



Volume II

Investing in People and Communities

**Report of the Strategic Social Planning Public Dialogue
Newfoundland and Labrador**

Social Advisory Committee

1997

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While we have benefited from the views of many, because of the format and nature of this document, not all sources have been explicitly cited.

We thank the hundreds of people and organizations who participated in the public consultation process. We were heartened by the magnitude, thoroughness and thoughtfulness of these submissions. We are also indebted to the hundreds of people who participated in all our meetings throughout Newfoundland and Labrador and who generously shared with us their knowledge, experience, concerns and hopes for the future.

Foreword

All people in the Province are affected by Newfoundland and Labrador's rapid social and economic changes. The loss of economic security, increased emigration (especially the young), reduced services and the changing population base are causing tremendous upheaval and stress in the lives of people throughout the Province. The drive to streamline, restructure and make more "efficient" use of available funds is conspicuous in both the public and private sector. People everywhere are preoccupied with these changes which affect the future of their families and their communities.

These changes are increasing tensions, especially between those who are working and those who are not. More people are forced to leave the Province in search of work. For those who remain, competition for work and economic development opportunities is creating conflict among individuals and communities. Many individuals and families are enduring hardship from cuts in social programs. Many people have diminishing access to services and community-based programs, thus leaving them without adequate support. A new course for social policy is needed to meet these demands. The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador has begun developing a strategic social plan for the Province by appointing a Social Policy Advisory Committee responsible for carrying out a public dialogue. This signals Government's commitment to engage the public in finding new approaches to social policy and programs.

In the course of this public dialogue, the Social Policy Advisory Committee has heard both expressions of concern and determined hope for the future.

Everywhere, people cited the Province's underlying strength and resilience, our strong cultural heritage, our traditions of caring for and helping others, our willingness to move forward, and our diverse skills and abilities. In the fabric of our communities, and in the network of our voluntary organizations, many people saw the strengths upon which to build a new social strategy.

People genuinely desire a renewed sense of faith in the Province and its communities. They want strong community and government leadership to help solve economic and social problems. People are committed to being part of this renewal, including involvement in decisions which affect them and their communities.

The public dialogue produced a wealth of information and a multitude of recommendations in all areas of social policy including health care, social services, education, justice and employment. Common themes emerged, interwoven throughout and across all these sectors - themes of integration, prevention and early intervention, the inter-relatedness of financial and social policy objectives, and how one set of policies may impact many outcomes.

These common themes should form the basis for the Strategic Social Plan.

The Committee proposes key directions and strategies which we believe can set in motion a process of social policy renewal. The new directions require a significant refocusing of the priorities for policy-making and administration of services, and new approaches to support individuals and communities.

We thus propose a new framework for social development based on investing in people by integrating social and economic development initiatives and by strengthening individual, family and community resources.

The new framework is contingent upon new attitudes, new ways of doing things and the sharing of responsibility and resources. Policies, attitudes, programs and relationships must be re-framed to deal with the circumstances which create social problems and to remove the barriers which hinder people from reaching their full potential.

Social policy must be forward looking and developmental rather than reactive, and must endorse and support a fundamental role for individuals and local communities in achieving well-being.

Government, however, must continue to be the key player in the provision of a full array of public services.

Establishing new ways for the public and communities to engage in collaborative strategic thinking and an ongoing dialogue with Government is essential to social policy reform.

The Social Policy Advisory Committee acknowledges the Provincial Government's difficult challenge in trying to maintain a full array of public services. Certainly, there are no quick fixes. We believe, however, that steps can be taken immediately to develop a new and comprehensive approach to formulating social policy. Making the shift to these new approaches will require strong, committed leadership. This will help to establish a new sense of stability and optimism, and trust between Government and the public.

The Social Policy Advisory Committee believes, without equivocation, that the success or failure of this Province, of this planning process and of individual lives rests with the kinds of choices the Provincial Government makes to invest in the people of the Province.

We must embark upon collective action to turn crisis into opportunity. Our best hope is a joint effort between the people and Government in equal partnership to negotiate our way through turbulent times. The public consultation and this report should be the first steps in a continuing process. The Social Policy Advisory Committee looks forward to Government's response.

Penelope M. Rowe

March 1997

The Social Planning Consultation Process

The Strategic Social Plan. The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador is developing a Strategic Social Plan to establish a framework for its social policy. Social policy shapes the roles of the Departments responsible for Justice, Health, Education, the Environment and Labour, Social Services, Culture and Recreation, Municipal and Provincial Affairs, and of other agencies and institutions, as well as Government's relation with the voluntary sector. The Plan will set out long-term objectives, establish priorities and define broad strategies for the Province's social programs and services.

In combination with the Strategic Economic Plan, the Strategic Social Plan will constitute the overall policy framework for economic and social development for the Province into the 21st century.

The Social Policy Advisory Committee. In June 1996, the Honourable Brian Tobin, Premier, released the *Strategic Social Plan Consultation Paper* and announced a public consultation process. The Honourable Joan Marie Aylward was named lead Minister, and an independent group, the Social Policy Advisory Committee (SPAC), was appointed in July to carry out the public consultations throughout the Province. The Committee comprised a full-time chairperson and 14 part-time members from various backgrounds, interests and regions of the Province. Members undertook this responsibility as volunteers.

What SPAC Was Asked to Do. The Committee was directed to consult with the general public, the voluntary sector, groups, organizations, individuals with an interest in social policy issues, service/program providers, Government employees and other social policy stakeholders.

SPAC was instructed to prepare a report outlining the findings of the consultations and to make recommendations for Government to consider as it develops the Strategic Social Plan. The Committee's terms of reference noted that SPAC will continue to advise Government during the implementation of the Strategic Social Plan.

In announcing the initiative, the Premier said that

- **The process of economic and social change is exerting enormous pressures on our way of life.** The consequences of these changes for our future must be recognized and programs redesigned. One thing is clear from all the changes and financial realities: we will have to choose new ways of doing things and we will have to do them better.
- **Simply cutting services is not the answer.** In order to allow and encourage our economy to grow we must maintain essential services; break the chain of poverty,

low educational attainment and unemployment; and provide the other supports we need in order to prosper.

- **Our objective should be to strengthen the social sector.** It must be strengthened so it can do a more effective and efficient job of planning, organizing and delivering programs and services.

This is the time to make choices for the future, and to set them down in a logical and coherent form as a plan for Government and a guide for us all.

Overview of the Consultation Process. A series of facilitated meetings was conducted around key sectoral issues, as outlined in the *Strategic Social Plan Consultation Paper*.

A "How to Participate" brochure and a public dialogue schedule were released in September, and meetings took place over a nine-week period concluding at the end of November. A Social Policy Workbook was prepared, and evaluation forms and "final thoughts" questionnaires were circulated.

Social Policy Advisory Committee members participated in 100 meetings and met with more than 1,500 individuals from 130 communities. In addition, SPAC received more than 600 written briefs, workbooks, questionnaires, E-mails, letters and telephone comments.

SPAC worked in small groups of one to six members. Sessions included

- private, one-on-one drop-in sessions
- round-table discussions arranged with private individuals and representatives of a variety of groups
- public meetings
- gatherings organized by specific groups, such as women's groups, literacy workers, social assistance recipients, rural development associations, child protection teams, family resource centres and consumer groups
- formal presentations of briefs.

The Social Policy Advisory Committee also had the opportunity to meet with the Micmac Band of Conne River, the Labrador Inuit Association and the Innu Nation to discuss social policy issues. Social policy, programs and services for the Conne River Band are under reservation status and Federally financed. The longer-term objectives of the Aboriginal people in Labrador are tied to on-going land claims settlements and self-government negotiations with the Provincial and Federal Governments. The Social Policy Advisory Committee thus did not feel it could comment on these matters.

SPAC's Approach. The Social Policy Advisory Committee was asked to consider key directions and broad approaches to social policy – to produce a "Road Map" to inform the Strategic Social Plan. The Committee was not expected to conduct research or an in-depth review of each department and policy area or to produce a report with a multitude of recommendations.

SPAC Reports. To fulfil its mandate, the Committee has prepared two reports. The first, *Volume I: What the People Said – Report of the Strategic Social Planning Dialogue*, presents detailed commentary from the consultations. The reader is referred to this companion document which provides the basis for Volume II.

This report, *Volume II: Investing in People and Communities – A Framework for Social Development*, identifies significant issues and trends and puts forward recommendations to strengthen fragile social and economic structures to help move us into the 21st century.

The Committee's recommendations focus on strategies for integration across sectors, and on horizontal concepts prerequisite to revitalizing social policy. The Committee proposes a framework for new approaches to social policy and planning, and key strategies which we hope will help set in motion a process of social development and renewal. The new directions would re-focus priorities for policy making and administration of services, and enhance approaches to support individuals and communities.

Other Studies. In recent years, reports have been submitted to the Provincial Government in many areas of social policy.¹ SPAC was not established to replicate the work of these studies.

Research and evaluations have been compiled by consultants and academics. For instance, within the Department of Social Services, there is an ongoing review of all programming for children and youth, including the *Child Welfare Act* (1972). There have been hundreds of briefs submitted to Government from external organizations and individuals, through diverse public consultation processes and meetings with Government officials.

Most recently, the Select Committee on Children's Interests assessed children's issues and set out recommendations, many of which were endorsed during SPAC's public consultations.² Improving services for children is a significant priority and the public is awaiting Government's response to the recommendations.

Together these exercises have resulted in thousands of recommendations for action. SPAC encourages the Provincial Government to review and act on the work of other studies within the framework SPAC is proposing.

I. Introduction

Canadian society is experiencing a profound transformation. Technological and demographic forces, global conditions, and national policy directions are affecting the lives of all Canadians.

In Newfoundland and Labrador we are in the midst of rapid social and economic change created by a traditionally underdeveloped economy, by the collapse of the northern cod fishery, and by Provincial economic imperatives. The result is a considerable upheaval for people and communities as we struggle with issues of Government deficits and personal security. Now, many more people are vulnerable.

In this climate of uncertainty, governments are re-examining their approaches to social policy and restructuring social programs. Under review are traditional principles of universality, the income safety net and the whole range of social policy and programs.

Social Policy

Social policy is about how people interact. It is about processes, transactions and institutions which promote an individual's sense of identity, participation and community. Good social policy promotes freedom of choice and social solidarity. It is the embodiment of values and relationships which enhance human well-being.

Social policy is also about the allocation and distribution of resources for the benefit of all people. It plays a critical bridging role during times of economic and social change. It should focus on people's needs by building a strong social infrastructure.

Social Programs

Historically, social programs have been based on a "remedial" approach to social policy formulation in which services were generally considered a last resort, rather than focusing on developmental and longer-range outcomes. In such a model, social problems are expressed in terms of crisis and need, and the accepted approach to resolving them is to apply more resources to the existing safety net of programs and services. Policies assume that the solutions will be found in treating the symptoms rather than analyzing the causes. Even now, social policy generally takes a remedial approach.

In the past, social programs were built upon traditional family structures and on the assumption that most people would be able to find work to support themselves and their families. Income support programs served as protection against emergencies, such as bouts of unemployment and inability to work because of a medical condition or because of disability. The social contract was based upon the principle that those who were working would pay taxes, and that these revenues, combined with other revenues generated by Governments, would be sufficient to underwrite public services and to provide a basic level of income support to those in need.

However, today, some programs have become ineffective and do not meet the basic needs of the people they serve, are not accessible to, or accommodating, of many who require them, or do not support the transition from dependence to self-reliance.

New models are required which are forward-thinking and developmental in approach – models which support personal abilities, long-term outcomes and shared responsibility. This will require not only strategic planning, but also a substantial degree of *strategic thinking*.

Reliance on Federal Government Transfers

Significant reliance on monies transferred from the Government of Canada, both to individuals and the Provincial Government, makes this Province extremely vulnerable to Federal fiscal, monetary and social policies. Unilateral changes to the Unemployment Insurance Program, to social housing programs and to the method and amount of financing contributed to the provinces for health care, post-secondary education and social assistance have been felt in every province. But the impacts are most severe in this Province because the traditional and deep reliance on Federal transfer payments makes it more difficult to absorb the reductions.

Cuts to Social Programs

The Provincial Government has had to respond to its financial problems with a series of budgetary restraints and rationing of public services, the impacts of which are being felt most immediately by citizens without work, by those who require health care, social housing, social assistance and services, and those desiring post-secondary education. Every day another personal story of the impacts comes to public attention. Especially in rural communities, people are witnessing the reduction of services and the centralization of others.

Many of the decisions and directions which are currently being taken have significant potential to stall both the social and economic development of our people and the Province.

The drive to streamline, restructure and do "more with less" is reverberating across the Province. SPAC is concerned that any further cuts will weaken our social foundation and cause hardship for many people.

Pay Now or Pay Later

The imperative to reduce the financial deficit at both the Federal and Provincial level is usually based on

the view that we cannot burden future generations with a tremendous financial debt.

Decisions, however, should also take into account the "social deficit" that results from financial deficit cutting. A large social deficit could have more severe – and costly – ramifications.

Mounting evidence indicates that *reducing* services, *not* creating jobs, *not* mitigating the impacts of poverty and disillusionment – especially for children and youth – or not tackling the root causes of problems will leave an even greater burden for future generations.

If social infrastructure is allowed to deteriorate – by reducing health-care services, by reducing the quality of education and precluding access to post-secondary education for significant numbers of young people who cannot afford to pay or borrow, by not finding better ways to reduce criminal activity and abuse, by not providing a level playing field for persons with disabilities – the price will be extremely high.

Federal Government Responsibility

Because the capacity of the Provincial Government to fund social programs is dependent on transfer payments from the Federal Government, changes to Federal programs are having a significant effect on the well-being of people.

These changes were not Provincial Government decisions; however, strong sentiment was expressed throughout the public dialogue that the Provincial Government must forcefully implore the Federal Government to revise its position on reductions to social programs.³ Rather than cut back on social programs to reduce expenditures, the Federal Government should revise the taxation system to generate more revenue. The Federal Government should amend its fiscal policies and overhaul the tax system in order to achieve a more equitable tax regime, in which large corporations and very high income earners pay a fairer share.

Root Causes of Social Problems

As pressure for social programs has increased, and the cost of delivering programs and meeting demands has mounted, many people have been searching for new approaches to understand why certain problems prevail, why the number of social issues appears to be increasing, and why some familiar problems are getting worse.

There are no simple answers. There are many complex causes and issues to be understood.

As research and data analysis have improved, there is a greater ability to identify the underlying – or root – causes of social problems. Similarly, more comprehensive, longitudinal research studies are advancing knowledge about positive and negative factors which influence an individual's health and well-being. Three major themes are emerging from a growing body of knowledge:

- increasing social problems are directly linked to a faltering economy
- the conditions of the early childhood years, including prenatal development, influence significantly a person's chances throughout life, and
- lifestyle – income levels, physical activity, good nutrition, and environmental factors – contribute significantly to health status.

Approach to Planning

Because there has been no comprehensive approach to social planning, each issue and sector have typically been viewed within their own confines. This "muddling through" approach will not successfully address the links between social problems and the broader environment. Nor does it provide a framework for successfully managing change across sectors.

Traditional "incremental" planning, which deals with issues in a piecemeal manner and not in the context of the whole, ignores the inter-relatedness of social problems and their underlying causes.

Applying old solutions to new problems – or familiar problems which have become more complex because of the tumultuous times – is unlikely to be successful. In fact, it may actually hinder development.

Social Infrastructure

Throughout the public dialogue people emphasized the importance of maintaining a universal health care system and access to high-quality educational opportunities. They were not willing to choose between various essential social programs. While many people understand the financial situation of the Province, they are adamant that reductions in human services beyond a certain point will undermine what is essential to future progress: employment, a healthy, well-educated population, stimulated and well-nourished children, active and engaged youth, and communities free from violence. We must invest in social infrastructure which provides equality of opportunity for all.

Government's Strategic Social Plan

In the Strategic Social Plan, social values and objectives should be enunciated, and each policy and program decision should be considered in light of these objectives. Once goals have been determined, an implementation strategy which sets out an action plan, and the necessary steps for affecting change, will be necessary.

The Strategic Social Plan should establish procedures to face the hard realities and find better ways of doing things. It should help identify our strengths and examine our weaknesses. It should address how Government and society can best assist people to improve their lives, strengthen community support networks, and contribute to the collective well-being of the Province.

The Plan should recognize that our different cultural heritages, as manifested in art, crafts, music, literature and social character, have intrinsic value essential to our collective provincial identity. Culture should be valued and promoted for its own sake.

The Plan should reaffirm Government's role as the central player in the provision of an array of high-quality public services. It should respond to the public's desire for more participation in the policy making and delivery process.

Making Choices

The choices which are made now will affect the future of this Province for many years. In making choices, however, policy formulation should be based on what is best for the people of the Province in the immediate-term, the short-term and the long-term.

Cultivating Change

The Committee acknowledges the difficult choices the Provincial Government faces and that there are no quick fixes. Finding solutions and adopting strategies to reverse the many negative indicators

will not be easy. However, the Social Policy Advisory Committee is convinced that merely adjusting social programs and services or tinkering with present systems will not facilitate the kind and magnitude of change required.

The link between the capacity of a nation and a province to take charge of its own future rests with the capacity and strength of its people. But exhortations to be better educated, to take risks, to find new business opportunities, and to enhance regional economic development can only be followed when a high level of social development is achieved.

The Social Policy Advisory Committee therefore recommends a framework for social policy founded on the concept of social development. Social development must be premised on the principles of investing in people, integrating social and economic development and acknowledging the crucial role of individuals and communities in fostering social and economic well-being.

II. Issues and Trends

Unemployment and Economic Insecurity

Lack of employment was cited as the paramount concern throughout the consultations.

People want to work, to be independent and self-reliant. In some rural communities, the lack of jobs is particularly severe. Without question, the absence of paid work is the most critical issue confronting the Province. The problem is substantial. It is estimated that 88,000 full-year, full-time jobs need to be created throughout the Province just to achieve parity with the projected Canadian unemployment rate (8.7%) by the year 2001.⁴

The economic insecurity and stress related to unemployment, and the associated loss of self-worth, are increasing such social problems as anxiety, depression, fatigue, alcohol and drug abuse, gambling and family violence. Health-care providers and educators indicated in their presentations to the Social Policy Advisory Committee that these issues are exerting increased and complex demands on their systems.

An added concern is that motivation and human capital (skills and training) deteriorate over time without work. Protracted unemployment influences people's way of life and can produce inter-generational effects.

It is a fact that the more highly educated and skilled a population is, the more ready and capable it is to create work, attract new business and improve general health. Focusing on education, training, job-readiness and skills development is therefore an important strategy. However, the assumption that people are unemployed is because they are not highly skilled is not entirely valid. There are other aspects and causes.

Implications for the Strategic Social Plan

In addition to developing long-term sustainable jobs in the private sector, continuing efforts are required to create work through Government initiatives.

Creative approaches, such as shortened work weeks and work sharing, might also need to be considered.

Dealing with the impacts of unemployment in the present economic climate must contend with the reality that in the foreseeable future there will not be enough jobs for all who want and need them. Strategic thinking is required, therefore, to conceptualize other measures that will enable people to preserve their skills and participate in their communities.

Poverty and Child Poverty

Low wages, unemployment, reduced access to employment insurance benefits and low social-assistance rates are creating hardship for many individuals and families.

Social Assistance benefit rates have not increased since 1992 and are among the lowest in Canada. The level of benefits does not provide a sufficient income for nutritious food, adequate housing and other necessities. The cumulative impact of multiple cuts and changes which have occurred in recent years has placed a heavy burden on many who are least able to carry it.

Women, in particular, are affected by poverty, and children suffer a double burden. Child poverty is a function of family poverty and is part of a complex array of interrelated problems. Children are dependent on their families and environment to help them succeed.

The stress in many families related to poverty and life-style changes places many children at risk.

Accumulated risks are strong predictors of negative outcomes in childhood, such as failure at school, delinquency and antisocial behaviour. Research indicates that children who grow up poor show almost three-and-a-half times the number of conduct disorders, almost twice the chronic illnesses and more than twice the rate of school problems, hyperactivity and emotional disorders as children who are not poor.⁵ These impacts frequently carry over into adulthood, and may lead to further cycles of poor parenting, abusive behaviour, and reduced ability to be self-sufficient and productive.

Poverty is more than financial deprivation. It leads to exclusion, isolation and marginalization, and it increases the risk of discrimination and victimization. Increasingly children are unable to afford to participate in school and recreational activities and this creates social differentiation.

Of course, not all families and children who are poor will encounter these negative conditions.

Implications for the Strategic Social Plan

Both the short-term and long-term risk factors associated with poverty are significant. A priority for the Strategic Social Plan should be to implement mitigative and preventative programs to reduce the negative impacts of poverty on children and youth.

It will be important to conceptualize new policies and develop new, community-based programs to assist families to be strong, even in the face of economic adversity.

Early Childhood

The early years are crucial to the development of children and the future health and success of adults. Early childhood experiences have a profound impact on an individual's cognitive, emotional and physical growth and subsequent functioning as an adult.

Key Issues for Children

- ▶ nutrition and food security
- ▶ mitigation of poverty
- ▶ school meal programs in all schools
- ▶ promotion of breastfeeding
- ▶ prenatal education and nutrition
- ▶ early identification and assessment of children with special needs
- ▶ family counselling and respite care for high-risk families.
- ▶ outreach services for isolated families
- ▶ integrated approaches to meeting children's needs
- ▶ early identification of children at risk
- ▶ parental development
- ▶ enhancement of community support networks

Unfortunately, growing up with adequate economic, social and emotional support is an experience denied many children.

Children who live in neglectful, violent and abusive families, whether or not they are poor, are also disadvantaged.

Currently the needs of some children are not being met because of lack of services, long waiting lists for a variety of services, high case loads of social workers and other professionals, and because policies and programs are inadequate across regions. There is also a dearth of services for preschool children in the Province.

Programs and services for parents are also lacking. Since the early years are crucial for the healthy development of a child, prenatal care, crisis support and skill-development programs need to be offered to parents long before their children are of school age.

Implications for the Strategic Social Plan

New programs and services need to be developed and existing services need to be expanded.

A commitment must be made to support early childhood development to ensure that all young children are well fed, safe and exposed to stimulating enrichment opportunities.

Strengthening families must be a key strategy for the Strategic Social Plan.

Programs to support children's growth and development should be integrated across sectors (education, health, social services, housing, recreation, environment) and must incorporate family, school and community networks.

Youth

Across the Province, many young people are engaged in civic activities, and are taking positive measures to build a future for themselves and to contribute to their communities.

Some youth, however, are facing increasing social problems, such as alcohol and substance abuse, idleness, disillusionment, and conflict with the law. Many problems are associated with low self-esteem, lack of a sense of self-worth and little optimism about the future. These problems, coupled with increased levels of stress and depression, have meant that the mental health and emotional well-being of young people are declining. Such stress also reduces interest in the pursuit of education.

Youth who have low educational achievement and poor attachment to the labour force will place greater demand on the social-welfare and health-care system, and increase the need for remedial education and training programs outside the regular school system.

In many parts of the Province, the inability of youth to enter the labour market has meant that many have little chance of developing job readiness, or social and leadership skills. The fact that 24% of all youth in the Province aged 18-24 years received Social

Key Issues for Youth

- ▶ giving youth a voice
- ▶ access to mental health and counselling services
- ▶ recreational activities
- ▶ meaningful involvement in civic activities
- ▶ high-quality secondary education
- ▶ promotion of healthy life styles
- ▶ career-planning information
- ▶ exposure to “work” experience
- ▶ building self-esteem and leadership skills

Assistance during 1995 points to a problem which should be tackled with some urgency.

Because the transition from school to work is facilitated by work experience, there is now greater emphasis on partnering with the private sector and other employers to provide mentoring, co-operative and on-the-job work experience. This type of experience is an important addition to education and training, and improves essential skills such as interpersonal communication, cooperation and responsibility.

In many Newfoundland and Labrador communities, however, the employer base is so limited that it is difficult to provide work opportunities for many young people. Youth are thus caught in what has been described as the "job paradox" – they need a job to get experience, and they need experience to get a job.

Youth from rural areas find it more difficult to obtain a good education because of the reduction in teaching staff which curtails the range of courses available in secondary school, and because of the expense of travelling long distances and living away from home. Poor families face the additional risk of having to assume higher debt loads from student loans because they must move to urban areas to obtain higher education.

Although many young people are having to leave the Province to find work, many young graduates of post-secondary institutions would like to be able to remain in the Province to contribute to their communities and to economic development.

Implications for the Strategic Social Plan

Mitigative measures are required to prevent young people from becoming reliant on Social Assistance.

Community involvement which enables youth to establish themselves as responsible citizens and meaningful participants in their communities is crucial for the transition to adulthood and to the workforce.

Specific retention strategies may be necessary to reverse the trends of out-migration of young, well-educated citizens.

Survival of Rural Communities

The survival of rural communities is a poignant concern. There is a perception that rural communities are not getting a fair or equitable share of public resources and are being dismantled little by little, service by service. The centralization of some services, the reduction of teachers due to lower student enrolment, decreased access to post-secondary educational opportunities and health care, reduction of municipal grants, and the loss of health professionals has put the future of many communities in jeopardy.

Changing demographics and out-migration, especially of youth and young families, are altering the complexion and structure of many areas, leading to further erosion of the base for service provision, and resulting in a shrinking tax base.

Out-migration is a response to a deteriorating social environment as well as to a declining economic base.

Some communities have been maintained over the years by short-term work programs and associated income-support programs. The groundfish moratorium has greatly exacerbated the situation. If no

practical employment alternatives are generated, people who can, will leave. Others, because of age, personal equity in homes which may not be marketable, lack of financial resources, or lack of work prospects elsewhere, may find it difficult to move away. So often the Committee heard the painful comment, "We can't afford to stay but we can't afford to go."

Such factors are altering the make-up of communities. Those who remain are likely to be older, less well-educated, require more support services and be more dependent on social services and income security.

Many of the young people who remain will have to rely on Government income support because of the lack of paid employment. This trend is already evident in the growing case loads of Social Assistance and the increasing numbers of young people who are turning to Social Assistance for support.

Implications for the Strategic Social Plan

If Government wishes to make a commitment to preserve rural communities, calculated affirmative policies and actions will be required.

Affirmative policies will be needed to ensure a reasonable level of public services such as health care, educational facilities, law enforcement, social service programs and income support. Given the move to decentralized decision-making and delivery (for example, regional school and health care boards), Government would likely have to impose (and provide) additional resource allocation to comply with its stated policies.

Innovative programs for children and youth will be necessary to give them adequate opportunities for enrichment. Delivery in small communities could be complicated by lack of community, financial and other resources, including leadership and people to manage volunteer activities.

Employment-creation initiatives will have to be mounted. Such initiatives must go beyond the scope

of the Regional Economic Development Boards which are planning for the longer term.

If no action is taken, it is likely that more young people will leave, especially the better educated, thereby sealing the fate of many communities and weakening the fabric of the Province.

Either choice will have a Province-wide impact, either because of the cost of providing additional services or because of a further reduction in population.

Health Care

The people of Newfoundland and Labrador value the universal health care system, which has developed over the years, and are concerned about the erosion of, access to, and the quality of available services.

As demand increases and services are rationed because of budgetary constraints, waiting lists are becoming longer for many services. The trend to private-sector provision of some services is fostering preferential treatment for those who can afford to purchase them.

Similarly, the costs of medication, medical supplies and services, which are covered when a person is in hospital, are now being passed on to individuals when they are released to the community. This means that people who are not well off may not be able to afford the support they need, since stays in hospital are becoming increasingly brief.

Access to health care is particularly difficult in rural areas, as medical services become centralized and health-care professionals, such as doctors, are more difficult to recruit. The long distances which must be travelled for health services are costly for patients and their families.

Research is expanding knowledge about contributing causes of some illnesses and pointing to methods of prevention and early intervention. More attention, therefore, can be directed to health promotion and measures which might reduce the occurrence, or severity, of certain diseases. Substantial evidence

exists which points out the cost benefit of promotion, prevention and early intervention.

Implications for the Strategic Social Plan

Changes to the health-care system, especially the increasing emphasis on community-based approaches to health-care delivery, need to be carefully monitored and evaluated to ensure that quality services remain available and accessible. Further cuts would exacerbate the erosion of the system and would lead to a two-tiered system.

New approaches to the delivery of health-care services should be considered to ensure that the needs of all citizens are met efficiently and effectively. Services should be allocated fairly by developing standards to determine an appropriate level of service that must be maintained throughout all regions of the Province.

Increased efforts to enhance health promotion through preventative approaches and early intervention should be a matter of priority.

A shift of resources to health promotion and illness prevention must not be accomplished at the expense of further deterioration of the acute care system. There must be a balance between acute care and chronic care, between health promotion and health delivery, between institutions and community-based and/or home-based services.

Education

Access to high-quality educational opportunities is a priority for people throughout the Province. People know that education is essential to their well-being and the future of the Province.

Restructuring of the school and post-secondary systems is creating uncertainty about continuing access to quality education.

Traditionally, schooling was deemed to be the great equalizer – creating equal opportunities for all regardless of socio-economic circumstances. Now, however, there is concern about the erosion of the

universal school system as more costs are passed to students who must contribute to certain expenses or engage in fund raising for school equipment and essential supplies.

The cost of a post-secondary education is becoming prohibitive for some. The average debt load has more than doubled in recent years, and taking a substantial student loan has become extremely risky.

Implications for the Strategic Social Plan

If education is a fundamental right, the system should respond to the needs of all students, both those who wish advanced learning opportunities and those who require extra support in their learning endeavours. This poses great challenges to the educational system as it has to adjust to a declining and scattered population, and to many challenging circumstances in the classroom.

A comprehensive educational system that is broad and inclusive, incorporating a continuum of lifelong learning – including early childhood development, academic schooling, skills training, literacy and adult basic education – must be maintained. It should extend across all age levels, bridge the gap between school and work, integrate school resources more intrinsically within the life of the community, address the special needs of individuals and regions, and value excellence.

Improving links between education and participation in the labour force through expanded use of technology, more focused career planning and information would enhance the prospects of many students.

Social Services

Social services programs have traditionally been under-financed and over-burdened in this Province.

Because of increasing demand for services, increasing duration of claims, growing case loads and reduced funding from the Federal Government, the problem has become more pronounced. A series of

cutbacks is causing uncertainty for those who require these programs.

The manner in which the Department of Social Services has been structured is quite different from that of other human service departments such as Health and Education. The Department of Social Services has had a dual mandate: it is a policy maker and a service-delivery agent. As well, its dual role in providing services and the income assistance program has caused the department to be viewed as a service of last resort for those receiving income through Social Assistance. The department's wider role in family rehabilitative services, child daycare and child welfare have tended to be seen in the context of financial need rather than on the basis of the requirement for a particular service.

Social Assistance Information 1995

- ▶ 53% of new cases were under age 25
- ▶ 32% of children under age 5 lived in households reliant on Social Assistance
- ▶ 16% of all Social Assistance recipients were between 18-24 years of age
- ▶ 24% of all youth in the Province received Social Assistance at some point during the year
- ▶ 52,550 different cases flowed through the Social Assistance system
- ▶ 35,000 collected benefits in any one month (Between 1992 and 1996 the average length of time on Social Assistance increased by one to three months; in 1996 the average duration of clients on Social Assistance was 8 months.)

Because the department's services are not universal – like health and education – many people who use the department's services feel stigmatized, many who could benefit from services are ineligible.

The department's service provision has generally been "remedial" in design. As more of the department's resources are directed to meeting the most basic income needs, its ability to play a preventative and developmental role has been weakened and has resulted in an approach which is primarily crisis-oriented.

The manner in which services are provided to children, especially in the child welfare system, has been the subject of much discussion and many reviews. However, there is concurrence that the way services are provided should be re-conceptualized so that greater emphasis is placed on the role of the family within the context of the community.

This might be achieved more effectively if the responsibility for service provision and income maintenance did not fall under one management system.

Implications for the Strategic Social Plan

Personal social services should be available on the basis of need and should be more developmental in approach.

Community-based provision of services – through a variety of agencies and organizations – could be considered. However, any transfer of responsibility and authority would require careful planning and a commitment of financial resources.

Ways to reduce barriers for people trying to leave the Social Assistance system to obtain work need to be found. Some traditional responses may no longer be adequate because of the lack of available work opportunities.

Links should be made between social and economic development initiatives. Access to education and training should continue to be a priority. Intensive planning efforts should be undertaken with other provincial departments, federal programs and community-based organizations, to assess where jobs might be developed, and how funds from a variety of sources could be maximized to create opportunities for work.

Financing Social Programs

Financing services is constrained for several reasons: Newfoundland and Labrador has a higher-than-average need for some social programs, a higher cost to deliver many of them, and a lower-than-average ability to generate revenues to pay for them because of high unemployment rates and a weak tax base. The direct Provincial debt now totals nearly \$9 billion (including unfunded pension liabilities) and costs more than \$500 million a year to service. This represents an average debt of \$16,400 for every woman, man and child in the Province.

Present Spending. Of each dollar the Province spends from current account, 66 cents goes to social programs such as health care, education, justice, municipal services, housing, employment and social services. A further 16 cents is spent on Provincial debt interest. The remainder pays for all other programs and services, such as maintaining roads and buildings, supporting resource industries, protecting the environment, enhancing business opportunities and promoting tourism and culture.

Sources of Revenue. At present, about 57% of the Provincial Government's total current account revenue comes from individuals and businesses in the Province, from such sources as sales tax, personal income tax, gasoline tax and payroll tax. Many taxes are higher than in any other province.

The other major source of revenue is transfers from the Federal Government. The two main transfers are equalization payments and funding to support social programs. However, in 1996-97, the level of Federal funding to support social programs such as health, post-secondary education and social services decreased. Funding for these programs is about \$100 million less in 1996-97 than in previous years. There have also been cuts in funding for social housing. A substantial decline in cash entitlements is anticipated to continue in future years.

The combination of low economic growth and Federal transfer reductions has caused Newfoundland and Labrador's rates of revenue growth to drop substantially. In 1989-90, revenue growth was 9%. In

the six years that followed, it averaged about 2.1%. During 1996-97 and 1997-98, revenues will fall rather than grow.

The people of the Province want a full array of social programs, particularly in health and education, delivered everywhere throughout the Province. They also want adequate levels of income from income-support programs and locally available social services. These requirements, however, are at odds with the current financial ability of the Provincial Government to provide and pay for them.

Implications for the Strategic Social Plan

Figures indicate that there is little flexibility to redistribute funds to social program areas from other departments.

Decisions by the Federal Government to reduce cash transfers have also imposed serious constraints on this Province. If this trend is not reversed, Provincial Government efforts to provide adequate social programs will be thwarted.

Additional revenues are required to maintain an adequate array of social programs. However, user-pay approaches to education and health services would erode the much-valued principle of universality in these programs.

The Voluntary Sector

The term *voluntary sector* (sometimes called the *third sector*) refers collectively to non-Governmental organizations such as charity, non-profit, advocacy and planning organizations. The defining feature is volunteer governance. Many organizations employ paid staff to conduct their activities.

Most of the social and economic activity which is outside the public (Governmental) and private (business) sectors, in essence, is carried out by the voluntary (third) sector. The sector therefore serves a vital role in the life of the people of the Province.

The role of the voluntary sector was referred to throughout the consultations because it often serves

as the conduit which links individuals and communities to Government activities. It is the means by which over 100,000 individuals become actively involved in the provision of many services.

The sector's relationship with Government – as a collective whole and as individual groups – is a significant element of social policy formulation.

In the course of restructuring public services, the voluntary sector and volunteers may be left to carry a greater responsibility. Many volunteers indicated they are already at the "burn-out" point; others are reluctant to become involved.

Increased responsibility is especially significant for women who tend to provide the kinds of voluntary services that are being relinquished by the public sector. Consequently, women are being expected to carry more of the burden.

Voluntary organizations usually originate because some public service is lacking, or because an existing service needs strengthening. Many organizations, which provide support to individuals and communities, operate without the benefit of long-term, secure funding and are thus obliged to spend considerable time and energy in fund-raising. The added work detracts from time spent providing service, and contributes substantially to loss of volunteer effort.

There are serious concerns about overloading the sector unless adequate support, resources and funding are provided.

Implication for the Strategic Social Plan

If voluntary and non-profit organizations are to be part of the solution, it must occur within a framework of stable funding, defined expectations and accountability, with formal guidelines in place to define and inform the relationship.

If Government wants expanded voluntary-sector participation in the delivery of human services, it will have to provide a significant measure of authority, financial support and other resources.

Two overriding principles must be entrenched:

- Volunteers should not displace or replace paid workers. Activities of volunteers should be an enrichment – a value added – to a professional level of essential public services.
- Partnership with the sector, and its many components, must be based on equal relationships in which each partner is involved in policy and program design, and in which roles and responsibilities are clearly defined and agreed upon.

Demographic Changes

Significant changes are projected in the number of persons living in the Province. The population is aging, young individuals and families are leaving to find work and the birth rate is dropping. There is also movement from rural areas of the Province to urban areas. These factors will affect family structures and support, alter the range and type of services required throughout the Province, and have an impact on the tax base (i.e. revenue generation).

Population Trends

- ▶ net loss of 20,000 persons since 1993
- ▶ net loss of 4,400 young adults (20- to 30-year-olds) in 1995-96
- ▶ 6,000 youth (20 to 24 years of age) left in the last 3 years
- ▶ the number of children is expected to fall from 146,000 to 85,000 over the next 20 years
- ▶ half the population is expected to be over age 45 by 2017

Implications for the Strategic Social Plan

All aspects of social programs will have to adapt to the changes that are occurring. The implications for social infrastructure should be weighed in the context of demographic trends for each decision Government and communities make.

If the population continues to decline from out-migration and the lower birth rate, there will be impacts on many sectors.

Education. There will be considerably fewer children in the future, as much as a 40% drop by 2016. The implications for education policy and delivery are enormous. Dispersed populations and small enrollments could increase substantially the cost of education per child.

Health. The health-care sector will have to respond to the increase in the population aged 50+ as there will be greater demand for special and accessible services for this age group.

Labour Market. Labour market policies will be affected by the decline in the 20-year-old to 44-year-old population which currently comprises 70% of the labour market. The skill mix and education level of a smaller and/or older labour market could weaken our ability to compete.

Municipalities. Fewer people and an aging population will have to bear a greater burden for supporting municipal infrastructure. This will influence municipal planning and services.

Provincial Finances. Tax-base erosion, declining Federal transfers that are based on population, higher per capita public debt, and less economic activity and consumer spending could have a negative impact on the Province's capacity to provide services.

Polarization of Society

There are core values which people hold important and which should form the foundation of all social policy decisions: fairness, availability, access and equity. However, society is becoming polarized.

There is an ever-increasing gulf between those who are well-off and those who are poor, between the employed and the unemployed, between those with and without special needs. This is creating an unequal, two-tiered social system with lower quality or fewer services for those who are not able to pay for them.

During the consultation, people pointed to a new divisiveness which is shaking our social foundations. This is evidenced by personal conflicts, mean-spiritedness and bitter competition among people and communities. While it is difficult for the Social Policy Advisory Committee to judge the health of communities, the frequency of comments indicate that people are shocked by the rapid erosion of community spirit and what they hold dear.

Implication for the Strategic Social Plan

Our collective ability to cope and our resilience which allows us to survive during difficult times must be nurtured through continued investment in social infrastructure for all who need it.

Special efforts, such as mediation skills to enable communities to deal with conflict, may be required.

Moving Forward

Just as the causes of social problems are complex and interlinked so, too, are the solutions. There is no single strategy to respond to the high levels of unemployment, reduce the causes of stress and family violence, improve health, eradicate the effects of poverty, and ensure sound early childhood development. Nor is there an easy solution to raising the revenues necessary to maintain social programs.

We have two choices to confront these problems: adjusting and adapting existing programs within the current social policy framework, or formulating significant new approaches within a new framework.

The choices Government makes now – about the fate of rural communities, about the welfare of our children and youth, about supporting those who need assistance, about how we share our resources and responsibilities, about collaboration and how decisions are made – will determine the future of Newfoundland and Labrador society.

The Social Policy Advisory Committee believes that a significant new approach is required – a new framework for social development.

Investing in People and Communities Framework for Social Development

Vision and Values

Our vision for Newfoundland and Labrador is of a vibrant, caring, supportive community. It is a society which builds on its own unique heritage and traditions while preparing to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century and in which Government and the people work in collaboration, in a spirit of openness, trust, mutual respect and shared responsibility.

We are a society that invests in our people, recognizing that our social, economic and environmental well-being depend on the strength of individuals, families and communities. Our society protects, nurtures and sustains our citizens while striving to instill hope and ensure a brighter future for all.

In Newfoundland and Labrador we value

- ▶ our cultural diversity and heritage, and the unique circumstances that shaped them
- ▶ our natural environment and all of its riches
- ▶ individual self-esteem, hope and dignity for all citizens
- ▶ health, security, justice and freedom from fear
- ▶ equality, equity and fairness
- ▶ creativity, independence and self-reliance
- ▶ freedom to make individual choices and take related risks
- ▶ education and training, and the opportunity they provide for people to prosper
- ▶ meaningful work and economic security
- ▶ trust in Government, and Government's trust in the abilities of the people
- ▶ democratic and equal participation
- ▶ families, in all their diversity.

III. Cultivating Change

A New Framework for Social Development

The public consultations raised questions about the manner in which government bureaucracy is structured and how it functions. Traditional departmental and agency jurisdictions and barriers can hinder social development and make comprehensive cross-departmental approaches difficult to attain.

Policy design and decision-making within Government do not adequately link social and financial objectives. The links between Treasury Board and social policy departments, and among social policy departments themselves, are tenuous. This tends to cause inconsistent, shortsighted and sometimes conflicting decision-making.

Actions in one sector sometimes collide with actions in another, causing contradictions which may be inefficient and costly.

The dialogue with the public, stakeholders and Government employees identified weaknesses in many areas including gaps and fragmentation in services, the quality and availability of some services, uneven geographic distribution of some services, and discrepancies between policies and program delivery.

The current approach to policy and delivery is **vertical** in design and operation. Because there is no overall policy framework, policies tend to reflect the goals and objectives of the line departments that formulate them and do not link decision-making across sectors.

The vertical (or "silo") approach is more susceptible to duplicated effort, gaps in services, short-term ad hoc programming, and inefficient expenditures. It frequently results in confusion and frustration for both clients and service providers.

The Social Policy Advisory Committee concludes that these issues will not be resolved merely through piecemeal adjustments to individual policies and programs. Many issues need to be addressed in concert in order to achieve bold change.

Doing Things Differently

Many of the problems associated with systems inefficiency could be ameliorated by a **horizontal** approach to policy and program development which encourages pan-sectoral cooperation.

New approaches to social policy require more coherent planning and decision-making. Policy coherence among financial, economic, environmental and social policy directions must be directed at the highest level.

The Social Policy Advisory Committee recommends that the Provincial Government adopt a comprehensive framework for decision-making and service delivery which links social and financial objectives and facilitates policy coherence at all levels.

A new framework is required which is founded on the concept of social development and which acknowledges the essential roles of individuals and communities in fostering social and economic well-being.

Framework for Social Development: Investing in People and Communities

The Social Policy Advisory Committee recommends a framework for social development which is founded on the key directions of

- ▶ *investing in people*
- ▶ *integrating social and economic development initiatives*
- ▶ *building on community strengths and assets.*

The Social Policy Advisory Committee recommends that the following strategies be adopted to achieve the new framework:

- *policy impact analysis*
- *prevention and early intervention*
- *integration of policy development and program delivery*
- *client-focused, family-centred approaches to service delivery*
- *strengthening community capacity*
- *research, analysis and evidence-based decision-making*
- *strong, balanced partnerships and alliances*
- *public participation and collaboration*
- *optimizing the use of resources*
- *access to services*
- *accountability through social auditing.*

Key Directions

Investing in People

Central to the new framework for social development is the principle of investing in people in order to build their capacity to adapt to the changing world and to be able to create a better future. This concept recognizes the needs of both present and future generations.

Investing in people requires a shift to a developmental approach which is forward-looking and future-oriented rather than reactive. In essence, it is a social investment which recognizes the importance of affirmative actions which strengthen individuals and communities to enable them to thrive.

Social infrastructures, such as health services, schools and support networks, are integral to social investment and must be maintained as essential public services.

Social investment embraces the notion that social infrastructure programs and services must be seen in the same light as investment in other kinds of infrastructure, such as investment in business development. Although it requires money up front, the return on the investment will be substantial. Some investments – such as feeding hungry children – will have almost immediate returns. Investing in such areas as prenatal and early childhood nutrition, early assessments for learning disabilities, education, literacy training and job-readiness will also reap considerable benefits and eventually become self-sustaining.

Because there may not be an immediate pay-off on some investments, "investing in human capital" may be a difficult course to take. It will require a significant shift in thinking, from the view that social programs "consume" financial resources, to the understanding that they are critical investments in protecting and enhancing human and social capital.

Integrating Social and Economic Development

The new framework is founded on the assumption that sound economic development flows from human development, and that human resource development underpins economic development.

Income support and other social programs should be linked to regional economic development initiatives and enhancing social infrastructure whenever possible, to ensure the most effective use of available resources.

Newfoundland and Labrador requires a well-adapted, active, educated, engaged and healthy population living in stable communities in order to create and act upon economic opportunities.

Young people should be involved in the development of their communities to give them confidence and experience to capitalize on future options. Social programs must invest in people and communities in

a manner that achieves a vibrant, positive society so that economic development can be realized.

The Strategic Social Plan will begin to integrate social policy. However, the ultimate objective should go a step farther to integrate social *and* economic policy within a single coherent framework. Formulating social and economic policy independently will fall short of achieving true policy integration. Policies must be consistent across departments and between economic and social initiatives.

Building on Community Strengths and Assets

The new framework necessitates greater participation by individuals and local communities. Investment in people can occur most effectively at the community level.

At the moment, many institutional arrangements limit rather than foster the development of individual and community capacity. Community engagement can underpin a whole new approach to our future.

People should be involved in, and responsible for, decisions and activities which affect them and their families because they are closer to the situation and can therefore respond faster and more appropriately. They are nearby to monitor the effectiveness of programs and can help to tailor solutions to individual needs.

Strategies which are locally-based can engender supportive civic communities. Such communities create a protective, nurturing environment for children and families. For vulnerable people, supportive communities help to reduce negative factors and can be the "life line" that keeps them from sinking. Such communities provide "a place and a purpose" and may reduce demand for more extensive and costly institutional and professional services.

While some communities already have a well-developed sense of civic participation, others do not. Engaging people in collective planning and dialogue is vital to fostering self-determination, a capacity which enhances resiliency and people's ability to cope.

Strategies

The strategies identified by SPAC can be employed to support social development and enhance services across many different program areas.

The Framework Strategies Should Stress

- ▶ long-term planning
- ▶ collaboration
- ▶ consultation and dialogue
- ▶ expertise of individuals, families and communities
- ▶ involvement of affected people so that they become engaged in their own decisions
- ▶ adequate resources and information

Policy Impact Analysis

Central to the new framework should be broad and comprehensive analyses of all policies, programs and practices and of their impacts on the people they affect. A process to enable a thorough review of the potential implications for different sectors, groups and regions should be undertaken. Policies must be assessed to determine if they are consistent with social goals and agreed-upon objectives.

When policy is being developed, a complete review of its implications for all groups should be conducted, since decisions may have different impacts on different regions or groups. Reviewing the effect of a particular decision on persons with disabilities, children, seniors, women, aboriginal peoples, or persons of low income, in advance of issuing a directive, could ensure better policy-making.

For instance, some decisions affect men and women differently. Women bear the main brunt of reductions in social programs. Cuts in health care and reduced educational supports for children with special needs, place an increased burden on women as they are

often expected to assume more unpaid or low-wage work. Gender-based analysis would enable policy makers to assess the impact of existing or proposed policies, programs and legislation on women and on men.

Institutional practices are often not assessed sufficiently to ensure that all people are treated fairly. Within the criminal justice system, policy impacts on victims may not be adequately considered and sometimes this gives preferential treatment to the offender. Despite improvements, the system is still insufficiently sensitive to, or supportive of, the needs of the victims of abuse and violence (primarily children and women). Victims are further disadvantaged because they have no access to legal aid for civil cases.

Analysis which is too narrow in scope can also miss the full range of potential impacts. This is most likely to occur when policy is considered only in the context of the effects it will have within the mandate area of a single department. Policy analysis should thus assess the impact of program decisions in the context of other program areas, and across all departments.

Policy Impact Analysis

- ▶ broad and comprehensive analysis of policies, programs and practices
- ▶ partnership between social and financial impact analysis
- ▶ avoiding bad policy-making
- ▶ considering impacts on different sectors, groups and regions.

Prevention and Early Intervention

These are key strategies for investing in people. Advanced research has identified the root causes of many social and health problems, yet policy

approaches have not kept pace with new knowledge. A key strategy of the new framework must be to act in new ways to prevent or diminish the long-term impact of certain conditions.

Many of the factors that determine our health and social well-being can be controlled and shaped by the kind of society we have, the nature of the support provided by families and the type of community support networks which are available to children, youth and adults.

Community-based programs help remove significant burdens from our health, employment, social services, justice and education systems. For example, investing in community-based services and supports for adults with physical or mental disabilities enables them to be active, contributing citizens, maximize their health status and helps to avoid repeated hospitalization or institutionalization.

Within the criminal justice system, far more effort and energy is expended on punitive approaches than on understanding and addressing the causes of criminal behaviour. Reducing the numbers who come into contact with the justice system could be achieved through sound social development strategies. For example, the risk factors which characterize and lead to criminal behaviour are often associated with the early childhood years. Certain risk factors - such as learning disabilities, behaviour problems, fetal alcohol syndrome - if ignored and left unattended, can result in frustration and subsequent negative behaviours. It has been estimated that 70% – 90% of offenders have some form of learning disability, but it is not the learning disability which is the problem: it is the lack of prevention, early intervention and treatment.

Some Potential Strategies for Prevention and Early Intervention

- ▶ opportunities for the unemployed
- ▶ early childhood development
- ▶ partnerships to implement initiatives
- ▶ promote healthy lifestyles
- ▶ self-help and mutual-aid support groups
- ▶ adequate levels of income support
- ▶ good nutrition through education and school meal programs
- ▶ recreational activities
- ▶ parental development and counselling support
- ▶ involvement of youth in community service work

All factors which affect physical and mental well-being – including biological endowment, lifestyle, quality and accessibility of health care, the human and natural environment, education, social and economic development, public policy, social services and the justice system – should be considered within the concept of prevention.

Income levels are the most important factors related to good health, followed by educational levels and a record of healthy childhood development.

Integration of Policy Development and Programs

A comprehensive policy framework would aim to integrate policy across departmental jurisdictions. A shift from policy fragmentation to policy coherence is essential. Traditionally, social and economic policies have not been shaped around long-term outcomes for individuals, groups and communities.

There are now increasing efforts to achieve inter-departmental, cross-disciplinary linkages in meeting

client needs. However, when they do occur, they are usually the result of individuals – frequently at the delivery end – who have expended considerable effort to make them happen.

Integration and Coordination Should Occur

- ▶ between social and financial policy
- ▶ among departments and among programs
- ▶ between Government and community-based agencies
- ▶ between the Federal and Provincial Governments
- ▶ at the service delivery level

Policies are sometimes inconsistent with the stated position of Government. For instance, while leaders speak of the necessity of accessible top-quality education, post-secondary education is becoming prohibitively costly for people, as tuition costs rise and more students have to travel farther to attend college.

Policies and programs with "one-size-fits-all" designs have marginalized certain groups who do not fit the programs. People end up "slipping through the cracks" because programs are not able to consider individual needs, regional variation and cultural diversity. These problems not only cause inefficiencies and higher costs, but lower the level or quality of service provided.

The direction of all social programs and services should be toward integrated, long-term planning which seeks life-long solutions that help people become self-reliant.

Client-Focused, Family-Centred Approaches to Service Delivery

Delivery of many human services is generally program-driven; people are required to meet eligibility criteria. Since rules and regulations govern

decisions, solutions to complex problems are difficult to attain. A more rational approach is to base decisions about the supports people receive on individual needs, regardless of the departmental jurisdictions.

A client-focused approach builds, in a holistic way, on the strengths and resources people have. Shifts in assessment approaches should focus on the "person in the environment" and recognize strengths rather than needs and weaknesses.

Examples of Client-Centred Models

- ▶ Independent Living Model
- ▶ Individualized Service Plans for persons with disabilities
- ▶ Community Health Centre Model
- ▶ Community Resource Base Model
- ▶ Intensive Family Preservation Model
- ▶ Community Family Group Conferences for youth, justice and family violence
- ▶ Community schools

Within a new framework, crisis intervention and service provision should not be based on "means testing" but on *needs identification* – considering the extent to which the person, in the context of the family and the community, requires support to resolve a problem. For example, while some families may be able to afford expensive counselling services (if such services exist where they live), others have to do without necessary support. This approach is at odds with the "investing in people" concept which emphasizes providing the support needed to ameliorate a problem.

Strengthening Community Capacity

"People live in communities. But the real importance of 'living in community' is that people – and groups

of people – develop the ways and means to care for each other, to nurture the talents and leadership that enhance the quality of community life, and to tackle the problems that threaten the community and the opportunities which can help it.

*... without capacity, communities are merely collections of individuals acting without concern for the common good; they are without the necessary ingredients required to develop a healthier community. Communities without capacity really are not communities in any meaningful sense, but have given way to negative conditions like apathy, poverty or ineptitude." (Aspen Institute, *Measuring Community Capacity Building*, p.1.)*

Much of the ability to shore up our Province and our people must be community-driven. For this to occur, SPAC believes that processes must be put in place which will strengthen and promote capacity building. Healthy communities are built on a sound social infrastructure comprising public services and community-based networks of voluntary and civic organizations. Strong communities require the willingness of people to invest time and energy in collective activities. A high level of volunteerism is an important indicator of the health of a community. Active volunteers enrich the scope of support networks and can act in very immediate ways to deal with pressing problems. The voluntary sector promotes improved lifestyles, and generally serves to enrich community life.

While a focus emanating from the public consultations and endorsed by SPAC is to extend a greater responsibility to communities, careful thought and planning will first be required, since there is an absence of formal social, health, recreational and other support services in many communities. Furthermore, there is not a well-developed or strong network of voluntary, non-profit agencies in some areas.

While people's desire for more local autonomy is evident, the devolution process must be embarked upon with caution, and it is paramount that Government maintain standards of services and remain committed to funding an array of public services.

If communities are to play an effective role in social development, processes to encourage *community*

*capacity building*⁶ must be implemented. Community capacity building will not always happen spontaneously. Targeted activities may be necessary to bring people together to find common solutions. This will require investing more in some communities than in others.⁷

Strong, Balanced Partnerships and Alliances

Partnerships between Government and community groups can be valuable in facilitating social development and integrating social and economic policy. For instance, a team approach involving education, health, justice, social services and non-Governmental groups can help to meet the needs of children, students, their families and communities in a holistic and supportive manner.

Effective Partnerships Require

- ▶ commitment to collaboration
- ▶ role identification and responsibility setting
- ▶ common goal-setting
- ▶ joint planning
- ▶ effective communications strategies
- ▶ shared decision-making by all the partners
- ▶ management authority
- ▶ dispute resolution mechanisms
- ▶ resource allocation and sharing of resources
- ▶ long-term funding arrangements
- ▶ evaluation processes
- ▶ accountability

People want more community-level involvement in service delivery and program management, based on new alliances. However, partnerships must be appropriately balanced. They will not work if one partner holds all power and control. Partners must have mutually-agreed, common goals. With more responsibility must come more resources and authority.

Research, Analysis and Evidence-Based Decision-Making

Reshaping social policy and managing change should be grounded in knowledge, research and analysis of what works and what does not.

While the information that Government needs to make the best decisions *is* often available, much valuable research and evidence-based information is not always well used by policy advisors and decision-makers.

The new framework requires continuous synthesis of inter-disciplinary perspectives and data analysis. The process should incorporate reviews of current research and studies, monitoring of programs and policies, evaluation mechanisms, assessment of best practices and innovative demonstration projects in order to find creative approaches to social policy.

This process can be achieved through a consolidation of information from experts in special fields and from community experience.

Research and Analysis

- ▶ baseline data
- ▶ monitoring and evaluation processes
- ▶ data analysis
- ▶ academic research
- ▶ best practices
- ▶ pilot projects
- ▶ cross-disciplinary perspectives

Public Participation and Collaboration

The present administration places high value on public consultation and has initiated frequent opportunities for the general public and non-Governmental organizations to express their views on a wide range of public policy. This could be a significant step in reconciling public policy with

public views. However, there is frustration about the way some consultations with the public have been conducted by Government.

While people want to be consulted, they want consultation to be genuine and to have a real purpose. Consultation should be collaborative and part of a logical, on-going process of dialogue. Information-sharing must be incorporated into the dialogue process.

Public Participation and Collaboration

- ▶ reconcile public policy with public views
- ▶ collaboration with those affected by policies
- ▶ systematic consensus building
- ▶ planned and routine collaboration
- ▶ local and regional dialogue
- ▶ ongoing dynamic process
- ▶ transparent decision-making

The success of the framework for social development requires systematic, on-going public and consumer collaboration. The traditional approach to consultation tends to create an adversarial atmosphere and a perception that the process is superficial. Systematic involvement would be more likely to lead to consensus-building, and solutions which are mutually acceptable.

Collaboration should take place routinely while policies and programs are being developed. Those people affected by policies should be involved from the outset.

Participation should be planned, frequent and take place in a variety of forums. While there may be a place for large-scale public consultations, they are not sufficient. This framework anticipates involvement which incorporates consumer, family and community input in a manner which fosters

better understanding of the issues involved and the resources available.

Government-wide directives should endorse the concept of more meaningful opportunities for public involvement. Creating an open and visible decision-making process will increase the credibility and transparency of the decisions made, and could enable the public and Government to work co-operatively to find new solutions.

Accountability Through Social Auditing

An important component of the new framework is the concept of social auditing.⁸ In essence, social auditing is about "what's working, why and for whom". Social objectives should be the base for policy formulation and should be the primary criteria for policy evaluation. Social auditing is based on the assumption that meeting social needs is what public policy is all about.

Social auditing is a process through which the effects of policy and other social conditions on people are analyzed. It goes beyond traditional accounting methods which focus on financial costs and benefits, and makes Government accountable for instituting policy that meets the needs of the public, and for doing it effectively.

Social Auditing

- ▶ encompasses monitoring and evaluation
- ▶ establishes benchmarks and performance indicators
- ▶ assesses the extent to which a set of principles is promoted
- ▶ assesses the extent to which a set of objectives has been achieved
- ▶ assesses the cost of achieving those objectives
- ▶ examines the impact on other policies and policy areas
- ▶ provides information to inform future policy development
- ▶ considers best practices and alternative strategies
- ▶ facilitates both financial and political accountability

Social auditing incorporates methods to review both financial and public accountability. It does not provide a *formula* for making hard decisions – choices will still have to be made. However, it could be the basis for making choices based on more complete information. The same information would provide the *benchmarks* against which citizens can assess policy achievements and failures.

Several types of information are required: the needs of target populations, existing services and how service is provided, and best practices and alternative strategies. Information should be drawn from a broad base, including those who require the services, service providers and professionals.

Inherent in social auditing is the ability for stakeholders, providers and policy makers to establish objectives and carry out the process collaboratively. While it will not solve the problem of a lack of resources, it can be a useful tool in directing resources based on the fullest information about social needs rather than simply on what is asked for.

Optimizing the Use of Resources

A social development approach would encourage all financial resources and facilities to be used to the greatest advantage.

Because Federal and Provincial policies and spending on social programs are not well coordinated, resources are sometimes wasted or misapplied. If existing financial resources are to be optimized, much greater co-operation between Federal and Provincial programs, in collaboration with non-Government groups, must occur.

Many facilities and human resources throughout the Province are under-utilized and could be more effectively used to support social and economic development. For example, many libraries are open for only a few hours each week, even though many have state-of-the-art computer equipment which could be used to a much greater extent by residents, to advance their knowledge and enhance their information technology skills.

In many communities, school buildings are not being used to optimal capacity. In some areas, innovative arrangements have been worked out and good relationships exist between individual schools and community groups to the advantage of the public. However, these arrangements seem to rest with the individual school board and principal of the school. This is because no central policy dictates that schools must be made accessible for activities other than those associated with formal schooling.

To make better use of resources, systemic and physical barriers which prevent optimal use of existing resources should be removed and approaches adopted which ensure that a fuller benefit can be derived from these investments.

Access to Services

Investing in people requires an adequate social infrastructure. To advance personal, social and economic development, people must have reasonable access to services and programs they need. The multitude of factors which influence well-being

should be central to the allocation of public resources. Throughout the public dialogue people frequently reiterated the importance of accessible and high-quality health care and educational opportunities.

As provision of services becomes more expensive, many costs are being transferred to citizens.

Low-income families without financial resources for travel or for the purchase of services may not be adequately served. The system is not fair if those who can afford service can purchase it, and those who cannot must do without. The growth of a two-tiered system is, in effect, a loss of access and further marginalizes some groups of people. As demand grows, the gaps in service become more pronounced and waiting lists for too few professionals become long.

Ensuring adequate programs and a fair allocation of resources and distribution of services requires planning that is based on identifying needs and services that meet those needs, in all regions of the Province. Allocation problems are compounded by the fact that even though people in isolated communities may feel they are not getting a fair share, on a *per capita* basis they may be getting a greater share of resources than people in urban areas.

Current and anticipated trends – increased demand for services, out migration, population aging – will alter the types of services each community and region needs. All services cannot be available in all communities; however, an identification of essential services is necessary and will vary according to department. Because our population is scattered over a wide geographic area, this a complex task.

Rational decision-making will require improved processes to enable communities to examine how services can be shared, what creative approaches can be employed, how local resources can be better utilized, what trade-offs can be made and how to work co-operatively in "clusters" of communities.

Cultivating Change

Cultivating change must evolve over time. The new approaches which have been proposed will take time to be achieved. The change should not be abrupt. Change of the magnitude the Social Policy Advisory Committee is proposing requires careful planning, appropriate transition procedures, and time for systems and people to adjust. The approaches will require new ways of thinking, new ways of working, and new concepts of management and decision-making. This means that long-term commitment must be endorsed. Most importantly, the acceptance and support of everyone involved will be essential for a successful transition.

IV. Cultivating Change

Implementing the Framework for Social Development

Catalysts for Change

New concepts of social development and social investment must be cultivated over time. Bold shifts to change the way social objectives are defined, pursued and measured will require affirmative action and committed leadership at the highest level. The Premier and Cabinet need to be the champions for change.

The new framework for social development requires new attitudes, new ways of doing things and the sharing of power and resources. It depends on philosophical shifts which focus on strengths and assets more than on weaknesses and problems. And it embraces the notion that people will be more self-reliant if they have a sense of confidence and some control over decisions which affect their lives.

The Social Policy Advisory Committee has proposed that the Provincial Government adopt a new framework for social development which is based on investing in people by integrating economic and social initiatives and by strengthening individual, family and community resources. Establishing this framework and advancing its objectives demand a significant shift in policy-making, a reorientation to horizontal policy and program design, and reorganized service-delivery systems.

The new model focuses on prevention and early intervention: client-centred, integrated service provision; improved research capacity and knowledge-based policy-making and program design; improved data collection, accountability, and evaluation methods; ongoing collaboration with the public; and building strong partnerships with community groups.

Central to the framework is the tenet that financial and social policy objectives must be linked, and equal weight assigned to social goals. Clear

objectives should be stated for the kind of society we want, and all policy decisions should flow from those objectives.

It is the view of the Social Policy Advisory Committee that the concept of social development still lags behind the understanding and recognition of economic development. While the framework's long-term objective is for integrated social and economic development, before full integration can take place *social development* must be given priority through specifically designed implementation strategies.

If Government accepts the recommendation of the Social Policy Advisory Committee to adopt a whole new approach to social policy, then it should signal its commitment through tangible action. Immediate and concerted efforts will be needed to review and act upon the multitude of changes required. Catalysts must be established at the highest level within Government and through a broad-based community alliance.

Catalysts for change must exist both within Government and at the community level.

A Central Agency Within Government

The Social Policy Advisory Committee recommends that a central agency be designated within Government to implement the new framework for social development. The responsibilities of the central agency should be to

- ▶ *establish social policy expertise across sectors*
- ▶ *remove vertical barriers*
- ▶ *change administrative and operational management*

- ▶ *improve coordination among departments*
- ▶ *improve co-action with the Federal Government*
- ▶ *build better partnerships with non-governmental groups*
- ▶ *promote comprehensive, integrated social and economic development*
- ▶ *improve strategic thinking and social planning.*

While line departments will continue to bear responsibility for carrying out their mandates, a central body should be tasked to manage change across departments and disciplines, to develop the course of action to implement change, to assist all systems to adapt to the new approaches, and to link with non-Governmental resources.

To be effective this body must be positioned within the highest echelons of Government and have the authority to act decisively.

Tasks to Be Undertaken

- re-focus Governmental policy and programming to a social development/social investment model
- enforce policy coherence across departments and identify policy and program contradictions
- monitor policies and programs to ensure they are being implemented
- assess the impact of policies and decisions in one department on other departments to ensure they are mutually supportive
- conduct social impact analyses of all public policies to determine the potential differential impacts on different groups such as seniors, women, youth, and persons with disabilities
- initiate social policy research and analysis, and synthesize research and statistical data to inform policy and improve social planning
- shift approaches to tackle the root causes of social problems, and promote targeted prevention and early intervention strategies

- play a lead role in working with the Federal Government to ensure that all Federal programs meet the needs of this Province and support social development goals
- link with the voluntary/third sector to create stronger alliances and partnerships with community groups
- establish monitoring and evaluation procedures to assess the value and success of social programs
- in collaboration with stakeholders, initiate social auditing to establish criteria for analysis, accountability and performance standards, and for Government spending to ensure it meets defined social objectives.
- support initiatives to improve the life chances of children*
- operationalize the Third-Sector Employment Program and Community Youth Program*

* Described later in this Report.

Options for Implementation

Several options could be considered for establishing a dedicated locus for developing the new framework and implementing the strategic social plan. These include strengthening the existing Cabinet Social Policy Secretariat by giving it an expanded mandate; creating a new secretariat with representation and resources from each department; giving one department the mandate for social development; or creating a Department of Social Development.

Whatever structure is chosen, it will require a strong and unequivocal mandate as a central Governmental agency with authority over line departments; it will need to participate with status equal to Treasury Board.

A Community-Based Resource Alliance

The Social Policy Advisory Committee recommends that the Provincial Government establish a community-based resource alliance to advance the new framework. The objectives of the resource alliance in promoting social development should be to

- *draw together existing resources*
- *enlist new resources*
- *encourage strategic thinking*
- *explore new ideas*
- *conduct social research and planning*
- *underpin social development*
- *assist local organizations and communities to strengthen their capacity and skills*
- *co-act with Governments to make optimal use of resources.*

The concepts proposed in this report demand new and changed relationships, rearrangement of resources and responsibilities, and a greater involvement of non-Governmental organizations. These shifts have to occur at a community level as well as within Government.

The success of the new approaches will depend on how well resources are consolidated and deployed to encourage strategic thinking, to support people and to strengthen communities throughout the Province.

Harnessing optimal use of existing Governmental and non-Governmental funds, human resources and assets must be a priority. We have much to draw upon to create better linkages among communities, organizations, institutions, Governments and Governmental agencies, and academics. Information and research should be better shared, analyzed and synthesized; expertise should be pooled; and community-based knowledge and first-hand experience should be integrated into the policy-making process.

A primary function of the alliance would be to develop processes to assist the public to define the kind of society we want and how we think it can best

be achieved. Its purpose would be to act as a resource for community groups and to ensure that non-Governmental and community-based knowledge is built upon, and used in defining new social policy objectives and directions.

The creation of the resource alliance should be jointly funded by the Federal and Provincial Governments. Private sources of funding and in-kind support could also be sought. It should draw upon the extensive pool of experience at the community level, and be structured to ensure regional input and to guarantee equal consideration of regional and local variations. It should operate at arms length from Government, but should have close association with the newly created Government champion.

Tasks to Be Undertaken

- serve as a centre for development in social policy, planning and program analysis and design, across disciplines and sectors
- contemplate new approaches based on experience, knowledge, data analysis and evidence-based research
- create links across sectors, among Governments, among the public, private and third sectors, in order to improve comprehensive approaches
- provide support to communities to identify and assess local needs, and to help them expand their social, economic and environmental planning capacity
- initiate improved strategies for prevention and early intervention
- encourage opportunities to integrate social and economic development
- provide assistance to community organizations and to build community capacity
- support approaches which build on, and are based in communities, thereby empowering people to be more involved
- work with Government to develop a social auditing system to analyze social spending, monitor impacts of policy decisions, ensure that social

objectives are being met, and monitor and evaluate social programs

- assist and support Government in developing new approaches to social development
- arrange community mediation, conflict resolution and skills development if required
- co-ordinate skills exchanges, professional support, volunteer exchanges; enhance community resources; help groups build a strong leadership and knowledge base
- develop public dialogue processes through involvement at the local, regional and Provincial levels.

The establishment of the new alliance would be a new and powerful way to enhance the concept of investing in people. It would focus attention on social development, draw together the tremendous array of experience, knowledge, research and capacity which exists throughout the Province, and be a central focus for planning and action. It would also be neutral territory to bring together Federal and Provincial officials, and a variety of community representatives to debate and contemplate ways to use existing resources in a manner most beneficial to the people of this Province. And, most importantly, it would be a forum for government and non-governmental groups and individuals to come to-

gether to set priorities and inform public policy as equal partners.

A New Way of Doing Business

Newfoundland and Labrador is well positioned to become a leader in seeking and testing innovative approaches to social policy. By shifting our focus to social development, emphasizing investing in people, and community capacity building, we can build a solid foundation for the future.

We have vast untapped human resources. Though our population is scattered across a large geographic area, we have good communication links and a reasonable network of physical infrastructure.

We also have a strong desire to preserve our culture and way of life. These are substantial assets upon which to build.

The challenge for the Provincial Government is to decide if it is willing to embark on bold new ways of investing in people and doing business by becoming the champion for change. By assuming the role of champion for the social development framework, the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador could become a leader in the field of social policy.

V. Improving the Life Chances of Children

All children deserve an equal chance to develop to their full potential. This requires a clearly-stated commitment to providing adequate resources to develop and support an array of programs and services for children and their families. The commitment should acknowledge that children's well-being depends on the circumstances of their families and that strong community support networks are necessary to assist families raise their children.

To act upon this commitment to children, current policies and programs need to be revamped across all departments, gaps in services need to be addressed, community-based family support systems need to be strengthened and a comprehensive strategy for children and youth services adopted.

Improved approaches to investing in people must start with strategies to enhance early childhood development to ensure that all children have a safe, stimulating environment, with adequate income support and an equal chance to succeed. Prenatal programs are one of the most effective ways to enhance healthy childhood development.

The recent Canada Child Benefit agreement between the Federal and Provincial Governments will make additional funds available for the development of programs and services for children. The Social Policy Advisory Committee suggests that the Provincial Government, instead of clawing back the full amount of the child tax benefit increase, allow the recipient to retain a portion and use the part it takes back to provide new programs.

The Provincial Government should endorse, as a priority, a commitment to enhancing the life chances of all children. This commitment should focus on policies and programs which acknowledge the primary role parents play in child development and on practices which build on the principles of prevention and early intervention.

A policy shift is advocated which moves away from traditional "remedial" methods that focus on crises and symptoms, to community systems of support that focus on the child's strengths within the context of the family.

Alleviating Poverty and Hunger

The Social Policy Advisory Committee recommends that action be taken to alleviate the negative impacts of poverty and hunger on children. Specifically, the objectives should be to

- *strive to provide a more adequate income level for families with children to meet the real cost of basic necessities; this could be advanced by not clawing back proposed increases to the Canada Child Benefit*
- *develop a comprehensive nutrition strategy to attain an adequate standard of food security*
- *increase support for school meal programs throughout the Province*
- *reduce burdens on low income families by reversing the trend to a two-tiered system of education where only those that can afford to purchase services can avail of them; this could be addressed by eliminating student-pay approaches for the costs of many school activities.*

Protecting Children and Families

The best way to protect children is to enhance the ability of families and communities to provide a more supportive and nurturing environment for children. A continuum of services which includes prevention, early intervention and protection is necessary.

The Social Policy Advisory Committee recommends that steps be taken to protect children and families. The objectives should be to

- *re-orient the focus of child-welfare services to include a greater emphasis on preventative programming which seeks to strengthen family functioning, and on better methods of identifying potential problems. This could be achieved through more home visits and by building parental skills through a range of community-support networks*
- *improve child protection services by enhancing opportunities to identify, assess and support children at risk, through co-ordinated efforts of professionals in schools, social services and health care*
- *increase the number of subsidized and accessible child-care spaces, especially for children needing enrichment and early interventions*
- *implement family study and parenting courses in the high school curriculum*
- *accelerate efforts to reduce violence and increase resources for the continued implementation of the Provincial Strategy Against Family Violence.*

Commitment to Early Childhood Development

Provincial policies should be developed to provide support to children and parents through family-oriented programs. A process for delivering pro-

grams and services so they are accessible to preschool children and their parents is required. Because it is not possible to have family resource centres in all communities, outreach strategies for more isolated communities should be expanded and community-based networks to support young children should be improved.

Regional outreach services should be established to assess need, assist in developing programs and provide expertise to communities in implementing them.

The Social Policy Advisory Committee recommends that a commitment be made to implement early childhood development initiatives through regional outreach services. These initiatives should include

- *augmenting pre-natal educational, nutritional and dietary supplement programs for high-risk parents*
- *promotional programs to increase breastfeeding*
- *methods for the early identification and assessment of children with special needs, including requiring that Preschool Health Checks be done at an earlier age and in all regions of the Province*
- *family counselling and respite care for high-risk families*
- *opportunities to improve parental development through parenting courses*
- *outreach services for parents such as a telephone help (warm) line to help decrease isolation and to help prevent problems.*

VI. A Community Youth Program

New approaches to social policy, as defined in the framework for social development presented in this Report, emphasize a shift to positive interventions. To address many of the concerns about positive opportunities and motivation for young people, the Social Policy Advisory Committee proposes a year-round program to encourage youth to become involved in community activities.

It is important to provide young people with a variety of options to help them develop a positive attitude to the future.

The proposed program incorporates a preventative approach for younger adolescents by encouraging them to participate in positive activities. It also provides opportunities for older youth to fund their post-secondary education and to gain the equivalent of work experience. The program builds on the concept developed by the Community Service Component of the Student Work and Service Program by providing youth the opportunity to earn tuition vouchers while engaging in meaningful community activities.

Opportunities for young people which exist in larger communities, such as formal recreation or volunteer activities, are more limited in small rural communities. There is also little chance to access other programs, such as cooperative education, mentoring programs or entrepreneurial education, and little exposure to work experience.

Therefore, a special initiative, targeted at rural communities, is proposed to augment a range of opportunities for youth.

Most initiatives proposed by the Federal Government focus on work activities. Because of the limitations cited above, these are unlikely to meet the needs of many Newfoundland and Labrador youth.

The Social Policy Advisory Committee suggests that the Provincial Government negotiate with the Federal Government a youth program which is tailored to this Province and which can enhance opportunities for young people. The additional merit in this program is that it will bring together different sectors to plan and carry out the program activities and this will strengthen community cohesiveness. Furthermore, it will be a positive incentive for youth to continue their education after high school.

The Committee recommends that the Provincial Government develop an innovative community-driven youth program that is based on community service, and implement it in cooperation with community groups and schools. The youth program should

- ***develop social and leadership skills and civic awareness***
- ***provide mentors and role models***
- ***provide access to the equivalent of "on the job" experience through community service placements***
- ***supply opportunities for community service and contribution to community development***
- ***promote meaningful involvement in community activities***
- ***create career awareness and develop an employability skills profile***
- ***build credits for post-secondary education***
- ***teach new skills to enhance job readiness***
- ***develop entrepreneurial skills.***

Objectives

The purpose is to promote well-adjusted and healthy youth who are able to adapt to change and be resilient in the face of uncertain futures and economic uncertainty. The program links community involvement opportunities with rewards which encourage them to work toward paying for post-secondary education.

For youth ages 13 to 18, the program would provide pre-employment skills, develop leadership skills, motivate them to stay in school and attend post-secondary institutes, and give younger youth "something to do". The component would be implemented in cooperation with the school system.

For older youth, ages 19 to 24 years, the program would build skills and provide work experience opportunities which are essential for them to enter the labour force.

The concept is a community service program that focuses on personal development and the development of career skills which combine experience and education. The younger group would earn tuition credit vouchers for hours of community service accumulated over time. Participation would be re-

warded through recognition of accomplishments. Older youth would be rewarded with tuition vouchers for full-time participation in placements or part-time placement during the school year.

Examples of activities:

- peer tutoring
- friendly visiting and other supports for seniors
- organizing recreation programs
- developing career information programs
- building computer and information technology skills
- assisting in organizing civic initiatives
- school bus monitoring
- reading programs with preschoolers and primary students.

The program would be administered in each community by a local committee comprising youth, school representatives, seniors and others who have time to devote to identifying community priorities and to managing different elements of the program. Where possible, links should be made with Regional Economic Development Boards.

VII. Strengthening and Supporting the Voluntary Sector

Inherent in the new framework for social development is the concept of building on existing assets to strengthen communities and to enhance civil society. The voluntary sector is, in essence, the third sector. The metaphor of the three-legged stool comes to mind – Government being one leg, business another leg, and the voluntary sector the third crucial leg that keeps society in balance and fosters civic communities. The voluntary sector can be instrumental in nurturing social cohesion.

Voluntary agencies are in a prime position to assist Government to establish social policy priorities, to delineate the service role of the sector, and to provide information and advice about the impact of Government decisions on the service capacity of the sector.

A relatively small investment in the voluntary sector will yield a high return in both social and economic benefits. The sector constitutes an immensely valuable resource which must be sustained and developed in a coherent manner.

Since the voluntary sector is the principal means of community action and involvement, strengthening the ability of the sector to take more responsibility is essential in order to achieve a new direction in social policy.

An expanded role for voluntary agencies in social development will require careful planning and a sufficient allocation of funds. Strategies will have to be developed at two levels: at a policy level, which defines and formalizes Government's relationship with the voluntary sector in general and with individual groups in particular; and at the community level, to support the expansion of the sector where necessary.

In advancing the new framework for social development, SPAC sees an essential role for the sector in

promoting and facilitating concepts such as integration, prevention and early intervention, greater individual and public involvement, and for finding new ways to meet social policy objectives.

In the Strategic Social Plan, Government should clearly state its recognition of, and support for, the voluntary sector.

The Social Policy Advisory Committee recommends that the Provincial Government make a commitment to strengthening the capacity of the voluntary sector to be a conduit for social development.

Specifically the Province should

- *in collaboration with the voluntary sector, develop policies and procedures for Government's relationship with the voluntary sector by developing guidelines to govern partnership relations, funding procedures, quality control, performance standards and appropriate monitoring and evaluation procedures*
- *increase financial support to voluntary-sector organizations by developing guidelines for providing funds to the sector in general and specific organizations in particular; guidelines should clearly distinguish between organizations which are providing "contracted out" services at Government's request and those which will receive funds to carry out activities which have been defined at a community level*
- *undertake a thorough analysis of the capacity of individual community organizations to deliver appropriate services before devolving service responsibility to individual community organizations*
- *provide core funding for a variety of activities – on an individual approval basis – such as research and planning, needs assessments, building community capacity, supporting self-help*

groups, and promoting preventative strategies and early intervention initiatives; funding should be provided on a long-term basis to improve efficiency and effectiveness

- *encourage and work with the Federal Government to improve tax benefits for charit-*

able donations and to seek other innovative measures to support volunteerism and charitable sector activities

- *recognize that coordinating volunteers and delivering community service programs require facilities, infrastructure and paid staff; assist the sector to meet these requirements.*

VIII. A Third-Sector Employment Program

The new framework for social development is premised on the concepts of investing in people, integrating social and economic development, and building community capacity. Creating employment in the third sector would advance all of these objectives.

Having work is a major priority and it is particularly important that people maintain and enhance their work skills. Research shows that the longer a person is without work, the more difficult it will be to re-enter the workforce. It is also absolutely critical that work opportunities be available for young people trying to make the transition from school, and to reduce the increasing numbers of young people who are becoming reliant on Social Assistance.

Work is important for the social and economic well-being of individuals and families as well as for its social and economic contribution to the community. Low self-esteem that results from a lack of meaningful work contributes to community conflict and increases personal and social problems. It is important for people to feel a sense of hope for their communities and hope that their children have a future in the Province.

Most people are unemployed because there are no jobs available for them. In the short to medium term, the private sector is not likely to create enough jobs through the marketplace for all those who wish to work. However, as we heard throughout the public dialogue, there is no shortage of work to be done, especially in developing and maintaining social infrastructure, in community service and in economic development initiatives.

Many objectives of the new framework could be met by creating work opportunities in the third sector.

The Social Policy Advisory Committee recommends that a third-sector employment program be established.

The Program should

- *augment community-based social programs*
- *strengthen social and community infrastructure*
- *provide a labour force for the implementation of social and economic development plans within the economic zones*
- *provide full-year, full-time jobs in social and economic development that aim at prosperity in the long term*
- *ensure work is driven and administered at the community level*
- *provide the voluntary sector organizations with the necessary development tools and support to provide meaningful employment*
- *create an environment that fosters long-term employment opportunities.*

The Provincial Government should negotiate with the Federal Government for the reallocation of funds to support job creation in the third sector.

The underlying premise of this program is the provision of long-term, year-round work at reasonable wages, based on the tasks performed. The Third-Sector Employment Program would create new jobs by matching employment opportunities to the development of social and economic infrastructure. The program would be based on thorough needs assessments, long-term planning and the concept of meaningful work.

Jobs in the third sector should mobilize public involvement to increase social well-being and to play a major role in the delivery of community-based social

services. Many voluntary organizations have already identified a range of positions which they need filled. Examples of possible work include recreational and leisure activities, delivering school meal programs, school bus monitoring, peer support for persons with mental health problems, friendly visiting programs for isolated people, family support programs, and personal enrichment programs for young people. The program could also encourage and nurture cooperative development and collective enterprise for the creation of long-term employment.

The Third-Sector Employment Program could also provide a labour force for the Regional Economic Development Boards in the Province to carry out their economic development initiatives. The development of new businesses and industries and the creation of long-term jobs often require workers to develop capacity and infrastructure where none exist, particularly in rural areas.

This proposal is not a make-work program nor should it replace or displace existing workers. It is a way of creating new jobs.

Once the jobs have been identified, they should be open to everyone. Participation in the program should be voluntary, with people competing for these jobs, just as they would for any other job, by submitting applications. Selection of employees should be based on who is most qualified. Wages should be commensurate with rates that would be paid for similar work in the private sector and should include appropriate benefits, such as workers compensation.

Work in the third sector is essential if communities are to survive. This Third-Sector Employment Program will enable many unemployed people to obtain work and move away from forced inactivity. It will create meaningful work, provide invaluable work experience for people making the transition from school to the marketplace, develop long-term

opportunities and decrease demand for programs and services as people reap the social benefits of being employed. It should also reduce the rising levels of stress, help stem out-migration and give people the chance to maintain work skills.

Steps to Implementation

- The program should be initiated by the newly - formed community resource alliance. Since one of the purposes of the alliance is to work with existing community groups to engage in community development, linking the strategy of third-sector work creation with the community-based catalyst for social development would facilitate coherent and integrated social development.
- Merge Federal and Provincial employment initiatives and resources under a common framework to ensure that consistent policies and integrated supports are provided, to avoid duplication of effort and unnecessary administrative costs, and to achieve greater effectiveness. This would ensure that both levels of Government are working toward common goals in concert with the community sector. Some funds should be allocated from Provincial employment programs and from the Federal Employment Benefits and Transitional Job Fund for wage support.
- Effect the redesign and adjustments required in existing Provincial income support and employment programs to meet the requirements of the new program.
- Negotiate with the Federal Government for the necessary changes to the Employment Benefits package to support the program.
- Target the development of 2,000 jobs in the first year and a further 5,000 in the second.

IX. Federal Responsibilities

The total amount of funds spent on transfers to individuals by the Federal Government in 1994 was over \$2 billion. This included Employment Insurance (EI), The Atlantic Groundfish Strategy (TAGS), Child Tax Benefits, Old Age Pension, Spouses Allowance, Guaranteed Income Supplements, Canada Pension, Goods and Services Rebates and other allowances.

In addition to transfers to individuals, the Federal Government also transfers funds directly to the Provincial Government (\$856 million in Equalization payments and the remainder CHST). In 1995, the Canada Health and Social Transfer replaced separate grants to Social Assistance, Health and Education and the total transfers have begun to be reduced. The transfers from the Federal to the Provincial Government make up approximately 40% to 50% of Provincial expenditures.

Changes to any of these federal programs, whether increases or reductions, have a significant impact on the financial well-being of people and on the overall financial situation of the Provincial Government. Decreases in transfers to individuals also decrease tax revenue for the Provincial Government and often drive up the costs of social programs, as people shift reliance from Federal to Provincial programs. For example, decreases in EI and TAGS increase poverty and more people must rely on Social Assistance.

Investments in education and training by the Federal Government provide access to literacy and post-secondary education for many who would not otherwise be able to participate. Because of the interwoven impacts and the extent of reliance on Federal support to, and investment in, individuals in the Province, the Federal Government plays a substantial role in achieving social policy objectives. Reductions in this type of investment stifle advances in the education levels of the Province.

The Social Policy Advisory Committee recommends that the Provincial Government encourage the Federal Government to share responsibility for social development in the Province by

- ▶ *negotiating with the Federal Government to participate in the new Framework for Social Development and in the implementation of the Strategic Social Plan*
- ▶ *appealing to the Federal Government to reverse the continuing reductions in transfer payments under the Canada Health and Social Transfer, and*
- ▶ *requesting the Federal Government to review and overhaul the tax system to increase federal revenues, and particularly to ensure that corporations and high-income earners pay their fair share.*

X. Conclusion

Rapid social and economic changes are causing considerable upheaval for the people and communities of Newfoundland and Labrador. Many people are worried about the future. There is little doubt that we must find the necessary compromises, buffers, and solutions to cultivate change.

If we wish to protect our Province, if we want to develop its potential, if we want to build on what is good about Newfoundland and Labrador, and if we want to foster social and economic change and development, then we must quickly regroup to find new ways of doing things.

This is not a job for Government alone. It is not a job for the private sector, the public sector or the community in isolation. We face a task which demands that we each put aside our conflicts and forget our individual self-interests. We will have to stop depending on others and take on the task of turning our beloved Province around, not only to ensure that this is a place where people can stay, but to make it a place where people want to come.

The Social Policy Advisory Committee recognizes that there are no quick fixes. We do believe, however, that there are ways to improve the manner in which Government does business and to help the public confront the future. The full participation of every single Newfoundlander and Labradorian in a most concerted effort is critical to deal with the mammoth problems this Province faces.

Policies, attitudes, programs and relationships should be reframed to support and invest more wisely in the social development of people and communities. The circumstances which create social problems and the barriers which hinder people from reaching their full potential have to be removed. Processes to operationalize change must be established both within the Provincial Government and at the community level.

The Social Policy Advisory Committee believes, without equivocation, that the success or failure of this Province, the success or failure of this planning process, and the success or failure of individual lives rests with the kinds of choices the Provincial Government makes to invest in the people of the Province. Ultimately Newfoundland and Labrador will be defined by its human and social capital.

It will be pointless for the Provincial Government to design a social plan which is not based in reality – but the defining reality must be rooted in the principle that people are the primary resource upon whose strengths this Province will flourish.

Appendices

Summary of Recommendations

1. The Social Policy Advisory Committee recommends that the Provincial Government adopt a comprehensive framework for decision-making and service delivery which links social and financial objectives and facilitates policy coherence at all levels.
2. The Social Policy Advisory Committee recommends a framework for social development which is founded on the key directions of
 - ▶ investing in people
 - ▶ integrating social and economic development initiatives
 - ▶ building community strengths and assets.
3. The Social Policy Advisory Committee recommends that the following strategies be adopted to achieve the new framework:
 - ▶ policy impact analysis
 - ▶ prevention and early intervention
 - ▶ integration of policy development and program delivery
 - ▶ client-focused, family-centred approaches to service delivery
 - ▶ strengthening community capacity
 - ▶ research, analysis and evidence-based decision-making
 - ▶ strong, balanced partnerships and alliances
 - ▶ public participation and collaboration
 - ▶ optimizing the use of resources
 - ▶ access to services
 - ▶ accountability through social auditing.
4. The Social Policy Advisory Committee recommends that a central agency be designated within Government to implement the new framework for social development. The responsibilities of the central agency should be to
 - ▶ establish social policy expertise across sectors
 - ▶ remove vertical barriers
 - ▶ change administrative and operational management

- ▶ improve coordination among departments
 - ▶ improve co-action with the Federal Government
 - ▶ build better partnerships with non-governmental groups
 - ▶ promote comprehensive, integrated social and economic development
 - ▶ improve strategic thinking and social planning.
5. The Social Policy Advisory Committee recommends that the Provincial Government establish a community-based resource alliance to advance the new framework. The objectives of the resource alliance in promoting social development should be to
- ▶ draw together existing resources
 - ▶ enlist new resources
 - ▶ encourage strategic thinking
 - ▶ explore new ideas
 - ▶ conduct social research and planning
 - ▶ underpin social development
 - ▶ assist local organizations and communities to strengthen their capacity and skills
 - ▶ co-act with Governments to make optimal use of resources.
6. The Social Policy Advisory Committee recommends that action be taken to alleviate the negative impacts of poverty and hunger on children. Specifically, the objectives should be to
- ▶ strive to provide a more adequate income level for families with children to meet the real cost of basic necessities; this could be advanced by not clawing back proposed increases to the Canada Child Benefit
 - ▶ develop a comprehensive nutrition strategy to attain an adequate standard of food security
 - ▶ increase support for school meal programs throughout the Province
 - ▶ reduce burdens on low income families by reversing the trend to a two-tiered system of education where only those that can afford to purchase services can avail of them; this could be addressed by eliminating student-pay approaches for the costs of many school activities.

7. The Social Policy Advisory Committee recommends that steps be taken to protect children and families. The objectives should be to
 - ▶ re-orient the focus of child-welfare services to include a greater emphasis on preventative programming which seeks to strengthen family functioning, and on better methods of identifying potential problems. This could be achieved through more home visits and by building parental skills through a range of community-support networks
 - ▶ improve child protection services by enhancing opportunities to identify, assess and support children at risk, through co-ordinated efforts of professionals in schools, social services and health care
 - ▶ increase the number of subsidized and accessible child-care spaces, especially for children needing enrichment and early interventions
 - ▶ implement family study and parenting courses in the high school curriculum
 - ▶ accelerate efforts to reduce violence and increase resources for the continued implementation of the Provincial Strategy Against Family Violence.

8. The Social Policy Advisory Committee recommends that a commitment be made to implement early childhood development initiatives through regional outreach services. These initiatives should include
 - ▶ augmenting pre-natal educational , nutritional and dietary supplement programs for high-risk parents
 - ▶ promotional programs to increase breastfeeding
 - ▶ methods for the early identification and assessment of children with special needs , including requiring that Preschool Health Checks be done at an earlier age and in all regions of the Province
 - ▶ family counselling and respite care for high-risk families
 - ▶ opportunities to improve parental development through parenting courses
 - ▶ outreach services for parents such as a telephone help (warm) line to help decrease isolation and to help prevent problems.

9. The Committee recommends that the Provincial Government develop an innovative community-driven youth program that is based on community service, and implement it in cooperation with community groups and schools. The youth program should
 - ▶ develop social and leadership skills and civic awareness
 - ▶ provide mentors and role models
 - ▶ provide access to the equivalent of "on the job" experience through community service placements
 - ▶ supply opportunities for community service and contribution to community development
 - ▶ promote meaningful involvement in community activities

- ▶ create career awareness and develop an employability skills profile
- ▶ build credits for post-secondary education
- ▶ teach new skills to enhance job readiness
- ▶ develop entrepreneurial skills.

10. The Social Policy Advisory Committee recommends that the Provincial Government make a commitment to strengthening the capacity of the voluntary sector to be a conduit for social development.

Specifically the Province should

- ▶ in collaboration with the voluntary sector, develop policies and procedures for Government's relationship with the voluntary sector by developing guidelines to govern partnership relations, funding procedures, quality control, performance standards and appropriate monitoring and evaluation procedures
- ▶ increase financial support to voluntary-sector organizations by developing guidelines for providing funds to the sector in general and specific organizations in particular; guidelines should clearly distinguish between organizations which are providing "contracted out" services at Government's request and those which will receive funds to carry out activities which have been defined at a community level
- ▶ undertake a thorough analysis of the capacity of individual community organizations to deliver appropriate services before devolving service responsibility to individual community organizations
- ▶ provide core funding for a variety of activities – on an individual approval basis – such as research and planning, needs assessments, building community capacity, supporting self-help groups, and promoting preventative strategies and early intervention initiatives; funding should be provided on a long-term basis to improve efficiency and effectiveness
- ▶ encourage and work with the Federal Government to improve tax benefits for charitable donations and to seek other innovative measures to support volunteerism and charitable sector activities
- ▶ recognize that coordinating volunteers and delivering community service programs require facilities, infrastructure and paid staff; assist the sector to meet these requirements.

11. The Social Policy Advisory Committee recommends that a third-sector employment program be established.

The Program should

- ▶ augment community-based social programs
- ▶ strengthen social and community infrastructure

- ▶ provide a labour force for the implementation of social and economic development plans within the economic zones
- ▶ provide full-year, full-time jobs in social and economic development that aim at prosperity in the long term
- ▶ ensure work is driven and administered at the community level
- ▶ provide the voluntary sector organizations with the necessary development tools and support to provide meaningful employment
- ▶ create an environment that fosters long-term employment opportunities.

12. The Social Policy Advisory Committee recommends that the Provincial Government encourage the Federal Government to share responsibility for social development in the Province by

- ▶ negotiating with the Federal Government to participate in the new Framework for Social Development and in the implementation of the Strategic Social Plan
- ▶ appealing to the Federal Government to reverse the continuing reductions in transfer payments under the Canada Health and Social Transfer, and
- ▶ requesting the Federal Government to review and overhaul the tax system to increase federal revenues, and particularly to ensure that corporations and high-income earners pay their fair share.

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Notes

1. Some of the many reports include: *The Provincial Strategy Against Violence; the Classrooms Issues Report; the Round Table on the Environment; Healthy Children, Healthy Society 1996; Community Matters: The New Regional Economic Development, Report of the Task Force on Community Economic Development in Newfoundland and Labrador; Special Matters: The Report of the Review of Special Education; LISTENing & ACTing: A Plan for Child, Youth and Community Empowerment; and Child Protection Services Evaluation.*
2. SPAC was specifically asked to consider the report of the Select Committee on Children's Interests (*LISTENing & ACTing: A Plan for Child, Youth and Community Empowerment*). The report, based on consultations throughout the Province and submitted to Government in June 1996, states that the approach to social policy and Government delivery structures must be dramatically changed. The Report calls for two significant shifts in philosophy: involvement of children, families, communities and community organizations in addressing social challenges, and prevention-oriented social policy which focuses on efforts to address potential problems before they overwhelm Government and society.

The Social Policy Advisory Committee concurs with these conclusions.

The report focuses on the importance of better integrating services for children through three key changes: creating a child, youth and family secretariat; appointing a child and youth advocate, and changing attitudes.

The Social Policy Advisory Committee supports better integrated services, the importance of the function of child and youth advocacy and attitudinal change. However, we suggest that, in order to optimize the functions, Government consider the specific structures which are proposed in the report in the context of the strategies proposed by SPAC. For example, while The Select Committee's model captures the public mood for input, it does not establish a significantly new way of designing policies and delivering services. The recommended approach to community input through Volunteer Community Advisory Committees does not assign the strong and equal role we would suggest. The Committee structure does not position the individual or community as full partners; it limits the role of the advisory boards and does not grant them any decision-making authority. SPAC asserts greater responsibility should be assigned to individuals and communities and that more tangible authority be vested in non-Governmental input.

SPAC believes a child and youth advocate to be an important function; however, the structure proposed should be reviewed to ensure that it is sufficiently independent from Government to defend the rights of the child, and that it would provide Province-wide access. The advocate's objective must be to protect the primacy of the child and to be able to advocate for the child, unfettered by other considerations.

The Children's Interest report also notes that the public asked why so many reports have called for substantive change, but so little change has occurred in policies for

children and youth. The Select Committee contends that attitudinal change is not because of lack of commitment or lack of knowledge on the part of politicians or the Provincial bureaucracy but rather because the call for change goes too far outside the "conventional wisdom" upon which welfare-state Government is based.

This may in part explain the lack of response, but we conclude that at a broad policy level successive Governments in Newfoundland and Labrador have not made any great collective commitment to, or displayed knowledge of, the importance of investing in programs for children and youth. Rigidity in the structure of Government and reluctance to relinquish control have hampered change. The level of resources dedicated to services for children and youth have been inadequate, and the Province has lagged behind many other jurisdictions in adopting new approaches. Tardiness has not been due exclusively to lack of funds. There has been insufficient attention to the concepts of prevention and early intervention, or recognition that a child's development in the early years predicated a child's future resilience, capacity to cope and ability to perform successfully in latter years.

3. SPAC recognizes that the Federal Government and provinces are negotiating the details of an enhanced child tax benefit which indicates a softening of the Federal Government's hard line approach to social programming. Given continuing cuts to other transfers, however, this program is really only a re-profiling of federal dollars, albeit in an appropriate direction.
4. Special tabulation, Economic and Statistics Branch, Department of Finance.
5. *National Forum on Health*, p.4.
6. Capacity building is a policy approach which has been defined as the transfer of money for the purpose of investment in materials or in intellectual and human resources. Unlike other policy approaches, it is intended as an investment in future benefits that are not clearly defined at the outset, but which are directed to long-term skill enhancement and competence (Bloomberg in *Child Welfare in Canada: Research and Policy Implications*, p.83).

Community capacity is the combined influence of a community's commitment and skills that can be deployed to build on community strengths and address community problems and opportunities (Aspen Institute, *Measuring Community Capacity Building*, p.1).

7. SPAC's concept of community goes beyond the typical notions of community development which are heavily weighted to concepts of economic development. Other studies, most recently *Community Matters*, which led to the development of the regional economic development boards, point to the wisdom of engaging in local development, especially in rural parts of our Province. However, most boards have limited their discussion to the traditionally defined concepts of economic development; in the future, they will need to co-ordinate their planning and development work with social policy issues and concerns.
8. This section has drawn on the work of Janie Percy-Smith (1992) pp.29-34.