstrate that these approaches are achieving the goals and objectives as laid out in the SSP?
Barriers?	7. What if any barriers or difficulties did you experience and/or are continuing to experience?
Learnings?	8. How have your experiences shaped the way you conduct business? a. Where are the future opportunities for continued improvement?
Future Plans?	9. What future plans do you have for new regional infrastructure investments?

Question	Related SSP Goal	Related SSP Objective	Related SSP Action
24. Are provincial expenditures and the deployment of community resources coordinated with the federal government to achieve the outcomes identified in the SSP? (1.3c)	Self reliant, healthy, educated individuals and families living in safe, nurturing communities	Coordinated, efficient and effective service delivery which makes the best use of regional and community resources.	Government will seek to coordinate its expenditures and the deployment of community resources with the federal government to achieve the outcomes identified in the Strategic Social Plan.

What?	1. What processes and mechanisms are in place to assure deployment of provincial and federal expenditures and resources to achieve the outcomes identified in the SSP?
How?	2. Has there been sufficient consultation or other coordination efforts with the Federal government to match programs and objectives? 3. Is there agreement between the levels of government about funding priorities with respect to the goals of the SSP? a. Is there a process to identify areas of funding priorities and a process to ensure that these priorities are adequately funded? 4. How are accountability measures introduced to ensure that funds are applied in a strategic manner, as agreed by both levels of government? 5. How are processes and mechanisms monitored?
What Difference?	6. What, if any early indicators do you have that government processes and mechanisms are effective? a. What milestones or critical success factors can you point to that might demonstrate that these approaches are achieving the goals and objectives as laid out in the SSP?
Barriers?	7. What if any barriers or difficulties did you experience and/or are continuing to experience?
Learnings?	8. How have your experiences shaped the way you conduct business? a. Where are the future opportunities for continued improvement?
Future Plans?	9. What future plans do you have for coordination and deployment of expenditures and resources?

## Question

25. What are the strengths and what are the areas that require enhancements of the current SSP? How can the partners best address areas for improvement?

1. In your experience, what can you point to that best exemplifies critical successes in SSP implementation?
2. How has this been achieved? Why do you think this is such an accomplishment? What does this suggest for best practices?
3. What are areas that require improvements or different approaches? How do you see this improvement being brought about?
4. What barriers exist? How can they be removed?
5. Any other comments?

**On a scale of 1 to 7, where 1 is 'strongly disagree' and 7 is 'strongly agree' please rate your agreement with the following statements:**

1. Compared to five years ago, Government has changed the way it conducts business consistent with the SSP's principles and values.

Strongly Disagree							Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	

2. Compared to five years ago, individual government departments have changed the way they conduct business consistent with the SSP's principles and values.

Strongly Disagree							Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	

3. Government departments have adopted the vision of SSP into their departmental planning and strategies.

Strongly Disagree							Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	

4. The SSP is effective in facilitating government/community partnerships and community capacity building.

Strongly Disagree							Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	

5. The SSP vision, values and goals guide the work of people at all levels within government.

Strongly Disagree							Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	

6. The SSP as a strategy is important to the future of our province.

Strongly Disagree							Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	



## Appendix 2: Interview Guide



# LEARNING STUDY

*Has Government Started Doing Business as  
Envisioned by the Strategic Social Plan?*

## INTERVIEW GUIDE



**Jane Helleur & Associates Inc.**

**August 12, 2003**

## WHAT IS A LEARNING STUDY?

The purpose of a Learning Study is to provide an analysis of progress of a program or activity at a particular moment in time. Its objective is to guide further development and approaches, procedures and monitoring systems to ensure future success. Learning Studies are particularly useful in large, complex initiatives that unfold over extended periods of time, and which involve many stakeholders. It provides participants with opportunities to reflect on where they have been and where they are going. It also provides opportunities to improve, to understand strengths in order to amplify them, and to isolate weaknesses in order to address them.

In this study, the purposes of our discussions with key informants will be explore the current extent of Strategic Social Plan's implementation and how this is being achieved. It will be an opportunity to analyze best practices and barriers to future implementation. Ultimately, it will provide a clear sense of the extent to which Government has started doing business as envisioned by *People, Partners and Prosperity, A Strategic Social Plan for Newfoundland and Labrador, 1998*.

## OUR MEETING VALIDATION PROCESS

During our discussions, care will be taken to record the key points of our discussions. We will then supply you with a Meeting Transcript that will summarize the key points that were discussed, the highlights of your observations and any key learning that can be taken from the discussions. We will also provide a list of any follow-up activities that may be required. This Meeting Transcript will be offered to you for your validation prior to it entering into the larger body of information gathered.

In this way, participants can be assured that the information they provide to us is accurately reflected, and that there will be opportunities for additional input and validation of results after the interview has taken place.

## MEETING ISSUES AND THEMES

The following information is provided to assist you and your officials prepare for our discussions. In the next pages we identify the question themes that we wish to explore through this Learning Study.

During our discussions we will be asking the following types of questions.

7. What is the **current status** in your department or organization with respect to this SSP objective?
8. How have you achieved the **progress to date**?
9. **What difference** has it made to the way you do business/to the delivery of services and/or programs?
  - a. What examples/documents exist to support this difference?
10. What **barriers** exist, or were encountered?
  - a. What strategies were put in place to deal with these barriers? How effective were they?
11. What **learning** has occurred as a result of your efforts?
  - a. Where are the future opportunities for continued improvement?
12. What are your **future plans**?
  - a. What future goals do have for continued improvement with respect to this SSP objective?

As a way of preparing for our discussions, we encourage you to consider the following question themes in advance, as they relate to your experience with SSP implementation. They are provided to give you a sense of the quality and depth of information we are seeking. These themes will be explored in greater detail in our discussions, with the objective of building a solid understanding of the status of SSP implementation within government to date. In addition to the information shared in the interview, you are encouraged to provide any documents which may also contribute to this Learning Study.

We thank you in advance for your participation in this important study.



## INTERVIEW THEMES AND QUESTIONS

### Partnerships

7. How are community partnerships enabling more responsive regional program and service delivery?
8. How have government partnerships with Regional Boards enabled identification and assessment of:
  - a. Resources for social development at the regional level?
  - b. The nature and extent of voluntary activity?
  - c. Gaps in community leadership capacity?
9. How has government partnered with Regional Boards to develop and implement mechanisms to involve communities in problem identification and decision-making?
  - a. To eliminate participation barriers, especially those confronting women and other disenfranchised persons?
10. How has government supported regional and community partners in the use of team-based approaches to respond to local issues?
  - a. To coordinate integrated responses to local needs?
  - b. To achieve coordinated and client-centred delivery of services?
  - c. To coordinate multipurpose use of government-owned infrastructure?

### Prevention and Early Intervention

11. How have partnerships with Regional Boards enabled an enhanced focus on regional prevention and early intervention strategies?
  - a. The implementation of programs and services aimed at prevention and early intervention plans?
12. How has government coordinated its investments with its federal and municipal counterparts with regional and community-based organizations to implement regional prevention and early intervention plans?

### Access and Quality of Service

13. What strategies have been developed to improve access to services at the regional level?
  - a. To what extent have standards for access and service quality been developed and implemented?
  - b. How have access and equity barriers for vulnerable individuals been addressed in these standards?
  - c. How are the values of inclusion, fairness and equity assured in access to services?
14. How has government consolidated and coordinated delivery of services to maximize effectiveness and efficiency? Within regions? Within government departments? Across government departments?

### Labour Market Development

15. How will the labour-market strategy for the province address regional labour market development issues?

- a. Generate long-term employment?
- b. Build upon employment generation opportunities in the community-based sector?
- c. Prepare people as entrepreneurs and employees?

### **Social and Economic Integration/Development**

16. What effort is being made between the provincial and federal levels to coordinate and integrate provincial and federal investments to achieve social and economic integration?  
To achieve outcomes identified in the SSP?
  - a. To what extent do these efforts take into consideration long term regional and provincial economic plans? Youth unemployment?
  - b. How is government developing programs that enable people to access education? Job training and work opportunities?
  - c. How reflective are these strategies of the needs of regions, communities and individuals, especially vulnerable individuals?
17. How has government cooperated with Regional Boards to coordinate long-term development strategies?
  - a. What processes are in place to monitor regional economic development progress?
18. Have new regional service and infrastructure investments been planned and implemented consistent with identified long-term development strategies for each region?

### **Self-Reliance**

19. Has the redesigned Income support program been implemented as planned?
  - a. How is it moving people towards employment? Enabling people to meet their basic needs? Offering improved service delivery?
20. How has government established supports to alleviate the effects of poverty, especially on children and families?
21. How has government supported the provision of literacy and basic life-skills education for people in need?

### **Community-based Sector**

22. How has government directed its funding to the community-based sector in ways that strengthen and/or enable implementation of the SSP and community-based delivery?
  - a. Has government made progress in moving from direct delivery approaches to a community-based model?

### **Multi-sectoral Approaches**

23. Has government been increasing its use of multi-sectoral approaches ?

### **SSP Strengths and Improvement Areas**

24. What are the strengths and what are the areas that require enhancements of the current SSP?
  - a. How can the partners best address areas for improvement?

## Appendix 3: List of Interviews

### Context Interviews

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Julie Bettney  
Joan Dawe  
Brendan Doyle  
Deborah Fry  
Rebecca Roome  
Gerald Smith  
Phil Warren  
Randy Williams

### Government Departments

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Linda Coles Charlotte Strong	Education
Loretta Chard Robert Thompson Lynn Vivian-Book	Health & Community Services
Ed Hayden Vivian Randell	Human Resources & Employment
Andrea Dicks Rod Regier	Industry, Trade & Rural Development
Gail Courtenay Jackie Lake-Kavanagh Marvin MacNutt Pamela Thomas Sharon Trenholm	Justice
Ron Bowles	Labrador & Aboriginal Affairs
Brenda Caul Rick Hayward	Treasury Board
Aisling Gogan Sheree MacDonald	Women's Policy Office
Carol Ruby Carmel Wyse	Youth Services & Post Secondary Education

Regional Steering Committees

---

Beverley Clarke  
Pam Elliott  
Gail Gosse  
Cyril Hayden  
Gillian Janes  
Catherine Rowsell

Northeast Avalon Regional Steering Committee

Priscilla Corcoran-Mooney  
Gerri Thomsson

Avalon Regional Steering Committee

Colin Holloway  
Fay Matthews

Eastern Regional Steering Committee

Linda Brett  
Des Dillon  
Heather Hillier

Central Regional Steering Committee

June Alteen  
Connie Boland  
Shelly Collins  
Perry Dingle  
Susan Gillam  
Jim Grant  
Doris Hancock  
Regina Warren

Cormack-Grenfell Regional Steering Committee

Tim Borlase  
Goronwy Price  
Alicia Sutton

Labrador Regional Steering Committee

Community Agencies

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Moyra Buchan  
Mary Ennis  
Jocelyn Greene  
Joyce Hancock  
Cathy Murphy  
Sheldon Pollett  
Penelope Rowe  
Marie White

Canadian Mental Health Association.  
Coalition of Persons with Disabilities  
Stella Burry Foundation  
Status of Women Council  
Community Activist  
Choices for Youth  
Community Services Council  
Housing and Homelessness

## Learning Discussion Groups

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### *Northeast Avalon Region*

#### *Regional Staff and Partners*

Gerald Alexander

Cindy Christopher

Margie Coombs

Jeannie House

Tony Janes

Ken O'Brien

Health Canada

Strategic Literacy Plan, Department of Education

Health and Community Services, St. John's Region

Newfoundland and Labrador Health Boards

Association

City of Mount Pearl

City of St. John's

### *Community-Based Agencies*

Reg Anstey

Bev Brown

Chris Courvemanche

Keith Dunne

Leslie McLeod

Sarah Mills

Kerry Murray

Cyrilda Poirier

Rhonda Thomas

Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of Labour

National Anti-Poverty Association

Francophone Federation of Newfoundland & Labrador

Canadian Federation of Students of Newfoundland & Labrador

Independent Living Resource Centre

FINALY!

Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of Labour

Francophone Federation of Newfoundland & Labrador

Kibride to Ferryland Family Resource Centre Coalition

### *Central Region*

#### *Regional Staff and Agencies*

Sandra Carpenter

Susanne Hobbs

Bruce Mathews

Mac Moss

Donna Noseworthy

Bob Turner

Health & Community Services, Central Region

Joining Forces Project

Human Resources Development Canada, Gander

College of the North Atlantic, Gander

College of the North Atlantic, Grand Falls-Windsor

Human Resources and Employment

### *Community-Based Agencies*

Walwin Blackmore

Angela Lambert

Steward May

Todd Mercer

Annie Pope

Darrell Rice

Town of Grand Falls-Windsor

Women's Centre

Coast of Bays Corporation

Town of Springdale

Your Strength is Our Strength, Peterview

Community Youth Network, Botwood

*Cormack-Grenfell Region  
Regional Staff and Partners*

Joanie Bruce

Tony Duhart

Scott Graham

Peter Kearley

Mike Ludee

Maureen Parsons

Heather Taylor

Robert Turnbull

Grenfell Regional Health Services

Human Resources Development Canada

Human Resources Development Canada

Human Resources and Employment

CC Loughlin Elementary School

Human Resources and Employment

Health and Community Services, Western Region

Primary Health Care, Western Health Care Corp. and

Health and Community Services, Western Region

*Community-Based Agencies*

Priscilla Boutcher

Wynanne Downer

Leona Gillette

Pam Moores

Eileen Pitcher

Paula Power

David Quick

Lynda Stonehouse

Minnie Vallis

City of Corner Brook

District Advisory Council of Health

Town of Steady Brook

Health and Community Services, Western Region

Victorian Order of Nurses

Learning Centre

School District 3

Family Outreach Resource Centre

Seniors Health Promotion Committee

*Labrador Region*

*Regional Staff and Partners*

Carol Best

Betty Learning

Stan Oliver

Bob Simms

Darlene Wall

Michelle Watkins

Economic Zone Board, Zone 3

Human Resources and Employment

Labrador Friendship Centre

College of the North Atlantic

Labrador Métis Association

Labrador and Aboriginal Affairs

*Community-Based Agencies*

Ken Anthony

Petrina Beals

Maxine Budgell

Stephanie Flowers

Debbie Keats

Mildred Montague

Sherry Russell

Janet Skinner

Town of Happy Valley

Mokami Status of Women Council

Labrador Literacy Network

Canadian Paraplegic Association

Labrador Friendship Centre

Canadian Paraplegic Association

FINALY!

Information and Action Network

## Appendix 4: Frequently Used Acronyms

ACOA	Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency
ADM	Assistant Deputy Minister
CMHC	Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation
ECDI	Early Childhood Development Initiative
FINALY!	Futures in Newfoundland and Labrador Youth!
HCS	Health and Community Services
HRDC	Human Resources Development Canada
HRE	Human Resources and Employment
ISSP	Individualized Student Support Plan
ITRD	Industry Trade and Rural Development
LDC	Literacy Development Council
LMDA	Labour Market Development Agreement
MUN	Memorial University of Newfoundland
NCB	National Child Benefit
NLFM	Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of Municipalities
NLHC	Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation
REDB	Regional Economic Development Board
RSC	Regional Steering Committee
SHP	Strategic Health Plan
SLP	Strategic Literacy Plan
SPAN	Single Parents Association of Newfoundland and Labrador
SPESP	Single Parent Employment Support program
SSP	Strategic Social Plan
VPI	Violence Prevention Initiative
WPO	Women's Policy Office
YSPSE	Youth Services and Post-Secondary Education