THE FEDERATION
of COMMUNITY SOCIAL SERVICES *of* BC

Social Policy Frameworks in Canada: Examples and Opportunities

Discussion Paper

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A discussion paper prepared for the Federation of Community Social Services Strategic Planning Session

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I. Introduction

Social Policy focuses on the systematic evaluation and response to social changes and needs. It refers to the decisions taken by government concerning goals for society and means of achieving them.[1] Over the past few decades the way that policy gets made has drastically changed and although policy development was never exclusively a government undertaking, the way various stakeholders relate to one another in terms of policy development has also changed.

Policy frameworks are sets of principles and long-term goals that determine rule-making, guidelines and give overall direction to planning and development of an office or government.

This report is in response to a growing interest amongst Federation members in more actively engaging with policy development and the perceived need for more robust and comprehensive policy frameworks to guide future policy development in BC. To do so it uses five social policy framework examples from across the country, each selected to showcase a different approach, process, or plan. They are:

1. *The Alberta College of Social Workers Social Policy Framework*
2. *Weaving the Threads: A Lasting Social Fabric*, Nova Scotia's Social Prosperity Framework
3. The *Saskatchewan Disability Inclusion Policy Framework*
4. The *City of London Social Policy Framework*
5. *People, Partners and Prosperity*, A Strategic Social Plan for Newfoundland and Labrador

While some are still in their early years and others were shelved long ago, together they offer a dynamic view of Canada's current social policy climate and insight into the key factors of successful social policy engagement.

Part II contains an overview of each framework, its key features and any relevant responses and analysis. Part III compares and contrasts the five examples in conjunction with commentary and research articles resulting in twelve key lessons, insights and best practices. This is followed by a brief overview of Canada's current social policy climate and the methodology of our five examples in Part IV. Finally, Part V offers some insight into the roles community social service agencies can play in future policy development, how to (or not to) go about doing so, as well as some emerging trends, theories and shifts in policy analysis.

1 Carter, Susan. "Public Policy and the Non-Profit Sector." *The Philanthropist.* Volume 23, Issue 4. 2011.

II. Overview: Five Policy Frameworks

1.1 *ACSW Social Policy Framework* [Alberta, 2010]

The Alberta College of Social Workers (ACSW) regulates social work practice in Alberta. Its primary focus is to serve and protect the public interest by promoting skilled and ethical social work and advocating for policies, programs, and services. The *ACSW Social Policy Framework*, developed in conjunction with the Parkland Institute, is phase two of the ACSW's *Closing the Disparity Gap Project*.

Phase I composed of symposia and a campaign raising awareness of the growing disparity between Alberta's haves and have-nots and the important role that social workers in Alberta play in helping to improve the well-being of all Albertans. After public consultations held across the province Phase II of the project, the framework itself, was released. Part of the impetus for Phase II, and the reason it took the form of a policy framework document, was the perceived need for a response to the *Minister's Advisory Committee on Health (MACH) Report* which discussed a potential new legislative framework for health in Alberta.

The *ACSW Social Policy Framework* was not created within a government department or in partnership with any government office; it was independently researched and authored maintaining a process completely at an arms-length from government influence. The *ACSW Social Policy Framework* also stands apart because it endeavors to reduce disparity across the province of Alberta rather than simply to raise bar for all Albertans.

The policy framework is premised on the Canadian Association of Social Work Code of Ethics and ACSW guiding principles of dignity and respect; equality; equity; comprehensiveness; quality services; and social dialogue. The framework's stated policy goals are: an increase in the quality of life for all Albertans by increasing equality; an increase in the share of wealth in middle- and low-income families; a lower cost of living and working in Alberta; and the protection and building of the province's communal assets.

1.2 *ACSW Social Policy Framework*: Key Features

In part responding to the provincial *MACH Report*, the *ACSW Social Policy Framework* emphasizes the fact that "health service" is only one many factors that influence the health and well being of Albertans. The framework attempts to bridge the disconnect between related issues of housing and health services with income supports, revenue reform and good governance in relation to quality of life. And, unlike other examples that determine values and principles 'on the go' during process of development, both the framework and it's process are value-based, rooted in the principles of social work and, specifically, those held by the Alberta College of Social Workers.

The framework focuses on reducing disparity (closing the gap between the rich and poor) rather than simply reducing poverty - raising the bar, as it were, across the board. The first third of the document features an in depth look at what disparity means and why it matters, what disparity looks like, and how Alberta got into the situation that it's in (explaining the causes and consequences of the province's socioeconomic disparity). The comprehensive recommendations that follow are combined with governance reforms that increase the feasibility and potential of the framework's vision. The broad solutions or recommendations for the "new policy paradigm" (which are examined in depth within the document itself) are: strengthening community services; quality of life for all Albertans; investing in housing affordability; ensuring dignity and an adequate income for the most vulnerable; protecting workers; democracy and good governance; and progressive revenue reform.

1.3 *ACSW Social Policy Framework*: Responses & Analysis

Policy frameworks such as this one, researched and written completely at an arms length from government, though unfettered by government politics or various specific ministry interests, can be a shot in the dark in terms of achieving impact and implementation. There is no guarantee that frameworks, various policy suggestions or governance reforms will be considered, let alone adopted. Indeed, research suggests that:

> Despite the surfeit of research and analysis that gets to the doors of ministers, executives, and their advisors, important barriers and hurdles remain. First, even the most relevant and rigorous research may not focus on, or have direct implications for, the levers controlled by policy-makers. Second, much good analysis sheds new light on problems and previous approaches, and may even suggest new directions to consider, but it falls short by not working through specific policy designs, thorough implementation analysis, and organization and capacity issues. Third, many policy shops in our public service institutions are lean and expected to firefight on issues- of- the-day and respond to the latest whims of ministers and central agencies.[2]

In this case, however, event hough the *ACSW Social Policy Framework* was published less than a year ago, there has already been some visible impact, albeit but nothing as substantial as what the ACSW might have hoped for. It has mainly been used by the ACSW as an advocacy tool over the past 14 months. It was distributed to Members of the Legislature and was one of the factors that led to a recent minimum wage increase. The Legislative Committee on the Economy was also given a copy which resulted in a recommendation that Alberta develop a comprehensive poverty reduction strategy – one of the stated goals of the ASCW. The ACSW is currently updating the document with a report card type system to keep it current.

2 Lindquist, Evert. "There's More to Policy Than Alignment." Canadian Policy Research Networks. 2009.

2.1 *Weaving the Threads* [Nova Scotia, 2007]

In late 2007, Nova Scotia announced a new framework for social prosperity. Titled *Weaving the Threads: A Lasting Social Fabric*, the framework was complimented by the provinces *Opportunities for Sustainable Prosperity* economic plan. Together they have been used to support Nova Scotia's vision for the future. Weaving the Threads outlines how social prosperity, economic prosperity and environmental sustainability are all linked together and it thus attempts to provide a foundation for all of the province's future social programming. The framework endeavors to integrate the idea of a social prosperity into all aspects of provincial public policy rather than to commit it to a single department and it emphasizes the importance of various government departments coordinating activities and both working together and working with communities to develop and implement effective social policy.

The framework sets a vision for the year 2020 where every person in Nova Scotia will have "the opportunity to live well and contribute in a meaningful way within a province that is caring, safe and creative." All strategies based on the framework are expected to identify and report on progress, linked to clear, measurable outcomes. Accountability for the framework has been placed at the highest levels within government. The Minister and Deputy Minister of Community Services, in partnership with all social policy ministers and deputies, are responsible for monitoring this framework, and its links to related strategies and action plans however mechanisms or measures for doing so aren't included.

The framework's guiding principles as stated are "coordination across government," "collaboration across sectors," and "shared responsibility for government, communities, families and individuals." Initial areas of priority at the time of release were: children and youth; crime prevention and reduction; health promotion and health care; poverty reduction; labour force development. The framework cites no author(s) and while it names only the provincial government on the cover page the document is housed and appears to have originated in the Department of Community Services.

2.2 *Weaving the Threads*: Key Features

Though specific research, facts or figures aren't referenced or included, the framework is explicitly based on "social trends," "demographics," and Nova Scotian "values" which are listed and paired with examples of social policy implications. These are grouped into sections titled "who we are," "what we're are doing," and "where we need to do more." An appendix also lists specific pre-existing frameworks, strategies and action plans from various government departments that related to and/or aligned with the development of *Weaving the Threads*. The key underlying premise in the framework is the need for greater inter-

departmental cooperation and coordination to solve social issues above and beyond policy frameworks or strategic plans, yet again, mechanisms or methods for doing so aren't stated.

This key principle of increased horizontal collaboration is one recent manifestation resulting from the fact that, in the past ten years or so, there has been a growing recognition and realization that economic and social goals are growing increasingly interdependent - even top officials from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) are now arguing in favour of strengthening the link between economic and social policies in the way that Weaving the Threads endeavours to do.[3]

2.3 Weaving the Threads: Responses & Analysis

While there is little to no critical response to the framework (it is barely four years old and has a stated endpoint of the year 2020), there are a large number of government programs, plans and strategies launched since 2007 that have resulted from, or were inspired by, *Weaving the Threads*. Many more that were previously in development have been aligned with, or made to agree with, the principles of the framework. Notable examples include: *Our Kids Are Worth It*: Strategy For Children and Youth (2007); *Our Kids Are Worth It*: Our First Year (2008); *Our Kids Are Worth It*: Our Second Year (2009); *Our Kids Are Worth It*: Our Third Year (2011); *Time to Fight Crime Together*: Our Strategy to Prevent and Reduce Crime (2007); and the *Framework for a Poverty Reduction Strategy in Nova Scotia* (2007).

GPI Atlantic is an independent non-profit research and education organization focused on the adoption of the Genuine Progress Index, or GPI, as a measure of sustainability, wellbeing, quality of life and economic growth to replace GDP. [See gpiatlantic.org for more information.]

Regarding outcomes measurement, although accountability and feedback processes aren't mentioned in the document, GPI Atlantic is lobbying to have the programs and policies of *Weaving the Threads* used as a sandbox to test the large scale application of the GPI index. The GPI is used elsewhere in green economics, sustainability and more inclusive types of 'welfare' economics and since advocates claim that GPI can measure whether the growth of a country or region, the increased production of goods, and the expansion of services have actually resulted in the improvement of the welfare or well-being of the population, on the surface, it seems to be very much aligned with the principles of the social policy framework and its economic sustainability counterpart.

3 Camdessus, Michel. "Strengthening the Link Between Economic and Social Policies Within the Framework of a Globalized Economy." Remarks by Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund to the Confederal Board of the World Confederation of Labour, Washington D.C. 1999.

3.1 *Saskatchewan Disability Inclusion Policy Framework* [Saskatchewan, 2007]

The *Saskatchewan Disability Inclusion Policy Framework* was created by the Office of Disability Issues in June of 2007. It was a rather belated response to the *Saskatchewan Disability Action Plan* produced by the Saskatchewan Council on Disability Issues in 2001. The council, struck in 1998, was to provide advice on issues affecting individuals with disabilities, to obtain direct input from individuals with disabilities on issues related to government programs, policies and priorities and to assist in the development of a government policy framework.

Not only was the government's delay in acting on the council's recommendations a point of contention for various agencies, organizations, community groups, but the frameworks contents were also widely criticized almost immediately after its release. Organizations such as IDEA Regina and the Saskatchewan Association of Community Living called it "too little to late" and simply "rhetoric, a good philosophy but without any substantive plan of action." Even the Council on Disability Issues (which produced the initial action plan) responded with an open letter calling for the government to review and reconsider many of the policy implications within the framework.

While it lacks the breadth of scope or comprehensiveness of the other frameworks reviewed in this report, the failure, as it were, of the *Saskatchewan Disability Inclusion Policy Framework* is worth examining to help identify (and ideally avoid) potential pitfalls and oversights in the development of future policy frameworks.

3.2 *Saskatchewan Disability Inclusion Policy Framework*: Key Features

Compared to its predecessor, the 2001 *Saskatchewan Disability Action Plan*, the policy framework offers little substance beyond a list of its vision, values, goals and principles. Most of the document is spent listing "progress to date" (in the form of government investments into supports, education, housing and employment between 2001 and 2006) rather than strategies or plans for future policy development. In fact, most of the document reads like a report card highlighting "action to date" on the recommendations and directions put forth by the council six years earlier rather than a conceptual framework to guide and inspire the future.

3.3 *Saskatchewan Disability Inclusion Policy Framework*: Responses & Analysis

As mentioned, the framework was widely criticized almost immediately after it's release. The most recurring criticisms expressed by agencies, organizations and the public focused on:

a) The Framework's Vision Statement

The vision statement from the initial *Saskatchewan Disability Action Plan* affirms: "A society that recognizes the needs and aspirations of all citizens, respects the rights of individuals to self-determination, and provides the resources and supports necessary for full citizenship." The *Disability Inclusion Policy Framework*, on the other hand, states a vision where "Saskatchewan people with disabilities participate fully in the economic and social life of their communities and the province."

While it can be argued that the difference is simply a matter of semantics, critics of the framework claim the vision statement is too narrow in focus, lacks substance and reaffirms the binary us/them dichotomy that pervades the experience of minority populations. Where the *Saskatchewan Disability Action Plan* includes all of society in the vision and process, the policy framework's vision statement:

> "...is a statement by the rest of the province, those who do not have a disability, of their vision for people who do have a disability. It is a reflection of the dualistic thinking with respect to people with disabilities that has dominated the history of Saskatchewan and Canada."[4]

b) The Framework's Concept of a Disability Lens

Ideally, a disability policy lens is a government mechanism and process to assess the impact of all policies, programs and legislation on individuals with disabilities. It would require all government agencies and departments to be accountable for decision making that impacts those with disabilities. However, the government simply understood the framework's vision, values and goals as being sufficient to function as a disability lens even though no strategy, process or method was described to include community consultation, accountability measures or reasonable assurance that disability issues would be included in future government legislation. In his open letter to government, Michael Huck, the chair of the Council on Disability Issues, articulated that:

> "The Disability Inclusion Policy Framework is not a disability lens. It does not constitute a transparent and accountable process or mechanism for discussing and evaluating government initiatives related to disability. Accepting the argument that the policy framework is a disability lens only serves to perpetuate and protect the bureaucracy from outside criticism and pressures for real change."[5]

c) The Consultation Processes (or lack thereof)

Another point of contention was the lack of community consultation throughout the development of the framework in spite of the fact that the framework itself states that "people with disabilities, their families and their support networks should be engaged in the development of policies and services that affect them" and that "people with disabilities,

4 *For Discussion: A Disability Policy Framework We Can Support.* Individuals with Disabilities Equity Alliance (IDEA) Regina. 2008.
5 Huck, Michael. "Open Letter to The Honourable Lorne Calvert, Premier of Saskatchewan." July 10, 2007.

their families and their support networks should have opportunities to take an active role in developing the support systems that serve them."

The lack of community consultation during the framework's development sharply contrasted the development of the 2001 action plan. In the words of the Saskatchewan Association of Community Living, "the action plan was created collaboratively with the disability community and we must return to this type of open, inclusive, mutual conversation when discussing the future of disability policy."[6] In this case the framework's actions spoke louder than its words indirectly suggesting that true collaboration might not actually be a real priority. Furthermore, in response to a community discussions hosted after the framework's release, Michael Huck argued that:

> "The proposed consultation process for the Disability Inclusion Policy Framework is obviously not a forum design to deal with fundamental questions and issues around programs and services for people with disabilities. The consultation questions assume acceptance of the policy framework and its implementation. As such the purpose of the consultation process is to communicate to the community what the new order looks like."[7]

Indeed many groups and organizations, such as the Saskatchewan Disability Income Support Coalition (DISC), boycotted the post-publication discussions altogether in response to the lack of prior consultation and an absence of action on key issues such as poverty.

Following the 2007 provincial election the new Saskatchewan Party government undertook a review of the policy framework and essentially shelved the document as it stood, though without any public announcement. In 2008 a multi-year, $76 million investment and income plan for people with disabilities was announced (based on the work of the Task Team on Income Support for People with Disabilities) as was a Disability Income Strategy that was to be pursued by the Ministry of Social Services in 2009-10. However, in spite of a new government appointed a Program Implementation Advisory Team (PlAT), there has yet to be any updates regarding the development of such a strategy.

6 Saskatchewan Association of Community Living (SACL). "Government's Disability Inclusion Policy 'Falls Short' of Addressing Individual, Family Needs." *Dialect: Newsmagazine of the Saskatchewan Association of Community Living*. Fall/Winter, 2007.
7 Huck, 2007.

4.1 *City of London Social Policy Framework* [Ontario, 2006]

The *City of London Social Policy Framework* was developed and prepared by the city's Department of Community Services. The framework was created to identify the key issues that play a role in the well-being and quality of life of Londoners and to define the city's role in responding to those social issues. The framework was intended to compliment and assist the city's corporate strategic plan in achieving the goal of positioning London amongst the best municipalities in Canada.

The *City of London Social Policy Framework* is a comprehensive document but one that is written for a broad audience meant to include both policy makers (at varying levels of government) and the general public. It is prefaced with explanations of social policy, social policy frameworks and the municipal role in policy making and service delivery. It also provides contextual information regarding the changing landscape of policy issues, the roles of different levels of government and the changing relationships between those levels of government.

The framework is based on principles of "equity and inclusion," "dignity and self-sufficiency" and "partnerships and accountability" and is broken up into three different components that specifically acknowledge and accord the fact that the individuals and families affected by the framework are not always on a level playing field in terms of opportunity and engagement. The three tiered components are: The Safety Net (including income security, continuum of affordable housing, and food security); Social Inclusion (including employment, skill development, and volunteer opportunities, child care and early learning, and recreation, leisure, and cultural opportunities); and Community and Neighborhood Capacity Building.

Some of the specific elements addressed within the framework are income security, safe and affordable housing, food security, employment, skill development and volunteer opportunities, child care and early childhood development, access to recreation, leisure and cultural opportunities, and capacity building (both individual and community).

4.2 *City of London Social Policy Framework*: Key Features

The *City of London Social Policy Framework* is noteworthy for a number of reasons. It not only introduces and explains social policy frameworks for those who might be unfamiliar, but discusses current thinking on social policy in Canada, the changing roles of government in relation to policy creation and service delivery, the existing research which was used to create the framework as well as explanations about how and why the *City of London Social Policy Framework* was created. It includes analysis of changing demographics, the Canada Social Transfer and the Canada Assistance Plan in light of current policy issues.

Furthermore, in addition to reviewing key policy and research documents and existing City of London strategies and activities, the Department of Community Services surveyed other successful and/or innovative municipal social policy models from across the country and incorporated specific aspects of other social policy strategies and plans with proven success records. The best aspects of Vancouver's sustainability model and Hamilton's Vision 2020 social development strategy, among others, are included as inspiration and "guideposts" and the best practices of each are combined to create a sort of 'greatest hits' social policy model.

The framework is also very clear in it's intent. Specific goals are paired with implementation ideas or models and the entire document is both explicit about, and premised upon, the fact that inter-governmental relationships were and are changing and that, as a result, the City of London's role in policy making and service delivery must also change accordingly.

4.3 *City of London Social Policy Framework*: Responses & Analysis

The *City of London Social Policy Framework* is still relatively young and, like others mentioned in this report, its full impact will not be visible for many more years. That said, various key policy strategies launched in London since 2006 have been informed, inspired and guided by the tenets of the policy framework. They include: the *London Community Housing Strategy* (June 2010); London's *Anti-Poverty Strategy* (2008); *London's Child and Youth Agenda* (2008); and London's *Income Security Policy Paper* (2006 - published concurrently with the social policy framework).

5.1 *People, Partners and Prosperity* - A Strategic Social Plan [Newfoundland and Labrador 1998]

In the mid 90's Newfoundland and Labrador was undergoing dramatic social and economic change. It was the only Province to record a population decline in 1995-6 and was on a trajectory to have half of it's the population middle-aged or older within by 2015. Realizing the extent to which this would significantly affect the direction of social policy and program requirements, the government of Newfoundland and Labrador convened a Social Policy Advisory Committee (SPAC), representing nongovernmental organizations, academia and the general public, to undertake public consultations and research in order to create a foundation for a provincial strategic social plan.

A year later, the advisory committee produced two key documents. *Volume I: What the People Said - Report on the Strategic Social Planning Dialogue* contained detailed commentary from the public consultations. *Volume II: Investing in People and Communities - A Framework for Social Development* identified significant issues and trends based on the findings of Volume I and proposed a framework for new approaches to social policy and planning and key strategies to set in motion a process of social development and renewal. Combined, these two reports formed the basis and provided the foundation for the government's Strategic Social Plan which was published a year later. The Strategic Social Plan (SSP), in combination with the province's Strategic Economic Plan published in 1992, was was intended to "constitute the overall framework for economic and social development for Newfoundland and Labrador into the 21st Century."[8] The plan, though announced in 1998, was not implemented until 2000. It was replaced in 2004 and eliminated completely in 2005.

In spite of it's short life and relative lack of success, it was an incredibly innovative policy framework and has been the model or inspiration for many subsequent policy frameworks across the country (including its successor the Rural Secretariat). Its most innovative feature was that, unlike most other, and even recent frameworks, public consultations and community involvement - rather than research, statistics and studies - were to be the driving force behind both the development process and the implementation of the final product. The goal was to incorporate both the public and community service organizations into all future policy making process in order to ensure that the SSP was not only "based in reality" but a reality rooted in the principle that people are the primary resource upon whose strengths the province will flourish.

5.2 *People, Partners and Prosperity* - A Strategic Social Plan: Key Features

8 Newfoundland and Labrador Social Policy Advisory Committee. *Report of the Strategic Social Planning Public Dialogue, Volume II: Investing in People and Communities*. 1997.

Volume II of the SPAC report contained the Social Policy Advisory Committee's recommendations to government based on the extensive public consultations described in Volume I. It's key focus was on horizontal concepts of interdepartmental cooperation, integration across sectors and levels of government as well as bottom-up, place-based policy developed in collaboration with the volunteer social sector. After the government accepted the two SPAC reports, it convened a series of interdepartmental and ministerial committees to turn the recommendations into policy and the Social Policy Advisory Committee continued to actively advise the government during the development and implementation of the Strategic Social Plan.

While the notion that 'the government cannot do this alone' is a recurring sentiment in many such policy documents, few frameworks have called for collaborative partnerships as explicitly, or to the extent that Newfoundland and Labrador's Strategic Social Plan did. Indeed, the social plan represented a "significant departure from the province's approach to policy formulation, program design, and service delivery."[9] The hallmark of the SSP was its emphasis on place-based, bottom-up and collaborative policy making. This experiment, as some called it, drew the province into "uncharted waters," in terms of policy development by giving the voluntary, community based sector a key role in policy development.[10] Many new linking mechanisms were created - the Premier's Council on Social Development (PCSD), the Strategic Social Plan Office (SSPO), and the Regional Steering Committees (RSC) - albeit with mixed results.

The plan also acknowledged the connection between economic well-being and physical well-being, emotional health and educational attainment and endeavoured to actively link the social and economic sectors in order to coordinate investments, achieve common objectives and integrate social and economic development.

5.3 *People, Partners and Prosperity* - A Strategic Social Plan: Responses & Analysis

The Newfoundland and Labrador Strategic Social Plan (SSP) aimed to not only integrate social and economic policy planning but also to engage communities, especially the voluntary community-based sector directly in policy development processes. This innovative, experimental endeavour pushed beyond the usual relationship between government and the non-profit sector. Unfortunately, the SSP operated only for a few years, and did so in times of fiscal restraint within a public service whose numbers had been dramatically reduced in the preceding years. As a result, the full dream was never realized. As stated in a report by the Community University Research Alliance:

9 Close, David. "The Newfoundland and Labrador Strategic Social Plan: The Lifecycle of an Innovative Policy." Midwest Political Science Association 207 Conference. Chicago, IL. 2007a.
10 *ibid.*

> "[The SSP] achieved none of its objectives, although it did make some progress toward all of them. This result was due to the mix of problems the SSP encountered: lack of time in operation; overly optimistic expectations about what the community-based voluntary sector and communities themselves could do; linkage structures that did not work as expected; and insufficient resources."[11]

Its short lifetime, minimal funding and lack of devoted, bureaucratic support greatly reduced the potential for the SSP to have an impact on the province. And while collaborative models of policy making are now starting to appear more frequently across the country, in the mid 90's most governments were simply not structured to facilitate the interdepartmental communication and collaboration that such models require. In other words, what the SSP sought to do went against the system's existing institutional logic.[12] Additionally, though some programs and services reported becoming more flexible and responsive to local needs, the voluntary community-based sector as a whole was not organized in a way that facilitated straightforward collaboration with the government either. When participating in a survey about the SSP in 2002, one in three contributing organizations did not even have enough information to complete the initial series of questions.[13] In the words of one researcher:

> "The SSP moved policy thinking in a dramatically new direction at a time when there were few resources available to facilitate the change. Thus, when the 2003 elections brought a new party to power, the SSP's development was arrested quite abruptly."[14]

The conservatives who took power in 2003 shelved the SSP in favour of a new initiative called the Rural Secretariat which adopted certain values, principles and strengths of the SSP but was much less ambitious in terms of horizontal collaboration within government. Where the SSP envisioned bringing community-based voluntary organizations into the policy process both to deliver services and to participate in policy formation, in the case of the Rural Secretariat, engagement was more like consultation."[15]

The SSP was a comprehensive plan, with a series of implementation mechanisms but little capacity to follow through. Perhaps it was because of the newness and the transformative nature of the SSP, that the necessary resources were rarely available but in many ways the SSP was also a top down initiative for a bottom up solution.[16]

11 Close, David, Penelope Rowe, Carla Wheaton. "Planning the Future of Rural Newfoundland and Labrador by Engaging the Public" From the Strategic Social Plan to the Rural Secretariat." Values Added. Community University Research Alliance, St. John's, NL. 2007b.
12 Close, 2007a.
13 Powers, Patti, Fran Locke, Larry Felt. "Everybody Wanted It: Collaboration between Voluntary, Community-based Sector and the Regional Steering Committees of the Strategic Social Plan for Newfoundland and Labrador." Values Added. Community University Research Alliance, St. John's, NL. 2006.
14 Close, 2007a.
15 Close, 2007b.
16 Community Services Council (CSC). "What Have We Learned?" Community University Research Alliance, St. John's, NL. 2008.

III. Lessons

Good policy development lies as much in the 'how' as the 'what' and the above examples offer many lessons about how, and how not, to engage in good policy development. The key lessons we can learn from the above examples focus on: building upon the work of others; undertaking research; understanding the current institutional context and policy climate; timing; determining the correct vision and values; intergovernmental collaboration; community involvement; implementation mechanisms; maximizing longevity; and funding support.

1. Don't re-invent the wheel. One of the key features of the *City of London Social Policy Framework* was that it explicitly reviewed and analyzed other social policy models from across the country and included a range of key features and best practices from other exemplary municipal programs (out of Vancouver, Ottawa, Hamilton, Edmonton) in the development of its own framework. Though each 'sample' policy model varies according to municipality, the City of London was able to benefit from the leg work done by other, much larger cities in terms of sustainability and growth management as well as: developing ways to formally capture and define the need for the municipal role in social issues; creating guideposts, local strategies and tools to facilitate and engage community stakeholders; and establishing mechanisms for sharing and feeding information back to municipal Councils, community members, and other stakeholders regarding activities and progress in areas of strategic effort.

2. Know your stuff. This might go without saying, but as useful as it can be to survey what has already been done, riding exclusively on the coat tails of existing work is a sure fire way to doom your project. Policy development needs to be based on comprehensive research and analysis since citizens and stakeholders can see through empty government rhetoric. The *City of London Social Policy Framework*, for example, supplemented the review of existing social policy models with public consultations, a review of key policy and research documents and an in depth analysis of existing City of London strategies and activities. During the development of the *ACSW Social Policy Framework*, the ACSW both partnered with the Parkland Institute at the University of Alberta to thoroughly research the causes and consequences of disparity in Alberta (comprising the first half of the framework document) and convened a broad, multi-sector stakeholder process to generate ideas and develop practical solutions (comprising the second half of the framework document). Similarly, *Weaving the Threads*, Nova Scotia's Framework for Social Development, held extensive consultations to determine not only demographics, trends and challenges in relation to social policy, but also the people's specific values, what they perceive to be working well (so as not to change it), and their priorities for provincial social investment. In contrast, the

Saskatchewan Disability Inclusion Policy Framework, which relied solely on the content of the *Saskatchewan Disability Action Plan* (which was six years old by the time the Framework was released) could offer little more than a vision, values, and some noncommittal 'key directions.'

3. Context matters. According to many analysts, all non-governmental policy developments should start with or incorporate a "strategic inquiry to map out relevant social, economic and demographic trends, emerging research, the policy environment, the political context and where your issue fits in the partisan political landscape."[17] Researching and understanding the broader social and political context of new frameworks and policy initiatives is integral. As such, our first example, the *ACSW Social Policy Framework* factored in current political issues such as the "contract culture" of community services and the recent "hollowing out of Alberta's economy" in addition to demographic trends. It also included a section on potential governance reforms to make its vision not only more feasible but also more sustainable. In contrast, some critics claim that a big reason why Newfoundland and Labrador's Strategic Social Plan was so short lived was the fact that it represented such "a significant departure from the province's traditional approach to policy formulation, program design, and service delivery."[18] As for those of us in the non-profit sector, Bob Wyatt, Executive Director of the Muttart Foundation, firmly believes that we need to stop viewing public policy making as a single focused attempt to get a decision made one way or the other; we need to "look at the broader context in which the decision is being made [and] attempt to understand the societal dynamics at play and the economic, social, environmental, cultural, or other factors that have bearing."[19]

4. Timing is key. When it comes to policy research, analysis and development, the attention of decision-makers and advisors is often narrowly focused on what needs to be harvested, harnessed, or worked into shape.[20] Increasingly, the potential for non-governmental engagement with policy is determined by instances of a well-defined problem or need, a temporal government appreciation of the insight required, and the 'right' experts being identified and mobilized to quickly address the problem, build a solution and then move along. This "exploitative" method of policy analysis contrasts to the equally valuable but much more uncommon "explorative" work which "involves decision-makers and advisors searching for insight on thorny and emerging problems that require illumination and multiple perspectives in order to better define them, to ascertain their character, nuances, scope, and boundaries, and to identify gaps."[21]

17 Mulholland, Elizabeth. "How to Avoid Common Policy Traps." *The Philanthropist. Volume 32, Issue 4. 2011.*
18 Close, 2007a.
19 Bourgeois, Don and Bob Wyatt. Resolved: "The Voluntary Sector Has Not Caught Up With The Way Public Policy Is Now Made." *The Philanthropist.* Volume 32, Issue 4. 2011.
20 Lindquist, 2009.
21 *ibid.*

As a result of the downsizing of government policy shops over the past few decades, exploitative policy making tends to be the dominant mode in today's government departments. It can thus be rather beneficial to monitor government policy cycles and take advantage of explorative phases. It can also be beneficial to prepare for those moments of purely serendipitous timing. For example, in a SSHRC funded study, one organization responded anecdotally about the unexpected opportunity of having a new minister "looking for something to hang her hat on" and being able to get her onboard their policy campaign at the perfect time.[22] Timing is also a key factor in multi-phase policy developments such as Newfoundland and Labrador's Strategic Social Plan and the *Saskatchewan Disability Inclusion Policy Framework*. In Newfoundland, both of the Social Policy Advisory Council's preliminary reports and the government's subsequent Strategic Social Plan were released within an eighteen month time frame. In contrast, the government of Saskatchewan let six years pass between the release of the *Saskatchewan Disability Action Plan* and its response. As a result, the public, community stakeholders and even the council itself had all lost faith in the *Disability Inclusion Policy Framework* before it even hit the ground. In the words of the Saskatchewan Association of Community Living:

> "By and large, the actions taken in regards to the 2001 Disability Action Plan are too little, too late. [...] After six years, the initial hope and promise of the Disability Action Plan has been lost. People have waited too long for substantive change."[23]

5. Share the Vision. A policy framework's guiding vision is key. It has to set a direction, inspire action, and convince the reader to engage with and buy into the rest of the policy document. Ideally it is supported by principles and definable processes and mechanisms that ensure consistency, accountability and appropriate, efficient implementation. It is a small part of the final product and sometimes skipped over or dismissed as fluff or rhetoric but in many ways it can be the lynch pin that either holds the policy together or sets it up for failure. In response to the province's *Disability Inclusion Policy Framework*, Michael Huck, chair of the Saskatchewan Council for Disability Issues, reiterated this point: "when you get the vision statement wrong there is little hope the dream will not turn out to be a nightmare."[24] As mentioned in the first part of this report, the framework's vision statement was a key point of contention.

Compare the following two statements. The *Saskatchewan Disability Action Plan*'s vision statement affirms: "A society that recognizes the needs and aspirations of all citizens, respects the rights of individuals

22 Whitmore, Elizabeth, Avery Calhoun and Maureen G. Wilson. "How Do You Know You Are Making a Difference?" *The Philanthropist*. Volume 23, Issue 4. 2011.
23 Saskatchewan Association of Community Living (SACL). "Government's Disability Inclusion Policy 'Falls Short' of Addressing Individual, Family Needs." *Dialect: Newsmagazine of the Saskatchewan Association of Community Living*. Fall/Winter, 2007.
24 Huck, 2007.

to self-determination, and provides the resources and supports necessary for full citizenship." Whereas the *Disability Inclusion Policy Framework*'s vision is: "Saskatchewan people with disabilities participate fully in the economic and social life of their communities and the province." As was reiterated by most of its critics, the policy framework's vision is too narrow and lacks the substance and sense of inclusion of the action plan's vision. The language of the framework's vision also reaffirms a dangerous us/them dichotomy - it is "a statement by the rest of the province, those who do not have a disability, of their vision for people who do have a disability [...] a reflection of the dualistic thinking with respect to people with disabilities that has dominated the history of Saskatchewan and Canada."[25] And while some might dismiss such concerns and simple semantics or nitpicking the connotation of the vision statement is anything but insignificant (especially when it comes down to issues of exclusion which have long been based on the subtle issues of gender, colour, ethnic origin and disability) - it is the guiding statement for not only the framework document, but all subsequent programs and policies.

6. Values. A growing sentiment among those thinking about the relationship between non-profit organizations and policy is that, as a sector, we have not kept up with the changing ways in which policy is being made. When it comes to policy analysis and development we lack both competence and capacity. Equally, important however is that fact that policy is increasingly based on values and public opinion as much as (or rather than) demographic trends and research traditionally supplied by the non-profit sector organizations, academics and the ever shrinking government policy shops. What this means for the non-profit sector is that policy projects have to try to align themselves with government priorities, partizan interests and the values of the public and the party in power:

> "Because values play a central role in defining the range of possible policy solutions, it is also important to be explicit at the outset about the core values guiding any policy development process and to negotiate consensus (where possible) when the priority placed on different values differs among key stakeholders."[26]

Thus, government projects like Nova Scotia's *Weaving the Threads* and Newfoundland and Labrador's Strategic Social Plan incorporate questions of personal value right into the public consultation process and the results manifest themselves in the 'guiding principles' of each document. Public engagement will be discussed more below, but is important to note than in today's policy climate values have as much weight and bearing as research and demographic trends especially when and where policy development is a collaborative process.

7. Working Horizontally. In the same way that many factors combine

25 IDEA Regina, 2008.
26 Mulholland, 2011.

together to create complex social problems, the best, most impactful government responses combine the knowledge, resources and drive of many government departments. Similarly, more and more attention is being focused, of late, on the interrelatedness and need for equal recognition of social stability, sustainable economic growth and good governance - what the secretary-general of the OECD calls the "triangular policy paradigm."[27]

The solutions and recommendations laid out by the *ACSW Social Policy Framework*, for example, link governance reform with the reduction of disparity and social change. Nova Scotia's Framework for Social Prosperity, *Weaving the Threads*, endeavours to integrate the idea of social prosperity into all aspects of provincial public policy rather than to commit it to a single department. It also and emphasizes the importance of various government departments coordinating activities and both working together:

> "Virtually every government department has something to do with social prosperity.We can either let the threads of these individual mandates and business plans dangle—or worse, tangle—or we can weave or knit them together in ways that are practical and line up with the fabric—the logical and practical progression—of people's lives.That's what a social prosperity framework is about—co-ordinating related activities and plans by working collaboratively together."[28]

While Nova Scotia's experiment in working horizontally is still to young to gauge any impact, we can examine Newfoundland and Labrador's Strategic Social Plan which also "recognized that social and economic development cannot happen in isolation" and proposed an approach that linked social and economic development.[29] The SSP's success depended on increased "coordination and integration within government through the development of partnerships among departments, in regions and within the voluntary community-based sector."[30] Ideally, with a single coherent policy and program re-alignment in place, different departments could streamline approaches and piggyback programs and the risk of one department (inadvertantly or not) undermining the efforts of another would be vanquished.

Such levels of coordination and cooperation, however, are difficult and require ample funding to support. They also require that all departments and offices share one united vision. Unfortunately, in the case of the SSP, the horizontal management approach met resistance within the entrenched bureaucracy and had few civil service "champions" to buoy it's efforts. As a result (and compounded by scarce funding), government continued to operate in a hierarchical silo system

27 Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). *A Caring World: The New Social Policy Agenda.* OECD Publishing, 1999.
28 *Weaving the Threads: A Lasting Social Fabric*. Government of Nova Scotia, 2007.
29 House, Doug, Alison Earle. "Understanding the Strategic Social Plan in the Framework of the New Rural Secretariat." Values Added Seminar - Community University Research Alliance (CURA). 2004.
30 CSC, 2008.

organized by domains of interest - health, justice, education, etc. - until the plan was scrapped.[31]

8. Community Involvement & Public Engagement. The gap remains incredibly wide between the theoretical inspiration and the reality of the governance architectures and policy development in both Canada and Europe, especially in terms of social learning and public participation.[32] While projects don't have to go as far as Newfoundland and Labrador's Strategic Social Plan and endeavour to include the public and community organizations directly in the policy development process itself, community and stakeholder engagement at all stages of development and implementation is integral; failing to tap into the benefits of local knowledge and limiting participation quickly become serious hindrances to policy learning, development and implementation.

Most of our examples, however, (the *ACSW Social Policy Framework*, Nova Scotia's *Weaving the Threads* and Newfoundland and Labrador's Strategic Social Plan) avoided that trap and actively incorporated extensive public consultations and symposia into their development and endeavoured to turn public discourse into policy directions. The issues and themes raised in the public consultations were weighted equally and combined with research findings, demographic trends, government priorities and "sets of conceptual benchmarks" that included governance reform, partnership models, further public consultation and citizen engagement as well as implementation and accountability measures.[33]

Newfoundland and Labrador's Strategic Social Plan ultimately failed in its goal of implementing a fully collaborative provincial policy development model where the public and community organizations helped make policy rather than just inform it - largely due to issues around communication, community access to government staff and information, unstable funding and volunteer burnout.[34] However, it did establish an set of new (though arguable ineffective) mechanisms to better link government policy makers and civil society: the Strategic Social Plan Office (SSPO), the Premier's Council on Social Development (PCSD), and a series of Strategic Social Plan Regional Steering Committees. The lesson here, one that I will return to in the last section of the report, is that policy solutions are more hypotheses than prescriptions and thus, consultation processes must start with questions rather than answers. They should encourage debate and take seriously contentious or dissenting views. Public participation should be an iterative process, sharing and discussing ideas and development at multiple stages, rather than a prescriptive one lest the policy

31 CSC, 2008.
32 Saint-Martin, Denis. "Coordinating Interdependence: Governance and Social Policy Redesign in Britain, the European Union and Canada." CPRN Social Architecture Papers. 2004.
33 Close, 2007a.
34 *ibid.*

meet the same fate as the *Saskatchewan Disability Inclusion Policy Framework*. Indeed, one of the most common criticisms leveled at the Saskatchewan government was that:

> "The proposed consultation process for the Disability Inclusion Policy Framework is obviously not a forum design to deal with fundamental questions and issues around programs and services for people with disabilities. The consultation questions assume acceptance of the policy framework and its implementation. As such the purpose of the consultation process is to communicate to the community what the new order looks like."[35]

The success of a social impact bond program aimed at reducing criminal recidivism in young offenders in the UK resulted in a Ministry of Justice policy initiative to redesign punishment, rehabilitation and sentencing procedures for youth.

9. Make it work [policy] designers. Public policy refers not only the decisions taken concerning programs and goals and principles for a society but also plans and means of achieving them. Implementation procedures are as integral as the introductory principles. In addition to incredibly low levels of funding, the other nail in the coffin for Newfoundland and Labrador's Strategic Social Plan was the fact that there were insubstantial implementation procedures and far to few mechanisms for translating the vision into action. As David Close pointed out, "because the SSP was about process, it had no deliverables; and without deliverables it had very little presence.[36] Indeed, as reiterated by Newfoundland and Labrador's Community Services Council:

> "There is an enormous difference between having vision, getting those good ideas, new structures and innovative approaches on paper, and designing methods to action the vision. [...] Newfoundland and Labrador had a comprehensive plan, though vague in certain respects, but little capacity to implement."[37]

Including implementation procedures and strategies in addition to principles and goals is especially important for non-governmental parties attempting to engage with or collaborate on policy. It is often easier to get government to buy into a program or an initiative that's tangible, possible and 'good to go' in terms of implementation than it is to get government to buy into a whole new values system or set of principles up front and then turn them into policy.

We have all heard the phrase "politics is about the art of the possible," and that is equally true of public policy-making. Good participants in public policy-making understand that part of the art is moving the markers as to what is or is not possible.[38] All of policy frameworks examined above are founded on goals and visions and principles, but the ones that focus only on purity of vision rather than the "art of the possible," the ones that stopped short of anything more than "shoulds" and "coulds," are the very same ones that have floundered. IDEA Regina criticized the *Saskatchewan Disability Inclusion Policy Framework* as such:

35 Huck, 2007.
36 Close, 2007a.
37 CSC, 2008.
38 Bourgeois, 2011.

> The Policy Framework includes some laudable goals with respect to disability services, employment and equality of outcomes for people with disabilities. It also contains a curious list of what "should" happen for Saskatchewan citizens who have a disability. While we are pleased to see that the policy makers recognized what should happen it seems that a Policy Framework ought to provide direction and leadership, not a wish list.[39]

An extended list of all policy frameworks, strategies and actions plans surveyed for this report can be found in Appendix A.

10. Longevity. "Building the necessary skills, resources and linking mechanisms is a long-term commitment. Unfortunately, political change often results in the dismantling or transformation of previous initiatives."[40] This was the case when the conservative party took power in Newfoundland and Labrador and halted the Strategic Social Plan in favour of their Rural Secretariat. Many analysts argue that, as a sector, we too have traditionally spent "too much time talking only to the government of they day rather than to all parliamentarians" and haven't been well positioned when governments have changed.[41] Longevity, as much as successful implementation, should thus be an inherent goal of all significant policy development projects. Maximizing longevity can be achieved in a number of ways: compromising with oppositional parties and critics; garnering sufficient support from all political parties able to win power (not just the one currently in power); gaining enough "institutional presence" and/or public investment to make the policy hard or impossible for future governments to cut; or creating policy that works so well that future government's don't want to cut it.

11. Honesty is the best policy/Let's call a spade a spade. If it's not a policy framework don't call it one. Masquerading public relations as policy development doesn't help anyone. Non-governmental players need to be especially specific and explicit about their goals and intentions; some of the most frequent complaints about policy advocates made by elected officials include: "submission of material that is usually too voluminous, too narrowly self-serving, and in a form often unusable by those in government," "failure to see their issue or demand within a governmental context," and "lack of appropriate preparation of an advocate's proposition."[42]

For example, some critics argue that such a misstep sabotaged any potential success of Newfoundland and Labrador's Strategic Social Plan. David Close, for one suggests that it was an error to even call the SSP a strategic plan since strategic planning, by definition, demands an "action oriented plan carefully linked to implementation," and "highly structured, future-oriented management techniques that better align an organization with its environment;" trying to make Newfoundland and Labrador's Strategic Social plan fit such definition requires "lots of stretching and bending.[43]" Similarly, beyond one page of vision,

39 IDEA Regina, 2008.
40 CSC, 2008.
41 Bourgeois, 2011.
42 Moore, Sean. "Can Public Policy Advocacy Be Taught? Or Learned?" *The Philanthropist*. Volume 32, Issue 4. 2011.
43 Close, 2007a.

values, goals and principles, the *Saskatchewan Disability Inclusion Policy Framework* is much more a progress report on certain provincial developments related to the 2001 Action Plan than a framework or guide for future programming and legislation; perhaps the government would have been better off naming and presenting it as such.

12. Put your money where your mouth is. Though not the only factors, funding issues and lack of bureaucratic support were key reasons why Newfoundland and Labrador's Strategic Social Plan failed to achieve any significant results. In 2000, funding devoted to the SSP was about 1/16th of 1 percent of the province's budget. And over it's short lifetime funding decreased rather than increased bottoming out around 1/19th of 1 percent of the provincial budget in 2003 (during a time when the overall provincial budget increased over 20%). Such numbers indicate a considerable lack of commitment and interest on the government's part. As a result, what could have been an innovative, comprehensive social revitalization project couldn't even get off the ground.

That said, having enough money to get something started is only one part of the problem. For such long term and comprehensive policy programs, funding plans and commitments need to be laid out for the entire course of the planned lifespan. For external frameworks developed independent from government this translates into either aligning your proposal with existing government priorities/issues, having an incredibly strong and ready-to-implement plan that you can confidently get the government to invest in, or including a cheque with your framework proposal (or some combination of the three). The good news on the horizon is that an increasing awareness that the persistent inequalities of social policy outcomes are a costly economic deadweight in terms of lost productivity, foregone tax revenue, reduced consumer spending and higher expenditures on income assistance, social services and health care is leading to growing, albeit slowly, acceptance of the view that social policy should be seen as a good investment in our current knowledge-based economy.[44]

44 Saint-Martin, 2004.

IV. The State of Affairs

It is important to point out that in these examples there is no consistent order of development or relationship between action plans, strategies and frameworks. As we have seen, action plans have informed frameworks, there are frameworks for strategic plans and various other combinations. And while all three terms describe guiding documents in policy development, there is no direct correlation between type of document and scope, scale, specificity, comprehensiveness, etc.

Before moving from understanding to undertaking, it is important to stop and quickly overview the developmental methodology of the above examples and to examine why there seem to be so few non-governmental players in the policy framework game before we to try to level the playing field and get involved ourselves.

Policy Document	Publishing Body	Based Upon
ACSW Social Policy Framework	Alberta College of Social Workers	ACSW Closing the Disparity Gap project (ACSW, Parkland Institute
Weaving the Threads: A Lasting Social Fabric	Government of Nova Scotia	Government consultations; existing strategies and action plans
Saskatchewan Disability Inclusion Policy Framework	Government of Saskatchewan	Saskatchewan Disability Action Plan (Saskatchewan Council on Disability Issues
City of London Social Policy Framework	City of London	Government review of existing materials and models
Newfoundland and Labrador Strategic Social Plan	Government of Newfoundland and Labrador	Report of the Strategic Planning Public Dialogue (Social Policy Advisory Committee)

Independant Body	*Government*	*Committee*

The above table shows the origins of the five examples documented above. Four of the five were government documents and two of those four were informed by a government-struck public committee.

The *ACSW Social Policy Framework* grew out of the ACSW's *Closing the Disparity Gap* Project, developed in conjunction with the Parkland Institute. The project was divided into two phases: Phase I held symposia and public consultations and raised awareness of the growing disparity between Alberta's haves and have-nots; Phase II of the project turned that public discourse into a comprehensive social policy framework aimed at responding to growing disparity in Alberta, both undertaken independent from government involvement.

Alternately, Nova Scotia's *Weaving the Threads*, and the *City of London Social Policy Framework* were both developed and drafted completely by government based on government research, reports and government led public consultations (the processes of which were not described in depth).

The *Saskatchewan Disability Inclusion Policy Framework* grew out of the work undertaken by the Saskatchewan Council on Disability Issues. The council was struck by government but was made up of community members and independent academics. The action plan completed by the council was used as the basis for a policy framework authored by government. Similarly, Newfoundland and Labrador's Strategic Social

Plan is a wholly government document but was informed by the two volume report completed by the Social Policy Advisory Committee, a government appointed independent group of citizens, activists, students and representatives from community agencies.

Thus, as we can see, apart from the *ACSW Social Policy Framework*, (which relied on a partnership with the University of Alberta's Parkland Institute), all of the above examples were government instigated and government led initiatives. This trend is consistent across the dozens of other frameworks and strategies I have examined. While it should be no surprise that government bodies themselves are responsible for the vast majority of frameworks, strategies and action plans, over the past few decades, there has been a notable decrease in the amount of voluntary sector engagement with comprehensive policy initiatives. And though involvement has decreased, it is not necessarily due to a lack of interest:

> "The fact that involvement in pubic policy is carried out by less than 25% of all organizations does not signify a lack of interest by the majority of other organizations. Repeatedly, small and medium organizations providing direct service say that they do not have the capacity (time or expertise) to engage in public policy, but they think that it is very important that others do on their behalf; they are ready to contribute to the effort and want to remain connected to policy work in their field."[45]

A list of other non-governmental stakeholders and the policy documents they have produced can be found in Appendix B.

And while a lack of interest might very well be a disincentive for certain organizations, there are a number of other possible explanations for reduced engagement among the rest of us:

CAPACITY. Government time and investment might very well be necessary to tackle projects of significant scope; as mentioned above most organizations simply don't have the capacity to devote enough time and energy for substantial policy-related initiatives.

COMPETENCE. The non-profit sector, like many non-governmental bodies, don't know enough about, or have lost touch with, how policy is made. We lack the internal or individual policy competence to feasibly engage with policy development and analysis. In part, this is because the way policy gets made has changed faster than we can keep up. We have lost our point of entry over the past few decades as cuts have impacted the size, make up and priorities of government policy shops. Furthermore, many analysts have pointed out that policy is increasingly based on values and public opinion, decreasing both the perceived relevance of, and desire or need for, public sector information, research, and analysis.

ADVOCACY VS. DEVELOPMENT. Policy advocacy and policy development are two related but distinct mechanisms of engaging with the policy development process that require different skill sets. Thus, different approaches are best suited for different organizations.

45 Carter, 2011.

Most non-profit organizations tend to align with the former rather than the latter (due to the capacity and competence issues listed above) which is why non-governmental policy documents often appear as "recommendations," "calls for action," and "discussion papers" rather than "frameworks" and "strategies."

RISK VS REWARD. Policy engagement requires significant preparation, patience, perseverance and, as mentioned earlier, even the most relevant and rigorous research may not address on, or have direct implications for the specific levers controlled by policy-makers at that time. Thus, the risk/reward ratio is often too high for most non-governmental bodies to fully engage.

Some academics and analysts have also argued that: "most policy-makers and top advisors seek information and experts in "exploitation" mode to deal with policy challenges; this is very different from an "exploration" posture that seeks out new insight, alternative expertise, and diverse perspectives."[46] This exploration vs. exploitation conception of two approaches to policy analysis and development places the non-profit sector and other non-governmental bodies firmly in a responsive, consultant position where we are 'called upon only when needed' rather than one of pro-active development where we 'inform, inspire and engage with' new policy. If governments are indeed in "exploitation" mode the majority of the time, there is little to be gained expending excess energy in petitioning them.

And, as we have seen, many others argue that the sector has lost touch with, and does not understand the public policy process and no longer invests the time, money and other resources to do so. Rather, "the sector largely views public policy making as a single focused attempt to get a decision made one way or the other."[47] So while individual organizations lack policy competence and capacity, larger or umbrella organizations most likely engage with policy on an ad hoc basis, issue by issue as determined by their specific interests (housing, women's health, etc.) or those of their members - an approach that structurally inhibits broad and comprehensive understandings of, and engagement with, good policy development. Additionally, while no public servant wants to make explicitly bad public policy, many researchers argue that what has been considered a benchmark for good public policy has very much changed.[48]

46 Lindquist, 2009.
47 Bourgeois, 2011.
48 *ibid.*

V. Get in the Game

1.1 Possibilities and Pitfalls

Policy development is a messy, complex and ever changing business with no guarantees of success or implementation. Substantive shifts in policy can also take a long time to effect. Funders looking for immediate short-term results are typically not interested in supporting this work.[49] In spite of such disincentives, and the roadblocks listed above, there are some tremendous strengths and assets that the non-profit sector can bring to the policy development process: incredibly deep passion and commitment; the ability to engage and include vulnerable and marginalized people in the policy conversation who would otherwise be excluded; invaluable front line knowledge and expertise that no government possesses; and the capacity to leverage enormous voluntary contributions of knowledge, information, analysis and advocacy (in addition to time and labour)[50]

And, for those brave organizations that want to get their policy hands dirty, there are factors that increase an organization's ongoing ability to influence government decisions. In some cases establishing organizational influence and effectiveness can take years and requires doing a good many things concurrently, but Sean Moore offers some specific examples of ways organizations can improve their policy readiness:

- motivating or successfully encouraging government to initiate, modify, sustain/continue, or terminate/limit something by way of law, regulation, policy, program, or other expenditure;
- being "at the table" when important consultations are being held and opinions canvassed and being asked - and listened to - by government for suggestions and comments on matters of state and public policy;
- being recognized by media, government, and other organizations as a "player" - as evidenced in news coverage, etc., and by involvement in stakeholder consultations;
- successfully gaining funding, franchise, or mandate from government;
- gaining benefit not only by *meeting* government criteria but also by *influencing* the definition of the criteria themselves; and/or
- increasing understanding (i.e., awareness) among decision makers about a particular organization or the sector at large.[51]

Equally helpful, Moore points out common complaints and observations made by elected officials regarding organizations petitioning policy makers without understanding how government, politics and public policy really work. The responses in his checklist of 'what not to do' were consistent across the country as well as a range

49 Torjman, Sherri. "Community Roles in Policy." Caledon Institute of Social Policy, 2009.
50 Mulholland, 2011.
51 Moore, 2011.

See *A Brief Guide to Understanding Policy Development* published by Nova Scotia's Rural Communities Impacting Policy Project and *Collaboration on Policy*, a manual developed by the Community-Government Collaboration on Policy and published by the Caledon Institute of Social Policy.

of specific policy issues and situations:

- a myopia of sorts by petitioners who fail to see their issue or demand in a larger context (for example, the precedent their proposition would create that would be difficult for government to deal with);
- a lack of appreciation by many interest groups for the range of political and public-policy variables that those in government must consider;
- failure of proponents to be aware of or actively link their idea to government's existing priorities or concerns;
- lack of appropriate preparation of an advocate's proposition (e.g., not massaging it in response to administrative, public-policy, and political imperatives);
- lack of patience and perseverance - the tendency by many petitioners to give up and go on to something else before adequately following up on their initial initiative;
- failure to understand the nature, "rhythms," and timeframes of government decision-making;
- submission of written advocacy material that is usually too voluminous, too narrowly self-serving, and in a form unusable by those in government; and
- unnecessary politicization of issues by proponents "going political" prematurely.[52]

If one's interest lies in taking the *ACSW Social Policy Framework* route, the above pitfalls and practices can be aided by a range of available documents aimed to help guide non-profit understandings of policy development and also the act of collaborating with other non-governmental stakeholders on policy. If outright policy development in fact lies beyond ones capability or capacity, there are many other policy advocacy mechanisms that will still allow you to inform, influence, and engage with policy indirectly:

i) Lobby or Petition Policy Developments. As mentioned above, the *ACSW Social Policy Framework*, while not embraced by government, has been a successful advocacy tool to help establish minimum wage increases in Alberta and to drive discussions around a provincial poverty reduction strategy.

ii) Monitor Policy Developments. While many communities make efforts to keep abreast of policy developments relevant to their interests and objectives, such efforts are often very informal. Increasingly, however, some communities are engaging in more deliberate and systemic policy monitoring in which they develop a methodology for following relevant changes and carry out this work on a regular basis.[53]

iii) Research and Analyze. In process similar to the Federation's current involvement with the Residential Review and Redesign project, organizations can develop an evidence base to explain the causes of certain complex problems, analyze and map such data, conduct

52 Moore, 2011.
53 Torjman, 2009.

symposia to determine the public's interests and principles around a certain issue and/or analyze the impact of previous initiatives, whether or not the organization is explicitly partnered with government.[54]

iv) Democratize Existing Policy. Working on policy often involves developing new approaches and measures but a significant amount of policy work aims to ensure that citizens are aware of, and receive, the benefits and services they are already eligible for. Many beneficiaries of programs are not aware of such benefits and/or may need assistance in accessing them. The policy work in this case involves identifying the programs and services for which certain citizens may be eligible and then developing a strategy to improve access and awareness.

v) Improve Existing Programs and Services. Non-profit and community organizations are also in an excellent position to utilize their extensive community contacts and client networks to survey, review and identify problems with existing programs and benefits and offer specific real-world solutions identified by the target populations themselves.

vi) Design New Approaches. A robust evidence base and extensive public consultations may very well inform the need for policy change but increasingly organizational policy efforts focus on working with government to design approaches or elements of programs that are new and innovative, or have been tried successfully elsewhere, or are specifically tailored to the target demographic/issue/place/time/etc.

vii) Clarify Values and Arguments. As we learned from the *Saskatchewan Disability Inclusion Policy Framework*, it is integral that government share the vision, values and perspective of those the policy change would effect. Organizations can function as facilitators and help interpret data, evidence, and public discourse so that government and all invested stakeholders are on the same page.[55]

viii) Ensure Compatibility. Different policies that are intended to help the same population may inadvertantly work at cross purposes and sometimes the alteration or improvement of an existing program or the introduction of a new measure is offset by a change or removal of a benefit or service elsewhere. Organizations can thus undertake the function of a policy lens (such as that envisioned by the *Saskatchewan Disability Action Plan*) or help develop a policy lens in order to anticipate and identify areas of policy overlap or interaction that would have negative consequences and advise development to minimize the impact of negative interaction.

ix) Reduce Barriers and Disincentives. Many reports have pointed out programs that create a 'catch-22' for citizens, making it incredibly

For more information and specific examples of the such processes see: *Community Roles in Policy* by Sherri Torjman, the Caledon Institute of Social Policy's *Collaboration on Policy* document and "Perspectives on policy analyses: a framework for understanding and design." in Vol. 4, No. 2, of the *International Journal of Technology, Policy and Management.*

54 Mayer, Igor, Els van Daalen, and Pieter Bots. "Perspectives on policy analyses: a framework for understanding and design." *International Journal of Technology, Policy and Management*, Vol. 4, No. 2, 2004.
55 Mayer, 2004.

complicated or even impossible for them to improve their situations.[56] Thus policy efforts can also seek to sort out complex or confusing systems that create barriers, problems or disincentives for citizens and search out solutions and remedies.

x) Monitor Progress. Equally as important as monitoring new policy developments so citizens and households are aware of programs that might benefit them, organizations can monitor the progress and impact of policy programs and determine the outcomes, strengths and limitations of developments and report findings and feedback to government.

1.2 Emerging Trends & New Ideas

For more on place based policy see also "Why do municipal issues rise on the federal policy agenda in Canada?" by Robert Young and Kelly McCarthy in *Canadian Public Administration.* Vol. 52, No. 3. and Neil Bradford's Canadian Policy Research Networks (CPRN) report "Place-based Public Policy: Towards a New Urban and Community Agenda for Canada."

Some researchers and analysts arguing that no existing theory or framework accurately and consistently describes the goals of social policy, how social policies on aggregate actually work, the relationship between individuals and social institutions or how policies affect those relationships, and individual and social outcomes. In other words, since 'poverty' or 'homelessness' means different things to different people and manifests differently in different places, a new approach is needed to provide a way of conceptualizing the relationships between individuals and society that is consistent with emerging thinking about social policy.[57] Switching to a life-course approach, it's argued, would provide a proper foundation and framework for understanding the future of social policy. Where the outdated conception of social welfare focuses on predetermined groups of people in aggregate (the unemployed or the disabled), and engages with them if and when they fall through the cracks and require a "safety net," a life-course approach focuses on the trajectories of individuals through life (longitudinal data) and on how key life events and transitions affect these trajectories. The conceptual framework is based on the participation (or non-participation) of individuals in the institutions of society - the market, family, community organizations, and government programs - over their lives and the interchanges of resources between the individual and those institutions analyzed on a micro level.[58] According to a recent report:

> This framework can influence the choice of broad strategic approaches regarding the pace and incrementality of policy change. It can be used to examine likely future policy pressures and opportunities, and can also help us think about policy architecture – the evolution of who should be doing what and the relationships among the many players involved in social issues. It can also influence policy design and delivery, and the construction of measures of effectiveness.[59]

56 Torjman, 2009.
57 Policy Research Initiative (PRI). *A Life-Course Approach to Social Policy Analysis.* Government of Canada, Policy Research Initiative, 2004.
58 *ibid.*
59 *ibid.*

In recent years there has also been growing interest in place-based interventions and their unique contributions to the tackling complex issues and challenging problems that cannot be resolved through single solutions or one-off responses (such as poverty). Place-based strategies are exactly that – a range of efforts that seek to achieve a desired objective through interventions in the neighbourhoods and communities where people live and increasingly they try to influence selected public policies germane to their identified issues.[60] Indeed, as more and more today's key policy challenges play out on municipal stages and in local spaces interventions must increasingly work from the ground up to generate solutions rooted in the particular concerns of local communities, attuned to the specific needs and capacities of residents.[61]

This perceived need for a place-based approach, combined with the fact that 'wicked problems' like poverty and homelessness cross departmental boundaries, span the mandates of different levels of government and resist the solutions available through the action of one lone agency has engendered a turn from government to governance. Neil Bradford, in a 2008 report ,stressed that in order to deliver on the country's major challenges of economic innovation, social and cultural inclusion, and ecological sustainability, national governments must engage local governance networks. He argued that 'wicked problems' – deeply rooted, interconnected, and unfamiliar – require holistic interventions addressing multi-faceted causality.[62]

This turn to governance can be understood in part as a response to the challenge of globalization and of governing increasingly diverse societies in which no single actor has the power to control events in a complex and diverse field of actions and interactions.[63] Box 1, below, lists a series of findings based on a broad survey of policy documents and reiterates the work of many other researchers and analysts that identify and embrace this shift from government to governance.

60 Torjman, 2009.
61 Bradford, Neil. "Canadian Social Policy in the 2000s: Bringing Place In." Canadian Policy Research Networks (CPRN). 2008.
62 Bradford, 2008.
63 Héritier, A. "New Modes of Governance in Europe: Increasing Political Efficency and Policy Effectiveness." *State of the European Union.* 2003.

Box 1
Governance Shifts

The literature suggests we are witnessing:

1. A move away from hierarchy and competition as alternative models for delivering services towards networks and partnerships traversing the public, private and voluntary sectors.

2. A recognition of the blurring of boundaries and responsibilities for tackling social and economic issues.

3. The recognition and incorporation of policy networks into the process of governing.

4. The replacement of traditional models of command and control by "governing at a distance."

5. The development of more reflexive and responsive policy tools.

6. The role of government shifting to a focus on providing leadership, building partnerships, steering and coordinating, and providing system-wide integration and regulation.

7. The emergence of negotiated "self-governance" in communities, cities and regions, based on new practices of coordinating activities through networks and partnerships.

8. The opening-up of decision-making to greater participation by the public.

9. Innovations in democratic practice as a response to the problem of complexity and fragmentation of authority, and the challenges this presents to traditional democratic models.

10. A broadening of focus by government beyond institutional concerns to encompass the involvement of civil society in the governance process.

- Saint-Martin, Denis. "Coordinating Interdependence: Governance and Social Policy Redesign in Britain, the European Union and Canada." CPRN Social Architecture Papers. 2004.

Part of the growing appeal of governance as a concept is its capacity – unlike the narrower term government – to cover the whole range of institutions and social relationships involved in the process of governing.[64] This is a step beyond simply better adaptation of various government interventions to local conditions; it is multi-level collaboration such that the combined effort becomes greater than the sum of the individual efforts.[65] A shift to governance is, in many ways, the result of the two inter-connected components of place-based policy coming together: municipal empowerment with community building - provincial and federal governments increasingly need to use a local lens to align and tailor their generally available sectoral policies; and, for the extraordinary 'wicked problems' in distressed areas, targeted or community-specific actions designed collaboratively have the best

64 Pierre J., and B.G. Peters. *Governance, Politics and the State.* London: Macmillan. 2000.
65 Bradford, Neil. "Place-based Public Policy: Towards a New Urban and Community Agenda for Canada." Canadian Policy Research Networks (CPRN). 2005.

track record for seeding lasting, transformative local change.[66]

The changing dynamics of the global-local relationship have not only opened the door, but as many have argued, necessitate systematic change in policy-making structures and processes. The following table summarizes the distinctions between and transitions from government to governance.

	Traditional Government Administration	Place-Based Governance
Organizational Logic	Departmental Mandates/ Constitutional Allocations	Multi-level Collaboration/ Framework Agreements
Design Principles	Central Control/Standards	Local Discretion/Priorities
Delivery Mechanisms	Government Programs	Negotiated Partnerships
Policy Goals	Palliative Management	Transformative Prevention
Policy Discourse	Discrete Files	Wicked Problems
Policy Knowledge	Rationalist Expert	Constructivist Experiential
Policy Skills	Design/Delivery/Direction	Convening/Brokering/Facilitating
Evaluation Frames	Government Outputs	Community Outcomes
Learning Dynamic	Departmental Reporting	Social Dialogue

- Bradford, Neil. "Canadian Social Policy in the 2000s: Bringing Place In." Canadian Policy Research Networks (CPRN). 2008.

One oft-discussed facet of governance models of policy development (such as the Urban Development Agreements in Vancouver and Winnipeg) is that, by in large, they place as much emphasis on community building and communication, experimentation and collaborative problem solving as they do measurable outcomes. Increasingly policy consultants and analysts, such as Elizabeth Mulholland, are arguing that "policies aimed at complex issues are often informed experiments than sure bets and should be undertaken in this spirit."[67] While too much reliance on measurable outcomes might "force people to choose, as advocacy targets, quantifiable things that aren't necessarily systemic change,"[68] a conceptual shift from outcomes to experiments allows targeted interventions to essentially become policy laboratories, generating fresh new insights about how sectoral policies work, or do not work, on the ground and in real time. With appropriate feedback loops, such initiatives enable adjustments, corrections or, if needed, swift termination at the same time as the macro-level policy focus is sharpened, suggesting where and how mandates and operating rules ought to be altered, reformed or strengthened.[69] While there is growing recognition of the mismatch between emerging and worsening social issues and the array of social

66 Bradford, 2008.
67 Mulholland, 2011.
68 Whitmore, 2011.
69 Bradford, 2008.

policies inherited from the post-war years, no clear blueprint for a new social architecture has emerged.[70] This, in turn, has led to the view that such collaborative policy experimentation at all levels of government is very much required.

Lastly, there is also a growing interest in analyzing and understanding why certain policy issues fail to make it onto anybody's radar in spite of extensive amounts of evidence as to their relevance. Research about the social determinants of health (SDoH) - the living conditions to which people are exposed - has been piling up since the days of Virchow and Engels in the mid-1800's. And in spite of a mountain of proof citing SDoH as the primary factor in determining the health of both individuals and the greater population, articles and editorials with titles like *A Land of Missed Opportunity for SDOH*; *Can a Radical Agenda be Mainstreamed?* and *Escaping the Phantom Zone of SDOH* continue to abound. If we accept the fact argued by Wyatt and Bourgeois, among others, that our sector has lost touch with the ways policy is made and how those processes have changed, then one last option would be to use the exemplar of SDoH as a policy project to get us up to speed. At the same time as we improve our policy competence, we can hang our hat on an increasingly hot-button topic, get SDoH on the radar of BC's politicians and general public alike, and become a key player in what could be a very significant policy discussion.

70 Ferrera, M., A. Hemerijck, and M. Rhodes. *The Future of Social Europe: Recasting Work and Welfare in the New Economy.* Oxford: Oxford University Press. 2001.

Appendix A - Other Frameworks, Strategies and Action Plans

The following is a list of additional, less comprehensive policy frameworks, strategies and action plans that were collected and reviewed in preparation for this report. Arranged according to the key issue that each specifically addresses, they offer an overview of the main areas of provincial policy interest as well as examples of other models, processes and programs from across the country. Copies of each - and additional policy papers, reports and research articles - are available in .pdf form. Contact marshall@fcssbc.ca

POVERTY

Breaking the Cycle: Ontario's Poverty Reduction Strategy (ON - 2008)
Framework for a Poverty Reduction Strategy in Nova Scotia (NS - 2007)
NLASW Poverty Reduction Strategy (NL - 2010)
All Aboard: Manitoba's Poverty Reduction Strategy (NB - 2009)
Federal Poverty Reduction Plan (CAN - 2010)
Action Plan to Combat Poverty and Social Exclusion (QC - 2004)
Policy Framework for Tackling Poverty and Social Exclusion in Scotland (UK - 2000)

HOUSING

HomeWorks! A Housing Strategy and Policy Framework (MB - 2009)
London Community Housing Strategy (ON - 2010)
A Housing Strategy for Newfoundland and Labrador (NL - 2005)
Housing Strategic Plan (NL - 2008)
Hope is a Home: New Brunswick's Housing Strategy (NB - 2010)
City of Langley Affordable Housing Strategy (BC - 2009)
Social Housing Plan for Newfoundland and Labrador (NL - 2009)
Taking Responsibility for Homelessness: An Action Plan for Toronto (ON - 1999)

MENTAL HEALTH

Aboriginal Mental Health: A Framework for Alberta (AB - 2006)
Framework for Diversion of Persons with a Mental Disorder in BC (BC - 2008)
Ontario's Policy Framework for Child and Youth Mental Health (ON - 2006)
Toward Recovery & Well-Being: Framework for a Mental Health Strategy for Canada (CAN - 2009)
Action Plan for Mental Health in New Brunswick 2011-18 (NB - 2011)
Autism Spectrum Disorder Action Plan (NS - 2011)

YOUTH/EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT

British Columbia Early Childhood Development Action Plan (BC - 2002)
Blueprint for Action: A Five Year Plan for Manitoba Child Care Policy Redesign (MB - 2001)

Policy Framework for Children and Youth with Special and Complex Needs (AB - 2003)
15 by 15: A Comprehensive Policy Framework for Early Human Capital Investment (BC - 2009)
Youth In Transition Policy Framework (AB - 2001)
Youth Policy Framework (BC - 2000)
NLASW Provincial Early Childhood Learning Strategy (NL - 2010)

POSITIVE AGING

Aging Population Policy Framework (AB - 2010)
Provincial Healthy Aging Policy Framework (NL - 2007)
Saskatchewan's Provincial Policy Framework and Action Plan for Older Persons (SK - 2003)
The New Zealand Positive Aging Strategy (NZ - 2001)
Strategy for Positive Aging in Nova Scotia (NS - 2005)
Engaging the Mature Worker: An Action Plan For Alberta (AB - 2011)
Improving Seniors' Quality of Life: Action Plan (SK - 2000)

VIOLENCE

Taking Action Against Violence (NL - 2006)
Respect Our Elders - Stop the Abuse: A Plan for Action (NWT - 2004)
NWT Family Violence Action Plan Phase II (NWT - 2007)
Domestic Violence Action Plan for Ontario (ON - 2005)
Sexual Violence Action Plan (ON - 2010)

ABORIGINAL ISSUES

Manitoba Metis Policy and Policy Framework (MB - 2010)
Ontario First Nation, Metis, and Inuit Education Policy Framework (ON - 2007)
Strengthening Relationships: Aboriginal Policy Framework (AB - 2000)
Aboriginal Education Policy Framework (ON - 2006)

OTHER

Framework for a Canadian Caregiving Strategy (CAN - 2004)
Home Schooling Policy Framework (QC - 2010)
Recognizing Prior Learning in Saskatchewan (SK - 2004, 2005, 2009)
Manitoba Policy Framework for Prior Learning Recognition (MB - 2001)
Achieving Culture Change: A Policy Framework (UK - 2008)
Smarter, Stronger, Healthier, Safer (AUS - 2010)
Health Equity in Australia: A Policy Framework (AUS - 2009)
Immigration Strategy for Newfoundland and Labrador (NL - 2005)
Literacy Coalition of New Brunswick Strategic Plan (NB - 2010)
Developing and Maintaining Manitoba's Cooperative Community (MB - 2008)
Building Foundations - Ten Point Action Plan (MB - 2007)
Action Plan for Women's Health (SK/MB - 2003)
Action Plan for Saskatchewan Women (SK - 2003)
Action Plan for Social Assistance in the City of Toronto (ON - 2006)
Rural Action Plan (PEI - 2010)

Appendix B - Other Stakeholders

The following lists some other non-governmental stakeholders and places outside government where social policy frameworks, strategies and plans are coming from. Various committees, project groups, associations, offices and coalitions are listed.

Saskatchewan Provincial Advisory Committee of Older Persons

(Sasatchewan's Provincial Policy Framework and Action Plan for Older Persons, 2003)
Committee membership was made by Ministerial Appointment and included individuals who bring various perspectives to the table: provincial, Aboriginal, women's, regional, health, education and research. Many also participated in external stakeholder groups, such as seniors organizations and cultural groups. They represented a broad range of geographic areas and perspectives from across the province.

Newfoundland Office for Aging and Seniors

(Provincial Healthy Aging Policy Framework, 2007)
The Office for Aging and Seniors was stablished in 2004 and located within the Department of Health and Community Services. One of its main functions is to oversee the development and implementation of the Provincial Healthy Aging Policy Framework and to monitor the implementation process. This is done with direction from the Ministerial Council on Aging and Seniors and with the support of many partners including: the Provincial Advisory Council on Aging and Seniors; the Interdepartmental Working Group on Healthy Aging (drawn from various government departments and agencies and regional health authorities); seniors' organizations; the federal government; other provinces and territories; and key stakeholders.

BC Division, Mental Health Diversion Project of the Canadian Mental Health Association

(Framework for Diversion of Persons with a Mental Disorder in BC, 2008)
The framework is one of a series of documents produced by the BC Division of the Mental Health Diversion Project of the CMHA. Funding, in part, came from the Law Foundation of British Columbia and BC Mental Health and Addiction Services, an agency of the Provincial Health Services Authority. The framework was developed and workshopped in conjunction with with policy makers, administrators, service providers, advocates, consumers and families.

Alberta Youth in Transition Working Committee

(Youth in Transition Policy Framework, 2001)

Alberta College of Social Workers

(ACSW Social Policy Framework, 2010)
The Alberta College of Social Workers regulates social work practice in Alberta. Its primary focus is to serve and protect the public interest by promoting skilled and ethical social work. The framework was developed in conjunction with the Parkland Institute (a non-partisan research network situated within the Faculty of Arts at the University of Alberta) which organized the symposia and drafted the policy agenda.

Saskatchewan Council on Disability Issues

(Saskatchewan's Disability Action Plan, 2001)

In 1998, after consultation with the disability community and government departments, the Government of Saskatchewan announced the creation of a disability strategy of which one element was the establishment of the Saskatchewan Council on Disability Issues. Reporting to the Minister Responsible for Disability Issues, the council's mandate was to provide advice on issues affecting individuals with disabilities, to obtain direct input from individuals with disabilities on issues related to government programs, policies and priorities and to assist in the development of a Disability Action Plan which would foreground and inform a Governmental Disability Policy Framework.

Newfoundland and Labrador Social Policy Advisory Committee

(Volume I: What the People Said, 1997)

(Volume II: Investing in People and Communities - A Framework for Social Development, 1997)

(People, Partners and Prosperity: Strategic Social Plan for Newfoundland and Labrador, 1998)

In July 1996, the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador appointed an independent group, the Social Policy Advisory Committee (SPAC), to carry out public consultations throughout the Province. The Committee comprised fifteen citizens from various backgrounds, interests and regions of the Province. The Committee produced two reports. Volume I: What the People Said, was a fairly comprehensive summary of the issues raised in the consultations across the Province. Volume II: Investing in People and Communities – A Framework for Social Development, contained the SPAC's recommendations to Government. The committee also advised the Government during the development and implementation of the Strategic Social Plan which arose from the two SPAC reports.

Ontario Cabinet Committee on Poverty Reduction

(Breaking the Cycle: Ontario's Poverty Reduction Strategy, 2008)

Canadian Caregiver Coalition

(Framework for a Canadian Caregiving Strategy, 2004)

The Canadian Caregiver Coalition is a national voice for the needs and interests of family caregivers.They are a bilingual, not-for-profit organization made up of caregivers, caregiver support groups, national stakeholder organizations and researchers that provides leadership in identifying and responding to the needs of caregivers in Canada.

Human Early Learning Partnership, University of British Columbia

(15 by 15 - A Comprehensive Policy Framework for Early Human Capital Investment in BC, 2009)

The Human Early Learning Partnership is an interdisciplinary collaborative research institute focused on new understandings of early child development. It is made up of a partnership of over 200 faculty, researchers and graduate students from six BC universities. Funding, in part, for the policy frameworj was provided by the United Way of the Lower Mainland and the Vancouver Foundation.

Alberta Children and Youth Initiative

(Policy Framework for Services for Children and Youth with Special and Complex Needs, 2003)
Introduced in 1998, the Alberta Children and Youth Initiative (ACYI) is a collaborative partnership of government ministries working together on issues affecting children and youth.

Ontario Campaign 2000
(A Poverty Reduction Strategy for Ontario, 2007)
Campaign 2000 is a non-profit, cross Canada coalition of over 120 organizations committed to working together to end child and family poverty in Canada. Ontario Campaign 2000 is a provincial branch made up a network of 50 organizational partners from across Ontario.

OrgCode Consulting Inc.
(London Community Housing Strategy, 2010)
OrgCode is an Ontario-based Management Consulting firm focused on Change & Transformation, Strategy & Planning, Training & Professional Development.

Nova Scotia Poverty Reduction Strategy Coalition
(Framework for a Poverty Reduction Strategy in Nova Scotia, 2007)
As of 2010 the Nova Scotia Poverty Reduction Strategy Coalition was renamed The Community Coalition to End Poverty - Nova Scotia.

Nova Scotia Seniors' Secretariat
(Strategy for Positive Aging in Nova Scotia, 2005)
The Nova Seniors' Secretariat is the provincial government agency responsible for seniors. The Seniors' Secretariat consists of the Ministers of Health, Community Services, Education, Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations, and Health Promotion. The Minister of Health serves as the Chairperson of the Secretariat and is Nova Scotia's Minister Responsible for Seniors. The Secretariat is staffed by an Executive Director and seven permanent staff.

Newfoundland and Labrador Association of Social Workers
(Poverty Reduction Strategy, 2010)
(Provincial Early Childhood Learning Strategy, 2010)
The NLASW is the professional association and regulatory body for over 1300 professional social workers in Newfoundland and Labrador. The mandate of the NLASW is to ensure excellence in social work, in part, through active engagement in social policy analysis.

Mental Health Commission of Canada
(Toward Recovery & Well-Being: A Framework for a Mental Health Strategy for Canada, 2009)

Social Planning and Research Council of BC (SPARC BC)
(City of Langley Affordable Housing Strategy, 2009)
The Social Planning and Research Council of BC (SPARC BC) is a non-partisan, charitable organization that focuses on social justice issues and works together with communities on issues of: Accessibility; Community Development; Income Security and Social Planning.

Child Care Coalition of Manitoba

(Blueprint for Action: A Five Year Plan for Manitoba Child Care Policy Redesign, 2001)
The Child Care Coalition of Manitoba is a public education and advocacy organization, made up of groups and individuals including parents, the labour movement, women's groups, the childcare community, educators and researchers and organizations committed to social justice and community economic development, among others.

Prairie Women's Health Centre of Excellence
(An Action Plan for Women's Health in Manitoba and Saskatchewan, 2003)
Prairie Women's Health Centre of Excellence is dedicated to improving the health status of Canadian women by supporting policy-oriented, and community-based research and analysis on the social and other determinants of women's health.

Newfoundland and Labrador Violence Prevention Initiative
(Taking Action Against Violence, 2006)
The Violence Prevention Initiative is a partnership between government and community organizations to address violence prevention.

Community Links Nova Scotia
(Seniors Influencing Healthy Public Policy in Nova Scotia: An Action Plan, 2006)
Community Links is a provincial organization that promotes age friendly communities and quality of life for Nova Scotia seniors through community development and volunteer action.Community Links developed the Action Plan with funding support from the Public Health Agency of Canada and in partnership with the Seniors Secretariat; the Group of IX; Atlantic Seniors Health Promotion Network; and the Public Health Agency of Canada.

NWT Seniors' Society
(A Plan for Action: Respect Our Elders - Stop the Abuse, 2004)
The NWT Seniors' Society is a non-profit organization that acts as a resource and support for seniors and elders across the NWT. The plan for action was developed with the assistance of Lutra Associates and with financial assistance from the Government of NWT Department of Health & Social Sciences and Justice Canada's National Crime Prevention Strategy.

Alzheimer Society of Ontario
(10 by 20: Ontario Action Plan For Dementia, 2010)
The Alzheimer Society of Ontario is the provinces leading care and research charity supporting people living with dementia. The society is a province-wide network of 39 Chapters that provides community services such as individual and family counselling, education and information, support groups, respite care and day programs.

Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario
(Sexual Violence Action Plan, 2010)
The Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario (RNAO) is the professional association for registered nurses who practise in all roles and sectors across Ontario. The association works to improve health and strengthen the province's health-care system.

The Mayor's Homeless Action Task Force

(Taking Responsibility for Homelessmess: An Action Plan for Toronto, 1999)
The newly elected Mayor of Toronto created the Homelessness Action Task Force in January 1998 in response to public concern about the growth of homelessness and its increasing visibility on the streets of Toronto. The Task Force developed both short-term proposals for emergency services and long-term solutions for health and mental health services, housing support, housing supply, and housing affordability.

Canadian Alliance on Mental Illness and Mental Health

(Framework for Action on Mental Illness and Mental Health - Recommendations, 2006)
Founded in 1998, the Canadian Alliance on Mental Illness and Mental Health (CAMIMH) is the largest coalition in Canada focused on mental illness, mental health, and addictions. CAMIMH's membership comprises the major national organizations whose activities span the broad continuum of mental health. They represent consumers and their families, health care and social service providers, professional associations, and community and research organizations. Together, they constitute a vibrant network of national, provincial, and community-based organizations dedicated to serving the mental health needs of the people of Canada from coast to coast. CAMIMH's mission is to promote and facilitate the development, adoption, and implementation of a national action plan on mental illness and mental health.

Federation of Canadian Municipalities

(Sustaining the Momentum: Recommendations for a National Action Plan on Housing and Homelessness, 2008)

Canadian Association of Social Workers

(Turning into Poverty the Provincial Way, 2009)

Provincial Advisory Committee on Mental Health Housing and Related Support Services

(Housing and Supports for People with Mental Illness, 2008)

College of Registered Psychiatric Nurses of Manitoba

(A Mental Health Strategy for Manitoba, 2009)

Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, Manitoba Office

(The View from Here: Manitobans call for a Poverty Reduction Plan, 2010)
The Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives is an independent, non-partisan research institute concerned with issues of social, economic and environmental justice. Founded in 1980, the CCPA is one of Canada's leading progressive voices in public policy debates. They have a National Office in Ottawa and provincial offices in British Columbia, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario and Nova Scotia.

New Brunswick Community Action Group on Homelessness

(Poverty in New Brunswick: Pre-Budget Consultation Submission, 2011)

Newfoundland and Labrador Committee on Newcomer Integration

(Retention and Integration of Immigrants in Newfoundland and Labrador - Are We Ready, 2005)

NWT Seniors' Society
(Making Connections: Building Networks to Prevent Abuse of Older Adults, 2011)

Ontario Select Committee on Mental Health and Addictions
(Navigating the Journey to Wellness: The Comprehensive Mental Health and Addictions Action Plan for Ontarians, 2010)
The Select Committee was created in February 2009 to investigate and report on the state of mental health and addictions care in Ontario. All three major provincial political parties were represented on the volunteer committee.

Social Planning Network of Ontario
(Ontario Poverty Reduction Strategy Consultations Summary Report, 2008)

Cities Centre, University of Toronto (formerly the Centre for Urban and Community Studies)
(From Abandonment to Affordable Housing: Policy Options for Addressing Toronto's Abandonment Problem, 2008)
The Cities Centre is the University of Toronto's urban research centre. The centre encourages and facilitates research on cities and a wide range of urban policy issues, both in Canada and abroad. It also provides a gateway for communication between the University and the broader urban community.

Canadian Council on Social Development
(Social Development Report Series, 2009)
The Canadian Council on Social Development's new Social Development Report Series identifies current federal, provincial, and territorial approaches to poverty reduction, alleviation and eradication, profiles the ideas, interests and institutions that have shaped the evolution of that work, and identifies critical issues for each jurisdiction moving forward. The series of reports (one for each province) provide an understanding of how geography, history and politics have created varying approaches to community building across our country.

Sudbury & District Health Unit
(A Framework to Integrate Social and Economic Determinants of Health into the Ontario Public Health Mandate, 2006)

Yukon Office of Social Inclusion
(Dimensions of Social Inclusion and Exclusion in Yukon, 2010)

SPARC BC, Public Health Association of BC, Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, BC Poverty Reduction Coalition
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