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**GOVERNANCE IN LOCAL PARTNERSHIPS TO ADDRESS
HOMELESSNESS**

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Executive Summary

Organizations working to address the needs of the homeless are under tremendous pressure to serve an increasing number of people with diverse needs. They are also struggling with limited resources and find themselves coping with changes in the level and nature of government funding. Organizational governance, both its quality and nature, is a key factor in the ability of organizations to address the needs of the homeless in this challenging environment.

In an organizational setting governance refers to the overall processes and structures used to direct and manage an organization's operations and activities. Encompassing roles, responsibilities, powers, partnerships and accountability, the essence of governance is captured by such questions as: Who is in charge? Who sets direction? Who makes decisions? Who monitors progress? Who is accountable for the performance of the organization? With whom and in what fashion does the agency partner and collaborate?

Although there are many different models of governance, every organization is different and there is no one particular model that applies to all organizations. However, from the case study analysis undertaken it is clear that organizations work most effectively when there is a model that encourages a commitment to a clear direction and vision; organizational capacity, appropriate structures, policies and procedures to achieve this direction; accountability to funders and community stakeholders; sufficient adaptability to meet changing circumstances; the ability of the organization to develop and maintain effective partnerships; and, the ability of the board and staff to work as a team.

The case study analysis identified a variety of strategies, partnerships, structures and tools that help to achieve effective governance. A strategic plan seems to be of paramount importance. It is a critical tool in establishing vision and direction, identifying priorities, critical issues, barriers and opportunities. It can, and should, provide guidelines for program planning and delivery and incorporate effective monitoring of both the internal and external environment. Monitoring and evaluation are critical to successful governance.

Other key elements of governance structure include a Board that is committed to the philosophy of the organization, brings a range of expertise to the table and has the ability and commitment to work on behalf of the organization seeking out other partners and sources of funding and playing a significant role in setting policy and direction. Boards can be "hands on" taking an active role in day to day operation, or focus more on setting broad policy and direction and developing overall guidelines for operation. Although both approaches have strengths and weaknesses, boards operating at the macro level appear to be most effective. Boards appear to operate best when there is a clear framework for decision-making, including the necessary background information; possible options; and, implications of various options and recommendations.

Formal committees, usually chaired by a board member, must be in place to deal with key issues such as finance, human resources, strategic planning and programs. Meetings, of both the board and committees, with adequate record keeping, should be held regularly, preferably monthly. There should be clear lines of communication and regular contact between the board and staff, preferably through the Executive Director or other senior staff members.

Moving from the board to the operational staff of agencies, the case study analysis suggests a flexible and non-rigid organizational structure works best given the rapidly changing circumstances and challenges these organizations face. The important characteristics appear to be open, non-micro management that encourages collaboration within the organization and with other partners.

The case study analysis also suggests that volunteers are a means of strengthening an organization and building capacity, particularly in a time of limited resources. Volunteers can also strengthen ties to the community and play a role in developing effective partnerships. However, effective use of volunteers requires administrative time, clear policies and procedures and the need to address issues such as liability, training and union regulations.

Training for both staff and volunteers is clearly needed to achieve effective governance. It helps staff and volunteers deal more effectively with clients, improves staff retention and the opportunity for promotion. Adequate training can also develop job skills that are inter-changeable with the ability to cover various jobs, share workloads and provide opportunities for job rotation.

Although the case study organizations were quick to point out that it was not all about money, nearly all organizations face financial problems because of the increasing demand for services. The ability to diversify the funding base, develop fundraising capacity, entrepreneurial skills and establish a sustainable business plan were highlighted as key characteristics of good governance. Organizations must have the capacity to pursue a range of revenue generating strategies. The issue of fundraising deserves special comment. Although many organizations undertake fundraising initiatives directed at the general public and private sector corporations and one organization has hired a professional fundraiser, the opinions on the value of fundraising were mixed. Some saw it as a crucial component of their business plan and long-term strategy. Others questioned the effectiveness of fundraising. The time, cost and effort required to run an effective fundraising campaign may be beyond the capacity of smaller organizations or those organizations with more limited resources.

Finally, the importance of strategic partnerships in promoting effective governance cannot be understated. Strategic partnerships play a critical role in the effective operation of resource constrained agencies serving the homeless. Partnerships comprise: coalitions of agencies working to address the community's larger goals, including those coalitions established under SCPI; relationships with municipal and other levels of government; partnerships with the private sector; and, other less formal collaborations and networking

arrangements with a wide range of agencies as part of improving the quality of services and information.

Formal and informal partnerships are increasingly important to agencies in developing support networks, setting community priorities, developing solutions to problems that require a diverse range of services, improving access to other sources of funding, making more efficient use of the funds available and lobbying government and other funding agencies to increase resources. Although it takes time and effort to build and make partnerships work there was a consensus that expanded, and sometimes very complex partnership arrangements were necessary in responding to the increasing needs the organizations face.

For those organizations that have tended to operate on their own with less reliance on partnerships, developing effective partnerships will be a capacity building exercise. This may be a difficult process, requiring changes to the board structure, and incorporating new ideas on the operation of the organization. The SCPI process is seen to have promoted capacity building through the development of collaborative processes and broad local partnerships among all stakeholders, private, non-profit and voluntary sectors and government. Effective partnerships are a key component of good governance.

The case study analysis suggests that, in the face of significant challenges, organizations dealing with the homeless are able to persevere and adapt to rapidly changing circumstances. Good governance and the development of strategic partnerships as part of governance are key components of this success.

“We have to get sensible about working together because we are never going to have enough money for all of us to keep running solo, we have to find the best answer for the community we are in, but finding the answer requires a certain amount of structural support and we have to be valued.” (Main Street)

1.0 Introduction

Across the country, the homeless situation is becoming more severe as the number of homeless persons steadily increases in most major Canadian cities. In order to address the needs of a more diverse and growing number of homeless people, organizations and agencies have had to adjust their methods of program delivery and management. Effective governance has become a critical aspect of meeting the needs of the homeless population.

Although there is a considerable body of literature and research on the homeless population there is less information available on the governance characteristics of agencies that are attempting to address the needs of the homeless. This report attempts to address this deficiency by examining governance characteristics of a number of agencies working with homeless people. A series of case studies will identify the partnerships, board structures and strategies these agencies are using in their work with the homeless population.

The following discussion begins with a brief examination of the changing characteristics of the homeless population, noting the trends exhibited in large Canadian cities. This is followed by an overview of the current program and funding framework within which agencies working to address the needs of the homeless operate. Then there is a review of the applicable literature on governance. This initial material sets the context for a detailed discussion on aspects of governance within organizations dealing with the homeless, focusing specifically on their ability to govern their affairs and the development and use of partnerships in the delivery of services in an ever changing and complex environment. This is accomplished through detailed case studies of agencies distributed across the nation and chosen to reflect a range of different organizational characteristics. A synthesis of the case study material is provided in the main body of the report and the detailed case studies themselves are contained in the Appendices. The report concludes with a summary of best practice applications and lessons learned.

2.0 Homelessness in Canada: Trends and Characteristics

2.1 *Defining the Homeless*

The complexity of the issues associated with homelessness leads to a wide range of definitions. According to the UN, homelessness is much more than the absence of shelter and includes both absolute and relative homelessness. Absolute homelessness focuses on those people who have no homes and therefore reside on the street (sleeping rough) or depend regularly on shelters. Relative homelessness looks at those people who live in homes that do not meet basic standards established by the United Nations (United Nations 1987). These basic standards include “adequate protection from the elements; access to safe water and sanitation; secure tenure and personal safety; and accessibility to employment, education, and health care.” (United Nations 1987) From this definition, Oberlander and Fallick offer a Canadian perspective on homelessness:

the absence of a continuing or permanent home over which individuals and families have personal control and which provides the essential needs of shelter, privacy and security at an affordable cost, together with ready access to social, economic and cultural public services (Oberlander and Fallick 1991: 15).

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) considers homelessness a condition of living;

a) in public or private emergency shelters which take a variety of forms including armories, schools, church basements, government buildings, former free-houses and, where temporary vouchers are provided by private or public agencies, even hotels, apartments, or boarding houses; or (b) in the streets, parks, subways, bus terminals, railroad stations, airports, under bridges or aqueducts, abandoned buildings without utilities, cars, trucks, or any other public or private space that is not designed for shelter (Helvie 1999:7-8).

Regardless of the definition, the end result is that many persons are living in circumstances that are simply inadequate or lack permanence.

2.2 *General Causes of Homelessness*

In considering the homeless problem, Avramov (1999) provides a useful starting point by suggesting “the first step towards understanding homelessness is the acknowledgment of the complexity of paths into homelessness.” (p. 6) This thought helps to reinforce that understanding homelessness is not only about examining the lack of housing, but more importantly, is also about determining why and how a person becomes homeless.

The Canadian literature suggests that the factors leading to homelessness are much the same in all communities: poverty, unemployment, mental illness, addictions and substance abuse all lead to growing numbers of the homeless population. In Edmonton

cultural and societal factors including racism are thought to be issues that influence the homeless situation (Edmonton Homelessness Count Committee 2000). In Toronto, the Mayor's Action Task Force (1999) pointed out that unemployment has been, and continues to be, a major cause of homelessness in Canada. The report also notes that the incidence of homelessness seems to be more evident in large cities like Toronto as compared to smaller or medium-sized cities. Emanuel (1998) suggests "large urban regions are the place where the vast majority of jobs are created in today's economy. They are the places where people with low skills or little education and work experience can live on the economic margins, but big cities are also where people on the economic margins fall off." (p. 7) Among some other factors identified by the Task Force as causes of homelessness were: an increase in poverty, cutbacks in welfare, social factors such as domestic violence, physical and sexual abuse, de-institutionalization and lack of community support programs for people suffering from mental illness or addictions.

The lack of affordable housing, and the absence of a government focus on housing (Edmonton Homelessness Count Committee 2000) are also listed as key factors. Experts in all Canadian cities have stated that, "the federal government's withdrawal from social housing has affected cities throughout Canada and is a primary reason for the rise in homelessness in the last five years." (*Mayor's Homelessness Action Task Force 1999:19*)

The critical trends that have been identified in the international literature as contributing to homelessness include poverty and a shortage of affordable housing options. Poverty often means that people are incapable of paying for their basic needs, such as shelter, food, childcare and education. In too many cases, the end result of this inability to afford the necessities of life is that some are forced onto the streets and into a life of homelessness.

The shortage of affordable housing options figures prominently on an international basis. Helvie and Kunstmann (1999) conducted a review of homelessness across seven countries, concluding that one cause identified in all of the countries was the lack of housing either as a result of a shortage of affordable housing (United States and Germany) or the loss of housing (Czech Republic, England, Russia, and Spain).

The findings of Helvie and Kunstmann concur with those noted by Avramov (1999) who cited lack of affordable housing, absence of appropriate social services, inadequate assistance and care for persons with mental problems, and social segregation, as being key causes of homelessness (p. 7). The causes of homelessness in various countries are identified in Table 2.1. These findings support the earlier claim that homelessness is a complex issue and, furthermore, that the causes of homelessness are numerous and equally difficult to assess and measure.

2.3 A Rising Number of Homeless People

Across the country evidence suggests that the homeless situation has become more severe over the past ten to fifteen years. The increase in homelessness is particularly evident in the number of people living on the streets of Toronto and other major cities. Food banks and shelters in some cities are unable to handle the increasing numbers of homeless

Table 2.1: Causes of Homelessness in Various Countries (not listed in rank order)

<p>United States</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Inflation 2) shortage of affordable housing 3) decreased federally funded programs such as food stamps, school lunches, unemployment and housing assistance 4) poor planning for de-institutionalization 5) unemployment 6) breakdown of traditions 7) increased acceptance of women's rights and redefinition of abuse 	<p>Germany</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) under-supply of houses due to increased production costs, decreased subsidized houses, and abolishment of tax exemptions for nonprofit housing 2) increased unemployment 3) increased recipients of welfare benefits 4) rent burden on low income population 5) de-institutionalization with poor community support services 6) self-reported factors: post imprisonment or hospitalization, evictions, arguments with relatives, and separation or loss of significant other
<p>Czech Republic</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) loss of home 2) long term or repeated unemployment 3) insufficient income and debts 4) gambling 5) inability to manage household on income 6) change in family structure, i.e. divorce 7) release from prison 8) health problems 9) family problems leading to forcing members out 	<p>Denmark</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) alcohol and drug abuse 2) mental problems 3) physical problems 4) dwellingness 5) domestic problems 6) criminals 7) street kids
<p>England</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) most common immediate cause is relationship breakdown with partner, family or friends 2) loss of private rented property 3) repossession of property 4) leaving institutions 5) change in benefit systems 	<p>Russia</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) loss of dwelling during imprisonment or due to illegal activities 2) slow judicial system to return housing 3) legally unprotected citizens 4) absence of homeless preventive measures 5) absence of support for organizations working with homeless 6) no government structure to work with homeless 7) mental illness 8) disaster victim 9) family problems leading to expulsion from dwelling
<p>Spain</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) socio-economic factors: housing, unemployment, social protection policies, migration, economic loss 2) personal characteristics: physical disease, mental disease, injury, accidents, alcohol, loss or disruptive family relationships, separation such as army service, justice problems or crime, institutional boarding (orphans), and loss of social support. 	

(Source: Helvie and Kunstmann 1999:221-222)

persons. Although most evident in major metropolitan areas the problem is by no means restricted to these centers but is present in small urban communities as well (Callaghan 1999, Fitchen 1991, National Rural Health Association 1996).

Our large metropolitan centers also tend to attract people from the surrounding areas. For example, 47 percent of the shelter users in Toronto come from outside the city. In Calgary 73 percent come from outside the municipal boundary; while in Vancouver about one third to one half of the homeless population come from outside the city (*Mayor's Homelessness Action Plan Task Force* 1999). Wherever the origin of these homeless people, the fact remains that there are growing numbers of people relying on shelters across Canada. In Toronto there was a 75 percent increase in shelter admissions from 1988 to 1998 (City of Toronto 2000).

In addition to increases in the number of people who are homeless there are also an increasing number of people living in "high risk" situations. They lack security of tenure, or have extreme affordability problems, and face the possibility they will not be able to pay the next month's rent. Many households also live in housing where adequacy and suitability problems are severe. Any minor change in the circumstances of people in these situations could quickly see them slip from the "at risk" to the "on the street" category. There is also evidence to suggest that homelessness is moving away from an episodic/periodic situation to a continuing state of affairs for many people. Transition back into "mainstream" society is becoming more difficult for many.

2.4 A More Diverse Homeless Population

In addition to increasing numbers of homeless people, there are also changes in the demographics of homeless people. Homelessness is now affecting people of all ages, more than ever before, and includes a higher percentage of young people, women and children. The cities of Toronto, Edmonton, and Calgary have all seen youth homelessness increase (City of Calgary 2000, Edmonton Homelessness Count Committee 2000, City of Toronto 2000). In Toronto families are the group whose numbers have risen most sharply in recent years (*Mayor's Homelessness Action Plan Task Force* 1999). The Aboriginal population is over-represented in some cities as evidenced by the fact that one third of the street population in Calgary during the year 2000 were Aboriginal persons (City of Calgary 2000).

Homeless people now also include both the employed and unemployed (*Mayor's Homelessness Action Task Force* 1999). In Calgary some unskilled workers depend on hostels and shelters, as they are unable to access other types of affordable housing. It is still true, however, that people with mental illness tend to make up a large portion of the homeless. In Vancouver, for example, two shelters funded by the Greater Vancouver Mental Health Services Society reported that between 1993 and 1997, the number of people with mental illness who had been turned away from shelters had doubled." (British Columbia 2000:7)

2.5 *Conclusion and Implications for Governance*

The evidence demonstrates that the homeless population is on the rise in many Canadian cities and there is an increased level of need among a growing and increasingly diverse homeless population. This increased level of need has had significant effects on agencies that are struggling to provide services to this growing and diverse client base. Many agencies require increased capacity to deal with the problems associated with homelessness and the current shortfall in service provision has stretched resources to the breaking point in many organizations. One such organization stated they are trying to cope with a 50 percent increase in clients using the same resource base. In addition, instead of only focusing on “warehousing” the homeless, organizations are trying to address the systemic causes of homelessness. This requires a range of services beyond basic shelter.

The need to respond to this evolving set of circumstances has resulted in agencies having to reach deeper into the community for help. This has included the formation of more diverse linkages, strategic partnerships and alliances with other related agencies as well as depending to a greater extent on the services of volunteers. These new and expanding partnerships must also strive for greater efficiency in program delivery and administration.

The quality and nature of organizational governance is an important aspect of the ability of agencies to deal with the growing number of homeless people, the diverse nature of their characteristics and the range of services they require. This initial material sets the context for a detailed discussion on some of the many issues facing organizations dealing with homeless people and their ability to govern their affairs and deliver services in an ever changing and complex environment.

3.0 The Supporting Community Partnerships Initiative (SCPI): The Current Program Framework

The Supporting Community Partnerships Initiative (SCPI) was established in response to the growing number and increasingly diverse needs of the Canadian homeless population. The program was established in December 1999, with a mandate to invest \$753 million over a three-year period. The ultimate objective of the program is to help reduce and prevent homelessness across Canada (SCPI 2000:5).

Within this broader objective a sub-objective of the initiative is to promote community based responses to the issue of homelessness. Under this approach SCPI acts as an umbrella agency that helps to create the necessary foundation to deal with the problems associated with homelessness. SCPI's success (and we heard on many occasions that it has been a success) is essentially based on its role as the incubator for both ideas and possible solutions. Furthermore, SCPI is intended to act as the bridge between the various agencies involved in program delivery. In this capacity SCPI connects various agencies, allowing them to work in collaboration with one another in the hope of forging more successful alliances and partnerships to deal with homelessness.

To support the broader mandate described above, many of SCPI's short and long-term objectives relate directly to the development and strengthening of community-based organizations. For example:

- to strengthen the capacity of communities to serve homeless people and reduce homelessness by bringing community service providers together to develop plans that address all the needs that are common to homeless people;
- ! to address the issue of homelessness at a community level by promoting the development of collaborative processes and broad-based partnerships among all stakeholders - i.e. the private, non-profit and voluntary sectors, labour organizations and all levels of government;
- ! to develop a base of knowledge, expertise and data about homelessness and share it among all concerned parties and the general public (SCPI 2000:6); and,
- ! to promote a "continuum of supports" approach to reducing homelessness.

From the above noted objectives, it is clear that the role of SCPI is to act as a bridge between the various players involved in the provision of services to the homeless population working to build the partnerships necessary to deliver the programs to meet the complex needs of homeless people.

One other key aspect of the SCPI requirements that affects community-based organizations is that local jurisdictions must develop a *Community Plan* to address homelessness. The plan then acts as the springboard for obtaining funding under the SCPI

program. The plan must be developed with input from a number of agencies and community groups to ensure that there is a broad representation from all those with a vested interest. In addition, the plan must address two fundamental points:

- ! the needs of the key groups at risk in the community; and,
- ! links with other community initiatives, both existing and emerging (SCPI 2000:10-11).

This plan is designed to ensure that the delivery of services is administered in an organized fashion and that it reflects community goals and needs. The success of any program or policy is rooted in its ability to deal with key issues in a timely manner while also delivering the intended results. Therefore the success of SCPI is dependent on organizations having in place well-governed operations and a developed Community Plan to address homelessness.

Ultimately, the driving force behind SCPI is the ability to forge strategic linkages between the primary organizations that are committed to assisting in the elimination of homelessness. With respect to governance structures, it is apparent that SCPI seeks to provide the necessary conditions to promote new partnerships and alliances between interested agencies. This may contribute to more effectively administered delivery of services within the community. SCPI has given communities more control. Federal officials, however, have readily acknowledged that they underestimated the time necessary to get organizations together, to develop community plans and to build the partnerships necessary to address the needs of the homeless population. Often these problems are related to lack of capacity within community based organizations. Capacity building, it has been suggested, is a 10-15 year process, particularly if one wants to involve homeless people themselves.

In the final analysis, good governance, sound organizational structures and effective partnerships are the essential criteria for not just accessing the funding available under SCPI, but also in delivering successful programs to the homeless. Therefore, understanding the inherent best practices of relevant organizations may provide the necessary 'informational tools' needed for SCPI to become more efficient and successful over the longer term.

4.0 The Concept of Governance

4.1 Definitions of Governance

A review of the literature on governance illustrates that it is a concept of significant complexity because of its multiple meanings and applications. Plato is credited as the first person to use the term in the written literature. He referred to governance as “steering the ship of state” implying leadership, vision and direction. Hirst (2000) notes that the term is relatively imprecise, in fact, he concludes that “it has multiple meanings and there is a good deal of ambiguity between its different usages.” (p. 13) Hirst further asserts that the ‘meanings’ of governance tend to cluster around what he calls a “search for effective regulation and accountability.” (p. 13) He offers five distinct examples to illustrate the diversity of meanings and applications of the term:

- in the field of economic development governance is related to “creating an effective political framework conducive to private economic action;”
- within the field of international institutions and regimes (on the global and state levels) governance refers to the regulation of world trade or global environmental issues;
- within the corporate structure, “governance is the watchword of those who wish to improve the accountability and transparency of the actions of management;”
- in the growth of new public management strategies, especially since the early 1980s, governance has been used in two distinct manners. First in the privatization of public entities and how these entities are regulated and comply with public interests, and second, the introduction of “commercial practices and management styles within the public sector and devolving services to agencies that are self-managing within overall policy guidelines and service targets;” and.
- in the relatively new practice of coordinating activities through networks, partnerships, and deliberative forums, governance becomes more associated with the idea of ‘social governance’ at the neighbourhood level in cities (p. 14-19).

Chaskin and Sunil (1997) suggest governance represents the mechanisms that promote both accountability and responsibility for actions undertaken. They further note that governance is essentially the process by which an entity can function independently, and at the neighbourhood level good governance can be an effective mechanism for supporting and maintaining local community-based initiatives by empowering agencies with increased control and self-determination. The essence of governance, from their perspective, is to direct organizational control into the hands of community-based structures to ensure greater efficiency (p. 25-29).

During the review of the literature a number of further definitions emerged and are summarized as follows:

- “Governance is the policies developed by the board that gives overall direction to the agency.” (United Way of Canada 2001)
- “Governance can be conceived as the point at which the external and internal environments meet. A good board of directors has its finger on the pulse of both environments; externally it assesses whether or not organizational initiatives are supportable, whether they meet development goals nationally and/or regionally; while internally it assesses whether the organization is responding appropriately to important forces and trends in the field of endeavor and within the wider environment, and whether it is meeting the needs of those it serves.” (IRDC 2001)
- “The governance function of a nonprofit is responsible to provide overall strategic direction, guidance and controls. Often the term ‘governance’ refers to board matters. However, many people are coming to consider governance as a function carried out by the board and top management. Effective governance depends to a great extent on the working relationship between board and top management.” (McNamara 2001A)
- Durest-Lahti (1995) noted that there are relationships that need to be developed in order to foster strong ties between the vested parties and they write “we can find governance relations rooted in positions such as those between a committee chair and committee members, among members of a legislative body or various administrative agency officials.” (Durest-Lahti 1995:12)

Rose (1997) notes that governance structures consist of two prevailing perspectives that he defines as ‘normative’ and ‘descriptive’. Under the normative interpretation governance structures tend to be either ‘good’ or ‘bad’. For the most part, they are ‘good’ when they minimize the role of the state and encourage the involvement of non-state mechanisms in delivery of services, changing the role of politicians to one of steering rather than rowing (p. 6). Under the descriptive interpretation governance structures are really the outcome of interactions and interdependencies. These relationships become the guiding principle for specific entities to enact self-control mechanisms. He concludes “the concept of governance thus seeks to direct attention to the self-organizing networks that arise out of the interactions between a variety of organizations and associations drawn from both public and private sectors.” (p. 6-7)

Despite the many and complex definitions, there are a number of key themes arising from these definitions that characterize the concept of governance: accountability; transparency; responsibility for actions undertaken; empowering; self-management; provision of overall direction; ability to interpret both the external and internal environments; establishing strategic direction; efficiency; effectiveness; working

relationships between management and staff; and, self-sufficiency. Another common theme that is more an aspect of structure than definition is the involvement of a board of directors and also the creation of linkages and key relationships. Within this context, the board of directors serves as “a group of people legally charged with the responsibility to govern an organization” (McNamara 2001B) and the partnerships (formal and informal) between public, private and not-for-profit organizations represent the linkages and key relationships that are necessary for organizations to work most effectively.

4.2 *The Essential Characteristics of Governance*

Moving from definition to practice it is obvious that effective governance cannot be legislated; it is a matter of capacity building and effective local involvement. Broadbent (1999) has developed a Practice Guide for Effective Stewardship consisting of eight fundamental tasks organizations must address if they are to achieve effective governance. These tasks have been summarized as follows:

- The mission of the organization must be established and communicated with members and stakeholders, since this will identify direction and the elements of success (objectives) the organization hopes to achieve. This assists in determining a plan to achieve this success. Goals and desired outcomes need to be set;
- Organizations need to be transparent and make information available on request. Policies for communication and feedback must be established. Board meetings should be held regularly and the minutes taken;
- Development of appropriate structures and processes, including the development of an audit committee and proper succession to the board through a nominating committee is essential to effective operation;
- The board must understand its role and be capable of providing an objective overview of the organization. It must define and communicate its philosophy of governance and develop a code of conduct for its board members. A written “conflict of interest policy” governing people with independent decision making authority must be enforced. Job descriptions, along with orientation and information sessions, should be provided. Feedback should also be supplied on the board’s performance, which will help in using the board’s time efficiently;
- Budget development and approval must be based on realistic assumptions. There must be effective monitoring and the control of expenditures. The organization’s assets and liabilities must be effectively managed and, in the case of a charity, administration must be provided for the record keeping of charitable donations. Financial statements and annual reports must also be developed, approved and circulated to the appropriate stakeholders;

- The board must oversee human resources. It must be ensured that the organization complies with employment legislation and safety regulations. Job descriptions, orientation, and training should be provided and staff recruited fairly. Staff structure should be reviewed periodically. If volunteers are an essential component of the organization, a clear set of policies for recruitment should be established including the screening of volunteers. Tasks, for both staff and volunteers, should be clearly stated along with a code of ethics. Orientation, training, and evaluation should be provided and regulations established regarding expense claims. The contributions of volunteers must be recognized, and direction provided on the integration of volunteers into the organization;
- Assessment and control systems must be constructed to assure that the organization will achieve its mission and objectives. A compliance audit should take place as part of the annual evaluation cycle, as well as an evaluation of the board's performance; and,
- Establishing effective partnerships and linkages are essential. It is important to determine whether the representation of constituencies and users on the board represents the mix most likely to achieve the organization's mission and provide it with credibility (Broadbent 1999:26).

Table 4.1 provides a summary overview of the key recommendations noted by Broadbent as being a 'best practice' guide. The table helps to illustrate many of the essential characteristics that are necessary within an organization and the manner in which they should strive to govern themselves.

Broadbent (1999:28) also suggests that accreditation is useful in promoting good governance practices. It is "a process by which a national or other overarching body establishes standards; evaluates member organizations or individuals to determine whether the standards are being met." This reassures the funders of the organization and the public that minimum standards have been satisfied. Accreditation as a process, however, "is likely to remain of limited applicability." (p. 29) This is because accreditation is expensive and this creates financial difficulties for small organizations. It also "requires the presence of a national or intermediary organization that can set standards, offer accreditation, monitor compliance, and impose real sanctions for non-compliance." (p. 29) For this reason, self-accreditation is often seen as more feasible as organizations report on their own practices and assess whether or not they have met a list of standards.

Table 4.1: Practice Guide for Effective Stewardship

Task	Description
Establish and communicate the mission of the organization:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - identify elements to success and how to get there - approve assessment process and management - set goals and desired outcomes
Request for information and transparency:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - establish communication and feedback policies and a code of ethics - hold regular board meetings
Develop appropriate structures:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - proper succession to the board through nominating committee - development of an audit committee
The board must understand its role:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - must decide upon its philosophy of governance - develop a code of conduct for board members and a written conflict of interest policy - job descriptions, orientation, information sessions, and feedback should be supplied
Approve the budget based on realistic assumptions:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - monitor and control expenditure - oversee organization's assets and liabilities - in the case of a charity, oversee record-keeping of charitable donation receipts - approve fiscal statements and annual reports
Oversee human resources:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - organizations must comply with employment legislation and safety regulations - provide job descriptions, orientation, training and recruit staff fairly - review the staff structure - volunteers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - set recruitment and screening policies - establish a code of ethics - provide orientation, training, and evaluation - recognize the contributions of volunteers
Develop assessment and control systems:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the board should establish a framework for internal regulations and a code of ethical conduct - compliance audit and evaluation of the board's performance
Develop a plan for succession and delivery:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - discuss if the representation of users on the board is relative to the organization's mission and credibility

(Source: Broadbent 1999)

4.3 Governance Structures and Models

The concept of governance is complex, and involves many linkages that are forged in the pursuit of establishing and maintaining organizations that are increasingly forced to adapt to a myriad of issues, changes and challenges. The ideal structural form of governance is equally fluid. The following section attempts to better address the complexity that characterizes governance through the exploration of specific models.

The literature related to governance models is diverse in breadth and application. The following material is based on the principle of 'board governance' and is reviewed through five governance models as discussed by Garber and Associates (2001) who contend that "each approach emphasizes different dimensions of the roles and responsibilities of the board and each arises out of a different relationship between board members and staff members. These in turn reflect differences in the size, purpose, and history of the organization." (Garber and Associates 2001) Garber's descriptions of each governance model are summarized as follows:

Advisory Board Model

- This model is based on the board providing a supporting role in the management of the organization. For the most part, the board is considered a helper/advisor to the CEO and therefore has little influence in the operations. In this situation the board is developed to promote and enhance the organization's credibility. This type of model does not provide a high level of accountability. According to Garber, the board meetings are informal and based more on fund raising and promotion.

Patron Model

- This model is similar to the Advisory Board Model in that the board has little influence over the operations of the organization. For the most part, the board is comprised of individuals who have the ability to generate considerable influence. Garber notes that they tend to be wealthy persons who are committed to the mission of the organization. The board also serves primarily as a fund raising creature that draws on the strength of its members' ability to raise money. However, since this model of governance lacks power within the organization, most Patron Boards are supplemented by a second board that has some influence and power with respect to the organization's operations and functions.

Cooperative Model

- This structure operates more on a collective basis or within a peer management structure. The key feature of this model is that responsibility is shared and most often there is no CEO. Under this structure, decision-making is by consensus, ensuring that all members have equal control and authority. Garber notes that this model is considered one of the most democratic but is equally difficult to operate because all members must share the same principles and direction to be effective. He also notes two key problems with this governance model. The first, that of the ability to find common ground or consensus on most issues among the members of the board, is often a long difficult task. The second key concern is the implementation of accountability measures. He notes this as a potential problem because given the desire for collective decision-making, it is difficult to attach accountability to a single person or action. Therefore, these two key issues need to be addressed to ensure that the operation of the board meets the needs of the organization.

Management Team Model

- This governance model has been used by numerous non-profits for many years and is extensively cited in the literature spanning the last two decades. A key aspect of this model is that in most cases, the board structure closely resembles the organization's structure and is therefore neatly integrated. In this model, the board members are not paid but act as an essential administrative layer. According to Garber, "individually or in committees, board members take on all governance, management and operational tasks including strategic planning, bookkeeping, fund-raising, newsletter, and program planning implementation." (Garber and Associates 2001) The Management Team Model is also about reflecting teamwork environments and democratic structures within the workplace. Furthermore, according to Garber, it provides a good fit for nonprofits. Key highlights of the model are its integration within the administration of the organization. This has resulted in the creation of many committees and subcommittees to deal with decision-making. The key criticism of the model is the fact that it appears to promote 'micro-management' by the board. In this scenario, "board members refuse to delegate authority, believing that their role requires them to make all operational decisions, leaving only implementation to paid staff." (Garber and Associates 2001)

Policy Board Model

- This model is attributed to John Carver. Carver's model is based on the following assumptions; that a board's primary role should be the establishment of guiding principles and policies, to interpret the external environment and establish strategic policy and direction to respond appropriately, to regulate authority and responsibility, to ensure accountability exists for all staff and board members, and to ensure that all guidelines and principles that they enact are adhered to by all members of the organization. The model works with fewer standing committees and thus the Board tends to meet more frequently. This model is a reaction to the fact that many organizations failed to maintain proper accountability and also to ensure that the board and the managers' roles were distinct and clearly noted (Garber and Associates, 2001).

In the five noted models summarized by Garber, assessing their potential application is difficult and becomes dependent on the organization's structure and focus. As these models are based on a board governance structure, it is also important to delimit the role that the board will ultimately play in the organization.

A more complete understanding of the role of the board in the structure of organizations and practices that lead to effective governance can be achieved by drawing material from *Effective Governance of Nonprofit Organizations* (Paton et al. 2000). The document suggests board members have four main roles:

- *Charitable trusteeship*. This role is based on ensuring that the organization's assets reach their intended use and agents act in the beneficiaries' interests;

- *Stakeholder representation.* This role is based on making certain there is responsiveness and legitimacy by giving fair representation to all contributors to the organization. This political perspective includes the concept of democratic accountability for semi-private institutions and cross-sectoral partnerships;
- *Supporting the “doers.”* This role is based on “assisting the organization’s leadership by taking on largely ceremonial board roles, by lending one’s name, interceding on the agency’s behalf, helping with fundraising, and advising or providing organizational resources in kind” (p. 6); and,
- *Directing the business.* This role is based on formulating and watching over strategy with the executive, and working to ensure the management process is producing results.

These basic roles have been translated into specific models as illustrated in Table 4.2 . This table provides additional characteristics of these particular approaches to governance structures.

Table 4.2: Four Implicit Models of Governance

	Board’s primary task	Contribution of members	Board-staff relations	Key issues
Trusteeship model	Stewardship of resources	Policymaking, and ensuring the integrity of procedures and controls	Board decides, staff administers	Ensuring efficient administration of executive programs
Political model	Stakeholder representation	Credibility with a constituency, flexibility, political realism	Board controls executive (one interest group among others)	Coalition management-creative synergy or mutual vetoes?
Supporters club	Opening doors and wallets	Social, business, and professional contacts	Trusting, shared interests	Maintaining a very clear focus for all activity
Business model	Strategic direction	Board-level experience and relevant expertise	Partnership with the executive, though one with inherent tensions	Performance management; hiring and firing the chief executive

(Source: Paton 2000:7)

The document also provides guidelines for board members and directors that are designed to improve governance and thus the effectiveness of organizations. These guidelines, organized under particular theme areas are outlined below.

Board Self-Assessment:

The board will find it beneficial:

- to have documentation regarding such issues as “its mandate, structure, method of member selection and duration of tenure, and chair’s responsibilities;”
- to be divided into committees with each having clear responsibility for different components of trusteeship and oversight;
- if sufficient material is obtained in advance of the meeting to make meetings more productive;
- if there is a way of guaranteeing follow-up on decisions and “suggestions made during board meetings;”
- if it can carry out regular self-assessments; and,
- if directors attend both the board and committee meetings.

Providing Strategic Leadership:

All Board members should:

- understand the mission and activities of the organization;
- review the organization’s mission and role regularly to ensure its fit with the organization’s capabilities;
- ensure the mission and role of the organization continually reflects the activities of the organization without being distracted; and,
- assess the organization’s performance against that of other organizations that provide similar contributions and services.

Management Oversight:

The board should:

- have specific objectives to assess the performance of the organization’s directors, CEO and senior management;
- have measures in place to guide “the quality and standard of services provided and the degree of success of the organization;”

- be provided with sufficient information to assess the organization's performance;
- regularly assess the organizational structure;
- give consideration to introducing new information technology (IT) that may allow for better execution of the organization's mission and service delivery; and,
- give staff members the opportunity to meet with the board members regularly.

Providing Support to the Organization with its External Constituencies and Stakeholders:

The board should:

- “have a good sense of who the organization's key external constituents and stakeholders;”
- ensure that outside constituents have the organization's mission, work agenda, and success communicated to them; and,
- also make “good use of its members' personal contacts and experience to support externally the organization's mission and objectives, whether by promoting the group among personal networks or by ‘opening doors’ to funding opportunities.”

Fulfilling the Role of Charitable and Financial Trustees:

- the structure of the board should “represent the interests of the organization's key stakeholders.”

Although there is some repetition in the above material from Paton (2000) with material previously presented in this section, this material does serve to expand the previous discussion and add to the understanding of governance issues.

Paton (2000) points out that the present is a very challenging time for community based, non-profit organizations. These challenges often result in board turbulence, making good governance more difficult. This turbulence tends to originate from a variety of sources, including:

- intense competition for resources in an era of increasing need and demand;

- “scrutiny by guardians of the common good, both statutory and self-appointed, is becoming closer and more intrusive. Media challenges are commonplace and the public is more questioning;” (p. 3)
- organizations, because of scarce resources, have had to become social venture capitalists;” and,
- larger and more complex and diverse public-private-voluntary collaborations and sponsorship arrangements are necessary to access a variety of funding sources and address diverse need.

Sound organizational structure remains the cornerstone of efficient governance. In relation to providing services to persons who have become homeless, achieving sound organizational structure remains both a difficult and complex task. As noted, the provision of services to the homeless has traditionally been delivered by a combination of private, public, and not-for-profit organizations. With the increasing diversity and numbers of homeless people and the need for a growing range of services that have to be provided in an era of fiscal restraint these linkages and partnerships take on added importance.

4.4 Summary Comments

As a final note to this section, Cloke et al. (2000) conclude that partnerships and relationships within various agencies, in the delivery of homelessness programs, are not without problems and difficulties. At times, the issues of power and control become mitigating problems that require careful attention. There is often evidence to suggest that some partners are unwilling to relinquish control or resources in order to fulfill the aspirations of other partners. It is evident that, with many players at the table, there will be a continuous need to open the lines of communication in order to facilitate smooth operations. It is also likely that there will be problems associated with control and organizational authority if there are numerous agencies that cannot work together. Garber’s discussion of the five governance models echoed this sentiment in noting that most board governance models have inherent faults. But by recognizing the strengths and weaknesses of each model, organizations will be able to draw from the best practices available.

In the end, the ability to structure the organization in a manner in which there is both autonomy and accountability is essential. These two points must be further strengthened by a clear and concise organizational structure, one that establishes the mission of the organization, explicitly states where the control and authorities lie and who is ultimately accountable for the actions of the agency, be they successes or failures. Certainly, the aforementioned models provide a starting point for understanding the fundamentals of implementing a governance model and perhaps identifying some best practice scenarios for organizations involved with the homeless.

5.0 Selection Criteria for Case Studies

Based on the literature review of governance models and homelessness, a detailed list of selection criteria was established to guide the research into the next phase. It was decided that the intended case studies to be selected for the homeless governance survey should illustrate the following characteristics. On a macro level, one or more case studies should fall into the following four categories:

Rural/Urban Cross-Section.

- There should be representation from at least one rural jurisdiction. Possibilities were identified in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Saskatchewan.

Regional Representation.

- There should be adequate coverage from all regions of Canada including British Columbia, Alberta, the Prairies, Ontario, Québec, and the Atlantic Region.

Client Service Diversity

- The selection had to include agencies that offer services to a diverse client base that includes single persons, families and youth. It was also important to include agencies providing services for Aboriginals as they represent a significant proportion of homeless people.
- There was also an attempt to include projects that were single purpose (perhaps offering only shelter) and projects that are multi-purpose and offer a diverse range of programs. The primary focus, however, was on multi-purpose projects.

Partnerships

- Representation from single and multi purpose partnerships should be evident as well as those agencies that exhibit formal and informal partnerships.
- It was important to draw on case studies incorporating both volunteer personnel and paid professionals.
- The types of partnerships should also be addressed with a mix of NGOs, other community organizations, the private sector and government.

In addition to the above noted ‘macro level’ categories, a subsequent set of ‘micro level’ criteria was also used to identify the case studies:

- **Accountability** - agencies needed to exhibit a high degree (or perhaps varying degrees) of accountability, an important characteristic of governance.
- **Monitoring and Evaluation** - including agencies that incorporate monitoring and evaluation was important as determining the degree of monitoring and evaluation and how it is used to influence future operations is an important part of governance.
- **Self-sufficiency** - agencies should represent varying levels of self-sufficiency as an important characteristic of governance is the ability to operate in a 'self-rule' environment. This is particularly important given the need for community based organizations to take on more responsibility in program design, delivery and management under current government programs.
- **Liability Issues** - an increasing concern and important issue for organizations. It was important to include one or more agencies that have dealt with this issue.
- **Autonomy** - agencies representing varying levels of internal control within an established board structure should be represented. Given the demands and responsibilities required of current program structures, agencies have to illustrate considerable autonomy to operate within broad and flexible program guidelines.
- **Mission Statement** - agencies should have a mission statement providing a general indication of their role and objectives.
- **Different Types of Governance Board Structures** – if possible agencies should include examples of different types of governance or board structures.
- **Strategic Partnerships and Support Networks** - agencies should illustrate multiple sources of funding, various types of social support services, development, and property management expertise.
- **Strategic Planning** - in addition to strategic partnerships some or all of the agencies selected should illustrate that they have the ability to develop strategic plans that take into consideration the characteristics and needs of their client base, the broader needs of the community, the various roles, responsibilities and areas of expertise of the partners in their organization and the limitations established by potential sources of funds.
- **Transparency** - agencies should illustrate that they are open and accessible to the public in their operations providing public dissemination of information about themselves and their business and operational affairs.
- **Ability to Adapt to Change** - program characteristics, levels of funding, changes in the number and characteristics of homeless people and the roles and responsibilities of community based organizations have changed significantly

over the past decade. It would appear that the best examples of governance will be found amongst those organizations that have been able to adapt to these changes and survive in a new environment. Case studies therefore tried to include organizations that have been able to “weather the storm of change.”

These characteristics not only provide important criteria for selection, they also provide criteria that can be used to measure and assess performance of the targeted agencies. As it was important in this review and analysis to highlight examples of good governance these characteristics provide a sound framework for the selection criteria. However, it is equally important to obtain information on the mistakes these organizations have made and the lessons they have learned from these mistakes. Often as much can be learned from what has gone wrong as from the successes.

6.0 Survey and Case Study Methodology

Case studies for the present research were selected from all regions of Canada including British Columbia, The Prairies, Ontario, Québec and the Atlantic Region. The selection of agencies was based on the criteria outlined in Section 5.0 and represents a cross-section of the organizations across the country. The survey instrument employed was undertaken in three stages, each designed to solicit specific information on the program delivery and structure of the organization. The emphasis in each stage is to develop a sound understanding of how the various agencies govern operations and effectively deliver programs.

6.1 *The Process*

The survey methodology for the data collection phase was designed not only to obtain detailed information but also to be sensitive to the organizations' valuable time and possible staff constraints. This was accomplished by deriving information from a number of sources and using the three-staged process in order to collect as much information as possible prior to the in-person interview. The three stages comprising the survey methodology were:

- The pre-survey information collection
- The self-administered questionnaire
- The detailed, in-person interview.

Each stage is discussed in detail in the following section. The three survey instruments to be used are included in Appendix A.

6.1.1 *Stage 1: Pre-Survey Information Collection*

The first step in the data collection process was the pre-survey assembling of pertinent information. This stage consisted of the collection of data accessible from public information sources including other studies, Annual Reports, Program Pamphlets, Directory Information, and from On-line sources such as web pages. The accuracy and current applicability of the information was confirmed during stages two and three. The use of the pre-survey reduced the length of both stages two and three while not compromising the quality of the data being collected. This step streamlined the data collection process by effectively collecting as much data as possible prior to the more detailed stages two and three activities.

6.1.2 *Stage 2: The Self-Administered Questionnaire*

Stage 2 involved the distribution of a self-administered survey that collected basic data about the organization that was not readily available from any other source. Prior to the distribution of this survey, contact persons from each agency were established. At least

two key contacts were arranged for each agency; generally a key staff member (the Executive Director) and a board member. Again this survey consisted of a short questionnaire that contained both open ended and closed questions. This stage collected basic, but essential, information. The rationale for the inclusion of this stage was to collect information that would otherwise make the in-person interview unnecessarily long.

6.1.3 Stage 3: The Interview

Stage 3 represented the in-person interview used to collect more complex subjective data. The interview was designed to probe key issues from both the staff and board components of the agency and also to delve into more detail on critical governance issues. This stage was the most complex of the survey methodology and given the nature of the questions, more senior staff or board members were interviewed. In all cases the Executive Director or board member(s) were interviewed.

6.2 Data Synthesis

Following the successful collection of data from the three stages, data was synthesized to produce a detailed profile of each agency (Appendix B). A template based on the characteristics of governance (identified in Section 4.0) was used to ensure that information on key areas was drawn from the material on each organization. This permitted identification of similarities, differences, areas of strength, weaknesses and aspects of best practice.

Overall, the collection of case study material and the survey approach proceeded from the specific and more quantifiable to the more complex and qualitative material. The following section provides the synthesis of the results.

7.0 Governance in Local Partnerships to Address Homelessness: Synthesis of the Case Studies

The intent of this section of the report is to identify themes from the case studies, situate the findings in the context of the literature scan (See Section 2.0), and identify successful structures, tools and strategies for problem solving and decision-making. How organizations use partnerships and collaborative arrangements in their operations will also be discussed.

The methodology for selecting the case studies was as described in Section 5.0.

7.1 Overview

The organizations selected for the case studies include: single and multi-sectoral agencies; agencies located in metropolitan, medium sized urban and rural areas; small non-profit organizations with minimal staff and budgets through to those with over 200 employees and a wide array of clients and services; and, those with a relatively simple organization to ones with more complex governance and financing structures.

The agencies are

- Victoria Cool Aid Society, Victoria, BC
- Calgary Drop-In Centre, Calgary, Alberta
- Main Street Project, Winnipeg, Manitoba
- Homes First Society, Toronto, Ontario
- Auberge Communautaire du Sud-Ouest, Montréal, Québec
- Victory Over Violence (VOV), Interchurch Housing Society and Cape Breton Transition House Society in the Atlantic Region

All were originally established to respond to a focused need, which in many instances was perceived as temporary. The closure in Fall 2001 of Homes First's award winning StreetCity project, after ten years of operation, exemplifies this, as the City of Toronto initially provided the warehouse space on a temporary basis (never expecting the need to last more than a couple of years).

The oldest agencies, the Victoria Cool Aid Society (1968) and the Main Street Project (1972), started out focused respectively on providing short term emergency shelter ('youth hostel') to transient youth traveling the country and on patrolling Main Street for crisis situations involving individuals who were victims of alcohol abuse or violence. Over the intervening years, both agencies evolved from a single to a multiple focus as they responded to the growing need for shelter and services and the increasing complexity of the problems and needs.

Today, Cool Aid operates a diverse range of housing and social services to respond with care to the life needs of children, youth, men and women in adverse situations. This is done by creating and supporting a range of effective immediate to long-term services. The Society has established itself as the ‘bottom-line’ resource in the social safety net within BC’s Capital Regional District. Similarly, as the Main Street Project continued, more programs were added to the society’s original mandate of providing temporary shelter to individuals in crisis situations. Now the Project exists to work with those individuals in the City of Winnipeg who are in need and unable to function due to alcoholism or other chemical dependence or to being intoxicated, injured, abused, lost or homeless.

For these agencies, the challenge has been to build the capacity organizationally to provide the staff and board expertise, as well as to develop the facilities, programs and services needed. A component of the challenge rests in generating the financial support for a multi-sector operation and effective partnerships with other organizations. Agencies with less developed governance and fewer collaborative arrangements are at a disadvantage.

The Calgary Drop-In Centre was founded in 1977 “to create a friendly noninvasive safe and supportive environment as an alternative to the streets and bars, and to provide an atmosphere where personal growth can take place.” Providing emergency shelter, transitional services, clothing, job placement, counselling, medical services, and hygiene programs has required new locations to be added over the years to respond to the need for increased space and more services, but the mission has remained the same.

Established in 1983, Homes First focused on responding to the gap in funding for housing for homeless single people. Pursuing a mandate to build non-profit housing by organizing homeless people to identify and provide for their own housing needs, its approach was to build partnerships between the housing users, housing producers, and local communities. Over the years it has stayed focused on its commitment “to ensure affordable and permanent housing for people who are homeless and/or have the fewest options in society.” However, like many other agencies it now finds itself providing a range of housing (permanent, transitional and emergency shelter) and support services for low income households; focusing on addressing the needs of homeless people, or those who have fewest options.

The Auberge Communautaire du Sud-Ouest, which has been in existence since 1987, focuses on a particular client group, youth (18-29 years of age). It provides transitional housing, a permanent housing program (Les Habitations “La Suite”), and support for independent living (Programme “Envol”), as well as range of employment and support services. The agency is getting involved in a variety of activities in response to the changing needs of their clients, emphasizing the need for agencies to continually adapt and evolve.

Three different agencies studied in Nova Scotia portray the rural experience of homelessness agencies. They are smaller than their urban counterparts selected for this project and tend to have a more focused mandate and client group. Victory Over Violence (VOV) Emergency Teen Shelter was founded in 1997 to provide an overnight emergency service, together with youth outreach services and a mentoring program to serve youth (12 to 20 years of age) from all communities in Kings County and the Annapolis Valley. Cape Breton Transition House Society is located in Sydney and was founded in 1979 to serve women and their children from all over Cape Breton Island along with women from other parts of the province, women from nearby reserves, and women traveling through the Atlantic provinces, with a 24-hour, 7-day a week shelter and crisis counselling service. The Inter-Church Housing Society founded in 1971 originally served primarily as a support base for developing, funding, and providing non-profit housing. Home ownership has been the main goal for the Interchurch Housing Society. According to the province, “the society’s challenge is to make ownership affordable so low-income, low-wage workers can live in a more stable living arrangement that reduces their likelihood of future homelessness.”

7.2 Roles of Agencies

From several perspectives there is a wide diversity across the agencies studied. The range of client groups includes youth, singles, families, and women with a diverse set of needs. Seniors are not served as a specific client group by any of the agencies, a point worth noting as this demographic group has particular needs. Cool Aid noted “there are more older clients (+55) ‘crustier types’ who don’t fit into the long-term care structure.” Culturally the programs serve a generic group, but the Main Street Project in Winnipeg has a high (over 60%) proportion of Aboriginal clients and Cool Aid observed that Aboriginal people are over represented relative to their portion of the general population. The Interchurch Housing Society also serves Aboriginal clients. Refugees were noted among clients by Homes First and the Interchurch Housing Society. Agencies expressed concern over the increasing number of: females among the homeless population; individuals with chronic physical and mental health challenges; substance abusers; young adults (20 to 24 years); and, in some instances, youth ex-offenders using the services.

The following observation on the clients served by Homes First captures the descriptive essence of the hard core homeless,

“Many of the residents have long histories of living on the street or in the shelter system, struggling with issues related to chronic addiction and/or severe mental health illnesses and limited life skills. Some of them have been institutionalized or incarcerated in the past. They require on-site support services that facilitate independent or semi-independent living and residential stability.”

The case study organizations vary in size from mid-sized non-profit organizations with over 200 employees to small agencies with a handful of staff supported by volunteers.

They include agencies in metropolitan centres, intermediate sized cities, and small rural communities.

An issue common to all agencies has been the need to evolve and adapt to changing pressures of sheltering the homeless over the last several years. The number of people accessing programs has increased significantly (in some cases 50%), while the level of funding has remained the same or reduced in some situations. This has required an expanded set of housing responses and a more complex array of support services, all involving in turn a more complex organization. The result is that agencies with limited resources and/or limited governance capability find it difficult to move beyond maintenance to prevention, and find their focus is treating the symptoms of homelessness rather than the basic causes. The experience of two agencies in crisis intervention is summed up as follows.

“It has evolved and changed with the needs of its clients. This has included enduring the painful transition of an agency helping the homeless and those with chronic alcohol related illnesses to dealing with the harsh realities of increased substance abuse. The original goal of bringing people in one door and seeing them go out better persons has dissipated into simply trying to make do with an increasing under supply of supports and a continuing reliance on referrals to help people in the best way they can.” (Main Street Project)

“A lot of time is spent crisis fighting/fire fighting, with little prevention work being undertaken. ‘The challenge is how to deal with larger numbers of clients and improve efficiency while still trying to stay individual and client focused.’” (Victoria Cool Aid)

Others see their role as addressing the basic causes of homelessness by taking preventive measures - keeping people housed and providing them with life skills training.

In addition to coping with the significant increase in the problem of homelessness, agencies have been in a constant state of transition as a result of the unreliable nature of the funding and the introduction and/or cancellation of program initiatives. Planning even for the short term has posed challenges, required back-up strategies and ability to adapt to change. The new demands placed on organizations by new program vehicles have also required a significant change in the methods of operation. Larger organizations have greater capacity and ability to handle these challenges, but less so the smaller organizations, which might find their sustainability threatened since they are at a disadvantage in accessing funding, such as that available through SCPI. As one said, “We don’t know if we are going to be here in six months.”

Rapid growth organizationally over recent years has challenged many agencies. Not only have they to serve increasing numbers of clients with more diverse needs, they also have to make a greater contribution to strategic planning (for example, community based plans) and play a greater role in program delivery. The pressures imposed suggest a need

for considerable capacity building, and the need for program funding to acknowledge the need to assist with this capacity building. Without this, some organizations may not have the capacity to respond to the responsibilities placed upon them.

7.2.1 Programs

This section provides an overview of the programs provided by the case study agencies. It is not possible within the constraints of this paper to describe in detail the programs; more information is available in Appendix B containing the individual case study reports.

As mentioned above, the case study agencies range from those with a focused purpose to ones that are multi-sectoral in their ability to identify and meet clients' societal needs. This is reflected in the array of housing and related services provided (see Tables 7.1 and 7.2 below). The experience of Victoria Cool Aid Society is succinctly expressed as follows,

*“To the extent that health, mental health, work, and poverty are addressed, Cool Aid is more than shelter – it connects people to community resources (health, housing, employment, day care).”
Homelessness is “rooted” in the lack of housing. By trying to provide housing the society has “to deal with poverty, substance abuse, mental illness, lack of education. By addressing these problems through housing, after a couple of years clients don’t see themselves as homeless and they can deal with other issues.”*

Some agencies do have client databases and specific client information which is used for registration, tracking outcomes, number of counselling hours, hours of employment obtained, reports and outcomes measurement.

The case studies considered the question of which programs could be expanded or strengthened based on the needs of clients. Responses included a range of suggestions that included more housing programs and improved access to job skills/employment training programs (large numbers of clients have not completed secondary school and/or have no trade skills).

“The key program to expand would be moving more into transitional and long-term supportive housing. These are two areas that have the greatest need. Certainly, the expansion into more follow-up and outreach would also be ideal areas to move into. So if I were to strengthen the Main Street Project, I don’t want just more shelter, I want more ways to break down that dam. There is a dam in our river and it has backed up into this huge lake and we are drowning in the lake. We need to break the dam, and the only way to do that is to engage people in a bigger thinking process...we have run out of shelter space, we have run out of the ability to absorb the people coming in without breaking down the dam.” (Main Street Project)

Table 7.1: Housing Programs Offered by Case Study Projects

<i>Case Study Project</i>	<i>Crisis/Emergency Shelter</i>	<i>Transitional Housing</i>	<i>Shared Accommodation/Shared Facilities</i>	<i>Semi-Independent Housing</i>	<i>Permanent Housing</i>
Victory Over Violence (VOV)	✓				
Interchurch Housing Society		✓ <i>NP Cluster housing stock available as second stage housing for women and children, low-income special needs and youth</i>			✓ <i>Includes Hearth Housing, NP Cluster Housing and turn key homes for needy families, single parents, couples and widows</i>
Cape Breton Transition Housing Society	✓	✓ <i>Second stage housing</i>			
Auberge Communautaire du Sud-Ouest		✓		✓	✓
Homes First Society	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Main Street Project	✓	✓			
Calgary Drop-In Centre	✓	✓			
Victoria Cool Aid Society <i>(Provides continuum of supportive housing)</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Table 7.2: Support Programs/Services (Classification is in broad categories; it is not possible to detail all types of programs/services)

<i>Case Study Project</i>	<i>Counselling/Referral Services (Crisis counselling, detox, outreach)</i>	<i>Life Skills (Financial, nutrition, socio-economic skills, empowerment)</i>	<i>Employment Training (Job skills, job search)</i>	<i>Medical Services/Care</i>	<i>Community Development (Social/recreation, meal programs)</i>	<i>Court Support/Advocacy work (Defence of Rights, etc.)</i>	<i>Follow-up support & services/other</i>
Victory Over Violence (VOV)	✓		✓	✓**			
Interchurch Housing Society							✓ Small Loans Program
Cape Breton Transition Housing Society	✓				✓		✓
Auberge Communautaire du Sud-Ouest	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
Homes First Society	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Main Street Project	✓			Emergency medical needs through Detox	✓	✓	✓
Calgary Drop-In Centre	✓	✓	✓	✓**	✓	✓	
Victoria Cool Aid Society	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓ Day Care

**Through partnership arrangements

Agencies have to be able to manage and administer programs within funding constraints that can result in short-term notice on termination of funding or program funding with a sunset clause. These situations can leave agencies scrambling to keep programs operating, putting stress on already limited resources, exacerbating the level of need and challenging the governance structure of an organization. The programs that get dropped when there are cuts to be made as a result of funding are the follow-up programs, as noted by Main Street, “it is the only thing you can get away with – you can’t cut shelter, can’t cut basic food, can’t cut beds.” This is seen as a national problem and as agencies continue to face shortages, they have tended to lean towards cutting both follow-up and outreach, as a quick and short-term response to a lack of funding.

Where funding is available, another challenge facing many societies is the pressure to expand services and programs in response to the needs of clients. For some this means expanding or strengthening programs, such as food access programs, financial support programs namely budgeting and financial management, and eviction prevention in the case of the Auberge Communautaire du Sud-Ouest. The challenges that rapid growth of programs, and in turn the agency create, involve ensuring the original objectives are sustained and not jeopardized, and that the agency remains financially viable and other programs/service areas are not negatively impacted. For example, some agencies are considering programs that are more entrepreneurial in nature and therefore more influenced by market forces. In one instance, the Auberge Board is aware that as market production (training programs that produce goods and services) begins to provide a greater proportion of the funding, there is a danger that it drives the project rather than the development and training of the youth for whom the project was initiated. The Auberge is also grappling with a recent experience of Bon Ménage, a housecleaning employment project that established a separate structure from the Auberge once the project was stable. However, due to mismanagement and inexperience the project eventually folded. The ending of a project in which the Auberge had invested time and resources has led them to be very cautious in relinquishing control.

7.3 Boards

Boards of self-governing not-for-profit organizations have a key role in governance – boards have a stewardship responsibility to set the direction and provide oversight for the organization, and provide guidance and support to senior management. To support this role and ensure a board is effective, a number of factors are critical. These include: board membership; clarity of roles within the organization, orientation and training of board members; having adequate information for decision making; and accountability.

7.3.1 Board Membership

A commonly held view among the organizations reviewed is that a “board is only as good as its members.” Board members are “mentors, supporters, advisors, reality checks, and challengers.” It is essential that board members have appropriate skills, connections to the community, a commitment to the goals of the society, and a high level of

motivation and desire to be involved – “they don’t need people on the board simply because they want to be on a board.”

All of the organizations reviewed are governed by a board of directors, ranging in size from 9 to 20 volunteer members. The desire and need to be representative of their community, to acquire certain skill sets (e.g. legal, architectural, business, public service, social work, etc.), to extend their reach into the community, to cement partnership and collaborative arrangements and to accomplish the work of the board within its organizational structure are all factors in determining the size of the board. For the most part the larger and more complex the organization, the larger the size of the board. The main exception is the Cape Breton Transition House – a smaller organization with a large board.

Board members are usually elected at the society’s Annual General Meeting; by society members; although some members are appointed directly by organizations represented on the Board, e.g. in the case of the Interchurch Housing Society by Wolfville Interchurch Council, the organization which founded the society. Some boards use nominating committees to search out suitable candidates with particular skills and interests, others are more informal, depending more on word of mouth, recruitment by individual board members and/or the executive director (in fact the executive director often plays a key role). With respect to board recruitment, the experience of Cool Aid is worth noting:

“The Society has a Nominating Committee made up of board directors, a management representative and the Executive Director, that looks for ‘great credentials, necessary skills on the Board’. Through a survey of existing board and committee members the assets and gaps of the existing board are reviewed and particular experience that needs to be recruited is identified. Depending on the year, the process may involve word of mouth, board recommendation or formal advertising. The Nominating Committee accepts requests for consideration and provides recommendation to the Board. Nominations are an annual Board agenda item.”

Board efforts are supplemented by the Executive Director who is “always scanning for potential members through her community network.” This is also true of the Executive Director of the Calgary Drop-In Centre.

While it is important for boards to recruit members with the necessary knowledge, ability, and experience to meet their obligations, it is also important that board members understand and support the purposes and interests they represent and the objectives and strategies of the organization they govern. Part of the role of a board Nominating Committees, therefore, can be to look not only for necessary credentials and skills, but also at the “belief system” of a potential member and its “fit” with the organization. This can aid in reducing problems arising from conflicts of interest and inappropriate conduct.

Most board members are drawn from the local community, with two boards (Auberge and Homes First) including tenants/residents. On occasion, boards (e.g. Auberge) will

include a staff person (other than the Executive Director, who is usually ex-officio). As well, some Boards include representatives from affiliated/sponsor organizations (e.g. Main Street and Victory Over Violence).

Diversity of member skills and backgrounds brings an expanded potential for funding, blending and sharing of resources by bringing service providers together to facilitate collaborative and more comprehensive solutions. It is viewed as a strength by most organizations, e.g. Homes First, Main Street, Calgary Drop-In Centre, and Cool Aid:

“The wide range of professional skills and experiential knowledge among the Board members (i.e., in law, business and non-profit management, community development, human resources, and finance, as well as a close understanding of tenants’ concern and issues) is considered a valuable asset to HFS and a strength of the Board. A diversity of views and full spectrum of ideologies promotes the careful examination of a wide range of suggestions and rich debates.”

The inclusion of residents or former residents on their board is viewed as a strength by Auberge – “the presence of the residents and ex-residents is considered a great advantage and their input is considered one of the great strengths of the structure and operation.” Board involvement for residents and ex-residents provides them with opportunities to mix with people who are not marginalized, contributes to building self-esteem, provides an “insider” view of policies and procedures that other board members cannot provide. However, in the case of Homes First, retention of tenant-directors has been a problem.

“For various reasons, it has frequently been difficult to fill the four positions reserved for tenants on the Board. Since HFS employees are not eligible to serve on the Board, a few tenant-Directors have had to resign because they have taken up part-time jobs with HFS. This is a repeated problem as those tenants who are more likely to undertake Board responsibilities are also more likely to be job-ready. The difficulty of retaining tenant-Directors may be a weakness of the Board and perhaps not very viable.”

To address this problem, the Board is considering whether to develop a two-day in-house training course for future tenant-Directors.

It is felt that a Board’s ability to develop effective partnerships can be strengthened through ‘cross-fertilizing’ i.e. by including people from other agencies on its board or by its own board members serving on other agency boards. This view is based on the need to have people who have influence in different areas. On the other hand, the issue of having people on the Board who are employed in related areas of work (i.e. Board members who are working, for example, in seniors supportive housing) may sometimes find themselves in a conflict of interest situation.

The length of term for board members varies (from no set term to up to 3 years) with reappointment possible in most cases, some for a limited number of terms, others with no limit. Some boards (e.g. Cool Aid) use a gradual approach to board renewal by staggering their member's terms. This can help to ensure continuity and effectiveness in dealing with key initiatives. Many boards report stable membership, little turnover, and directors who have served for multiple terms. The longest terms of service appear to occur in the Atlantic organizations:

- “several of the board members have served since the beginning of the organization” (VOV);
- the organization is unique in the sense that several active board members have served the society consistently for 10 to 15 years and a few dedicated board members have even served the society since the early 1970s (IHS).

As a result of long terms of service, these boards are aging in place. They will be challenged with recruiting a new team to serve in the future.

The presence of board burnout or fatigue can sometimes be related to the length of time board members serve. The Calgary Drop-In Centre feels that limiting the length of time a board member serves can help to avoid the problem. On the other hand, in another organization where members have been on the Board for years (Auberge, for example) and remained very active, the diversity and “mental health” of the board help to prevent burnout and fatigue. Another instrumental factor is that board members “are uplifted by the work being done.” Strategies for combating burnout and fatigue include recognition at the AGM, certificates of appreciation, and changing committee assignments.

Generally board burnout and fatigue was not considered to be a significant issue in most organizations - if there is burnout or fatigue, it is generally accepted that it is more likely to occur at the staff level. The prime exception is the Main Street Project.

“This is a key issue due to the demands on the board and their high level of interaction with micro-management of operations. But this also has to do with the type of board that agencies have.”

On occasion, when Board burnout and fatigue have occurred in other organizations, it was suggested that it might have less to do with the Board itself and more with the individual's personal life, “people do resign and leave, sometimes because they are overextended.” (Cool Aid) It was also noted “Directors are extremely busy and are hard-pressed to commit the considerable amount of time required by the agency.” (Homes First)

It is important for board members to understand their role as directors. While most of the boards in the organizations reviewed do not have board member job descriptions, board members, at a minimum, are expected to fulfill certain statutory, legal, or fiduciary duties e.g. to act honestly and in good faith, to exercise due care and diligence, and to disclose

Table 7.3: Board Membership

Agency	Size	Members	Terms	Selection	Policies	Evaluation
Auberge	12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 7 associates (community members) • 3 residents/ex-residents • 1 salaried employee (excluding the ED) • ED (non voting) • +2 associate members (with specific expertise) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • no limit • generally stable membership with some serving 15 years 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Director and President of Board seek out new members with specific areas of expertise • focus on partnership relationships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • informal code of conduct • liability insurance policy • conflict of interest by-law 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No formal evaluation structure. • Informal self-evaluation.
Homes First	14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10 community volunteer members • 4 tenants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 years with no limit on number of consecutive terms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • recruited by a 3-person Nominating Committee • elected by HFS members at AGM 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • liability insurance policy • conflict of interest by-law • informal code of conduct 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No formal structure to evaluate Board (during annual retreats, Board conducts informal self-evaluation according to specific criteria and questions).
Main Street	18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 13 active volunteer community/funding members (1 from the Winnipeg Police Services) • 5 vacancies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 and 2 year terms • executive member has 3 year term 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • candidates nominated after Board has looked for expertise 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • conflict of interest by-law • Code of conduct 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No formal Board evaluation process other than AGM.
Calgary Drop-In	20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 12 volunteer community members • 8 vacancies 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • no Nominations Committee – use word of mouth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • no formal code of conduct • conflict of interest policy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No formal Board evaluation process other than AGM.

Agency	Size	Members	Terms	Selection	Policies	Evaluation
Cool Aid	19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 19 volunteer community members 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 year terms (half elected each year at AGM) No limit on the number of terms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nominations Committee 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> liability insurance policy conflict of interest by-law Code of conduct 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No formal Board evaluation process other than AGM.
VOV	9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> volunteer community representatives (e.g. police, businesses, retirees, churches) 1 HRDC Career Resource Centre legal advisor (ex officio) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No set terms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> recruitment by other board members/program coordinator appointment by consensus 		
HIS	10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> volunteer community representatives e.g. local clergy, retired business/govt. representatives 1 appointed by Interchurch Council staff coordinator (ex officio) legal advisor (ex officio) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> three year terms no set limit on number of terms 			
CBTH	19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> community representatives (police, professions, trades and services, community services/organizations, housing authority) 				

conflict of interest. Usually these requirements are set out in provincial statutes and/or in an organization's bylaws and policies. For example, most organizations have adopted conflict of interest policies and several have code of conduct policies. One board uses the Canadian Centre for Philanthropy code of ethics. Where there is no 'formal' policy, particularly with respect to code of conduct, boards often operate using "informal" policies where it is understood that board members will conduct themselves in an appropriate manner. As new members come onto a board it is important to ensure that they are familiar with the policies and from time to time, it is important for board members to be reminded of their responsibilities.

Orientation and training for board members can help not only ensure that all directors understand their responsibilities, but also the operation of the organization. As part of its Board meetings, Cool Aid schedules orientation sessions. The Cape Breton Transition House conducts internal "tune-up" workshops and sends board members to training sessions. The society also presents a "very thorough" orientation manual to new board members. The manual provides a brief descriptive history of the transition house and related agencies and covers: responsibilities and expectations of members, the committee structure, the role of the executive director in relation to the board, staff job responsibilities, the memorandum of association and the bylaws.

Board performance is key to effective governance and expectations have risen generally in all sectors. As a result, increasing attention is being paid to board evaluation (both overall and for individual members). Yet, while most of the organizations reviewed feel their board is effective, none appears to undertake formal self-assessment or evaluation. There is, however, "increasing interest in pursuing this." For example, one organization is currently reviewing the Ottawa Institute on Governance's assessment questionnaire for possible use as an evaluative tool. Client satisfaction surveys have also been suggested for use as a model for developing an internal scan survey. In the absence of formal evaluations, organizations cite key indicators of board performance that include: attendance and participation in board and committee meetings and special events; willingness to undertake training and additional terms; and continuing interest in/curiosity about the organization.

7.3.2 Governance Models

Organizational capacity is a key factor in determining the kind of governance model that a board uses. For the majority of the organizations reviewed, board governance style has evolved over time – moving from being an operational board with a direct and frequent hand in managing the society's affairs to being a policy/advisory board with responsibility for the society's day-to-day operations delegated to the Executive Director and other staff.

“Over the years, the Board has been able to change from a more operational role to one of setting direction through the strategic planning process and establishing the overall policies (after hearing from the operational side) that guide the Executive Director in how to run the

organization.” In earlier days, the Executive Director had to rely on the Board to be the administration. “ The extent to which the Board gets involved (in operational issues) is affected by the degree you have an administrative infrastructure and do not need to use the Board” and “given the length of time the Executive Director (‘highly seasoned’) has been with the organization.” (Cool Aid)

“The first organizational model of the Interchurch Housing Society was an active management-directed board which ran the organization until projects were underway. When sufficient funds were raised to support hiring the first administrator and a secretary bookkeeper, the board adopted a less hands-on approach as an advisory board.”

“The governance structure of the Cape Breton Transition House society has evolved since selection of the first board of directors. The hands-on board acting as a steering committee changed to a combination of advisory board and the more active members of the board's executive serve as a management team.”

The boards of two organizations (the Main Street Project and Victory Over Violence) continue to have a “hands-on” management style. In the case of VOV, the board operates very closely with the project manager as a management-consulting team. Main Street is in the process of transition. Its board wants to redefine its role and the whole board structure is currently under review. There is a desire to move away from the “hands on approach” or “micro- management” of operations (which takes too much time and depletes resources) by giving the Executive Director more autonomy and discretion to manage day-to-day operations effectively. At the same time, the Board wants to move into a new direction of strategic planning and co-ordination. The Board of the Calgary Drop-In Centre can be characterized as a Policy Model as it is not involved in day-to-day operation and confines its responsibilities to providing overall direction and policy development. However, the work of the Board to promote and enhance the organization and its role in establishing collaborative partnerships with the private sector to enhance funding possibilities also means it illustrates characteristics of the Advisory and Business Board Models (See Section 4.3).

It is important for a board to understand the difference between managing and governing – even when they are directly involved in operations. In general, amongst the various organizations, the board’s governance role and responsibilities include: setting the strategic direction for the organization; setting operational policy; ensuring adequate resources (including adopting the budget); oversight/monitoring of the society’s activities and performance; undertaking community outreach, public education, and advocacy; ensuring accountability obligations are discharged; and hiring and evaluating the Executive Director (and on occasion other staff). Most boards have responsibility for signing cheques over a certain limit, several undertake or assist with fundraising activity, and in some cases board members provide professional services at no cost to the organization. Fundraising is increasingly becoming an activity of board members. The

Board of the Calgary Drop-In Centre plays a very active role in fund raising, seeking out partnerships and promoting the organization, particularly with private sector organizations.

In organizations where the Board has a more “hands-on” management style, board members also frequently provide on-going basic support services to residents and clients – activities that may be covered routinely by employed staff in larger organizations. Thus, the idea of following custom as a volunteer board member attending regular meetings of the board and participating in committee work seems to be greatly expanded in these organizations. Board membership requires dedication and many extra hours beyond the norm of a voluntary service position.

While policy/advisory boards generally do not get involved in day-to-day operations, situations can arise from time to time that precipitate their board’s involvement in operational issues. Cool Aid’s board is “*called upon when exceptional things come up*”. Such “exceptional” circumstances recently arose within Homes First.

“Over the previous year, major organizational re-structuring required the attention of the Homes First board, notably in hiring an executive director. After a six-month period, the acting Executive Director was hired in an open competition. During this time, the board was ‘quite involved’ in dealing with financial issues and the hiring process. They have since withdrawn from addressing any operational issues.”

7.3.3 Board Structure

Most boards use committees, and board members on the whole participate in these committees, either or both in an oversight or working capacity. A notable exception is Auberge, where the expectation that each Board member participate in at least one committee has been eliminated as it was felt to be too time-consuming and demanding. Committees usually have specific terms of reference and where an organization is involved in strategic planning, the strategic plan may set out designated committee responsibilities and provide focus for committee work. Generally, the various committees “do most of the work and bring information to the Board and this is efficient in terms of time (no one can do everything) and it keeps all informed.” However, this also requires the Board to place a “lot of trust in the committee members’ expertise” – but the amount of time they commit to issues “increases the confidence levels of committee recommendations.” It also requires thorough reporting to the Board so that information does not get lost.

“...while the strength of the Board is in its diversity, this in turn leads to weaknesses in the Committees. In some instances issues and decisions could perhaps be better documented in reports from sub-committees to the Board. This concern relates to the fact that like many organizations with long serving members, ‘there are some people who have considerable knowledge about the organization that is not documented and how do you

Table 7.4: Board Structure/Operations

Agency	Type	Role	Officers/Committees	Meetings	Decision Making
Auberge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Policy board - day-to-day operations left to the Executive Director 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bylaws - “accomplish all the actions necessary to realize the objectives that the organization is pursuing...” Receive, discuss and decide on information furnished by the Executive Director Give direction to projects being developed, find solutions where needed Hires the Director, approves hiring of staff Takes all decisions on contracts and commitments over \$1,000 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Officers - president, vice-president, secretary and treasurer. Board members do not have to participate in a committee 	Monthly	
Homes First	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Policy board - day-to-day operations left to the Executive Director 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advises and determines strategies and broad policies Sets some policies, e.g., the anti-discrimination policy, and dealing with major staff issues and contentious issues Performs strong fundraising role Hires Executive Director 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Officers - 2 co-chairs, vice-president, secretary, and treasurer Board members sit on standing and ad hoc committees <u>Standing and Ad Hoc Committees</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tenant Support Finance/Planning Operational/ Financial Mgmt. IT Property Management Nominating Committee 	Monthly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consensus

Agency	Type	Role	Officers/Committees	Meetings	Decision Making
Main Street	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In transition from managing operations to becoming a policy board Day-to-day operations handled by ED (e.g. staffing, budget) under the guidance of Board policies and procedures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gives directions to projects being developed Advises and determines strategies and broad policy Hires Executive Director General policy direction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bd. Members participate in committees <u>Committees</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Program and Services Executive Personnel Finance 	Monthly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Majority vote although rare there is not consensus
Calgary Drop-In	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Policy/advisory board -day-to-day operations handled by ED 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sets policy direction Strong fundraising role 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Executive Personnel Finance Fundraising 	Monthly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consensus on most issues Majority vote on some
Cool Aid	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evolved over the years from an operational board to a policy board - day-to-day operations handled by ED 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advisory/oversight/monitoring Hires the Executive Director and is involved in hiring of managers with the Executive Director and one other manager Policy direction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Board Members sit on committees <u>Committees</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Executive (Chair, Vice Chair, Treasurer, Secretary, Past Chair) Finance Human Resources Planning Housing Communications 	Monthly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Majority vote - though it is rare there is not consensus

Agency	Type	Role	Officers/Committees	Meetings	Decision Making
VOV	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management board with a “hands-on” management style. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviews/ supports program direction • Provides oversight of shelter services and facility • Direct responsibility for assisting staff in community fund-raising events, soliciting donations and in applying for core funding from government/community sources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Special committee for the upcoming Ski Martock fund-raising event • Committee-of-the-whole to provide assistance in finding a new location for the shelter 	Monthly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consensus for general problems • Bylaws specify majority vote for important financial decisions (e.g. major changes to the organizational structure, services, programming and staffing)
HIS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evolved from an active management-directed board, once staff were hired to an advisory board • Current board president helps with many administrative tasks and “clearly steers” the organization's day-to-day operations as well as its overall direction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current main focus is to encourage housing development by other organizations in addition to their own programs. • Most of the operating procedures for this organization are developed by the staff coordinator in consultation with the board. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Officers - president, vice president, secretary and treasurer • Committee of the whole • Special Committees (e.g. Board recruitment/ nomination and planning/development of Abbeyfield) 	Generally Monthly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Majority vote

Agency	Type	Role	Officers/Committees	Meetings	Decision Making
CBTH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evolved from a hands-on board acting as a steering committee to a combination of advisory and management board • More active members of the board's executive serve as a management team. • Several board members also provide free professional services to the organization. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides a secure and supportive shelter environment for women and their children who have been victims of family violence. • Supports the work of the association's professional staff and volunteers • Supports the associations dedicated outreach and public education services to schools and the community. • Participates in advocacy work on behalf of abused women and children. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Officers -_president, vice-president, secretary and treasurer (elected for one-year terms) • <u>8 working and oversight standing committees</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Child Care ◦ Education And Outreach ◦ House And Safety ◦ Second Stage Housing ◦ Finance ◦ Labour-Management ◦ Personnel And Negotiation ◦ Staff And Resident Development. 	Monthly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All-important financial decisions must be subject to majority vote plus one.

replace the knowledge someone has? This is an issue a number of non-profit societies face.” (Cool Aid)

Most organizations have a number of standing committees related to overall management and program areas, e.g. executive, finance, human resources, planning, housing, and communications. The Executive Committee is usually made up of the Society’s officers (the Chair, Vice-Chair, Treasurer and Secretary and Past Chair) and whose roles are often set out in the bylaws of the organization. Otherwise, the membership of other committees tends to be determined by board “members volunteering where they have an interest or expertise”/ “members are encouraged to help in areas they feel comfortable with.” On occasion committee membership is supplemented by staff and other community representatives when additional skills are required. In addition to standing committees, a number of Boards use ad hoc, special committees, and task forces to deal with specific short-term issues (e.g. organizational restructuring, collective bargaining, and fundraising projects). Board size can sometimes be a critical factor in the effectiveness of committees, especially where board members are “busy people.” When much of the work of a board is done in committees, a larger board may be able to bring more resources to the tasks at hand.

Different boards view the role of an executive committee in different ways. In the case of the Main Street Project it is seen as “a core strength of the organization,” whereas in Cool Aid, the fact that it meets only rarely (and then to deal with emergency situations or matters referred to it by the Board in between Board meetings) is seen as a strength. Toronto’s Homes First operates without an executive committee. Instead there are two co-chairs, a vice-president, secretary, and treasurer. Executive Committee members often act as the chairs of standing committees, providing a “direct link back to the board”.

7.3.4 Board Meetings/Decision Making

On the whole, Boards meet monthly; committees have a more varied schedule, with committees responsible for finance and human resources meeting most frequently. Auberge has experimented with different procedures and methods of operation. There has been a recent return to monthly meetings after a year of meetings every two months to reduce the demands on the Board. Members found that they were not sufficiently aware of issues and continuity was difficult. It was noted “the monthly meetings of finance work well to ensure that Main Street is on budget and in fact, they have not run a deficit in some time.”

Board decision-making is conducted formally and is usually by majority vote – although in practice consensus is more the norm. Only one board (Homes First) specifies consensus decision making for all issues. For some organizations (e.g. Victory Over Violence), while general problems are resolved based on consensus decision-making, the organization’s by-laws require important financial decisions regarding major changes in organizational structure, services, programming and staffing to be determined by polling the board members and the achievement of a majority vote. Board meetings are usually conducted formally, with minutes and decisions recorded.

7.3.5 Board Accountability

Because boards are ultimately liable for their organization, they need to be assured that accountability exists both internally and externally.

“For example, the Board is accountable to the provincial government through its contracts, to the Real Estate Foundation of BC through provision of grants, to other agencies in terms of multiple agency partnerships, to contractors, developers etc. for a variety of housing projects, and to the membership and the community.” (Cool Aid)

Accountability is ensured and achieved in a variety of ways. Two key areas are staff/board relationships and reporting and monitoring of the society’s activities and performance.

In all the organizations reviewed, the Executive Director is accountable directly to the Board and, in general, other staff are accountable to the Executive Director. Annual performance reviews and goal setting for the Executive Director and other staff are used extensively to help ensure accountability. Regular and frequent contact between the Board and the Executive Director is another important element. Without such contact (and reporting), it would be difficult for the Board and staff to carry out their respective responsibilities within the governance framework and further the goals and objectives of the organization. Trust is a key ingredient of this relationship, particularly as issues discussed by boards in many organizations are “most often those brought forward by the Executive Director,” and because staff, to work effectively, need to know where the Board is heading and what are issues of concern.

“A key strength noted by the board is that there is a high level of interaction and exchanges between them and the Executive Director... the board is ultimately responsible for all policies, but they also strive to ensure that the Executive Director is implementing policy issues as directed by the board.” (Main Street Project)

“The Executive Director reports to the board of directors. He will have a report at every board meeting and he is at all board meetings. In fact, I don’t like having board meetings without his presence.” (Calgary Drop-In Centre)

Boards have a right to expect that management will provide them with the information they need to carry out their responsibilities, but boards also have the obligation to identify their information needs and ensure that staff have put in place systems to provide the information. The timeliness, quality and quantity of information are factors that affect its value to the board. Amongst the various organizations reviewed, regular reports from staff and committees are made to their boards. For example, once a month, the program coordinator for VOV prepares a summary status report on the organization's activities

and the board chairperson reports on the organization's programs and financial status. Other organizations have gone even further in identifying how information is presented to the board.

Cool Aid uses a Board Meeting Agenda that has two main parts - General Business and Governance Orientation. General Business items include: reports from the Executive Director and the Treasurer, Business and Development Projects, Committee Priorities and Motions. Governance Orientation includes: an overview of the Strategic Planning process, committee work plan orientation, and orientation sessions and program tours. Cool Aid also uses a Board Decision Support Framework & Checklist that includes identifying whether the request to the Board is an information or decision item, but also ensures that, where appropriate, reports include: background information; overview (sufficient to answer the what, when, where, why and how); key assumptions used analyzing the item (e.g. funding, timing, costing recoveries, political, etc.); options or alternative courses of action that can be pursued; analysis (e.g. strategic fit, business priorities, financial, human resources, legal, risk assessment, and program linkages); a recommendation; and implementation (key milestones, schedule, communications strategy). Cool Aid has also developed an annual schedule for regular quarterly reporting to committees and the board.

All of the organizations receive funding from external sources and, to ensure accountability, there are usually formal contractual reporting procedures and deliverables established between the funder and the organization. Program evaluation, as part of government program reviews or as part of the strategic planning process, sometimes forms part of the reporting process to funders.

“While no formal evaluation has been conducted of the society's programs, they participated in the federal government evaluations of the CMHC programs. Informal assessment and monitoring of current programs is conducted routinely, however, because the society must regularly report to both the Kentville and Wolfville Area Interchurch Councils. Similarly, regular reports are made to the United Church of Canada and to other granting organizations.” (Interchurch Housing Society)

Formal reporting is sometimes augmented by additional contact – it is important “to keep in touch, to give the funder positive news and maintain contact regularly, not just when we have a problem.” Examples of techniques used include: having managers report quarterly to the funder on how they have maintained their accounts, sending letters to funders to thank them and keep them apprised; inviting the funder to visit the organization/program; and regularly e-mailing funders.

Organizations feel a need to be accountable (as well as provide information and increase awareness) not only to their members and clients, but also to the general public.

“Ultimately the board is accountable to the community because members are elected from the community.” (Calgary Drop-In Centre)

“There is no mandate requiring the Board to be accountable (other than financial) to any particular constituency. However, ‘we like to think we are accountable to the community. We want to start to do the Annual Report like a report card on the Strategic Plan and we need to get a report card back from the community.’” (Cool Aid)

Accountability to members, clients, elected officials, stakeholder and related organizations, and to the general public is achieved in a number of different ways. The most frequently used tools include:

- the Annual Report;
- publicly disclosed and available financial statements;
- newsletters – an organization’s own or use of a sponsor’s or other organization’s;
- media coverage, including newspaper advertisements, feature articles, and releases;
- presentations to community organizations, e.g. service clubs, educational institutions, women's and seniors groups, employers, business associations and the general public;
- public release of board minutes;
- web sites;
- advertised and open Annual General Meetings;
- open houses;
- widely distributed brochures e.g. in local shopping malls, health facilities, and public libraries;
- information booths;
- invitations to project openings and events; and,
- client surveys and regular meetings with clients.

There is some variation in the extent to which organizations carry out outreach and disseminate information to the broader community. Organizational capacity, funding arrangements, age of the organization are all factors.

“Occasionally, staff and board members give talks or presentations to church groups and local organizations on the activities of the society. However, no systematic plan exists for outreach and publicity.”
(Interchurch Housing Society)

“To date, a summary annual report has not been prepared, although it is anticipated that by March 2002, the target date for the first formal annual meeting, that an annual report will be presented at this time.” (Victory Over Violence)

7.3.6 Analysis – Lessons Learned

The diversity of board members’ skills and background adds strength to the structure and operation of an organization in a number of ways, including: expanding the society’s potential for fundraising; gaining the required skills and credentials to govern the organization effectively; and, gaining insight into the application and effectiveness of policies/programs by having residents/former residents as board members. In addition, effective partnerships can be developed by including people from other agencies on the board or by the board’s own members serving on other agency boards.

As agencies have acquired greater organizational capacity, their boards have tended to move away from a hands-on micro-management governance role to one that is more policy/advisory oriented, with day-to-day operations delegated to the Executive Director. This governance style permits the board to focus more on planning, monitoring and oversight within a strategic framework. It also requires clarity in the respective roles of the board and staff.

Over the last decade particularly, there has been an increasing interest and analysis of what contributes to effective board governance. This general societal trend is reflected amongst the various organizations reviewed. There is both awareness of and considerable effort being made to introduce best practices into the structure and make-up of boards and how they operate. On the whole, boards have and/or are addressing such matters as: member competencies (through recruitment, training and orientation) and the need to have community government, and private sector representation and linkages (both on the board and in committees); organizational structures to ensure board member involvement and the board’s work gets done (e.g. the appropriate use of committees); information management for planning, monitoring and decision-making; and accountability both within the organization and externally (through reporting, consultation and outreach).

Some boards are further along than others are in the process of adopting best practices. There are some particular areas that most or a significant number of boards need to address. While some boards use nominating committees and undertake an annual

assessment of what competencies the board needs, others are more informal relying on word of mouth and personal contacts. While all of the organizations have boards based strongly within their community, in some cases board membership also comprises residents/tenants and/or employees. For Auberge this is viewed as a strength, however, Homes First has experienced some difficulties. While long-term members can be of value to a board, at some point board renewal may become an issue. Some boards deal with this by limiting the number and length of terms for their members and by following a rigorous annual nominating process. Once board members have been appointed/elected rarely are their roles clearly outlined, and this is particularly evident with respect to committee selection. Beyond the expectation in most organizations that a board member will participate in a committee, in most cases, committee membership is determined by personal interest rather than overall organizational need. It is rare too for boards to undertake a formal board and member evaluation and self-assessment, a process that can help to identify areas where improvements in performance are required.

Effective board governance cannot be legislated, nor can a single model be applied to all organizations because each organization is unique. However, in assessing whether or not a board is effective an important consideration is the degree to which the board “fits with the management style of the organization and has been structured to fit with the organization, and how well the philosophies match.” Another consideration is how well the structure permits an organization to deal with particular issues. In the final analysis, “fit” can be seen as both a strength and a weakness – the board is only as strong as other parts of the organization.”

7.4 Revenue Generation – Funding/Fundraising

7.4.1 Core Funding

Amongst the various agencies there are some differences in revenue source. The Cape Breton Transition House, Auberge, Homes First, Main Street, and Cool Aid obtain the bulk of their funds from government sources, generally federal or provincial governments. In fact, both Cool Aid and Homes First, derive more than 80% of their revenue from government, and the Main Street Project derives more than 90%. Those agencies not receiving substantial government funding include the Interchurch Housing Society and the Calgary Drop-In Centre. The Calgary Drop-In Centre receives the majority of its operating funds from the City of Calgary and its capital funds from community and private sector sources through fund raising. Funding sources for the various agencies are set out in Table 7.5.

Government funding comes primarily from provincial governments, with smaller portions provided by the federal government and local government, although this is beginning to change. Federal funding is derived from such agencies as Health Canada, HRDC, CMHC and SCPI and some new funds have become available. Historically in Canada, local government has generally not been the primary funder of social programs and services. Most organizations serving the homeless are located in the “downtown” area. In areas where there is a multitude of local government jurisdictions, local

Table 7.5: Revenue Sources

Agency	Federal Government	Provincial Government	Local Government	Others
Auberge		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health/Social Services • Leisure, Fishing and Hunting • Québec Housing Corp. • Fund for the Fight Against Poverty 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Montreal • City of Verdun 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Centraide • J.A. DeSève Foundation • Rents • Donations • Membership dues • Fundraising
HFS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CMHC • HRDC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Municipal Affairs and Housing • Community Housing Assistance Program • Health 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Toronto 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rents • Donations • United Way donations • Others
Main St. Project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SCPI 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manitoba Housing • Employment & Income Security • Winnipeg Regional Health Authority 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Winnipeg • Winnipeg Police Service 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • United Way of Canada
Calgary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CMHC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Calgary Health Authority 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Calgary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The United Way • Corporate Donors • Fund Raising Initiatives
Cool Aid	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CHMC • Canada Employment • HRDC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social Development & Economic Security • Children and Families • Health • Adult Forensic Services • Community Development • Employment Training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Victoria 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • University of Victoria • United Way • Capital Health Region
VOV				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eastern Kings Memorial Foundation • Church and church related organizations • Service clubs • Private donors
IHS	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a
CBTH		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Services • Health 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Law Foundation of Nova Scotia

governments outside of the “downtown” area have often been reluctant to provide funding for services outside their immediate area.

Rental income comprises a significant portion of non-governmental revenue for some agencies - 13% for Homes First and 8% for Cool Aid. Other income is derived from grants from foundations and other community organizations (e.g. the United Way and the Law Foundation of Nova Scotia), earned interest, fees (e.g. housing management) and fundraising. (See *Fundraising Section* below). The Calgary Drop-In Centre has entered into a partnership with the Calgary Homeless Foundation to set up an endowment fund in an effort to stabilize their source of long term funding, leaving them less dependent on government sources in the future (they hope).

For most agencies, the process of setting the annual budget is a fairly conventional and on-going process. Senior administrative staff (usually the Executive Director and Financial Officer) initially drafts a budget based on existing commitments and forecasting. For some agencies (e.g. Cool Aid), the Strategic Plan and Annual Operating plan provide the larger framework:

“What areas do you think are the most important, what’s needed in the community for clients and staff, what can we do to attend to that, how do we get funding, what funding is available.” (Cool Aid)

The Board (through the Finance Committees and/or as a whole), reviews the draft budget, and is responsible for its adoption.

Within the limits imposed by the budget and/or by Board policy, expenditures are usually monitored and controlled at the staff level – program managers, the Financial Officer, and/or the Executive Director (in fact, at least one executive director’s contract specifies that a deficit is not acceptable). Otherwise, Board/Finance Committee approval is necessary. Monthly financial statements are produced in most agencies and program expenditures are regularly reported to the Finance Committee, Board Treasurer, and Board. In several organizations this reporting system and “strong problem solving working relationship” between board and staff are believed to be a key strength and an aid in reducing/eliminating budget over-runs.

One notable aspect of agency core funding is the plethora of funding sources – a variety of government agencies and non-governmental organizations, each with different application requirements that can complicate the budget process. For example, Main Street uses seven processes to set its budget – one for each of its core funding partners. Dealing with varying forms, time-lines, and information “causes a lot of extra work,” is time consuming and uses a lot of resources. Meeting the criteria for different funding partners is a “reactive” process that sometimes means that the agency is not being “proactive” to their particular needs. To address this problem, the Main Street Project is changing to real cost budgets.

Adding to the challenge is the varying nature of funders’ reporting requirements. For example, federal and provincial governments sometimes require monthly reporting, some

by quarter and some annually. Information required also varies – involving financial issues, activities and results – all of which can be “onerous and time consuming.”

Apparently most agencies do not undertake joint funding applications with other agencies to any great extent. While there are many examples of joint projects (where more than one organization delivers different parts of a particular program or service), the most common practice seems to be for each agency to receive funding individually for their particular part of the program or service. For example, in Calgary, the United Way has “given dollars to Meals on Wheels to make sandwiches for the Drop-in Centre and for the working population living in a new shelter in Mayland Heights.”

Homes First has also been involved in partnering with several other agencies on joint funding applications for projects. A successful application was developed by Homes First and Field to Table (Food Share) to provide complementary services and submitted to the Homelessness Initiatives fund, administered by the City of Toronto. For the latter, several meetings were held with staff from both agencies to co-ordinate the writing of each agency’s section of the proposal. More recently, a proposal to develop temporary, transitional housing received funding under the SCPI program. This proposal involved several agencies, including the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, Na-Me-Res, and Food Share.

Where there are joint funding programs, as in the case of Cool Aid, (especially those involving housing projects), a task force is set up comprised of staff, a board member, and representatives from the other agency(s) involved. Perhaps because of the breadth and diversity of Cool Aid’s programs, joint funding applications are also put together between program areas within the organization. An example is the Homeless to Work and Outreach program application for SCPI funding where there is a cross over for research and service delivery.

Undertaking joint funding applications requires the commitment of board/staff time. In the past, the preparation of proposals and developing partnerships has not been funded and collaboration efforts have usually been responsive to funding availability. However, this is changing. Homes First has created a staff position dedicated to new development and brokering has been funded by the United Way.

While most agencies feel that their financial situation is stable – at least for now – from time to time, most have had to deal with funding problems and for most, “funding is an ongoing issue.” Ensuring future financial sustainability is a major issue for most agencies. This has prompted the Calgary Drop-In Centre to enter into a partnership arrangement with the Calgary Homeless Foundation to develop an endowment fund as previously noted.

Homes First has faced serious funding difficulties since 1998. A couple of years ago, their accumulated deficit absorbed a reserve of about \$325,000. The total agency budget for the year 2000 was almost \$7 million, with a deficit of about three-quarters of a million. Most of the accumulated deficit is due to significant losses incurred during the

development of a new project (Savard's) and outstanding accounts receivable (government funding for specific projects), including the organizational transformation costs, and the prolonged closing of StreetCity.

To address their financial problems, a joint board and management effort was mounted at the outset and continues. In 1998, this involved going to their primary funder, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, who, on the basis of the findings from an operational audit of HFS, insisted that the organization be restructured (or be "taken over") and pledged to fund the costs for this process (funds that are still outstanding). To complicate matters, government staff reductions left fewer experienced people to make funding decisions. Homes First was vulnerable to funding decisions that were affected by interpersonal conflict, and a constant change of contact persons led to instability and uncertainty.

Financial instability arises with changes in government program requirements and direction, when funding has a "sunset clause," when major funders are lost, when there are delays in obtaining promised funds, with under-funding for some programs and staff wages/benefits, because of the inability to obtain funds for certain activities (especially those that are not part of direct service delivery), because of the uncertainty that results from funding allocated on a year to year basis, and on occasion because of personnel issues.

Financial instability is further exacerbated by the environment, in which homeless organizations are increasingly operating. They are frequently in "competition" with other direct service providers e.g. the private sector and government. While this can be regarded as a "threat" to some organizations, in some respects it can also be an opportunity for partnership and funding stability.

In some cases, government-funding programs place "onerous" requirements on service agencies. Changes to government programs, can cause significant problems for an agency. For example, when HRDC eligibility criteria were changed, local service agencies had to drop or significantly alter their training programs. The impact on Homes First was considerable: tenants lost training opportunities; staff descriptions had to be changed and renegotiated with the union. As well, funders are "making new demands to produce statistics - it's almost not worth the hassle." In future, Homes First has determined that it is preferable "to initiate ideas for projects, then find the funding for them."

Given their reliance on government funding, particularly provincial government funding, if there are no increases in funding, cutbacks in funding, or "if one of the major funding partners were to pull out, then there would be a major shortfall." As noted, some agencies have already faced these situations; for others, the possibility looms. While most agencies feel (at least tentatively) that they can be sustainable, they are looking at ways to ensure sustainability. The following describes a number of the approaches being taken.

- Undertaking advocacy – The challenge of the main Street Project is to get the Province more involved in housing and homelessness, and through advocacy convince the province – “they need to be part of the problem solving.” One of the core strengths of the Main Street Project is that it has a stable funding base – “current funders are committed and there is no real concern about losing them.” However, workloads have increased dramatically with no matching increases in funding and their building and programs are at capacity.
- Developing good relationships with community funders – With provincial downloading, Homes First’s primary funder is the City of Toronto. Devolution of social housing management to municipalities in Ontario means that operating agreements must be re-negotiated with the City of Toronto. This is the responsibility of the Executive Director “who is confident that the change will be beneficial as she has formed good relationships with City staff.”
- Working with other community organizations – Last year the provincial government cut funding for two of Cool Aid Employment Services’ (CAES) programs (Casual Labour Pool and Skills to Work), and the survival of CAES was threatened. Staff were given notice. Along with several member agencies in the community, the Executive Director and CAES Manager “collectively fought back and negotiated with the Ministry to reverse the decision.” Continued funding was secured to keep the programs running, at least for another year.
- Implementing fee for service – Some services lend themselves to charge outs for services provided. For example, Cool Aid is considering charging employers a finding fee for their use of the society’s employment service. The Main Street Project funds the Intoxicated Persons Detention Area through a fee-for-service contract with the Winnipeg Police Service.
- Drawing up sustainable business plans – Business plans generally include a description of the business, a marketing plan, a financial management plan, and a management plan – as such they are an important part of an organization’s strategic planning. Cool Aid has developed a business plan for the organization and on a regular basis conducts business reviews/analyses on each business proposal to evaluate appropriateness and profitability, including the time frame when the enterprise will be stable enough to allot a portion of its profit to help sustain Cool Aid overall operation.
- Expanding fundraising capability – see *Fundraising Section* below.
- Building organizational capacity to become more entrepreneurial – A number of organizations (e.g. Homes First, Auberge, and Cool Aid are moving in this direction. With a change of provincial government, Cool Aid is anticipating significant funding challenges. As a result, the Strategic Plan is being realigned and a Business Development Task Force has been struck to:

- create a basis for alternative revenue by setting up the appropriate enterprise structure(s), ensuring that the type of business subsidiary minimizes risks to Cool Aid, such as the loss of charitable status;
- develop and/or review contracts, proposals or initiatives that Cool Aid proposes to enter into with potential partners;
- do a business review/analysis on each business proposal to evaluate its appropriateness and profitability, which will include identifying a time frame when the enterprise will be stable enough to allot a portion of its profit to Cool Aid; and,
- establish a sustainable business plan (One of the goals of the plan will be to pay for administration costs such as the salary of Cool Aid's Development Manager).

There is a “greater desire to work entrepreneurially rather than fundraise.” The Executive Director attended “the 2nd National Gathering of Social Entrepreneurs” in Miami 2 years ago and in December 2001 attended the “3rd gathering” in Seattle. Interest in this endeavour is growing amongst Canadians - American non-profits are “way-ahead” of Canadians in developing entrepreneurial capacity. At the second gathering only three or four Canadians attended, while more than thirty went to Seattle. The National Gathering (www.nationalgathering.org) is the primary association for the community of social enterprisers: people and organizations that use earned income strategies in the nonprofit sector. By running double bottom line ventures that have a strong social mission combined with fiscal sustainability, these social entrepreneurs are delivering greater social return on investment.

Some specific approaches used or being considered, include activities directed at social entrepreneurship and alternate funding techniques:

- co-locating services;
- fee for service/cost recovery (e.g. ask employers to pay a finding fee for employment service);
- partnerships with the Capital Health Region and Canada Health to track mental health clients, where the software being used is a revenue generator;
- setting up a Foundation to raise money and establish an Internet Auction;
- working in a different way (e.g. using creative financing techniques to build projects without government assistance);
- establishing endowment funds as is happening in Calgary; and,

- re-structuring the ways programs are funded, by turning profit/equity into other businesses.

7.4.2 Fundraising

Fundraising for some agencies, such as the Cape Breton Transition House, has been a key undertaking from the start: “the initial association activities were concentrated on raising money for the shelter and public education. Early on, the board established a separate house committee to raise money ... the first fund-raising campaign netted \$30,000, and involved up to 700 community volunteers.” On the other hand, the Main Street Project is notable for its lack of fundraising activity – “with a stable set of funding partners, this has not been a priority issue.” The Project has no real formal process in place and there are no plans to move into active fund raising for money in the near future. For others, while fundraising activity has been carried out, “efforts have been minimal” and often of only limited success (accounting for only a small proportion of the agency overall budget i.e. less than 5%). While most organizations seek cash, in-kind donations can also be significant: for example in-kind donations in the Interchurch Housing Society “are much larger than cash donations.”

Organizations serving the homeless do not generally have a client base from whom they can obtain financial contributions. “Former (recovered) clients do not have the means to give, so the client base does not lend itself to fundraising and there is no base of fundraisers.” Economic conditions can also affect the ability to fundraise successfully – “because of the downturn in the local economy, private donations and contributions to charity events have decreased.” Fundraising itself takes time and expertise, both of which cost money – it can be a double-edged sword.

Fundraising has usually been undertaken to support large and small capital expenditures (e.g. shelter and housing construction costs, renovations, furnishings, landscaping and playground equipment). Many agencies find it difficult to fundraise for operational expenditures. For example:

- It is very hard to fundraise operational costs – people don’t want to give for something they feel government or business should support. It is easier to fundraise for one-off capital events or projects. (Cool Aid)
- Try finding funding for a fundraiser, or volunteer coordinators. (Main Street)

Traditionally, fundraising activities have included: special events (e.g. concerts, auctions, golf-tournaments, bingo, flea markets, benefit nights, plant sales, and penny drives); solicitation (e.g. through direct mailing, speaking to service clubs and professional organizations, requests to foundations); and the use of promotional materials (film and printed). On occasion, a particular agency has been named a “charity of choice” for other fundraisers or by individuals (e.g. the United Way). In at least one case, through a provincially regulated program, non-profit organizations can earn income from gaming –

in Cool Aid's case, this amounts to approximately 2% of total revenues. Most agencies have or are in the process of obtaining "charitable status" to provide tax receipts for donations.

For most of the agencies, fundraising is becoming an increasingly important activity, particularly as provincial government funding is reduced – "There is recognition that new ideas must be tried for fundraising and the Board is in the process of developing new sources." (Auberge) This is a shift from the historical view that the nature of the services being delivered precluded the need to fundraise in a significant way - "a lot are core services and the responsibility of government for which Cool Aid acts as the steward."

Agencies are increasingly building their organizational capacity to fundraise, using board members, staff, volunteers and/or an external individual/firm. The following are some examples of how various agencies carry out their fundraising activities.

- The Board of Cape Breton Transition House has set up a separate charitable organization, Friends of Transition House, to support projects and programs of the association through solicitation of grants, gifts, bequests and contributions. A representative from the charity sits on the Society Board, but they maintain their own smaller board for fund-raising and solicitation of equipment and services.
- The Calgary Drop-In Centre has a full-time fundraiser who works with the corporate sector, makes presentations and prepares promotional material. Volunteers are used to assist in putting on events. A fundraising committee, comprised of people from the community and the board, "has been very active lately" focusing more efforts on raising funds from the private sector (corporate donors). The organization is trying to become less reliant on government funding (from all levels) and become more entrepreneurial.
- Victory Over Violence has a staff member helping to organize and coordinate the efforts for a major winter fundraising campaign at the local ski hill whose operator has had a lot of success in helping other charitable organizations raise money. Fundraising has become the board's "main activity" as the organization has had to deal with new expenditures.
- The Board of the Interchurch Housing Society has established a special fundraising committee for its turnkey house project. Included in this fundraising was a loan from the Canadian Alternative Investment Cooperative. In addition, the society has just recently received approval for a Mission Grant from the United Church of Canada. This grant will be paid over the next two to three years to cover outstanding debts from the first turnkey house and depending on the planning horizon, the development of a second turnkey house.

- Homes First has traditionally solicited donations twice a year through a direct mail campaign. More recently a new Housing and Program Development Department has been created to provide assistance to all its departments in requests for funding from governments, foundations, corporations, and individuals. A major capital fundraising campaign, “Rebuilding with Respect” is being launched, with a goal of raising \$4 million from the corporate sector for new housing development, tenant support services, and capital improvements.
- Cool Aid has recently hired a staff person, part of whose job responsibility is to fundraise. The Manager of Development will work closely with the Communications Committee to prepare materials for use in attracting revenue. These will include PR materials for special events, brochures and/or flyers for Planned Giving, corporate donations, and putting together PR kit of materials for the Foundation and the Society.

Two agencies have recently established foundations to assist with their fundraising. Homes First has created a foundation, separate from the Society, to administer their fundraising campaign and allocate campaign funds in a transparent manner. With anticipated changes in their funding environment, Cool Aid has begun to develop the “capacity” to fundraise by creating a foundation. The need for a foundation was identified in its three year Strategic Plan as a way of obtaining alternative revenue. Base funding for the Foundation comprised contributions in memory of a Manager of Finance on his sudden death and funds donated by a member of the community.

7.4.3 Analysis – Lessons Learned

For most of the agencies reviewed, core funding has traditionally been derived largely from government sources, particularly provincial governments. However, the ability/willingness of provincial governments to continue funding at the same levels and/or for the same services or delivery model has changed or is changing. In addition, working with the homeless is labour intensive (e.g. as much as 70% of budgets are wages) and in many areas it is impossible to use volunteers to replace skilled professionals, leaving agencies with few options.

Stable funding supports operational stability and enhances the ability of an organization to deliver not only its programs and services more effectively, but also to plan and develop needed programs and services for a growing and more complex clientele. Most agencies have limited ability to carry a program on their own when funding changes. The following are some of the lessons learned by agencies:

- For many of the organizations reviewed there is a perceived or real need to become less dependent on such funding, to become more adaptable and innovative and to build organizational capacity to ensure future financial sustainability.
- Most agencies would argue that they have had to be flexible and inventive in the past to obtain funding from multiple agencies on an annual basis, respond to changes in government program requirements and direction, and deal with delays and under-funding for certain activities. For example, two years ago, Cool Aid’s daycare faced declining

enrolment and an increasing number of parents who could not afford licensed daycare. A flexible operating budget and staffing model have accommodated the flux in enrolment and kept the daycare operating. Participation in problem-solving meetings has assisted parents to access subsidies. While the core funding of the Auberge is stable, the post-transitional housing pilot project, Envol, lost its funding from the Regional Health Board in 2000. Reserve funds permitted the project to continue on with the work. The project has just been accepted under the SCPI program and this funding will permit purchase of a residential building as well as hiring of permanent staff.

- To meet the challenge of financial sustainability, societies are “in the process of shifting the mindset” – moving from a dependence on government funding to the strategic development of organizational capacity in the areas of fundraising, entrepreneurial capacity, and partnerships. There is a growing awareness that there is a need to be “pretty resourceful, to be extremely determined, very creative, and adaptable.”
 - *After the loss of their federal government contracts, the Interchurch Housing Society Board almost closed the society, but decided to try to raise enough money to get through the first year without government funding – and succeeded, drawing funds from community sources, the general public and other levels and branches of government..*
 - *“There is recognition that it will be bit of a rough ride for a while, that we may get cuts in some areas and may look different in terms of how we deliver services. The challenge is to be more corporate and look at activities that create income. The intention is to become less dependent on government funding by establishing a Foundation to do fundraising and developing entrepreneurial skills - although within Cool Aid there is a ‘greater desire to work entrepreneurially rather than fundraise’.”*
- The shift towards entrepreneurship is, however, not without risk.
 - By generating all or a share of its revenue with earned income, a non-profit can potentially ensure a stable, long-term source of support for its programs. Unfortunately the potential is not always realized. The Auberge Board is aware that as market production begins to provide a greater proportion of their funding, there is a danger this will drive the project rather than the original mission. This concern is based on a recent experience – Bon Ménagement, a housecleaning employment project was established as a separate structure from the Auberge. Originally a stable project, it folded eventually due to mismanagement and inexperience. The termination of a project in which the Auberge had invested time and resources has led them to be very cautious in relinquishing control.
- The shift towards entrepreneurship is also a long-term endeavour. It takes time to “grow” a business and it can be many years before a business runs a profit. Likewise, it can take many years for a foundation or endowment fund to achieve a level of investment that provides a return to a society.

7.5 Staff/Volunteers

A number of issues relating to staffing and volunteers with implications for governance emerged during the case study preparation. Particularly pertinent for organizations addressing homelessness are those relating to training and development, burnout, policy/procedure manuals, and the ability of the staff and administration to adapt and be flexible.

The case studies provided a range of organizational size and complexity from those with a large number of staff and a hierarchy of management through to a small non-profit with one full-time coordinator and a part-time clerical assistant. The role of volunteers varies across the organizations. Those providing services to clients with mental health problems such as Cool Aid and The Main Street Project commonly find that with the increasingly chronic nature of the problems in this area specially trained staff are required, and volunteers do not have the experience. In other organizations, a union presence inhibits the use of volunteers.

7.5.1 Burnout

For some agencies staff burnout is a real issue, for others it is not seen as a current problem. The pressures causing burnout that were identified in the cases studies include the following:

- i. a growing problem of homelessness over the last 5 years resulting in an increasingly worse situation on the streets;
- ii. a reduced vacancy rate in some markets (in Victoria it is 0% and very low in Calgary);
- iii. the demand for services, and a wider range of services, is very high and going to get higher;
- iv. poverty has increased and poverty itself creates problems;
- v. there is anxiety about funding and no job security for the staff;
- vi. front-line staff are having to absorb more responsibility (with funding cuts) for program delivery and administration – “these two areas are the least likely to be the recipients of new dollars from government agencies who appear more inclined to promote programs that have a ‘measurable outcome’ as opposed to assisting the organization to run better;”
- vii. under-staffing means complete demand on your time all of the time, “very rarely does anybody take breaks here, very rarely is time taken for lunch or to go out for lunch;” and,

- viii. as noted in the rural based organizations there is pressure on staff (although burnout was not specifically identified as an issue), despite lower-pay scales, staff are often on call 24-hours a day putting in many hours beyond their job descriptions serving on board committees and as volunteers for special events, house maintenance projects and general support activities.

Some agencies expect burnout to become even more pronounced in the near future as resources and staff are stretched. For one agency where workloads have increased more than 50% there have been no changes to staffing levels or funding. It was noted there are no real ‘measures of burn out’ (although it is often reflected in increased sick leave and decreasing moral) but the problem is huge and is beyond reasonable – including the Executive Director’s situation. The organization does not anticipate that solutions will be easy to find. The ability to provide essential programs may be limited by factors such as staff constraints. For Main Street the many years of frozen budgets have taken their toll. Increases in cost of living and things like utilities have created an environment of having to do more with less. This has caused the society to cut and one of the key areas that have been cut is staff.

If there is burnout in larger organizations analysis suggests it is more likely to occur at the staff level, rather than at the Board level. The case study analysis did not identify any Board member burnout, despite the fact that in some of the rural organizations some board members were long serving. Some felt that staff burnout is always present given the client group being served.

“The whole organization is under stress as the client base numbers and need increase and are combined with a lack of service – damned hard work.”

The challenge is to continually prevent and address burn out – “you can’t wait for it to become an issue, need to address it right up front.”

Other agencies noted they had experienced and dealt with burnout. At the Auberge burnout is not felt to be very important at this point, although it has been of concern in the past. There is acknowledgement that the work is demanding and that salaries are relatively low but over the years, better definition of responsibilities and clearer lines of communication have helped reduce the problem of burnout. At Homes First, staff found it very difficult to cope with all the changes during the transition period (of funding), and there was a great deal of stress associated with the organizational restructuring. However, most of that is over now.

7.5.2 Organization Structure - Adaptability/Flexibility

Organizations serving the homeless have to operate on limited resources which they felt calls for an adaptable organizational structure. Some also suggested that staff retention

programs and policies would help strengthen the organization through retention of key employees.

It was noted that where there is a grouping of jobs that are inter-changeable with skills that can cover various jobs, it creates a good situation of sharing of workloads with the opportunity to offer relief. This also provides staff the ability to rotate through the various jobs. However, with so many persons doing the same jobs, there is not much upward mobility and this causes people to stay in the same job. This has created retention and recruitment issues, as staff have no ability to move up with the current staff and organization structure. There does not appear to be any solutions for organizations, given the current shortfall in funding and the increased workload. The key issue noted by Main Street was that even though most staff are highly “cross-trained” to cover the various jobs, the inability of Main Street to retain workers through promotions and such has resulted in a stagnation of the employment base

The Auberge also noted it has little room to maneuver with the number of staff. Continuity in programs is considered very important but replacement of staff for a period of time (e.g. maternity leave), makes continuity difficult, whereas a few more staff members would allow more flexibility in replacement and guarantee of constancy.

At Cool Aid there is no organization chart. As the Executive Director observed, we have “been in progress for 33 years and haven’t been able to commit to a ‘diagram’ that effectively describes the organization.” Management and the staff group are seen as “very flexible and non-rigid and this is considered good.” There is a fair amount of autonomy at the program level and the trend is open and not micro management. A current challenge is that Cool Aid has had to expand organizationally (staff, administrative functions, etc.) as it has taken on more programs. It is now a mid-sized non-profit society and needs to determine an administrative/staff structure that will work well, and provide for more delegation. This is viewed as far more positive than negative – the challenge is how do you become a mid-sized non-profit that can consolidate human resource policies and provide services to programs. Large organizations have to have more structure and the opportunity to delegate.

Another issue Cool Aid is looking at is internal partnerships, as the society realizes that internally it is too ‘stove piped’. For example, there could be more collaboration and opportunity for ‘cross-pollination’ between the housing and support services, in order for them to better understand each other. It feels inter-branch communication will also help facilitate and enhance improved community understanding and recognition.

Homes First has moved from having a single salary level for all staff, which offered no advancement opportunities, to having several departments requiring more specialized skills (i.e., maintenance, support services, and finance). Most staff prefer this.

7.5.3 *Volunteers*

The case study agencies can be grouped into those where volunteers played a significant role in the delivery of programs and services and those where they had a very limited part. Main Street, Victoria Cool Aid and Homes First all noted that there was limited use of volunteers, with the exception of Board members and volunteers who served as resource people on Board Committees. The absence of volunteers in the daily operations of some services was explained in part by the increasingly complex nature of mental health problems and the impact of medication,

“the level of many of the issues presented is beyond the skills of lay volunteers - would advise against the use of volunteers and instead would encourage the hiring of people with training in the area of service delivery - work is relationship based, very hard for a non-expert to do.” (Victoria Cool Aid)

At the same time, there is a desire to involve clients in some volunteer activities recognizing that it is a way for clients to participate, obtain training and increase self-esteem.

Agencies with a union presence were also more restricted in their ability to use volunteers. At Homes First no direct services to tenants are provided by volunteers, in part, due to union restrictions.

Homes First, Main Street Project, Calgary Drop-In Centre and Cool Aid noted they are, however, looking at ways to increase the use of volunteers in certain non-professional areas (renovation, janitorial, food services, furniture/clothing collection), as well as for fundraising. The feeling that volunteers should not be used to provide direct services tended to prevail among these agencies. Main Street has a Coordinator of Volunteers establishing a volunteer program with policies, procedures, job descriptions, but volunteers are not used in service delivery or areas of direct contact with clients. Cool Aid’s current Annual Operating Plan indicates that the “administration will examine useful and effective ways to incorporate more volunteers in our programs and in particular in our fundraising events.” As Cool Aid observed, “a significant challenge is that we have no dedicated internal resource to develop (a formal volunteer program), but we may be able to develop this under the Cool Aid Foundation.” For Homes First, the main area of volunteer involvement is with the capital campaign. And the challenge is to keep the momentum going in a campaign that is slow to build. Main Street sees the opportunity to use past clients in the volunteer program as a key strength - building life skills and stability, but will primarily focus on off-site programs, clothing collection for example.

The small community based organizations rely heavily on volunteers. Victory Over Violence has depended on a large pool of volunteers, providing training programs, for example on special training on sexual harassment, racism and suicide prevention. Currently in addition to the nine active board members, the organization estimates they

draw on a pool of approximately 30 dedicated volunteers. With reduced activity, however, the number of volunteers with the Interchurch Housing Society has declined from the 1980s when the society constructed 110 Hearth Homes.

At the Auberge there are over sixty volunteers who work at various tasks. Volunteers, because of their commitment adherence to the values of the project, diversity of experience are seen as an important asset, if not the “heart” of the Auberge. An advantage is that their presence is not dependent on the agency’s financial situation. One issue is how to keep them active as long as possible, although according to a study undertaken, volunteers at the Auberge stay longer than average.

7.5.4 Training

To varying degrees staff and volunteers in the case study agencies receive training, either through in-house training, conference attendance or courses/workshops offered by provincial Non-Profit Housing Associations, or by the local health region/authority. For the most part training appears to be informal and as needed; some noted that it is an area that requires more attention. Cool Aid has recently committed to a continuous learning environment, and has established a training committee and human resources plan (which includes training and development).

Accreditation and licensing is also an issue for some agencies. In British Columbia, under the previous provincial government, organizations receiving over \$200,000 in funding had to be accredited by 2004 (this may change with the new government). Given the breadth of Cool Aid’s programs and funding sources there may be up to 6 different external agencies to deal with concerning accreditation. There is a need to develop organizational capacity (resources) to undertake accreditation. As a consequence, this initiative has been postponed to April 2002.

The issue of licensing/regulation/standards is an on-going issue. Licensing involves reducing risk and what is needed is to get shared risk standards (e.g. as in Alberta and Saskatchewan) developed from the point of view of the client and client family.

7.5.5 Policies and Procedures

A number of agencies talked about the need for policies, procedures and manuals for staff. These are important for variety of reasons, including:

- i. where the nature of the activity is sensitive (for example providing emergency services for youth) and careful records must be kept;
- ii. where guidelines are set by funding partners as part of delivering certain programs;
- iii. the need for house rules and procedures;

- iv. sometimes the nature of the service means policies and procedures are required to meet the internal objectives of the organization as well as to meet the requirements of the provincial government for health, housing, fire codes, personal safety and financial support; and,
- v. where agency staff or volunteers support clients who appear in court.

As opposed to being bureaucratic, good policies and procedures can provide guidelines for operations, protect staff, outline procedures for handling difficult situations and in general result in more effective operations. It was also noted that good procedures are key to successful integration of volunteers into the structure of an organization.

Agencies also have a variety of policies, some formalized with unions, related to hiring procedures, including whether or not former clients are employed. For example, one organization has a policy in certain program areas of not employing people who have been clients in the last two years; the principle being that there should be distance.

Administratively, in the case study agencies the Executive Director has overall authority for daily operations and is accountable to the Board of Directors. The Executive Director is central to the decision-making and is usually supported by managers/program coordinators through weekly team meetings in many of the agencies. Typical major administrative functions include – accounting, payroll, human resource management, support to various governance mechanisms, communications with funding partners and the community at large, government relations, multi-agency functions, financial and fiscal management, treasury functions, and overall technological, administrative and planning support. While complaints are handled, for the most part, wherever possible by respective managers an Executive Director may be called upon to settle disputes.

7.5.6 Analysis - Lessons Learned

As agencies become more multi-sectoral and expand their program and service activity, the challenge is one of effectively managing organizational growth with limited resources, namely establishing better organizational structure and providing the opportunity for delegation. Homeless initiatives need to support this and also focus on administration and management, rather than solely on program outcomes. For many agencies it requires considerable capacity building, plus expansion of staff and facilities to accommodate a more multi-sectoral program structure.

Staff retention programs, training and policies are also important in helping strengthen the organization through retention of key employees, as well as preventing burnout. This can be achieved through restructuring the organization to provide advancement opportunities, for example having several departments requiring more specialized skills. Burnout seems less of a problem in larger organizations where there is generally a better definition of responsibilities, better lines of communication, and more emphasis on teamwork. These characteristics seem to reduce pressure on staff. Better and more formal training programs, development of job descriptions, identification of appropriate skill

sets, staff accreditation and greater recognition of skills and more staff are certainly other solutions.

The establishment of policy and procedure manuals was viewed as important by agencies for providing a good definition of responsibilities, clear lines of communication and reporting procedures. These all assist in making sure accountability measures are in place.

There is a feeling that the opportunities for using the voluntary sector are not being optimized. However, the effective use of volunteers in an organization takes time, a certain capacity level and organizational resources that currently in most homeless agencies are at a premium. It may also be related to the fact that in some instances there are neither funds for staff, nor in-house expertise, to organize volunteers and use them effectively. There is also the concern about liability. It was clear from the case study analysis that many agencies realize there are opportunities for strengthening this area of governance capacity.

7.6 Strategic Planning

Strategic planning provides a framework to guide and direct initiatives and decisions. It is an opportunity to look beyond day-to-day challenges, to choose the future that an organization desires, having confronted the challenges and choices and evaluated the options and issues. It is a means for ensuring the efficient and effective use of resources while addressing both needs and aspirations; identifying priorities; and focusing on critical issues and opportunities. It can be used to raise awareness of issues and their complexities and to obtain meaningful input, for education and exchange of information. Strategic planning deals with change, “which an organization will either manage or which will manage the organization.”

Key steps include:

- to shape or confirm an organization’s values, vision and mission;
- to scan environmental trends and conditions pertinent to the organization's vision and mission;
- to identify and assess internal resources and organizational strengths and weaknesses;
- to identify strategic issues in the form of opportunities and threats;
- to select the issues to be addressed during the current planning cycle;
- to fashion goals, objectives, and strategies, to address the issues; and
- to implement the change strategies.

As Table 7.6 outlines, the various organizations are at different stages in developing a Strategic Plan. Some (e.g. Auberge, Homes First and Cool Aid) have had a plan in place for a number of years; others (Main Street Project and Calgary Drop-In Centre) are currently in the process of developing a plan. Table 7.6 also outlines the process used or being used to develop a strategic plan. Consultation is a key component of the process.

Those organizations that have undertaken strategic planning believe the process is worthwhile. The following statements from the various organizations illustrate the value of strategic planning.

“Introduction of the strategic planning process and all the documents that flow from that – has absolutely transformed the organization – more businesslike, Board work is easier, better organized and will have good long-term consequences. For a Board member to see the planning and then reporting related to the planning, it gives them a handle on the organization, makes the Board work more effective.” (Cool Aid)

“The plan has brought change to how we work as an organization and the change management process has been critical to achieving our performance targets.” (Cool Aid)

“The organization’s policies, guidelines, mission statements and principles are “what guide us” in a positive manner. The “challenge is the ability of an organization to continually manage and change policy as the need arises,” e.g. to fiscal responses/needs.” (Cool Aid)

“The Strategic Plan is used and referred to constantly – it is “used to keep everyone in line” and it “keeps everyone focused and permits a way of dealing with the single issue or ‘flavour of the day’ unless it fits in with the Plan.” (Cool Aid) “We feel it’s well worth the money we spend on this process. We have to keep focused and we have to keep on track.” (Calgary Drop-In Centre)

“During the organizational re-structuring or transformation, the mission statement was used to re-focus the work of the agency and guide program planning (programs deemed tangential were dropped). On an ongoing basis, the principles of the mission statement serve as a guideline for program planning and operations decisions, down to the daily work level.” (Homes First)

Table 7.6: Strategic Planning - Status and Process

Organization	Status	Process
Auberge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 25 Year Plan • Annual Report and Outlook 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussed and adopted at an annual weekend meeting attended by Board members, members, volunteers, residents and employees. • Future goals discussed at this session are referred to the Orientation Committee, then to the Board and General Assembly.
Homes First	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3-5 year horizon • Reviewed annually • Has a mission statement and a set of guiding principles • Management has developed an operating plan based on the strategic plan (first time operation planning has been keyed to the strategic plan). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On an annual basis, the Board establishes key directions and priorities; management team ‘fleshes these out’; returned to the Board for approval. • Staff had input when the Board altered the mission statement and established the guiding principles • Staff or the Board, or both together, can change policies.
Main Street	<p>In progress – “nothing formalized at the moment”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviewing the mission statement to determine what, if any, changes are needed. • Re-evaluating the Board’s roles (what is it that they should be doing and are they going to be more active in strategic direction) • Undertaking a complete program assessment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extensive consultation on-going with partners and funding organizations • Both Board and staff are involved • A consultant is being used to facilitate and give feedback
Calgary Drop-In	<p>“loose plan” in final development stage</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3-5 year horizon 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the last two years plan was developed at Friday and Saturday afternoon sessions with a facilitator • Planning session held November 2001

Organization	Status	Process
Cool Aid	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 year horizon • Plan established the vision, mission, guiding principles, 4 strategic objectives, strategies, expected outcomes, performance targets and program goals. • In process of updating Plan – 2-year horizon, revisiting vision, doing an environmental scan. • Annual Operating Plans – based on the Strategic Plan, includes: objectives, how to achieve objectives, expected business environment, monitoring and reporting results. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involved all levels of the organization – staff, managers, and board, assisted by external facilitators. • Manager assigned to be Coordinator, Strategic Planning • Board committees base their work plans on the Plan/ Planning Committee assigned specific responsibility • Core planning team (chaired by Board member/includes 4 managers and executive director) to identify needed changes. Two focus groups (1. Board and Administration; 2. Management and staff) to test direction/provide input. • AOP reviewed over 2 day period in October (relevance, achievements, continuity, impact on next year’s work; adopted in March as the AOP.
Organization	Status	Process
VOV	Information is not available	Information is not available
IHS	Information is not available	Information is not available
CBTH	Information is not available	Information is not available

7.6.1 Analysis – Lessons Learned

Based on the experience of the agencies that have developed strategic plans, a number of critical elements involved in their development and implementation can be identified.

- It takes time to develop a strategic plan. To develop their first strategic plan, Cool Aid’s Management group spent 12 days over 6 months and the Board spent 1.5 days. To update this plan will involve 4 days for 5 of the managers, and 2 days for all managers, 1.5 days for other staff and the Board. In the case of the Calgary Drop-In Centre, the Board developed a draft strategic plan after a year-long collaboration with management, funders and other community based organizations.

- It also takes time to implement the plan. “In theory the Strategic Plan is applied with rigor, in practice we are ‘getting there.’ The organization is “still in the process of developing objectives and are starting to do evaluations of policies – they are a work in progress.” (Cool Aid)
- It is helpful to use an external facilitator to assist in the development of the plan and any updates. Calgary was able to get funding from an anonymous donor to do this, others have had volunteers who have donated their services.
- The planning process should be inclusive to ensure adequate input and buy-in. At a minimum it should involve Board and staff (at various levels), but might also include volunteers and clients.
- The Plan needs to build on the organization’s traditions, but at the same time reflect a commitment to the future by positioning the organization for success.
- The Plan needs to be integrated - the organization’s vision, mission, guiding principles, strategic objectives, performance targets, and operations should be consistent with each other.
- The organization’s resources and structure need to be aligned to meet the directions set out in the Strategic Plan.
 - It is critical to assign someone internally (at the staff level) to coordinate the process e.g. to send out timelines for tasks, quarterly reviews, etc. “The success of the Strategic Plan’s implementation is the result of having dedicated a skilled coordinator who can balance the many processes and tasks required to ensure the plan moves forward.” (Cool Aid)
 - It is effective for all board committees to develop work plans on which to base their decisions in support of the strategic plan’s directions.
 - It is effective for a board committee to be assigned particular responsibility for the plan. For example, the terms of reference for Cool Aid’s Planning Committee include:
 1. To support the strategic plan over the three year horizon.
 2. To ensure the implementation of the strategic plan demonstrates partnership with our programs, clients, other agencies and the public and private sector through a community development process.
 3. To direct and monitor society research projects.
 4. To establish appropriate links and communication with other standing board committees to facilitate the strategic plan.

5. To report and recommend to the Board the ongoing monitoring process of the actual implementation of the Society's Strategic plan including: updating of the Strategic Plan Environmental Scan; review and refining the Strategic Plan Assumptions; and, assessing current year's Business Priorities through Performance Measurement Reports.
 6. To propose actions, if any, to address the above items 1 to 5.
- Monitoring is essential to ensure accountability. Cool Aid does this through: quarterly reports to the Planning Committee and Board; weekly/quarterly management meetings; and the Executive Director's reports to the Board.
 - On-going planning is essential – updates and revisions will be necessary as the external (and in some cases the internal) environment changes. One way to achieve this is through annual operating plans and periodic updates of the Strategic Plan itself.

7.7 Strategic Partnerships

Strategic partnerships play a critical role in the effective operation of resource-constrained agencies serving the homeless. Effective partnerships are a key component of good governance. Partnerships comprise: coalitions of agencies working to address the community's larger goals, including those coalitions established under SCPI; relationships with municipal governments; partnerships with the private sector; and, other less formal collaboration and networking arrangements as part of improving the quality of services and information.

The case studies reflect a wide range of partnership activities, with many creative approaches to the sharing of expertise across communities and organizations. In some instances, agencies have given considerable thought to the types of partnership arrangements and how they work.

“How do you do collaborative governance especially during the development process? How do you share the governance model (responsibility and accountability) when there are different sizes of organization (capacity), different stages of evolution, and different levels of trust between organizations?” (Victoria Cool Aid)

Levels of ‘partnerships’ were described as follows by Cool Aid’s Executive Director and the representatives of the Community Partnership on Homelessness and Housing in Winnipeg.

- i. **Networking** – sharing information and knowledge, agencies are “ambassadors for each other.”

- ii. **Collaboration** – this is in between networking and partnering, it is the precursor to partnerships – some networks may do this where they feel in sync with philosophy, practice and standards; the challenge is how to combine programs without amalgamating agencies.
- iii. **Partnering** – each partnering agency has a piece of the delivery of the product/program, e.g. financing, construction – “fuse yourselves together, and then how much do you have to give up?”

7.7.1 Networking

Agency respondents were emphatic about the value of networks. At the Auberge, the benefits of networking by the Director (who has been working with the agency for 17 years and is a founding member), the staff, Board members and volunteers are all viewed as important. For example, the yearly audit is donated by a well-known firm because of contacts of the President of the Board, and the Director of Azimut comes from the business sector and brought his network when he began work on the project. The same sentiment was expressed by the Calgary Drop-In Centre regarding the involvement of the Executive Director, Board and volunteers in networks such as Inter-Agency Group. Networking by Board members with corporate representatives has also improved funding potential of the organization.

At Main Street Project, networking is part of establishing solid working relationships on the program level with the “frontline” workers – the nurses, social workers and receptionists, as well as with individuals at the administrative level where the Executive Director has well developed relationships that have become more personal and direct. These relationships have taken a long time to establish. The prominent role the Executive Director plays in the Community Partnership on Homelessness and Housing in Winnipeg also opens many doors the yield benefits in terms of referrals, information and program planning.

7.7.2 Collaboration

Collaboration and loose partnerships have a valuable role. Some agency respondents feel that groups are increasingly talking to one another to come up with ways of accessing funds and determining solutions to problems. In fact SCPI is seen to have been the catalyst for creating loose coalitions, and bringing various organizations together in dialogue. Hope was expressed that the partnerships currently being established would continue following the completion of SCPI. Agency respondents in both Winnipeg and Calgary who play a significant role in SCPI committees noted several lasting advantages of such coalitions or loose partnerships including: a better assessment of community needs; better sense of capacity in the community; better linkages between agencies that lead to information sharing; greater capacity to raise awareness of issues and play an advocacy role because of the broad based nature of such coalitions; and better opportunities to build community consensus. It was also pointed out that such

collaborative arrangements were much more effective at “breaking down the silo mentality.” They bring organizations out of an isolated mode of operation and consensus positions developed by collaborative organizations, although not always easy to develop, do help to convince funders of the importance of addressing homelessness and housing issues.

While Main Street runs all its programs solo, it has informal partnerships which it believes are essential to maintain, for example in a number of areas with the Salvation Army. The Calgary Drop-in Centre has a number of informal agreements and partnerships with agencies, including an informal agreement with two outreach workers in Alberta Family and Social Services to provide a ‘fast-tracking system’ for accessing financial support for independent living situations for clients starting jobs. The Calgary Drop-In Centre also works closely with Mustard Seed (Calgary), which provides a variety of programs and services (street level services, food services, shelter, spiritual development, etc.). The quality of the informal partnership with Mustard Seed is best epitomized by the comment on the relationship,

“We are best friends with Mustard Seed!”

These informal partnerships were prevalent in the 1970s and today they are viewed as just as essential as the formal ones providing funding. If there were a loss of some of the informal partners it would be an issue because it would impact service delivery and the referral system. From Main Street’s perspective the loss of community partnerships such as links with the Salvation Army would be a blow to its ability to deliver essential programs, and possibly as critical as the loss of (operational) funding. In Nova Scotia, Victory Over Violence (VOV) works in close collaboration with the RCMP and Kentville Police.

Many agencies collaborate informally over information sharing. Cool Aid has been closely involved in collaborating with a number of agencies, examples of specific strategies include:

- conducting a consultation process with other service providers for shelter enhancements;
- distributing comprehensive communication/information packages; sharing expertise through tours, open houses and the website;
- sharing expertise on parent education forums, casual labour pool, and community development in recreation and housing; and,
- participating in the development of the provincial shelter network (Shelter Net BC).

The Homes First Society has also initiated events to share ideas with colleagues nationally and internationally. In March 2001, HFS organized and hosted a forum with

staff from agencies in Vancouver (Portland Hotel) and New York (Common Ground) who share similar clientele and provide similar services. City of Toronto staff, private sector developers, and other local housing providers were also invited. And further such meetings are planned, for example a spring visit to Vancouver. Information sharing, as has already been noted, is a strength and positive outcome of the SCPI committees in most centers.

7.7.3 Partnerships

While the benefits of networking and collaboration are important, the establishment of formal/strategic partnerships encourages sustainability through funding, the provision of services and sharing of information.

From the Nova Scotia case studies it is clear that organizations could not have developed and been sustainable without community based organizations developing formal partnerships. The Interchurch Housing Society owes its origin to a unique partnership of local churches in the Town of Wolfville. Working together to develop housing alternatives were members of the Catholic Church, the United Church and the Anglican Church. The Interchurch Housing Society also worked very closely with a number of other church-supported charitable groups including the clothing depots, food pantries, women's auxiliaries and community health services. As the society's programs expanded, there were a number of community partnerships with other housing organizations including South Central Nova Housing Association, which formed to deliver federal non-profit and cooperative housing programs. In the mid-1980s, this organization reconstituted as HANDS, Housing Assistance Non-Profit Development and the Interchurch Housing Society contracted services from HANDS to reduce staff and administrative overhead costs.

Similarly, the strength of the Cape Breton Transition Housing Society organization lies in its ongoing community partnerships. These partnerships appear to be reciprocal in that the association benefits greatly from these relationships and gives back as well. The organization has several strategic partnerships. The most important partnership for the Cape Breton Transition Housing Society is the Inter Agency on Family Violence, which represents 35 agencies and organizations. Through cooperative efforts, a colloquium on family violence was held which recommended a work plan for the community. The second most important partnership is the association's involvement in the Transition House Association of Nova Scotia, which provides a collective voice for obtaining the core funding which supports women's shelters across the province.

Victory Over Violence has an on-going partnership for provision of services with McDonald's restaurants and the local Canadian Tire franchise. However, their closest relationship with a local agency has been "The Red Door," a health clinic serving teenagers and young adults in Kentville since 1990.

Some partnerships have reciprocal arrangements. The partners of the Auberge include funders as well as community organizations or networks. For example, Centraide funds

part of the activities of the Auberge, but the Director is a frequent speaker at their conferences and meetings and, over the years, a working relationship has emerged. Thus, funding agencies, including the government, are seen as partners.

The Calgary Drop-In Centre has a number of formal partnerships with agencies, including a formal agreement with the Calgary Urban Projects Society (CUPS) for nursing services. No money is exchanged, as the Calgary Health Authority has allocated funding for CUPS to provide services for the last 6 to 7 years. The Centre's formal partnership with the Calgary Homeless Foundation and the joint development of the endowment fund may, however, help to stabilize the funding situation of the organization. The long term formal partnerships between The Main Street Project and its seven core funders has provided the organization with considerable funding stability.

The Homes First Society in Toronto has formal partnerships with St. Christopher House (HFS manages a housing project for them) and with the Toronto Community Housing Corporation (HFS provides support services for one of their buildings).

At Victoria Cool Aid formal program delivery partnerships are developed with other community agencies and all levels of government as part of a collaborative community response to client needs. These involve funding and formally negotiated partnerships. Two examples are joint undertakings with the former Capital Health Region, one involving the development of a database to track mental health client information, with funding from Health Canada, the other involves the Cool Aid Community Health Centre,

“where the board was heavily involved in making sure the “Ts” were crossed and struck a task force to follow the proposal development, to make sure some due process was followed regarding the relationships being formed. It looked at the human resource and reporting mechanism issues, and discussed what kind of governance model should exist – should the Community Health Centre have its own board or be under the Cool Aid Board? It chose the latter...”

“Staff feel that this multi-disciplinary approach will lead to, among other things, less emergency room use, reduced frequency and duration of hospital visits, and better coordination of prevention services to address the downtown's health and social problems.”

Formal partnerships with funding partners are critical. For example, Main Street draws all its operating costs from seven funding partners; the loss of even one could cripple the program and be an economic blow. However, it has been able to maintain these partnerships over many years. Cool Aid places special emphasis on maintaining close contact with its funding partners by sending regular reports and ‘positive (not just negative) news’ stories, regular contact by e-mail, extending invitations to visit and thanking the funder.

7.7.4 Role of Agency in Broader Collaborative Efforts

The role of the agencies in broader collaborative efforts within their respective communities highlights issues relating to: the establishment of resource/support networks; the time consumed in working to establish coalitions and partnerships; the operational structure; and, decision-making and conflict resolution. These are discussed below.

Establishment of Resource/Support Networks

There are a variety of resource/support networks emerging in communities that are part of a collaborative effort that benefits agencies that participate. An example is the role the Auberge plays in working with a variety of community groups in Montreal. The activities of the Auberge are located in the southwest of Montreal, an area rich in community resources. The Auberge participates in various activities with neighbourhood organizations and economic development organizations (e.g. Regroupement pour la relance économique et sociale du Sud-Ouest (RESO), Concertation jeunesse sur l'emploi du sud-ouest¹). It belongs to community associations (e.g. Table de concertation Ville-Émard/Côte St-Paul) and works in partnership with Bâtir son Quartier, a technical resource group based in the southwest part of the city. It also participates in the Regroupement intersectoriel des organismes communautaires de Montréal (RIOCM or intersectoral coalition of Montreal community organizations) and the MCHRAT (Montreal Consortium for Human Rights Advocacy Training) based at McGill University. In addition, the Auberge is member of a number of local and provincial organizations that deal with homelessness such as the RAPSIM (Réseau d'aide aux personnes seules et itinérantes de Montréal) and the provincial coalition of youth shelters (Les Auberges du Cœur). The Auberge also has participated on governmental bodies when these were pertinent; for example the regional health board had a regional assembly as well as a liaison committee on homelessness. The Auberge continues to participate on a provincial Council on health and welfare that is linked to the Ministry of Health and Social Services.

Time Required to Establish Coalitions

Many agency representatives noted that collaboration has huge time implications. For the most part non-profit agency work directed at establishing and maintaining these is “being done off the side of the desk,” while some government agency representatives involved in collaborative efforts indicated that they “made sure time was included in and recognized as part of their work program, otherwise they would have had trouble making the necessary commitment.” It was observed that it does help to have one member of a coalition/committee as a “consistent person” to take on the role of keeping information flowing, coordination – that “helped to mitigate the lack of time.”

¹ Youth coalition on employment in the south-west

The pressure of the time commitment was emphasized in relation to the time required to thoroughly do the paper work to prepare and submit funding applications, especially where time frames were short.

“There have been periodic ‘crunch periods’ that have required major time commitments,” e.g. putting the SCPI Community Action Plan together, developing the Urgent Need proposal. “People rally – especially for the short term stuff.”

Commenting on the time commitment required to make collaborative efforts work the Executive Director of The Main Street Project stated that considerable time is required to develop consensus positions. This often slows progress on issues and priorities. However, it was her opinion that decision-making and governance by the consensus building approach pays dividends in the long run. It leads to greater solidarity on issues, allows the organizations to speak with a stronger voice and with greater certainty that their actions and ideas are a true reflection of community needs and priorities. The final results make the substantive time commitment worthwhile.

Operational Structure

Some of the observations regarding how coalitions are structured and the implications for operations considered the membership, namely the structure, inclusiveness vs. exclusiveness, degree of participation and accountability.

The success of establishing structures for broader collaborative efforts and coalitions depends on synergy and a high level of trust. While coalitions have to consider the degree of influence that their members have within their respective organizations, this has to be balanced with personality. Some thought that “personality provides more leverage” and that “personality is more important than structure.” The strength of the individual personalities is seen as a critical contribution to the greater whole of a coalition; it produces different leadership skills and different perspectives on issues.

“The City (Victoria) played a huge leadership role through their representative – kudos for the City – when you talk about the people who represent an organization, I don’t know what would have happened without someone like the City’s representative. The City’s representative has “far more clout in the City,” than the provincial representative has in the province – and this was important.”²

A high level of trust among the membership helps decision-making, as members are willing to delegate to other members of the group. This is especially important if the group is large as decisions are more effectively made in smaller groups. The Victoria SCPI focus group participants suggested the use of co-chairs not attached to any organization that might receive funds has helped to “move things along” and helped

² Victoria SCPI Focus Group

decision-making. Having “co-chairs helps to spread the access, brings different skills to bear, it is a way to keep people involved.” Co-chairs are “able to be strategic – to have feet in different places.”

The issue of accountability was highlighted in the context that coalitions may not have a prescribed mandate. As a result, what are members’ expectations and how can these be adhered to over time? While accountability is required, but there was a feeling that some local organizations may see this as difficult – especially after a few years.³ This in part relates to the issue of the sustainability of a coalition over time, since it is hard to hold people’s interest. The Victoria SCPI Committee noted it has had “quite a strong consistency over 2 years” that has been very positive in maintaining member interest. Another observation was that “members need to have ‘flexibility, responsiveness, and willingness to think outside the box.’”

Addressing the issue of accountability from her involvement in the Community Partnership on Homelessness and Housing in Winnipeg, the Executive Director of The Main Street Project pointed out that such loose collaborations have no official “membership” requirements to join or continue as part of the group. In this context the “group” had a problem of addressing accountability. Some felt they were “accountable to the community” a concept that was difficult to identify and define. Others felt they were accountable to respect and promote the basic objectives and goals of the organization. Despite these differing opinions she felt the most members work to promote the mandate and objectives of the coalition, even when decisions did not always work to the advantage of their particular organization.

Decision-making and Conflict Resolution

The Victoria SCPI focus group participants noted consensus is used in the Committee to make decisions – “only use a voting system when needed to have something done.” The process was seen as the “ultimate in collaboration – once a decision is made, committee members can live with it.” However, it is recognized that different organizations have to make themselves accountable.

“Co-chair experience and knowledge of alternate dispute resolution methods” was viewed as important. – “need to have someone who knows how to drive in the driver’s seat.”⁴

Some sensitivity can arise when people (on the SCPI Committee) do not get funding and may claim exclusion; this creates a conflict of interest issue.

The experience of the Executive Director of The Main Street Project with the Community Partnership on Homelessness and Housing was that conflict arose around the setting of community priorities. Organizations involved in the group often had to place community priorities ahead of those of the organization they represent. In essence, they wear “two

³ Victoria SCPI Focus Group

⁴ Ibid

hats” and they often have to put their “day job hat” aside and put on their “community wide hat.” This placed some people in a difficult position. In addition to conflict between community priorities and agency priorities, conflict arose over the prioritization of broader needs within the community. In the Winnipeg context this often revolved around Aboriginal versus non-Aboriginal issues and priorities. This was addressed by setting up an “Aboriginal Reference Group” within the larger organization that established its own set of priorities before coming back to the larger coalition. Although there was some conflict and difference of opinion a volunteer group within the coalition and the two co-chairs undertook a process of conflict resolution. After a great deal of time consuming discussion and a lot of listening and efforts to make sure the issues did not get personal a consensus was reached.

7.7.5 Role of Board Members in Building Partnerships with the Private Sector

Agencies are beginning to realize the influential benefits of board members who have cross appointments to boards, especially in strengthening partnerships. Tapping into resources in the corporate/private sector is important, particularly in the absence of government funding.

At Homes First, after government funding for the agency was reduced by 26% in 1998, targeted recruiting introduced more ‘political balance,’ ‘a business perspective’ and a higher level of skills within the Board of Directors. The agency gained considerable benefits when a senior executive of a management-consulting firm joined the Board.

“Networking at a senior level within the corporate sector and appealing to ‘corporate social conscience,’ he attracted 14 senior executives to work on the development of a foundation that would administer the capital campaign (Rebuilding with Respect) and allocate its funds. In this way, private sector contributions would make up for the lack of government funding. The foundation would be at arm’s length from HFS and have its own Board of Directors. Several prominent and influential people are lending their support and connections to the foundation’s development. It is expected that the foundation will be certified by January, 2002.”

The same board member was able through his company to contribute the “in-kind” equivalent of half a million dollars to Homes First in information technology and management consulting services, including a strategic plan prepared according to current business standards and formats. This will assist the agency in conducting performance measurement and demonstrating its effectiveness, both beneficial in the pursuit of funding.

As noted in the Homes First case study, just as with other volunteers, those from the corporate sector have a desire to see the beneficial effects of their contributions on clients, to make a difference, and obtain ‘emotional payback’. There appears to be some dissatisfaction with umbrella charitable organizations, such as the United Way, and a preference for closer ‘donor stewardship’.

Private sector partners also play an important role at the Auberge. For example for one of the five training and employment areas, the community computer facility is located on a shopping street in Verdun, a municipality neighbouring Montreal. The building in which it is situated is an ex-bank building donated to the Auberge while the computers used have been donated by IBM and the high speed Internet connection is donated by Bell. Calgary Drop-In Centre is also exploring partnerships and board memberships with representatives of private corporations to try to strengthen the possibility of continued funding from corporate donors and to provide a ‘business perspective’ and higher level of management skills on the Board.

7.7.6 Involvement with the Municipal Government

Most of the organizations have strong and long term partnerships with municipal government. The City of Montreal provides funding to both the Auberge and to Azimut, and, in both instances, is one of several funders. The Main Street Project has always had the core funding from the municipality through the Police Department, City Health and Welfare as well as directly from the City budget. The City of Calgary has been the major funder of operations at the Calgary Drop-In Centre for many years.

Victoria Cool Aid continued a direct partnership with the City of Victoria through the latter’s support of two projects (Johnson Manor and the Downtown Community Activity Centre). Cool Aid also worked with the City of Victoria on the development of the community plan to address homelessness, the Sexually Exploited Youth Project, the Downtown Street Enterprise Project and in general through the Downtown Working Group and Social Planning and Housing Advisory Committees. The involvement also includes biweekly meetings with the City of Victoria.

7.7.7 Role of Board Members in Building Partnerships with Community Based Agencies

Several agencies indicated they encourage cross appointments of board members with other agencies that serve a similar client group. For example, the Calgary Drop-In Centre has board members representing the agency on the board of In from the Cold (a city-wide program whereby churches open up their doors at night to house and feed homeless people). They also have members on the board of the Calgary Homeless Foundation.

Boards may be strengthened, and partnerships promoted, by having people involved in boards of other agencies that potentially can be mutually supportive. It is an asset to have people who have influence in different areas of community expertise.

Some agencies may have board members or senior staff who may have expertise in accessing funding. In Victoria, it was noted some organizations benefited by having “internal champions within their organizations that helped get funding.” (Victoria SCPI Focus Group)

7.7.8 *Benefits/Limitations of Private Sector Partnerships*

The partnerships and networks have been important in helping the entrepreneurial activities at the Auberge. The catering program has provided services for clients such as the Mayor of Montreal and the Cirque du Soleil, and the furniture workshop is refurbishing table and chairs for a large pub in the neighbourhood. At the Auberge, one of the methods to develop partnerships and to advance the projects has been “reflection” committees set up for each of the five training and employment areas. These meet about twice a year to look at the general goals, progress, and issues that arise, and serve as a forum to test ideas or ask for help.

The Calgary Drop-In Centre employs a full time fund raiser who works with Board members to solicit funding from the corporate sector. Some Board members represent corporate constituencies and these partnerships as well as the work of the fund raiser resulted in the collection of \$16 million dollars for capital expenditures, much of it from corporate donations.

While strategic partnerships and inter-agency collaboration are accepted as viable methods of securing service delivery, there are limits to the benefits of appealing to the corporate sector and relying on donors. As noted by Homes First, “The private sector can offer a lot, but it cannot provide operating funds.” One challenge lies in the nature of charitable solicitation which, to be successful, requires putting a “human face” on service users, e.g., producing a video of clients and telling their stories. This may violate confidentiality requirements and the privacy of clients. “That’s why government funding is easier.”

7.7.9 *Role of Formal/Informal Partnerships*

There is no doubt that agencies see the partnerships as essential; without them far less would be achieved. There was positive reaction to the on-going future use of partnerships and inter-agency collaboration, as the standard for delivering programs and services effectively. Agencies see it as an opportunity to cooperate with other centres, to get feedback and to build upon their individual strengths.

Looking to the future, as expressed by one agency,

“We see a growing partnership with Health and Welfare Canada and HRDC.”

The reasons for becoming involved in networking, collaborations and partnerships include:

- “get more bang for the money, more interesting as well;”
- combining resources “can’t unlimitedly provide everything clients need to improve their quality of life;”

- improving client services;
- “a window opens, it is your choice;”
- “it’s a way of getting the community to take ownership of the issues;”
- “it’s the way it has to be;” and,
- “now with the Federal homelessness initiatives, people have to collaborate, slowly becoming more collaborative as a result.”

There are also different kinds of networking and partnering. For example, partnering to respond to issues or concerns, or partnerships to create new projects, where some are partners in kind, intent, or funding through a shared contract.

7.7.10 Variations in Organizational Capacity and Implications for Partnerships

Cool Aid is an example of an organization that has worked extensively in a variety of partnership arrangements with a diverse set of organizations. It is an active participant in various local, regional and provincial associations and alliances.

Strategic partnerships and networking, internally and externally, are important to Cool Aid’s operation and aim of improving the overall delivery of services. The organization is more intimately networked than many agencies because of the variety of programs and services it offers – this drives more partners and networks.

*“A great deal of networking goes on, it is ‘what Cool Aid is known for’.”
 “Cool Aid cross promotes services, resources and information with other agencies in the community, this is in part because Cool Aid is so multi-faceted and intricately networked regarding homelessness and related services. An agency should be highly cross-promoting and therefore more holistic.”*

Cool Aid represents the type of larger agency that might be approached by government to look at ways of getting the community involved in action. To do so, they consider using words like “mutual clients” in order to work towards community collaborative goals. Cool Aid also suggests using the term “Community (not ‘Cool Aid’) Strategic Plan,” to help to neutralize the collaboration. The process may involve first co-location, then a move into collaboration and the end outcome may be a strategic partnership. The Executive Director notes the challenge is how you acknowledge smaller organizations that have collaborated and been absorbed into a larger agency in the process, possibly this is achieved by being centered on the clients. The process may be frustrated if there are significant variations in the organizational capacity that deter effective collaboration, e.g. staff resources.

7.7.11 Analysis – Lessons Learned

Given the growing need and complexity of problems, agencies are increasingly looking at ways to work together to collectively make efficient use of resources. The case study results generated some critical insights into the area of partnership activity.

“We need to find wiser ways of using existing resources. It is not about increasing (the supply of) money.” (Main Street)

The Need to Plan Structural Partnerships

A clear message was the need to pay attention to planning and structuring partnerships, in order to strive for greater efficiency in program delivery and administration. It was noted that while many agencies exhibit a willingness to partner or collaborate there is no infrastructure and resources to develop a proactive, practical strategy for creating and sustaining partnerships. Structural partnerships are needed and planning is required to make them work. Communication and planning functions need to be developed to support the provision of complementary services.

Strategic partnerships occur with funders and with community partners. Case studies highlighted the following:

- With ***funding partners*** there are formal contracts and relationships, e.g. quarterly account reporting. This involves working closely together, developing a regular reporting (activities and budget) relationship and personal contact such as inviting the funder to visit, regular e-mail contact on positive news stories (not just problems) and ‘thank you notes’; the partners need to work steadily to support the on-going relationship. The challenge is finding funding partners who are stable and committed over the long term; many are government agencies with programs that may have sunset clauses or are vulnerable to termination with changes in governments. Another perspective on funding partners was shared in the Victoria and Winnipeg SCPI Focus Groups, where it was noted the SCPI process was a positive and different experience. It was “much more open, bureaucrats will listen to what the Committee wants and what they want to do with the money, especially in larger cities where the bureaucrats do not know everyone in the community. A connection between local government and the Federal Government has developed – bureaucratic institutions are working as peers with community organizations developing process – there is a certain equality in the working relationship – the silo mentality is weakening and issues are viewed with greater credibility and receive more attention”

- With the *community partners*, it is relationship building that is pivotal to achieving ‘buy-in’ and success. Examples of community networks and partnerships exist on a number of levels within the community. In Cool Aid’s experience, a partnership truly exists when the community partners take ownership and everyone is involved – there is shared leadership, shared outcomes and shared resources, and the main community partners orbit around a cluster of services, network and partner around individual clients and around issues related to clients.

“In order for partnerships to work, you need broad plans that everybody buys into but broader planning is time consuming and costly and until we invest in this, it just becomes another layer in the community.” (Main Street)

“Proceed with caution, be proactive about how you set it up. If not, it will blow-up and revert to traditional approach.” Quote from Tommy Douglas was cited – “Make sure it works properly or you lose the opportunity for future collaborative efforts.” (Victoria SCPI Focus Group)

The Need for Capacity Building

For those organizations that have tended to operate on their own, with less reliance on partnerships, developing effective partnerships will be a capacity building exercise. This may be a difficult process, requiring changes to the board structure, and incorporation of new ideas on the operation of the organization. In fact the SCPI process is seen to have promoted capacity building through the development of collaborative processes and broad based partnerships among all stakeholders (private, non-profit and voluntary sectors and government), in the hope of forging more successful alliances and partnerships. Capacity building is, and will continue to be, key to successful program delivery. For example, under SCPI good governance and sound organizational structure are seen as the essential criteria for accessing the funding available by the service agencies.

To improve partnerships the following is needed as part of capacity building:

- i. Planning*
Explicit acknowledgement of the role of partnerships and actively pursue building partnerships through the strategic planning process, as well as in daily operations and in planning board membership. Some agencies already are doing this; others need to develop capability in this area.
- ii. Structure*
Boards should be structured to develop and enhance partnerships. The board structure should represent diverse partnerships. There has to be diversity to prevent a tunnel vision approach to dealing with the homeless,

to ensure a range of partners who provide different perspectives, come from different organizations, including the private sector, and bring with them expanded potential for funding, blending and sharing of services. Diverse partnerships also bring service providers together, facilitating collaborative and more comprehensive solutions.

iii. Support

It would be more constructive if a coordinated structure existed for the Boards (and in turn, agency staff) of local housing providers to specialize, collaborate, share resources, and develop and organize complementary service partnerships. Clear lines of responsibility are required. Mechanisms to facilitate sharing of information and resources are evolving, but with limited staff and budget this process could benefit from external support to structure the activities.

“We have to get sensible about working together because we are never going to have enough money for all of us to keep running solo, we have to find the best answer for the community we are in, but finding the answer requires a certain amount of structural support and we have to be valued.” (Main Street)

iv. The Value of the Partnership be Recognized

Considerable benefits accrue from the efforts of public, private and non-profit partnerships working together. For some agencies, such as Main Street, most of the partnership building is done through volunteer work and the agency feels this will have to change. Just as there is growing awareness of the role of the voluntary sector, it is also important that the value-added benefits of partnerships receive recognition. Ontario’s Promise is such an example. Initiated in November 2000, Ontario’s Promise⁵ is a province-wide “movement to help children and youth,” a “made in Ontario” version of the America’s Promise initiative that was created in 1997 by General Colin Powell, U.S. Secretary of State. It provides an impetus for partnership between public, private, and charitable sectors and has raised more than \$33-million of increased support for the voluntary sector. More than 135 organizations (corporations, community agencies, service clubs and professional organizations, and government) have joined as partners. As part of the Ontario’s Promise program, private sector partners as an “Agency of Promise,” receive media attention and are “promoted for their exemplary corporate citizenship in Ontario’s Promise publications and events.” The non-profit’s contribution is similarly acknowledged.

⁵ Information on Ontario’s Promise is drawn from a 10-page marketing supplement that appeared in the Globe and Mail (who is a partner and donated the space) on September 14, 2001.

The Benefits of Formal and Informal Partnerships

Although formal partnerships are important, many agencies have developed informal partnerships that have a significant role. The case studies show that these informal partnerships are just as important as formal partnerships in facilitating the delivery of programs, sharing of client information, cross client relationships, and helping agencies provide services they do not have in-house. The diversity of expertise often brought to the partnership/coalition allows individual agencies to add to their knowledge and help their own organizations' processes.

It is important to link with other community initiatives and not to work in isolation, and this can be achieved on an informal basis. Informal relationships and partnerships can be just as effective as the formal partnerships established through the board structure. Examples of community networks and partnerships exist on a number of levels within a community.

There is concern among organizations that an overriding constraint is the limited resource base with which agencies work. This may result in either collaboration or competition when funding opportunities arise. Similarly one challenge facing agencies is that when government withdraws funding, there is no single responsibility for addressing people's needs; rather there is a "hodge podge" of funding sources and requirements serving to exacerbate the situation. At this juncture, while the benefits of collaboration are evident there are also concerns about loss of independence through amalgamation of agencies and roles.

The level of competitiveness that exists in terms of funding arrangements and partnerships today is a source of frustration. One agency expressed the view that today's partnerships and funding arrangements have become almost too competitive and not supportive of the needs of the people being served. It is more difficult to develop partnerships when there is inter-agency competition for funding. Another perspective was that over the last few years, there has been lots of isolation and competition that has not worked.

"The benefit of building capacity through a focus on partnerships is that while the concrete outcome is broader and less tangible, there are strengths that come from working together." (Victoria SCPI Focus Group)

Successful collaboration means no turf wars or competition; the overriding objective is to meet the client's needs by bringing together the community resources required. Achieving this means sensitivity to the roles of collaborating organizations and recognizing their contributions to the partnership structure to generate a 'win-win' situation for all.

One respondent made the suggestion that the questionnaire used in this study could be adapted as an organizational tool for agencies trying to determine whether partnerships will work.

The Importance of Compatibility between Partnerships and Governance

For collaboration and partnering to work effectively in terms of sharing responsibility and accountability between partners there should be compatibility in the respective organizations' capacity (size) and stage of evolution, as well as in the level of trust between the organizations. Where organizations are not equals in governance issues, for example large and small organizations, it can often be a problem in establishing a collaborative process, as responsibility and accountability cannot be shared equally. There are organizations that are passionate about their clients but lack the business skills.

“We have to get sensible about working together because we are never going to have enough money for all of us to keep running solo, we have to find the best answer for the community we are in, but finding the answer requires a certain amount of structural support and we have to be valued.” (Main Street)

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APPENDIX A
SURVEY VEHICLES

Homeless Pre-Survey Information

Part A: Overview Questions

Name of Organization:

Location:

Approximate Date of Inception:

Comments:

Part B: Board Structure

Board:

1. Does the organization have a formal board structure? How many members are on the board?
2. What is the mandate, mission, or vision of the board?
3. What other types of public/private sector organizations or agencies are represented on the board?
4. Are there committees and subcommittees on the board? What are they? What role do they play?
5. Does the board report to any external parties (foundations, government department etc)?

Part C: Core Funding Sources

6. Does the organization prepare an annual report? Is it made public?

Part D: Program Delivery

7. What is the overall program objective of the agency? Is it to provide temporary shelter only or is it more diverse?
8. What programs are offered within each of the following categories (Health, Social, Housing, Financial, employment, life skills, etc)?
9. Describe the nature of each program, objectives, criteria, strengths, weaknesses, etc.

Homeless Mail-Out Survey

Part A: Overview Questions

Name of Organization:	
Location:	
Approximate Date of Inception:	
Person(s) Being Surveyed:	
Position(s):	
Date of Survey:	
Comments:	

Part B: Board Structure

Board:

1. Does the board establish strategic direction or is it more concerned with operational issues (funding, programming, allocation of resources, staffing) guiding principles and policy?
2. How often does the board meet?
3. Is decision making at board meetings done by consensus or majority vote?
4. Does the board have a constitution/Bylaw? Please forward a copy if possible.

Board Members:

5. How are board members selected (e.g. What particular areas of expertise or representation from public and private sector agencies do you look for)? Who appoints and elects directors?
6. Is there a set term for board members to serve, and what is the average length of service?
7. Are board members paid for their services?

Part C: Administration and General Staff

8. Does the agency have a Chief Executive Officer? An Executive Director? Program Managers? Who are they accountable to?

9. Is there a set of policies and guidelines that the agency follows? If so, who sets the policies/guidelines?
10. How is information about the agency disseminated to the public?
11. Can you provide an organizational chart?
12. What is the paid staff component of the agency? Describe the nature of the various positions? Provide job descriptions if available and salary ranges.
13. Are there policies/programs for training and development? If so, what are they?

Part D: Voluntary Sector

14. Approximately how many volunteers does the organization have?
15. What types of responsibilities do volunteers have (administrative, program delivery, front line, activities with clients)?
16. Are volunteers provided with job descriptions and a code of ethics?
17. Who provides job evaluations for the volunteers?

Part E: Core Funding Sources

18. What are the core sources of funding for the agency? What is the approximate percentage of each major contributor? What percentage is private vs. public?
19. What is the annual operating budget for the agency? Can you provide a copy?
20. Does the organization have charitable status and does it provide tax receipts for donations?

Part F: Core Client Base

21. In general, who are the clients being served by the agency?
22. Can you provide information on the socio-economic profile of the clients (families, single individuals, children, age, gender)?

Homeless In-Person Interview

Part A: Overview Questions

Name of Organization:	
Location:	
Approximate Date of Inception:	
Person Being Interviewed:	
Position:	
Date of Interview:	
Interviewer:	
Comments:	

Part B: Board Structure

Board:

1. Is the board's role one primarily of advising rather than directing operations? Does the Board play a role in fund raising?
2. What type of influence does the board have over daily operations of the agency? What sort of authority/administrative responsibility does it have for daily operations?
3. Does the board have a strategic plan? How is it developed? How often is it revised?
4. Has the board been able to structure strategic partnerships with other agencies? Please describe the purpose and nature of the partnerships.
5. Is there a code of conduct for the board to follow?
6. Are administrators accountable to the board?
7. Is the board accountable for any policy problems or issues that might arise?
8. Is the board liable for financial problems in the agency? Does the board have liability insurance?
9. How is the board evaluated, by whom, and how often?

10. What has been the most important issue that the board has dealt with in the past 12 months? How did you successfully deal with it?
11. What do you see as the most important challenge facing the board in the next 12-24 months?
12. Do you feel the board is effective?
13. What are the strengths and weaknesses with the current board structure?

Board Members:

14. How is board succession and renewal handled? Is there a nominating committee?
15. Do board members have clearly defined roles?
16. Do board members have decision-making authority for policy and operational issues?
17. Is there a conflict of interest policy for board members?
18. Do you have to deal with “burnout” or fatigue among the board members?

Part C: Administration and General Staff

19. How are the agency’s daily functions administered and who has overall authority for daily operations?
20. How are changes made to policies, guideline or mission statements? Do the changes need to be approved by the board (or other entity).
21. Do the organization’s policies, guidelines, mission statements or principles impact the daily operations in any significant manner (positive or negative)?
22. Do either the managers or administrators have regular meetings with the board or various committees to ensure that policies and objectives are being met? How are objectives/policies evaluated?
23. How are internal policy disputes settled? Is there a formal process?
24. What is the organization’s approach to handling external complaints made by clients and others?
25. Who hires the staff (is there a formal process followed)? What experience/training are they expected to have? Is training provided?
26. Is the performance of staff evaluated and if so how often and by whom?

27. What is the screening process for hiring (police or security check, bonded) and is there a code of ethics for them to follow?
28. Does the agency employ past clients? (Explore)
29. Do you feel staff “burn out” has been an issue? If so, why?
30. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the current staff structure?

Part D: Voluntary Sector

31. What training/experience are they expected to have? Is training provided?
32. How are volunteers screened?
33. What do you think motivates volunteers to get involved?
34. Do volunteers play an important role during financial difficulties?
35. How does the organization deal with liability issues related to the use of volunteers?
36. Does the agency share volunteers with other groups and vice versa?
37. Is there a recognition program to mark excellence in service by volunteers?
38. Are there any strengths or weaknesses with the volunteer component of the organization?

Part E: Core Funding Sources

39. What process is used to set the annual budget? Who structures the budget (Administrative staff, the board)?
40. Does the organization engage in fund raising campaigns? What is the nature of the campaigns? What types of campaigns are most successful?
41. Who oversees the agency’s assets and liabilities?
42. Who monitors and controls expenditures (CEO or the Board)? Who approves financial transactions? What happens with budget overruns? Who is accountable?
43. Has the organization faced serious funding difficulties, and if yes, how did they deal with the situation?
44. Do you feel the agency has the ability to sustain itself financially in the future? What challenges do you think you’ll face with respect to this thought?

Part F: Structural and Strategic Partnerships

Networking:

45. Is the organization a member of a network or group of related agencies or service providers? If yes, what is the nature of the relationship(s)? Probe networks of contacts.

46. What precipitating event or situation motivated collaboration?

47. Is information and knowledge shared within this network of organizations? Do you consider this relationship to be formal or informal?

48. Does your agency ‘cross promote’ services, resources or information with other agencies in the community?

Partnering:

49. What are the most important agencies you are most likely to deal with on a daily or frequent basis in the process of conducting day-to-day operations (see checklist for frequency of contact i.e daily, weekly, monthly)?

<i>Check List for Related Agencies and Groups</i>							
Housing Agencies:	<i>Frequency</i>	Social Services	<i>Frequency</i>	Health/ Medical:	<i>Frequency</i>	Other Sectors:	<i>Frequency</i>
<i>SRO</i>		<i>Food Banks</i>		<i>Addictions</i>			
<i>Hotels</i>		<i>Employment/</i>					
<i>Salvation</i>		<i>Job Training</i>					
<i>Army</i>		<i>Counselling</i>					
<i>Religious</i>		<i>Outreach</i>					
<i>Organizations</i>		<i>Workers</i>					
<i>Other:</i>		<i>Education</i>					

50. What are the most important government (federal, provincial, regional, municipal) departments that you deal with on a regular basis? How often do they meet? Is there a dedicated contact person?

51. What influence has criteria set by funders had on the membership and structure of the partnership?

52. Do you feel you could have achieved the same level of results without the partnerships in place?

Part G: Core Client Base

53. Is there a cultural/ethnic component to the client base?

54. Are any records kept on frequency of visits, nature of problems, etc.? Is there a follow-up program (e.g. counselling) for chronic users?

Part H: Program Delivery

55. Are there programs in place to address the basis causes of homelessness? (Expand on causes and provide examples of solutions)

56. Based on the needs of the clients, which programs could be expanded or strengthened?

57. Is the agency's ability to provide essential programs limited by any factors such as staff constraints (lack of training or expertise) or financial issues? Can you provide examples?

58. Has a lack of expertise, training or financial shortfalls contributed to any programs being terminated? If so, supply some examples.

59. Are any services currently being delivered jointly or otherwise through partnerships with other agencies? Please specify.

60. Over the past five to ten years, what are the most significant changes made by the agency to adapt to changing clientele, programs, and funding circumstances? Has this resulted in changes to the management or organizational structure? Explain.

Do you have any final comments on any of these issues we have been talking about?

APPENDIX B
CASE STUDY REPORTS

Case Study: Nova Scotia

Case Studies of:

Victory Over Violence (VOV) Emergency Teen Shelter

Interchurch Housing Society (ICHS)

Cape Breton Transition House Association (CBTHA)

**Victory Over Violence (VOV),
Interchurch Housing Society (ICHS),
Cape Breton Transition House Association (CBTHA):
Profile**

History

CBTHA and ICHS were founded during the 1970s, and VOV in 1997. CBTHA, located in Sydney, was founded by two women who had first hand experience of abused women, ICHS, located in New Minas, was first established as a sub-committee of the Wolfville Interchurch Council, and VOV, located in Kentville and New Minas, was established through the joint endeavours of a community committee and two local churches.

Mandate

CBTHA provides a secure and supportive shelter environment and second-stage housing for women and their children from all over Cape Breton Island who have been victims of family violence, including Aboriginal women from nearby reserves. CBTHA also provides a crisis line, counselling, outreach, public education services. ICHS originally was a delivery agent for CMHC and provincial housing programs; today it continues to manage its housing portfolio and serves as a support base for developing, funding and providing non-profit housing to families at risk of homelessness in the local area – both through their own programs and programs in other housing organizations. VOV manages a 7-day a week emergency shelter for youth ages 12-20 primarily from Kings County and the Annapolis Valley, a drop-in program, outreach discussion groups, a mentor program and employment counselling services.

The Board

CBTHA and ICHS have evolved from small hands-on board-run non-profit societies to organizations with hired staff and volunteers: CBTHA has a 15-member board that acts as an advisory board with an executive committee that serves as a management team; ICHS has a 10-member an advisory board. Some CBTHA and ICHS board members have served since their organization was first established. VOV has a 9-member ‘management’ board with a hands-on management style. Board membership in all 3 agencies is drawn from their local community. Representation includes the legal and financial professions, police, churches, business, community service organizations, and the construction trades. Most members are elected at the AGM, some are appointed by funding agencies. In addition to the usual oversight board role, members of all 3 boards are actively involved in fundraising and advocacy, and frequently in providing on-going support services to residents and clients. A unique aspect of CBTHA is the orientation manual presented to new members when they join the board. All of the boards have sub-committees, some standing, some ad hoc special purpose. The boards meet monthly and major decisions are based on a majority vote.

Funding Sources

Both CBTHA and VOV have core funding from the Nova Scotia Department of Community Services. CBTHA also has core funding from the Nova Scotia Department of

Health and VOV from HRDC. Foundations provide funding for both CBTHA and VOV. CBTHA recently qualified for provincial Shelter Enhancement Program funding. Core funding for ICHS was originally provided by federal and provincial housing contracts and grants; currently core funding is derived from rents, repayment of loans, housing management fees, and interest income. All 3 organizations are significantly involved in fundraising - gifts, bequests, donations and contributions of goods and services from charitable events and a wide variety of organizations - churches (local and national), service clubs, women's auxiliaries, businesses - and private donors. Establishing a trust fund and /or a committee to solicit and receive donations are typical fundraising approaches. As part of its fundraising strategy, ICHS obtained a loan from the Canadian Alternative Investment Cooperative and a Mission Grant from the United Church of Canada to aid in the development of its turn-key housing. VOV is currently planning a major fund-raising campaign at the local ski hill whose operator has contributed a staff member to help organize and coordinate efforts.

Strategic Planning

In April 2001, VOV received funding through HRDC's Youth Internship Program to fund a major research project to evaluate the current operation in preparation for a longer-term program development plan. On a monthly basis, the program coordinator prepares a summary status report on the organization's activities and the board chairperson delivers a report on the organization's programs and financial status. No formal evaluation has been conducted of the ICHS' programs, but informal assessment/monitoring of current programs is routinely conducted, with regular reports to the Interchurch Councils and other granting organizations. The executive director of CBTHA is the senior manager of both the business aspect of the association as well as programs and activities.

Current Issues

A number of issues are common to all 3 organizations: sustained funding (for the agencies and their partners); dependence on fundraising and the effect on donations as the local economy downturns; increased demand for services; board succession planning and board demands – “board membership requires dedication and many extra hours beyond the norm of a voluntary service position”; and staff - lower-pay scales, job demands that require them to work many hours beyond their job descriptions.

Partnerships

For all of 3 organizations, the sustained involvement of supportive community organizations has been critical for their development. Partnerships reflect the nature of the organization's programs and services and/or their origins.

VOV's strategic partnerships are maintained with local churches, the Haven Ministries, and the Kentville Interchurch Council, the police, Canadian Mental Health Association, and local businesses. Partnerships with provincial and federal government agencies are also important. VOV's closest relationship with a local agency has been "The Red Door," a health clinic serving teenagers and young adults in Kentville.

ICHS owes its origin to a unique partnership of local churches in the Town of Wolfville and has worked very closely with a number of other church-supported charitable groups including clothing depots, food banks, women's auxiliaries and community health services. As the society's programs expanded, there were a number of community partnerships with other housing organizations including South Central Nova Housing Association. In the mid-1980s, this organization reconstituted as Housing Assistance Non-Profit Development and the Interchurch Housing Society contracted services from HANDS to reduce staff and administrative overhead costs.

CBTHA's strength lies in its ongoing reciprocal community partnerships. CBTHA's most important partnerships are: the Inter Agency on Family Violence which represents 35 agencies and organizations and the Transition House Association of Nova Scotia, who provide a collective voice for obtaining core funding to support women's shelters across the province. CBTHA also works closely with the local police (who also provide meeting space at their headquarters). CBTHA supports the local women's centre and helps with activities of many local organizations, such as the Elizabeth Fry Society.

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Victory Over Violence (VOV) Emergency Teen Shelter

***Office Location is Kentville and Shelter Location is New Minas (Kings County)
Geographical Service Area is from Middleton to Windsor***

Founding Date: established in January 1997 by the Victory Over Violence community committee and two local churches.

1.0 Board Structure and Function

The organization was formally chartered in 1999 and since then it has had an active volunteer board with four officers: a chairperson, vice chairperson, secretary and treasurer. Currently, the Victory Over Violence board has 9 members including the chairperson. **A charitable number registration application is pending.**

The Board's mandate is to review and support the directions of the programs and to provide oversight of the shelter services and facility. The board also has the direct responsibility for assisting staff in community fund-raising events, soliciting donations and in applying for core funding from provincial and federal government sources as well as community-based sources of funding. This board acts in a management capacity as well as with a hands-on management style.

The main board subcommittees are as follows: a special committee for the upcoming Ski Martock fund-raising event and a committee-of-the-whole that met regularly this past Summer to provide assistance in finding a new location for the shelter when the former church location was lost. This shelter committee has solicited donations of goods and services to renovate the new location to make the surroundings more comfortable for staff and the youth clients. This new location has a kitchen, laundry and shower plus shelter staff offices and a sleeping area. The shelter has longer service hours than provided in the previous church location opening in the late afternoon for the "Stay Awhile" program in addition to later in the evening for overnight accommodation.

The board conducts their monthly meetings in a formal manner with minutes being taken mainly by the program coordinator or other staff members. General problems are resolved based on consensus decision-making. Following the organization's by-laws, important financial decisions regarding major changes to the organizational structure, services, programming and staffing are determined by polling the board members and the achievement of a majority vote. Once a month, the program coordinator prepares a summary status report on the organization's activities. As well, depending on the reporting cycle, the federal government and all other funding agencies receive formal reports. The board chairperson also delivers monthly reports on the organization's programs and financial status.

2.0 Board Membership

Several of the board members have served since the beginning of the organization. The board represents a diverse group of people mainly from the Kentville and New Minas

areas. Local police and the RCMP serve on the organization's board. Representatives of local retail businesses are board members as well as retirees including a school principal. A new minister recently appointed to a church in Kentville has joined the board. Because the core funding is mainly derived from HRDC and provincial sources, a representative from the local HRDC Career Resource Centre sits on the board. As well, a representative from a local law firm provides assistance to the organization and sits as an ex-officio member.

Board service is completely voluntary. However, recently a member of the board was paid to provide a staff development workshop on leadership and team building. The term for board members is not clearly spelled out in the articles of incorporation. Currently, board members serve as long as they are able to participate in the organization's activities. Three board members have left since 1999. Replacements are recruited both by other board members and the program coordinator. Appointment of board members and officers is currently conducted by consensus.

To date, a summary annual report has not been prepared, although it is anticipated that by March 2002, the target date for the first formal annual meeting, an annual report will be presented at this time. Eventually, when this annual meeting is held the scope of board membership and the appointment process may be expanded.

3.0 Administration and Staffing

The organization started with all volunteers running the shelter who were mainly students from Acadia University. A program coordinator was appointed and paid from the first start-up grants, which came mainly from community and church contributions. This same person is still serving in the position as coordinator and she reports directly to the board of directors. Currently, a new office manager and bookkeeper has been hired to look after the administration side as the organization has expanded.

Currently, the organization has 17 staff and three new student interns. The majority of the staff work part-time or job share with other staff. The shelter services are now mainly provided by paid staff and supplemented by relief volunteers. The employment and outreach programs, such as "Let's Talk About It," are provided by paid staff and student interns. The office support staff include paid employees, some contributions from volunteers for special services and a unique bridge of hiring program clients who share their expertise through outreach services and the mentor programs.

Staff development is just beginning to become a routine part of the organization's activities. Since the beginning, a fair amount of attention has been paid to proper training of staff and volunteers. Recently, a staff retreat was held to build leadership and team work skills. There was also special training on sexual harassment, racism and suicide prevention.

The organization has depended on a large pool of volunteers. Currently in addition to the nine active board members, the organization estimates they draw on a pool of

approximately 30 dedicated volunteers. The organization also has a small number of regular donors who serve as patrons in times of need. With the relocation to a new shelter location, one of these patrons has covered the first three months of rent.

4.0 Policies and Procedures

With the sensitive nature of providing emergency services to youth in crisis, the organization has developed very detailed formal procedures for intake when the youth arrive on their own or are escorted to the shelter by police. A status form is completed which notes their name, age, local address and contact person if available, school they attend, health card number and who should be contacted in case of an emergency. Allergies and special needs are noted as well. The youth are also asked how they found out about the shelter. A release form must be signed by the youth so that liability for loss or damage to the facility is assumed by the new client.

The volunteer or staff on duty also completes an observational client profile report which notes distinguishing characteristics of the youth's needs, behaviour and the reasons for coming to the shelter. Should a critical incident occur, a formal report must be filed.

Outreach services are less formal in their documentation of the clients. Basic demographic information is collected and the clients are asked to complete a program evaluation form. Given the nature of the assessment process for the mentor program, this provides greater opportunity for the documentation of information on the clients.

5.0 Communications and Public Relations

From the beginning, this organization has used multiple sources of publicity to create general public awareness and to reach local youth. There has been widespread distribution of brochures on the shelter and the outreach services. The Victory Over Violence Committee and the teen shelter have received consistent coverage in the local newspapers. The recent HRDC and Nova Scotia Community Services grant for the "Youth Internship Mentor Program" received national publicity. The opening of the shelter in its new location received publicity through radio, television and newspapers.

Staff and volunteers visit the local high schools to give presentations and to run information booths. A study was conducted in May 1999 to assess awareness of the teen shelter by local high school students. Recruitment of student volunteers has been conducted through visiting selected classes at Acadia University and the Kingstec campus of Nova Scotia Community College. Instructors at these institutions were also asked to pass out information cards to students who they think might have an interest in becoming a volunteer or fundraiser for the shelter.

An open house is being held in December 2001 to further enhance public awareness of the new shelter location and the expanded scope of services provided through the outreach and mentor programs.

6.0 Funding

Fundraising is an on-going activity and the large Ski Martock campaign has a staff member helping to organize and coordinate the efforts. The shelter has received a diverse base of financial support ranging from the Eastern Kings Memorial Foundation, individual churches, the Kentville Council of Churches, service clubs, women's auxiliaries and private donors. For example, the shelter recently received a donation from the Greenwood Knights of Columbus to support the provision of meals to youth who visit the shelter. Several new funding opportunities are being explored such as the federal/provincial Shelter Enhancement program.

In April 2001, the organization received \$212,416 in funding through HRDC's Youth Internship Program, which is geared to preventing homelessness. An additional \$84,000 was provided by Nova Scotia's Department of Community Services and private sector partners. This grant allowed VOV to expand the scope of their outreach services to employment counselling and mentoring.

7.0 Clients and Services

Currently, the employment program reaches clients of the Canadian Mental Health Association, the local Partners in Employment organization and increasingly, older youth in their early 20s along with young mothers on social assistance.

At the shelter as well, the original mandate of providing emergency housing services to youth between the ages of 16 to 18 has greatly expanded. First of all, youth under the age of 16 show up and are accommodated if it is ascertained they have a genuine need for emergency assistance. What was not anticipated when establishing the 16 to 18 age profile was the increasing number of youth aged 20 and over who are seeking assistance.

Recently, there has been a predominance of male shelter clients compared to two and one-half years ago when the clients were more evenly divided between young women and men. There is also an increasing number of young offenders using their services. The average distance traveled by youth is approximately 10 km. Among the youth who have traveled long distances from other parts of Nova Scotia or from New Brunswick, many are seeking work at the local fairs and festivals in the area or they are hoping to work on Valley farms, which are always hiring workers. Some youth attend school while staying at the shelter. Others will head to the Community Access Project (CAP) sites to retrieve their e-mail. Each year, between 60 and 100 youth use the shelter for a single night or for several consecutive days.

The RCMP find youth at the shopping malls and hitchhiking with no place to stay overnight. The military police at CFB Greenwood also bring kids to the shelter as do local Citizen patrols. With the new "Stay Awhile" program, it is expected that more youth will find their way to the shelter and to other services offered by VOV.

8.0 Community and Agency Partnerships

It is clear that this organization could not have developed without sustained involvement by dedicated individuals and supportive community organizations. Currently, their strategic partnerships are still maintained with local churches and the Church Council. This organization clearly works in collaboration with the RCMP and Kentville Police. They have an on-going partnership for provision of services with McDonald's restaurants and the local Canadian Tire franchise.

Their closest relationship with a local agency has been "The Red Door," a health clinic serving teenagers and young adults in Kentville since 1990. According to the VOV project coordinator, almost all of their clients are referred to The Red Door or they access the health clinic services directly. Currently, the clinic is run mostly by volunteers and it has lost its core funding from the Annapolis Valley District Health Authority. The VOV project will face a serious loss of support if The Red Door goes out of business. In the near future, both organizations will be exploring ways to extend or combine their services if such actions are feasible.

Interchurch Housing Society (ICHS)

Office Location is New Minas (Kings County)

Geographical Service Area is from Eastern Annapolis County, Kings County to the Hants Border, Shubenacadie and parts of Digby and Lunenburg Counties

Founding Date: established first as a subcommittee of the Wolfville Interchurch Council, the society emerged as a separate organization in 1971 and received charitable tax status the following year.

1.0 Board Structure and Function

The first organizational model was an active management-directed board of nine-members which ran the organization until projects were underway in 1976. When sufficient funds were raised to support hiring the first administrator and a secretary bookkeeper, the board adopted a less hands-on approach as an advisory board. Currently, the Interchurch Housing Society board has ten members including the president and staff coordinator. There are four officers: president, vice president, secretary and treasurer.

The board's mandate has changed considerably since the beginning. As of the late 1980s, the organization is no longer a delivery agent for CMHC and provincial housing programs. The ICHS board oversees the management of a small portfolio of non-profit cluster housing stock, which includes some units designated as second-stage housing in Kentville. Through fairly large-scale fundraising efforts to solicit contributions from individuals, local churches and national religious organizations, and the recent donation of land, the board has launched a third wave of activities focused on the development of turn-key homes delivered to needy families in the local area.

For the most part, the ICHS board now serves as an advisory board and meets as a committee of the whole. Most decisions are based on majority votes, which are recorded in the minutes of every meeting by the secretary. Recently, the board had two special committees one of which was designated to recruit and nominate a new slate of board members. The second committee assisted board members and others interested in the planning and development of an Abbeyfield residence for assisted living to be located in Wolfville. The ICHS held the separate funds in trust for the Abbeyfield residence until they could obtain registration as a separate non-profit society.

As a registered non-profit society, the organization advertises publicly and holds annual general meetings. The board meets regularly every month, but with ongoing activities members maintain fairly close contact with each other between meetings. The by-laws have not been reviewed or amended since 1986.

Since the major changes in the organization's structure in the early 1990s, no formal evaluation has been conducted of the society's programs although they participated in the federal government evaluations of the CMHC programs. Informal assessment and monitoring of the current programs is conducted routinely, however, because the society

must regularly report to both the Kentville and Wolfville Area Interchurch Councils. Similarly, regular reports are made to the United Church of Canada and to other granting organizations.

2.0 Board Membership

While the board of the Interchurch Housing Society has assumed an advisory board structure, the current board president helps with many administrative tasks and clearly steers the organization's day-to-day operations as well as its overall direction. Several clergy and church-delegated board members have served for over 20 years. Two retired businessmen and government representatives have served on the board for many years. As a result of long terms of service, many of the board members are aging in place. One long-serving board member from the clergy has written a review of the history of the Interchurch Housing Society over twenty years (Hergett, 1991).

Residents of the towns of Kentville and Wolfville seem to be equally represented on the current board. The ex- officio members of the board include the society's legal advisor and the staff coordinator.

The term for the board is clearly spelled out as three years from the date of his or her election. While the majority of the board members are elected, one member is still appointed directly by Wolfville Interchurch Council, the organization that founded the society. Given the pattern of long service on this board, it is clear that board members are regularly re-elected at the annual general meetings. It is also clear that few board members retire from office. No major business of the society can be conducted without a quorum of at least one-third of the board members present.

3.0 Administration and Staffing

The current staff coordinator had served on the ICHS board and was appointed after he retired from his job. His main responsibilities are to review the requests for Small Loans, to ensure maintenance of the Cluster Non-profit housing is completed and to collect rents as well as the last remaining payments from occupants of the few remaining Hearth Homes compact housing units for which the society still holds the mortgages. He also served as project manager for the development of the first, new turn-key housing unit.

The staff coordinator completes all of the financial reports and maintains the society office, which is located in space donated by the Annapolis Regional Housing Authority. The part-time, staff member handles clerical duties preparing minutes and other board materials. She manages the accounts and a client database. While this staff member may attend board meetings, she does not sit on the board.

In the early 1980s, this organization had 17 core staff in the office and several construction and maintenance crews. Volunteer support has always come directly through local clergy and the board of directors. Indirectly volunteer support has come through individual sponsoring church organizations. In addition, the society has benefited greatly

from in-kind gifts of free office space, supplies, building materials, professional services, and recently, a donation of land for construction of their turn-key homes. Not surprisingly during the 1980s, when 110 Hearth Homes were constructed as well as the Cluster Housing, there was a much larger pool of volunteers than there is today. Currently, there appears to be no program for board or staff development. It is anticipated, however, that volunteers and new board members will require orientation to the history and current activities of the organization.

4.0 Policies and Procedures

Given the considerable change in the scope and operational structure of this organization since its inception, it is not surprising that policies and procedures have evolved through several developmental phases as well.

Currently the main focus of the board is to encourage housing development by other organizations in addition to their own programs. The society continues to deliver affordable housing to families who without assistance may be homeless. The society also provides small loans to residents living at or below the poverty line. Recent requests to the loans program have come directly from struggling homeowners and tenants. The society provides money for oil, electricity as well as for critical home repairs and other assistance to help tenants with deposits and rent arrears. In the past, small loan requests only came through referrals from such groups as the local fire departments, churches, and provincial Family and Children's Services workers.

Most of the operating procedures for this organization are developed by the staff coordinator in consultation with the board. The procedures govern the small loans' program, property management and repair schedules, mortgage lending and rent collection. Any procedures that require borrowing of money or major financial commitments must be presented to the board for review and ratification. The procedures for the "Interchurch Housing (trust) Fund" and for granting loans are set out in the "memorandum of association." From the documents reviewed it is not clear how the procedures were developed for construction management of the most recent turn-key housing project.

5.0 Communications and Public Relations

To a large extent, this organization has depended on the various church newsletters, Interchurch Council communiqués and local newspapers for most of its publicity. Currently, there is no brochure or other widely distributed source of information on the organization. The only source of any significance is the history of the society entitled, Visible Faith: The Wolfville Area Interchurch council and The Interchurch Housing Society, 1970-1990 (Hergett, 1991).

Occasionally, staff and board members give talks or presentations to church groups and local organizations on the activities of the society. However, no systematic plan exists for outreach and publicity.

6.0 Funding

Through the Interchurch Housing Society (trust) Fund, the board may solicit and receive gifts, bequests, donations and contributions. Because the organization was almost wholly dependent on federal and provincial contracts and grants until the early 1990s, private fundraising was not as much of a priority as it is today. After the loss of the federal-government contracts, keeping their small staff was as much of a challenge as raising money for new programs and housing development. The board almost closed the society, but decided to try to raise enough money to get through the first year without government funding and they succeeded.

Currently, the core funding is derived from rents, repayment of loans, housing management fees, interest income, grants and a small amount of cash donations. In-kind donations are much larger than cash donations.

The board had a special fundraising committee for the turn-key house project. Included in this fundraising was a loan from the Canadian Alternative Investment Cooperative. In addition, the society has just recently received approval for a Mission Grant from the United Church of Canada. This grant will be paid over the next two to three years to cover outstanding debts from the first turn-key house and depending on the planning horizon, the development of a second turn-key house.

7.0 Clients and Services

Historically, the society has mainly focused on serving low-income families with children. They broadened their interpretation of families to include single parents, couples and widows for their Hearth Homes and for their turn-key housing. Low-income people with special needs and young people were seen as the clients of the scattered-site cluster housing. In Shubenacadie, cluster housing also accommodates Aboriginal single persons and families. In Kentville, several of the cluster housing units are rented as second-stage housing to accommodate women and children who are in transition from Chrysalis House, the local women's shelter.

With the occupancy of the turn-key house, a new client group was accommodated. The society has extended their eligibility status to include refugees. In this case, a family with two children from Kosovo was housed who decided to settle in the Kentville area. For over a year, this family had been living in very cramped and unsuitable accommodation.

8.0 Community and Agency Partnerships

Right from the beginning, this organization owes its origin to a unique partnership of local churches in the Town of Wolfville. Working together to develop housing alternatives were members of the Catholic Church, the United Church and the Anglican Church. The Interchurch Housing Society also worked very closely with a number of other church-supported charitable groups including the clothing depots, food pantries, women's auxiliaries and community health services. As the society's programs expanded,

there were a number of community partnerships with other housing organizations including South Central Nova Housing Association, which formed to deliver federal non-profit and cooperative housing programs. In the mid-1980s, this organization reconstituted as HANDS, Housing Assistance Non-Profit Development and the Interchurch Housing Society contracted services from HANDS to reduce staff and administrative overhead costs.

Currently, this organization works in partnership with the Fundy, Interchurch Food Bank located in the New Minas Baptist Church and with several other support service committees under the Wolfville Area Interchurch Council and the Kentville Council of Churches. These committees include the support groups for newcomers to the Kings County area and a local Housing Action Group.

Cape Breton Transition House Association (CBTHA)

Office and House Location is Sydney.

Geographical Service Area is the Cape Breton Regional Municipality including Glace Bay and other communities in the former area of Cape Breton County

***Founding Date:* founded in 1979 and the organization was formally established in 1980 when the articles of incorporation and the by-laws were submitted to the province. The Cape Breton Transition House was the first women's shelter and crisis counselling service in the province outside of Metro. Halifax.**

1.0 Board Structure and Function

One of the first activities of the founding group was to raise money and to formally constitute a board of directors. The original board was made up of 12 concerned individuals and representatives from supportive agencies. The board applied for non-profit society status and submitted the articles of incorporation and by-laws to the province.

The Cape Breton Transition House Association was officially launched in 1980. At this time, the society's model of operation was a hands-on board acting as a steering committee. The members of the board carried the tasks of hiring staff and fundraising, along with planning the society's programming. In the early stages of the association's development, board members sought guidance and direction from provincial women's organizations and Byrony House, the first women's transition house in the province.

The association took a little more than a year to renovate a five-bedroom house for their first facility. The house opened officially in February 1981 with 24 hour-a-day shelter service accommodating 20 women and their children. This house is still being used today for both association services and as a shelter. Crisis counselling service was offered to all women who contacted the organization by phone and to women who sought refuge at the house. Very early on, the staff and board recognized the need for children's programming, court support and advocacy work, police-community relations, and follow-up support and services to women after they left the shelter.

The board's mandate has changed very little since the founding years. The board's responsibility is to provide a secure and supportive shelter environment for women and their children who have been victims of family violence. The board supports the work of the association's professional staff and volunteers. The board also supports the associations dedicated outreach and public education services to schools and the community. The board participates in advocacy work on behalf of abused women and children. The board's organizational structure has changed to a combination of advisory board and the more active members of the board's executive serve as a management team. Several board members also provide free professional services to the organization.

Because of the range of services and activities of the transition house association, the board has eight working and oversight standing committees. The committees related to

programming are childcare, education and outreach, house and safety, as well as second stage housing. The committees related to management and staffing are finance, labour-management, personnel and negotiation, and a committee on staff and resident development. Given this committee structure, it should be noted that all but the executive staff at the transition house are in a CUPE local bargaining unit. Board labour-management and personnel committees are required as part of the collective agreement.

The original fundraising committee formed in 1979 during the organization's founding year and became a separate organization in 1986. The Friend's of Transition House Foundation Society raises money to support projects and programs of the association through solicitation of grants, gifts, bequests and contributions. They hold the charitable tax number for the association. The Friend's society also solicits specific contributions of money, supplies and furnishings for the transition house, offices and second stage housing. The Friend's society is located in downtown office space along with the public education services department of the association.

The current 19-member board conducts monthly meetings in a formal manner with minutes and committee reports. Not all committees meet each month so that committee reports may vary with each meeting. The Finance committee may meet more often depending on the time of the year. As well, the personnel committee meets more often during contract negotiation periods.

The organization's bylaws stipulate a quorum of 10 members and all-important financial decisions must be subject to majority vote plus one. Any significant change to the organization's structure and operations must be presented to the board for approval as well as brought before the annual general meeting. The president or board members may also call an extraordinary general meeting should the need arise. The officers of the board include a president, vice-president, secretary and treasurer and are elected for one-year terms.

A unique aspect of this organization is the very thorough orientation manual presented to new members when they join the board. Last revised in 1997, the manual covers responsibilities and expectations of members, the committee structure, the role of the executive director in relation to the board, staff job responsibilities, the memorandum of association and the bylaws. Also contained in the manual is a brief descriptive history of the transition house and related agencies along with a history of the development of transition house services in Nova Scotia. Through the Transition House Association of Nova Scotia, selected members of the Cape Breton Transition House board attend the yearly THA leadership training workshops.

2.0 Board Membership

Representatives on the current board come from a wide range of community organizations and services mostly in the greater Sydney area. There is a representative of the Cape Breton Regional Police and there have been RCMP officers as board members in the past. There are several professional representatives who are social workers, a doctor, lawyer and accountant. Several board members also represent trades and services

such as in construction and carpentry. A retired contractor has taken over responsibility for property management and upkeep of the house and the second-stage housing.

While the term for board members is three years, the past president has served as a board member for over ten years. She brought both her skills in accountancy as well as her experience as an administrator of the regional housing authority to the association. Several members of the board have served for many years including a social worker that received a distinguished service award at the June 2001 annual meeting. He had served on the board since the early 1980s. A unique aspect of the board's composition is the prominent role played by men who serve as the chair of several board committees as well as their involvement in community education and advocacy.

The association board membership has always been large and several of the standing committees may also include non-board member volunteers who serve as resource people to help with the committee's responsibilities. The association has also had a few representatives from local clergy on the board as well as local nuns from the Sisters of Ste. Martha. Occasionally, members of the local Black community in Whitney Pier and the Membertou First Nation have participated on board committees. According to a past president, in the early years of the organization, there was better representation on the board from smaller communities in Cape Breton and surrounding counties. Today, the composition of the board is mainly from the urban area around Sydney.

3.0 Administration and Staffing

Staffing of the organization has grown considerably since the founding years when the organization had five staff members including the director. Presently, there are ten full-time staff including the executive director and at various times twice as many part-time staff who serve as relief workers.

The executive director is the senior manager of both the business aspect of the association as well as programs and activities. She sits as an ex-officio member on all of the board standing committees and is generally expected to attend all of these meetings. The executive director is also expected to be the association's chief advocate in the community and to be a leader in addressing concerns regarding the impact of family violence on women and children.

The senior staff supervise the overall operation of the crisis counselling and shelter facility services. The staff provide orientation and direction to students and volunteers who help with the shelter's services and they supervise all the part-time relief workers. The household manager takes responsibility for all supplies and services for operation of the facility, food preparation, medical care and supplies, and the overall cleanliness of the house. This person also provides the orientation to new residents about house rules and procedures.

Because the system of payments for reimbursement is very complex and sources of collection range from the province and municipalities, to Indian Affairs and occasionally out of province sources, a full-time bookkeeper, accounts office manager is needed. This

staff member completes the payroll, and handles the processing of all expense claims and payments. This staff member also works directly with the board finance committee.

Other staff positions include crisis-support counsellors, a children's counsellor and outreach workers. One of the most important staff positions is the public educator who coordinates the educational program and runs the support groups. In addition, this staff member is currently carrying the duties of manager of the second-stage housing and serves as a facilitator for the Second Chance inter-agency training sessions.

The staff of the association applied for research grants in the 1980s to document the history of family violence in the region and the characteristics of the clients that have used the organization's services.

4.0 Policies and Procedures

Given the nature of this service, policies and procedures are required to meet the internal objectives of the organization as well as to meet the requirements of the provincial government for health, housing, fire codes, personal safety and financial support.

The house is a controlled-access environment with a recently installed video-camera security system. Police regularly visit the house and often escort new residents to the premises. New staff must pass police background checks because of the nature of the services and the presence of young children.

Every activity has a set of procedures and a check list to follow which helps new staff and volunteers with problem-solving should the need arise. The most detailed procedures are listed for admission and discharge in the House policy manual. Separate guidelines and procedures exist for answering the telephone crisis line and handling distress calls. There are also procedures to follow when the association staff or volunteers support women who appear in court.

Currently, the organization has a no drug or alcohol on the premises policy. They feel that more staff training is needed in the area of substance use and abuse as well as in helping residents who have mental health and multiple problems. The procedures' manuals do not provide enough guidance to staff and volunteers. As a result, bi-monthly case conference meetings with facilitators from Mental Health and Addictions services provide support and guidance to staff. Should a resident have to be evicted procedures are in place to ensure that they always have another place to stay.

In the past year, the staff and resident development committee of the board reviewed the policy for unpaid workers (volunteers and student placements), the procedure for release of information, the procedure for searching a resident's room, and the public health problems of head lice, etc.

5.0 Communications and Public Relations

The association uses a series of publicity campaigns throughout the year to draw attention to its services and to create greater public awareness about family violence. National Family Violence Week and the Purple Ribbon Campaign are two examples of their community strategies to build public awareness. Once a year, the association runs a major local newspaper ad, which outlines the nature of their activities and solicits support from the community. Through the downtown office, brochures and other information is distributed. The association places this information in public places such as local malls, at the hospital and in doctor's offices. They also distribute information in the schools.

Staff, board members and volunteers from the association are frequently asked to speak to local organizations, service clubs, women's and seniors groups. Several of these organizations also donate to the organization. The media profile is carried for the organization by the executive director who also participates in lobbying the provincial government in Halifax on behalf of women victims of family violence.

6.0 Funding

The initial association activities were concentrated on raising money for the shelter and public education. Early on, the board established a separate house committee to raise money for the purchase of a home in a centrally located residential area of Sydney. The society's 1996 newspaper advertisement describes the first fund-raising campaign, which netted \$30,000, and claims up to 700 community volunteers. The provincial government matched the \$30,000 amount, and within the next few months a house was purchased.

Since these first activities, fundraising has been an on-going activity conducted mainly by the Friends of Transition House. Several fundraising activities have netted new gifts and contributions of money, goods and services to the organization. The Friends rely on plant sales, flea markets, benefit nights, concerts and private donations. At Christmas time, toys and gifts are received and distributed to current and past residents. Because of the downturn in the local economy, private donations and contributions to charity events have decreased.

Core funding to the organization comes from the provincial government through the Departments of Community Services and Health. The province pays a per diem for resident's accommodation and for the outreach and crisis counselling. Previously, the core funding had to be collected from both municipalities and the provincial government. The largest private source of funding is a core grant from the Law Foundation of Nova Scotia, which supports the public educator's position and some of the programming. Recently, the association qualified for Shelter Enhancement funding, which assisted the installation of a wheelchair lift to provide access to the front door. As well, a new playground was developed in the back yard for the children who reside or use the facility's services.

7.0 Clients and Services

Every year the Transition House Association's annual report provides detailed data on the demographic characteristics of clients and their use of the association's facility, crisis telephone line and outreach programs.

The number of distress calls increased from nearly 4200 (1999-2000) to a little over 5200 (2000-2001). The number of distress interviews decreased from 505 to 447 over the same period. The total number of women served was 120 and increased to 126 covering this same period. The number of children admitted was down slightly from 87 to 76. Most women have one or two children, but occasionally women may come with up to four children and with older teenagers. The majority of women residents are not working and they are fairly evenly divided between being single and married. Most of the women come from Sydney, Glace Bay and the former Cape Breton County.

Almost half of the referral sources are the women themselves and their friends. About one third report their main referral sources are the police and social workers. Some of the residents report being homeless when entering the facility. It is interesting to note that external events in the Sydney area such as closure of the steel plant and the remaining coalmines have not to date increased the caseload at the house, but these events may have increased the number of distress calls. The confidential nature of many of the association's outreach programs prevents detailed reporting except to classify some of this work as part of the distress interviewing process.

Occupancy remains steady at Callwood House in Sydney, the second-stage housing owned by New Dawn Enterprises and rented by the association. This housing project had fewer problems than in previous years. MacAdam Place in Glace Bay has a low occupancy rate, which has caused considerable concern to the association board. In addition, major repairs were required some of which were covered by financial assistance from the federal/provincial Shelter Enhancement Program.

8.0 Community and Agency Partnerships

The strength of this organization lies in its ongoing community partnerships. These partnerships appear to be reciprocal in that the association benefits greatly from these relationships and gives back as well. This organization works very closely with the local police who often bring staff coffee in the morning and allow the association to hold board meetings at their headquarters. The organization also supports the local women's centre and helps with activities of many local organizations such as the Elizabeth Fry Society.

The organization has several strategic partnerships. The most important partnership is the Inter Agency on Family Violence, which represents 35 agencies and organizations. Through cooperative efforts, a colloquium on family violence was held which recommended a work plan for the community. A media awareness day was held in the past year to bring attention to unemployment and social problems and how they relate to family violence. The Inter Agency also continues to receive funds from the provincial

Departments of Justice and Community Services to support the police-based intervention program to victims of family violence. The second most important partnership is the association's involvement in the Transition House Association of Nova Scotia, which provides a collective voice for obtaining the core funding which supports women's shelters across the province.

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Summary of Programs and Services offered by each organization:

VOV Emergency Teen Shelter

7-day a week Overnight Shelter Services for Youth

5-day a week Stay Awhile Drop-in Program

Let's Talk About It, community outreach discussion groups

Mentor Program for youth at risk starting work terms

Employment Counselling Services

Interchurch Housing Society

Small Loans Program

Hearth Homes

Non-profit Cluster Housing

Turn-key House Projects

Abbeyfield Residence

Cape Breton Transition House Association

7-day a week Extended Stay Shelter Services for Women and Children

7-day a week Crisis Telephone Line

Second-Stage Housing in Sydney and Glace Bay

Special Crisis and Addictions Counselling for Women

Special Counselling Services for Children and Teens

Transition House Public Education Services on Abuse and Family Violence

Outreach Support Groups in Glace Bay, North Sydney and Sydney

Second Chance Outreach for Men who are abusive and Women who are abused

Summary of Community and Agency Partnerships:

VOV Emergency Teen Shelter

The Red Door, teen and young adult health clinic
The Haven Ministries
Kentville Interchurch Council
McDonalds and Canadian Tire for work terms
Nova Scotia Community Services
Canadian Mental Health Association
Career Resource Centre, HRDC
Local Police and RCMP Detachment

Interchurch Housing Society

Wolfville and Area Interchurch Council
Kentville Interchurch Council
Fundy Interchurch Food Bank
Chrysalis Women's Transition House
Dept. of Housing, Nova Scotia Dept. of Community Services
Division of Mission, United Church of Canada

Cape Breton Transition House Association

Cape Breton Regional Police
Local RCMP Detachment
Cape Breton Regional Hospital
Cape Breton Inter Agency on Family Violence
Membertou Mik'maq Social Services
Elizabeth Fry Society
Everywomen's Centre
Friends of Transition House
New Dawn Enterprises
Nova Scotia Dept. of Community Services
Victims Services, Nova Scotia Dept. of Justice
Transition House Association of Nova Scotia
Byrony House, Halifax

Formal reports are provided to federal government departments that provide core funding.

Case Study: Québec

Case Study of:
Auberge Communautaire du Sud-Ouest

Auberge Communautaire du Sud-Ouest: Profile

History

Established in 1987, the core activity of *Auberge* was to provide transitional housing for 18-29 year-old youth. Over the years other programs and services have been developed as a response to the changing needs of their clients: a permanent housing program (*Les Habitations "La Suite"*) and support for independent living (*Programme "Envol"*); as well as range of employment and support services (*Azimut*).

Mandate and Philosophy

Philosophie d'Intervention guides the work of the *Auberge*. Included are twenty-one principles and how these are translated into action. The approach grew out of a reaction to the clinical model, which treats symptoms of problems in isolation and problems are seen primarily as an individual's lack of adaptation. Instead, *Auberge* sees addresses youth homelessness through improving socio-economic conditions, development of supportive social networks and a more positive sense of self. At the heart of this approach is increased of self-esteem and solidarity with others.

The Board

Auberge has a 12-member board comprised of Associates; residents or ex-residents; and salaried employees. The Executive Director is a non-voting member. Two additional members can be added if other expertise is needed. Board membership is stable; some have been members for 15 years, others are new. Inclusion of residents and ex-residents is valued - their input is considered one of the board's strengths. The board's role is to receive, discuss and decide upon information provided by the Executive Director. The board gives direction to projects being developed, finds solutions where needed, while day-to-day operations are left to the Executive Director. Regular communication between the Director and the President is a key. The board recently reinstated monthly meetings to improve awareness of issues and continuity. Board members are no longer required to participate in committees - a requirement that was felt to be too time-consuming and demanding. The board executive meets with committees on a regular basis and reports back to the Board.

Funding Sources

The provincial government provides *Auberge's* largest single source of funding, with other funders including the City of Montreal, Centraide and the J.A. DeSève Foundation. Rent, donations and membership dues provide other revenue. Fundraising has evolved over the years and various approaches are used: bazaars, benefit suppers, a penny drive with the *Auberges du Cœur*, and a lottery of the Ailes de la Mode (a department store) Foundation. Keeping members informed through a newsletter is seen as the critical factor to successful fundraising. *Azimut* is funded through the provincial fund for the Fight Against Poverty, the Cities of Montreal and of Verdun, and Centraide. While *Auberge's* core funding is stable, *Envol*, lost its funding from the Regional Health Board in 2000. Reserve funds permitted the project to continue and the project has been accepted under the SCPI program.

Strategic Planning

Staff (the Director and the Co-ordination Committee) are responsible for day-to-day decision-making. This committee meets on a weekly basis. The strategic planning process includes a five- year plan and an annual report and plan. These are discussed and adopted at an annual weekend meeting attended by Board members, members, volunteers, residents and employees. Future goals discussed at this session are referred to the Orientation Committee, which reports to the Board and General Assembly.

Current Issues

A continuing challenge for *Auberge* has been expanding services in response to client needs and ensuring continuity in programs, given the limited size of the staff. A pressing problem is the relationship (and consolidation) of the 3 services provided by *Auberge*. One issue is the equalization of pay scales and benefits as a result varying funding sources, differing programs and expertise, and the rapid growth of pilot programs, especially *Azimut*. *Azimut*'s budget (much of which is derived from production) is expected soon to be greater than that of transitional housing, a function considered to be at the heart of the *Auberge*. There is concern about the impact on *Auberge*'s original objectives - the Board is aware that as production becomes a greater proportion of funding, production rather than development and training of the youth may begin to drive the project.

Partnerships

Auberge's partners include funders as well as community organizations or networks (e.g. *Regroupement pour la relance économique et sociale du Sud-Ouest*, *Concertation jeunesse sur l'emploi du sud-ouest*, *Table de concertation Ville-Émard/Côte St-Paul*, and *Bâtir son Quartier*, a technical resource group based in the south-west part of the city). *Auberge* also participates in the *Regroupement intersectoriel des organismes communautaires de Montréal* (an intersectoral coalition of community organizations) and the Montreal Consortium for Human Rights Advocacy Training based at McGill University. *Auberge* is a member of several local and provincial organizations that deal with homelessness (e.g. *Réseau d'aide aux personnes seules et itinérantes de Montréal* and *Les Auberges du Cœur*). *Auberge* also has participated on governmental bodies such as the regional health board and continues to participate on a provincial Council on health and welfare that is linked to the Ministry of Health and Social Services. Networks developed by the Director, who has been with the *Auberge* for 17 years, are considered important.

In addition to public sector funding partners (e.g. Québec's *Fonds de Lutte Contre la Pauvret*, HRDC, the City, Centraide, Industry Canada, the *Ministère des Affaires municipales et de la Métropole*, and the Montreal School Board), the private sector plays an important role in *Azimut* in 3 of its 5 training and employment programs (e.g. the community computer facility is located in a donated building). IBM has donated computers, the high speed Internet connection was donated by Bell, the catering platform and the furniture workshop have provided services to various clients and local businesses. To develop partnerships and advance projects, support committees are set up, comprised

of *Auberge* staff, participants/ former participants, and representatives from a school that is specialized in the pertinent field, another insertion project, and industry.

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1.0 Background

1.1 History

Established in 1987, the core activity of the *Auberge* is transitional housing for 18-29 year-old youth. Over the years other programs and services beyond the initial 21 units have been developed to respond to evolving needs. Services and programs that are now offered include *Azimut*, a pre-employment and employment pilot project, *Envol* independent living support and *La Suite*, permanent housing.

1.2 Philosophy

The philosophy that guides the work of the *Auberge* is contained in a 1989 document, *Philosophie d'Intervention*⁶, which lists twenty-one principles and how these are translated into action. The approach of the *Auberge* grew out of a reaction to the clinical model, which treats symptoms of problems in isolation and problems are seen primarily as an individual's lack of adaptation. The individual is labelled and perceived in terms of the label, e.g. homeless, addict, etc. While the clinical model is acknowledged to be efficient in dealing with crises, the *Auberge* focuses on the desire of youths to change their situation and realize their potential. The objective then becomes giving individuals the desire to live, to find pleasure in their lives, and to give a sense of possibilities. At the heart of this approach is increased self-esteem and solidarity with others.

The principles that guide the work of the *Auberge* include:

- The problem of youth homelessness is more than individual problems of adaptation and is rooted in poverty, social isolation and exclusion. This principle is translated into action through improvement of socio-economic conditions, development of supportive social networks and a more positive sense of self.
- Act on the quality of life and on personal, social and economic well-being. This principle is fundamental in the approach of transitional housing at the *Auberge*; persons can stay up to a year, each has their own room, and support is given to help reorient their lives. The development of a social network is an important element of the intervention.
- Develop a global approach to the conditions of homeless youth. This principle is carried out in the initial contact with residents. The *Auberge* team takes a few weeks at the beginning to examine the person's situation, including social networks, economic situation and personal problems. Strengths, weaknesses, accomplishments, plans for the future and what is needed to realize these are identified. The means to acquire missing elements are then explored.

Other principles include development of a community approach which translates into weekly resident meetings, regular consultation with residents, residents with voting rights in the General Assembly, ex-residents who can continue to be members of the *Auberge*, and outreach to the wider community to participate as volunteers and become associate

⁶ *Philosophie d'Intervention*, Comité d'Orientation, L'Auberge Communautaire du Sud-Ouest, Montréal, Août 1989

members of the Corporation. Some principles focus on the goals of the youth, such as helping them take back control of their lives and exercise their right to choose. In practice this principle translates into respecting the goals that have been chosen and giving the tools to reach these while allowing for mistakes. Solidarity, co-operation and support between peers is another principle that leads to emphasis, where possible, on group processes and the confirmation of the place of the resident in the structure of the *Auberge*. Other principles include intervention on a basis of equality as much as possible (and identification where in the intervention this is not possible); intervention on a basis of trust (and clear indication when this is no longer the case); intervention on a voluntary and negotiated basis (and indication of the limits of what is negotiable); the guarantee to residents of the right to a private life and self-determination; recognition of the right to mistakes; intervention that is focused primarily on the present and the future while helping mourn the past; non duplication of existing community resources.

2.0 Board Structure

2.1 *Members of the Corporation*

There are three categories of members

- Founding members – the six founders of the *Auberge*
- Regular members
 - Residents – all persons who are resident of the *Auberge* and have a residency agreement;
 - Participants – all persons who are receiving services from the *Auberge*, whether they have been residents or not;
 - Associates – neither resident nor participant but pay their dues and/or volunteer.
- “Sympathizer” those who contribute to the work of the *Auberge* without being regular members.

Founding members and regular members have voting rights.

2.2 *Board of Directors*

The Board is composed of 12 members:

- 7 representing the Associates;
- 3 representing the residents or ex-residents;
- 1 representing salaried employees, excluding the Executive Director.

The Executive Director is a non-voting member.

Two additional Board members can be added to acquire expertise that may be needed by the Board. This addition of “co-opted” members is consensual and decided upon during a regular meeting of the General Assembly.

The Board of Directors gives itself an internal working structure, elects a president, vice-president, secretary and treasurer. The Board hires the Director, approves hiring of staff and takes all decisions on contracts and commitments over \$1,000.

2.3 *The Role of the Board*

The bylaws describe the role of the Board as, “accomplish all the actions necessary to realize the objectives that the organization is pursuing...” The role of the Board, according to both the President and Executive Director, is to receive, discuss and decide upon information furnished by the Executive Director. The Board gives direction to projects being developed, finds solutions where needed while day-to-day operations are left to the Executive Director. The Director establishes the Board’s agenda, but this is done in close collaboration with the President and the Co-ordination Committee (see below). The relationship between the Director and the President is one that rests on regular communication.

2.4 *Strategic Planning*

The strategic planning process includes a five year plan and an annual report and plan. These are discussed and adopted at an annual weekend meeting attended by Board members, members, volunteers, residents and employees. Future goals discussed at this session are referred to the Orientation Committee that then brings these to the Board and General Assembly.

2.5 *Current Issues*

The expansion of services in response to the needs of the residents is one of the major issues confronting the Board and the overall organization. Three distinct services are now offered: transitional housing, post-transitional housing services and pre-employment and employment training. The issues that are emerging revolve around consolidation of these three services. *Azimut*, an employment pilot program, has grown rapidly during its first three years. The budget in the first year was \$30,000 and is projected to be \$600,000 - \$800,000 for the third year. It is expected that it will soon be greater than that of transitional housing, a function that is considered to be at the heart of the *Auberge*. Furthermore, it is expected that an increasing proportion of the *Azimut* budget come from production and thereby closer to market forces. (This was originally to be 50% of the budget by the fifth year, but is projected to be less.) The Board is aware that as production begins to be a greater proportion of funding, there is danger that production rather than development and training of the youth, begins to drive the project.

The challenges that the rapid growth of *Azimut* bring to the Board are on two levels; the first is ensuring that this project does not modify the original objectives of the *Auberge*, and the second is that it not financially endanger other services. An option that might be considered for *Azimut* is a separate corporation with control by the Board of the *Auberge*. However, the *Auberge* is grappling with a recent experience of *Bon Ménagement*, a housecleaning employment project that established a separate structure from the *Auberge*

once the project was stable. However, due to mismanagement and inexperience, the project eventually folded. The ending of a project, in which the *Auberge* had invested time and resources, has led the Board to be very cautious in relinquishing control. Nonetheless, *La Suite*, a housing project for youths who have been residents of the *Auberge*, is resident-controlled (four of the six Board members).

2.6 Strengths and Weaknesses

When asked about the strengths of the present Board structure both the Director and the President spoke of equilibrium in the membership. Membership is stable; some have been members for fifteen years, others are new to the *Auberge*. Over the years, persons have been involved in the *Auberge* in different capacities, withdrawn for a period of time and then returned. For example, the President was an employee of the *Auberge* from 1988-91, withdrew from active involvement for a few years, and has been President for two years.

The presence of the residents and ex-residents greatly valued; their input is considered one of the great strengths of the structure and operation. Membership in the Corporation is large and diverse but according to the Director, “with continuity in the ideas and objectives”.

The Board has tried different procedures and methods of operation. There has been a recent return to monthly meetings after a year of meetings every two months to reduce the demands on the Board. Members found that they were not sufficiently aware of issues and continuity was difficult. However, the expectation that each Board member participate in one committee has been eliminated, a requirement that was felt to be too time-consuming and demanding. To keep in touch with issues and activities of the various committees, the Executive of the Board now meets with these on a regular basis and reports back to the Board.

3.0 Administration and General Staff

3.1 Structure

The Director and the Co-ordination Committee undertake the day-to-day decision making. This Committee is composed of the Director, assistant director, daytime coordinator, nighttime coordinator, and the *Azimuth* and *Envol* project managers. This committee meets on a weekly basis just before the team meeting. All levels of issue are discussed at the team meetings – the progress of the youth, problems, and planning. If major issues, such as recent discussions of youth working “under the table” are raised, these can be sent to the Orientation Committee, which can then bring the discussion to the Board. This is generally the process for policy modification initiated by employees.

The Director is central to much of the decision-making, but this is often shared with coordinators (e.g. budgeting) or committees (e.g. the selection committee for hiring). A similar process is followed for internal policy disputes; issues may be brought forth by one of the committees then followed through by the team of employees, the Coordinating

Committee, the Orientation Committee and then to the Board. External complaints, on the other hand, would go directly from the Director to the Board.

3.2 *Hiring and Evaluation of Employees*

A selection committee made up of a coordinator, resident or ex-resident and member of the corporation undertake hiring of employees. For most positions at the *Auberge*, general capabilities, rather than a specific background are required, although each program may have more particular qualifications. While no formal training is given to new employees, the coordinator will supervise and closely collaborate for a period of time.

The *Auberge* has an annual evaluation of employees. This is done by a committee made up of a resident, a coordinator, and a member of the Corporation. The process involves not only looking at the employees' strengths and weaknesses but also discussing mutually recognized needs, such as training.

3.3 *Current Issues*

A major issue confronting the Board in the next year is equalization of pay scales and benefits of the three sectors of the *Auberge* (i.e. residential, employment, and post-residential services). The complexity of the issue stems not only from varying funding sources, related in part to differing programs and expertise required, but also to the rapid growth of the pilot programs, especially *Azimut*, which is expected to have a budget that surpasses that of the transitional housing in the next year.

Other issues such as “burnout” are not felt to be very important at this point, although they have been of concern in the past. There is acknowledgement that the work is demanding and that salaries are relatively low but over the years better definition of responsibilities and clearer lines of communication have helped reduce the problem of burnout.

In the early years, there was a drift towards a more “clinical” approach. Overcoming this tendency, which threatened both the method of working and the underlying philosophy, required energy and team work. This is seen as one of the major issues that the *Auberge* has confronted in the last fifteen years.

One area of concern, expressed by the President of the Board, is the difficulty of assuring continuity in programs because of the limited size of the staff. A few more staff members would allow flexibility and guarantee consistency when staff has to be replaced for a period of time (e.g. maternity leave)

4.0 *Voluntary Sector*

The *Auberge* has over sixty volunteers who work at various tasks. Volunteer are seen as an important asset, if not the “heart” of the *Auberge*, because of their commitment, adherence to the values of the project, and diversity of experience They are invited,

recruited and some initiate the contact with the *Auberge*. Volunteers are treated as members of the team, invited to various activities, are members of committees, and encouraged to become members of the Corporation. Their presence is not seen to vary depending on the financial situation. A concern is keeping them involved as long as possible, although according to a study undertaken, volunteers at the *Auberge* participate longer than average.

5.0 Structural and Strategic Partnerships

5.1 *Funding and Partnerships*

The partners of the *Auberge* include funders as well as community organizations or networks. For example, *Centraide* funds part of the activities of the *Auberge*, but the Director is a frequent speaker at their conferences and meetings and, over the years, a working relationship has emerged. Thus, funding agencies, including the government, are seen as partners. Networks developed by the Director, who has been with the *Auberge* for 17 years and is a founding member, staff, Board members and volunteers are all considered important. For example, the yearly audit is donated by a well-known firm because of contacts of the President of the Board while the director of *Azimuth* comes from the business sector and brought his own networks to the project.

5.2 *Community Partnerships*

The activities of the *Auberge* are located in the south-west of Montreal, an area rich in community resources. The *Auberge* participates in various activities with neighbourhood organizations and economic development organizations (e.g. *Regroupement pour la relance économique et sociale du Sud-Ouest* (RESO), Concertation jeunesse sur l'emploi du sud-ouest⁷). It belongs to community associations (e.g. *Table de concertation Ville-Émard/Côte St-Paul*) and works in partnership with *Bâtir son Quartier*, a technical resource group based in the south-west part of the city. It also participates in the *Regroupement intersectoriel des organismes communautaires de Montréal* (RIOCM or intersectoral coalition of Montreal community organizations) and the MCHRAT (Montreal Consortium for Human Rights Advocacy Training) based at McGill University.

5.3 *Youth and Homelessness Networks*

The *Auberge* is member of a number of local and provincial organizations that deal with homelessness such as the RAPSIM (*Réseau d'aide aux personnes seules et itinérantes de Montréal*) and the provincial coalition of youth shelters (*Les Auberges du Cœur*). The *Auberge* also has participated on governmental bodies when these were pertinent; for example the regional health board had a regional assembly as well as a liaison committee on homelessness. The *Auberge* continues to participate on a provincial Council on health and welfare that is linked to the Ministry of Health and Social Services.

⁷ Youth coalition on employment in the south-west

5.4 *The Role of Partnerships in Azimut*

Private sector partners play an important role in *Azimut*. It has five training and employment “platforms”; a community computer centre, a caterer, woodworking shop, house cleaning/maintenance and office work. The first three platforms are well established and partnerships have played an important role in their development. The project grew out of recognition that while there were work “insertion” programs available to *Auberge* youth, the youth were often not ready for these, and pre-employment training was needed. The program has evolved into one that begins with pre-employment and moves youth into production work. In the next year it is expected that 50 youths will be in pre-employment training, 40 in production, and an additional 14 will be senior apprentices, receiving a full salary.

Funds are about 35% each from the provincial government (*Fonds de Lutte Contre la Pauvreté*⁸) and HRDC with an additional 20% made up by the City, Centraide, Industry Canada, the *Ministère des Affaires municipales et de la Métropole* (Ministry of Municipal Affairs and the Metropolis) and private partners. At this stage, 10% comes from production. Additional resources come from partnering arrangements. Thus, the *Montreal School Board* provides a specialist in training adults to the *Auberge* and this partnership has permitted school board accreditation of *Azimut* courses. The community computer facility is located on a shopping street in Verdun, a municipality neighbouring Montreal. It is situated in a building that had been a bank, which was donated to the *Auberge*, while IBM has donated its computers and the high speed Internet connection is donated by Bell.

The partnerships and networks also have been important in production activities. The catering platform has provided services for clients such as the Mayor of Montreal and the *Cirque du Soleil*. The furniture workshop is currently refurbishing table and chairs for a large pub in the neighbourhood.

One of the methods to develop partnerships and advance the projects has been support committees, set up for each of the platforms. These meet about twice a year to look at the general goals, progress, and issues that have arisen. The support committees are a place to test ideas or ask for help. Members are various actors in the field and the links created are important not only for the project itself but can lead to opportunities for the youth. Thus, the platform dealing with woodworking began as furniture repair and is moving into production and recuperation of wood. The support committee includes not only the director of *Azimut*, the project manager, the employment training officer, one or two participants or ex-participants but also a representative of an employment insertion project that specializes in furniture manufacture (*AMRAC* or *Atelier de meubles recyclés Ahuntsic Cartierville*), a representative of the Québec association of furniture manufacturers, a representative of a secondary school with a vocational program in furniture manufacture, and *Eco-Quartier*, the local neighbourhood organization that deals with ecological and recycling issues⁹. Through the contacts made at this committee, youth in the *Azimut* project have been invited to visit a furniture factory and have been

⁸ Funds for the Anti-Poverty Fight

⁹ Funded by the City of Montreal, each borough has an Eco-Quartier.

given short-term employment to gain experience. These committees have been set up for each of the five platforms with key actors who include, in each case, a school that is specialized in the pertinent field, another insertion project and a representative of the industry.

While three of the five platforms of *Azimut* are well established, two, office management and house cleaning/maintenance, will be the focus of some consideration and discussion and, perhaps, reorientation. It is not expected that more platforms will be added but there is discussion of growth through vertical integration of activities. One area, for example, would be food production (i.e. a farm) which would not only fit into the catering platform, the nutritional needs of the *Auberge* but could offer training as well as a respite from city life.

6.0 Core Funding Sources

The largest single source of financing for the *Auberge* is the *Ministry of Health and Social Services* (\$312,000 in 2001)¹⁰. Other governmental sources include the *Ministry of Leisure, Fishing and Hunting*, the *Québec Housing Corporation* and the *City of Montreal*. *Centraide* and the *J.A. DeSève Foundation* are the largest private charitable sources of funding (\$84,000 and \$65,000 in 2001 respectively).

Other sources include rent from the residents (\$46,400 in 2001) as well as donations, membership dues and fundraising. This last item has evolved over the years. The *Auberge* had a lottery for trips for over ten years, holds bazaars and benefit suppers and participates in a penny drive with the *Auberges du Cœur*. The lottery for trips has been dropped and the *Auberge* has now partnered with a lottery of the *Ailes de la Mode* (a department store) Foundation. The draw for a “dream house” should result in a similar amount of money as the previous lottery. The *Auberge* has concluded that while it is important to vary fundraising activities, membership is the key. Over the fifteen years the *Auberge* has found that solid membership assures funds, no matter what the activity. To keep members of the *Auberge* network informed and connected they receive a newsletter three to five times a year (about 700 are sent out) and are invited to various activities. This is seen as the critical factor to successful fundraising.

As mentioned above, *Azimut* has a different source of funding, including the provincial fund for the Fight Against Poverty, the City of Montreal and of Verdun and *Centraide*.

While the core funding of the *Auberge* is stable, the post-transitional housing pilot project, *Envol*, lost its funding from the Regional Health Board in 2000. Reserve funds permitted the project to continue and the project has been accepted under the SCPI program. This funding will permit purchase of a residential building as well as hiring of permanent staff.

¹⁰ The information in this section is drawn from, *Auberge Communautaire Sud-ouest, États financiers au 31 mars 2001*, Raymond Chabot Grant Thornton, Laval le 16 mai 2001

7.0 Core Client Base

In the year ending March 2001, the *Auberge* had accepted 154 new persons for the transitional housing and had to turn 246 away because of lack of space¹¹. The average stay is 44 days. Over half (65.5%) of clients are male, and the majority of clients are between 18 and 24 years. Most (85%) come to the *Auberge* from family, the street, a room or apartment, or shelters, while the rest come from institutional settings – prisons, foster parents, detox centres, etc. Over two-thirds (70%) have not completed secondary school, 87% have no trade, 37% have no revenue and 44% receive welfare. Over two-thirds (67%) come from the metropolitan region and French is the mother tongue for 83%.

Support needed includes:

• Physical health	17%
• Mental health	14%
• Depression or distress	19%
• Suicide	8%
• Medication	17%
• Victim of violence	8%
• Justice issues	25%
• Sexuality and sexual orientation	10%
• Self-esteem	34%
• Pregnancy	3%
• Addiction	43%
• Aggression/violence	27%

The types of intervention that are offered include help with budgeting (65%), completion of secondary school (27%), and support in finding a trade and employment. Other activities include developing networks (40%) and working on family ties (23%). Support is also given in reimbursement of debts (31%), staying in school (9%) and work (33%) and search for housing (32%).

Upon departure 21% were working full time, 9% working part time, 8% in school full time and 2% part time and 7% in an employment program. Sources of income upon departure, included 62% receiving social assistance, 23% a salary and 11% were without revenue. 10% moved into an apartment or room and another 13% into a shared apartment while 11% moved in with friend. 12% went to another youth transitional housing project and 10% went back to their family or spouse.

8.0 Program Delivery

Each of the staff is responsible for their own program area.

¹¹ The information in this section is drawn from *Naviguer ensemble vers le même port, L'Auberge communautaire du Sud-Ouest, Bilan et perspectives Juin 2001*

8.1 Employment

The process of employment training begins with the initial series of meetings to discuss and analyze the young person's situation. The goals of the employment strategy is to have the resident understand their socio-economic reality, give them means to make the changes they desire, and to take back control of their situation. The *Auberge* gives youths not only support in finding work and training but also in managing the work environment, increasing options and taking responsibility vis à vis work. In the year ending March 2001, 99 "profiles" of residents were completed, most within the first 15 days of arrival at the *Auberge*, while 33 residents and ex-residents participated in training or exploration of trades in *Azimut*¹² and 16 residents worked in insertion enterprises. Other activities included visits of the *Azimut* "platforms", monthly meetings with the *Azimut* employment counsellor to let residents know about *Azimut*, and various information sessions and meetings.

8.2 Economy/Dream Program

While this program also deals with taking control of the youths' socio-economic reality, the focus is budgeting and realizing individual or collective "dreams". Work with residents includes increasing awareness of debt and savings, budget management and methods to save money, as well as use of co-operative saving tools that the *Auberge* has developed. In the last year 23 residents and 3 ex-residents saved \$4,235, an average of \$163/person. The work undertaken included meetings as well as individual sessions about budgeting, a mural to give a visual follow-up on the dream projects, fundraising for projects, support in loan and grant applications for studies and sessions on low cost leisure activities and on income tax preparation.

8.3 Nutrition Program

The goals of this program are to improve nutrition and help maintain stable and healthy nutritional habits after leaving the *Auberge*. The program includes preparation of meals, training in the functioning of the kitchen, weekly community meals and food baskets for ex-residents. The committee also undertakes food preparation for special occasions, such as monthly birthday celebrations, for parties and thematic meals as well as snacks for committee meetings. Future activities planned by the committee include a recipe book for ex-residents and a project with local community organizations.

8.4 Socio-cultural Program

The program focuses on development of social networks, increased pleasure in life and exposure to a variety of experiences. The activities include outings to music and improvisation shows, theatre, films and videos, visits to the community garden, hockey matches, parties (New Years, Halloween, St. Valentine, Christmas), and writing

¹² Participation in *Azimut* is offered first to residents or ex-residents of the *Auberge*, then other residents of the network of the *Auberges du Cœur*, other community organizations in the area working with youth and finally to youth organizations that refer persons, such as the *Carrefours Jeunesse Emploi*.

workshops. The program draws on partners such as Le Medley (a club with music and improvisation), the Molson Centre, Cinéplex Odéon, etc. Future activities include workshops with the *Ligue nationale d'Improvisation*, and greater links with various community festivals and activities.

8.5 Volunteer Program

This program revolves around integration of volunteers in all facets of the *Auberge* and development of an active network of “solidarity”. The committee evaluates needs, recruits volunteers, ensures training and support and develops links between volunteers, residents, and employees. In 2001 the *Auberge* had 68 active volunteers (including ten new volunteers) who contributed almost 3,000 hours of work. The committee organizes an annual supper to recognize volunteer work and sends cards of thanks and keeps in touch by phone. Volunteer recruitment is undertaken through special activities, media events, ads in local papers, and notices in universities and colleges.

8.6 Defence of Rights Program

The program deals with the defence of rights of young homeless persons, residents and ex-residents of the *Auberge* and plans to develop a formal structure within the *Auberge* for defence of rights. Among its tasks is the identification of appropriate sectors of intervention; information and increased awareness by residents, ex-residents, employees, and members about situations that have an impact on youth rights; development and maintenance of partnerships with resources that deal with the defence of rights; creation of a network of experts in the field; and political action by *Auberge* residents to improve the conditions of youth. In 2001, the program undertook 79 interventions which included 15 cuts to social assistance because of parental obligations¹³, 25 cases of cuts to social assistance for other reasons, as well as 26 cases of problems of access to services. The program also contested the push of social assistance recipients to take work (13 cases) as well as participating in a larger campaign with other community organizations to contest “workfare”.

8.7 Program of Personal and Social Development

The program focuses on self-esteem, dignity and self-confidence. Activities include weekly group meetings, discussions and activities with residents and ex-residents, offering a range of alternative addiction and mental health resources, ensuring integration

¹³ In Québec, young adults are considered the responsibility of their parents until the young person is independent. The parental contribution can be either financial or material, such as housing or food. A parental contribution is not expected if the person is an orphan, the parents receive social assistance, parents cannot be found, or the parents refuse to help – in the latter case the Ministry can undertake procedures against them. The parental contribution is expected for a period of three years and is calculated on the basis of their revenue, marital status and the number of dependant children. A person is considered independent if they have lived apart from the mother or father for at least two years for reasons other than schooling, they have had a full time job for at least two years, they have been married, have co-habited with someone at least a year, have or have had a dependant child, have a bachelors degree, or are at least 20 weeks pregnant (with a medical certificate to that effect).

of members and volunteers in these activities, and integrating group living skills into weekly floor meetings (i.e. on each of the three floors of the *Auberge*).

8.8 *Post-transitional Housing Program “Envol”*

The program, which focuses on ex-residents of the *Auberge*, includes development of mutual support, solidarity and co-operation among residents, ex-residents and members of the *Auberge* and integration of ex-residents in their new communities. The program includes development of a housing bank, ensuring community support when the youth leaves the *Auberge*, workshops on preparation for departure, technical support for the move, a furniture bank and collective activities to develop and sustain a social network.

The *Auberge* has access to 10 public housing units and 9 additional units in *La Suite*. In 2001, 73 residents were given support in finding an apartment, were given furniture and helped to move.

8.9 *Azimut*

This program as described above is to help youth in training and gaining employment. Since 1999, 137 youth have participated in programs. Five platforms have been developed: furniture/woodworking, catering, computer centre, office work and house cleaning/maintenance.

Case Study: Ontario

Case Study of:
Homes First Society

Toronto Homes First Society: Profile

Origin

The Homes First Society (HFS) was established in 1983 by a group of organizations working with the homeless on the streets of Toronto under the sponsorship of the Fred Victor Mission of the United Church of Canada. From the outset it has been committed to building partnerships among housing users, producers and managers, and local communities by initiating housing developments based on the experiences and needs of the people to be housed.

History

HFS has been a leader in innovative housing for the homeless, developing its first project for homeless single people in 1984. Since then the range of services the organization provides has grown to include overnight shelter, transitional housing, shared accommodation, and independent living opportunities. Housing support services include counselling, life skills training, crisis intervention and referrals, training and job readiness programs, tenant worker programs, social and recreational programs, meal programs and conflict resolution. These projects and programs have been developed in partnership arrangements with community agencies and government funders.

Mandate and Philosophy

The mission of HFS is to provide affordable, housing and transitional supports for people who are homeless and/or have the fewest options in society. HFS is dedicated to helping the homeless develop their own housing by creating communities with people who, while sharing a common destiny, have infrequently had any other relationship with each other. The philosophy emphasizes a facilitative management model, described as a form of community (economic) development with two key features: the devolution of decision-making to the people most affected by the decisions; and an emphasis on multi-functional and multi-dimensional strategies and vehicles to accomplish both social and economic goals. Providing support services that assist tenants to move from transition to more permanent housing and more independent living underscores the entire philosophy and mandate.

Funding

HFS has traditionally drawn funds from a number of sources including: the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing; CMHC, HRDC, the City of Toronto and the Ontario Ministry of Health. HFS has charitable tax status and provides tax receipts for donations. Twice a year, spring and fall, HFS mounts a direct mail solicitation of donations. With provincial downloading, the primary funder for HFS will become the City of Toronto.

The Board

The Board of Directors consists of 14 volunteer members, including four who are tenants. Directors are recruited by a three person nominating committee and serve two-year terms with no limit on consecutive terms. The Board has no Executive Committee but operates with two co-chairs, a vice president and a treasurer. Other Board members sit on, and often chair committees such as Tenant Support, Operations and Management,

Information Technology, Fundraising, the HFS Foundation, and Nominating. Ad hoc committees are used to deal with particular policies and issues as they arise. The HFS Board best fits the “Policy Board” model and primarily advises and determines strategies and broad policies, rather than directing operations. The Board’s extensive role in partnership building also means it fits into Patron’s Supporter Club model as members, because of their positions and expertise, are able to open doors and wallets and have good social and business contacts. Decision making, whenever possible, is by consensus.

Strategic Planning

HFS operations are guided by a three-to-five year strategic plan. The Board establishes key directions and priorities, which are given to the management team to “flesh out” and then return for Board approval. Management, working with the Board, then develop an operational plan. The strengths of the organization have to be the diversity of programs offered and its ability to adapt to changes in funding levels and client needs as well as fostering change in the lives of the clients it serves. The major weakness includes the ability to retain tenant Directors and the Board is looking at more extensive training for tenant Directors so they can participate more fully in the discussions of the Board.

Current Issues

Major challenges that have to be addressed in strategic planning include additional staff training as staff are increasingly dealing with serious mental problems, funding reductions that have left the organization with a deficit, retaining tenant Directors, staff burnout and maintaining core funding.

Partnerships

Structural and strategic partnerships have been a strength of HFS. The Board itself is a reflection of strategic partnerships drawing members from law, business, community development agencies, human resources and finance. This provides a cross-section of skills, diversity of views, a full spectrum of ideologies and good contacts with other agencies and community groups. The Board has also worked to create effective partnerships with the various levels of government and Board members regularly attend meetings with various government departments from all three levels to discuss policy, program and funding issues. These on-going partnerships have allowed the organization to function more effectively through periods of turbulent policy change.

At the operational level inter-agency contact and referrals are staples of the work of HFS. Management and staff are frequently in contact and work closely with food banks, detox centres, hospitals, the Housing Services Department of the City of Toronto, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing and the Ministry of Health. Daily contact occurs with shelters, mental health and outreach services. HFS has formal partnerships with St. Christopher Housing, the Toronto Community Housing Corporation and partners with Native Men’s Residence to serve the hardest to house. Informal partnerships exist between HFS and the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health. Referrals, cross-promotion of services, and information sharing between these agencies are common.

On a broader scale the organization has worked with other community and municipal agencies to organize and host a conference and workshops to share information and explore the future of tenant support services and needs of the homeless. HFS was also one of more than 50 agencies and community based organizations that comprised the Community Reference Group that provided ideas and advise for the development of Toronto's Community Plan for Homelessness. Partnerships at both an operational and Board level as well as broader collaboration with community and government on policy and program issues means the HFS is well informed, well connected and is able to channel a great deal of information into its strategic planning process.

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 *History of Organization*

The Homes First Society (HFS) was established in 1983 under the sponsorship of the Fred Victor Mission of the United Church of Canada by a group of organizations working with the homeless on the streets of Toronto.¹⁴ Its mandate was to build non-profit housing by organizing homeless people to identify and provide for their own housing needs. It is committed to building partnerships among housing users, producers, and managers, and local communities by initiating housing development based on the experiences and needs of the people to be housed. Maximum resident participation is encouraged and supported through opportunities for input and decision making in the development and operation of housing projects.

HFS has become a leader in the field of developing innovative housing for low-income individuals who have difficulty maintaining stable housing. Its first project for homeless single people was developed in 1984 at 90 Shuter Street. At that time, there was no funding program at any level of government that recognized the needs of this population. The leadership of Homes First had remarkable success in persuading government at three levels to provide specific financial support for single adults and facilitate the development of a ground-breaking housing project. HFS has continued to develop and manage non-profit housing, including unique and innovative projects, generally in partnership arrangements with community agencies and government funders.

1.2 *Philosophy*

Homes First is dedicated to helping the homeless of Toronto to develop their own housing. It can be said that this is a matter of creating communities with people who, while definitely sharing a common destiny, have infrequently had any other relation to each other. The history of the first major Homes First project, StreetCity, demonstrates how the physical location of the housing, a joint task of developing it, and ultimately, residing together and managing the housing bring the most marginalized of our society into a meaningful relationship with it and each other.¹⁵

The facilitative management model developed by HFS has been described as a form of community (economic) development with two key features: the devolution of decision-making to the people most affected by the decisions and who must carry them out; and

¹⁴ This report is based on information gathered from face-to-face interviews of one- to two-hour duration with the Executive Director, each of the two Co-Chairs of the Board of Directors, and two former employees, as well as print documents and reports obtained from Homes First Society.

¹⁵ Stewart E. Perry and Mike Lewis. 1994. *Reinventing the Local Economy*. Vernon, B.C.: Centre for Community Enterprise.

the stress on multi-functional, multi-dimensional strategies and vehicles to accomplish both social and economic goals.¹⁶

2.0 Services and Programs

Homes First provides permanent housing and transitional support services for low income households, with a focus on addressing the needs of homeless people or those who have the fewest options. It currently operates 16 housing projects offering a continuum of housing options from entry-level high support shelter and transitional housing to longer-term semi-independent or low support housing sites. The shelter and transitional housing projects offer short and long term beds and/or private rooms with shared lounge, washroom, and laundry facilities, with optional meal programs. The longer-term semi-independent sites include both shared accommodation (with shared facilities) and self-contained units. Case management support is available for all residents who require it.

HFS provides direct, pragmatic housing and related services, such as mediation and life skills training, which address the basic causes of homelessness by keeping people housed. Due to funding reductions, however, it no longer proactively advocates for broad solutions.

2.1 Client Core Base

Many of the residents have long histories of living on the street or in the shelter system, struggling with issues related to chronic addiction and/or severe mental health illnesses and limited life skills. Some of them have been institutionalized or incarcerated in the past. They require on-site support services that facilitate independent or semi-independent living and residential stability.

There are approximately 370 singles (140 females and 230 males) and 40 families residing in 16 buildings. There is no cultural or ethnic component to the client base, except for the twelve units that are designated for refugees (both single adults and families).

Support service files are maintained for tenants; at minimum, staff meet monthly with clients to review their plans for support service needs. Service statistics are kept to satisfy the requirements of the United Way, the Ministry of Health, and the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health.

2.2 Program Delivery

Homes First provides many programs and services in a number of areas. They include: overnight shelter, transitional housing, shared accommodation, and independent living opportunities; individual case management, including counselling, life skills training,

¹⁶ Perry and Lewis 1994.

crisis intervention, and referrals; training and job-readiness programs, including skills development, resume preparation, job search and interview techniques, and tenant worker programs; housing supports, including options counselling and referrals; and community development, including social and recreational activities, meal programs, and conflict resolution. New programs include Strachan House Meal Club, Meegwitch Cooking Club, and the Healthy Cooking Workshop Program.

2.2.1 Housing Services

The following is a list of HFS housing projects:

24-hour High Support Shelter and Transitional Housing Projects

- StreetCity¹⁷ - originally 70 private rooms (being closed, 18 individuals left)
- Strachan House - 65 private rooms
- Savard's - 15 beds

Semi-Independent or Low Support Housing Sites

- Bellevue - 28 self-contained units
- Community Homes (Huron) - 10 private rooms
- Community Homes (Spadina) - 7 private rooms
- Community Homes (Spadina) - 6 private rooms
- Community Homes (Wales) - 5 private rooms
- Jarvis Houses - 24 private rooms
- Meegwetch - 64 self-contained units, 14 townhouses
- Pleasant Manor - 16 self-contained
- St. Christopher House (Brandon) - 5 private rooms
- St. Christopher House (Northcote) - 6 single rooms
- Sheila Miller - 22 self-contained unites
- Shuter St. - 77 private rooms (floor suites)
- Vaughan - 29 self-contained units

2.2.2 Support Programs

HFS staff provide tenant support services in the following areas:

Direct individual and on-site support

- 24-hour staff at transitional facilities
- crisis intervention
- options counselling

¹⁷ This award-winning innovative project is closing after ten years of successful operation. The City of Toronto initially provided the warehouse space on a temporary basis (this was never expected to last more than a few years) and announced in July 2000 that StreetCity would be closing in the fall of 2001. There is no funding source to provide an alternative location. StreetCity tenants have been relocated, most of them to other units within the HFS portfolio, except for 18 individuals who due to limited mental ability do not understand that they must leave.

- advocacy and referral services
- co-ordination and facilitation of meal programs
- case management
- cultural linking
- on-site banking services (24-hour sites)
- on-site rent collection (24-hour sites)
- staff accompaniment and escort services
- physical and mental health care (including hospitalization follow-up)

For example, new food access programs include an informal Community Meal Program (CMP) at all sites. This program operates with food donated from food banks supplemented with additional funds. The CMP is a tenant driven program overseen by site staff. It involves tenants organizing and preparing a community meal for all tenants in the housing site. A successful Meal Club program was recently introduced at all sites. This is a daily food program that ensures tenants in need have access to at least one nutritional meal five days a week.

Education, employment, training and empowerment

- skill development programs
- computer training
- computer access at all sites
- tenant complaint process
- tenant worker programs
- a client focused approach

For example, Tenants First (TF) is an HRDC-funded support program for tenants who are employed to provide building maintenance and cleaning services for HFS buildings and other organizations. This program works in conjunction with the Property Management Department to ensure janitorial and maintenance tasks are completed for all HFS housing projects. TF is currently exploring the expansion of this program to include job placement services.

Housing support and outreach program

- information on affordable and supportive housing options
- advocacy and referral to housing services
- one-to-one housing search support
- follow up support

Property management/Enhanced building management services

- ensuring properties are kept clean, safe and secure
- timely response to maintenance and repair issues
- after hours' emergency on call system

Internal community-building

- regular Tenant or Town Council meetings facilitated by staff

- mediation and conflict resolution
- tenant selection committees
- planned seasonal and holiday social/recreational activities
- on-going social recreational programs
- a community meal program

For example, a tenant conflict resolution and mediation program offers tenants alternative ways to address conflicts and strategies to resolving conflicts. Tenants complete a form outlining the issue or conflict and submit it to staff. Site staff are responsible for booking mediation sessions, communicating with both parties, and facilitating the discussion and resolution. External community building

- affiliations with relevant agencies
- participation in community gardens and neighbourhood events
- participation in neighbourhood associations

Program Evaluation

Service programs are not regularly evaluated at Homes First Society. On an ad hoc basis, and when funding has been available, outside consultants have been used to conduct project-specific evaluations.

Several evaluation reports were reviewed for this report:

- an evaluation of 90 Shuter St. in 1987¹⁸
- an evaluation of StreetCity in 1991¹⁹
- an evaluation of Jarvis Houses in 1994²⁰
- an evaluation of Savard's in 1999²¹

The studies were conducted soon after the projects were developed (from 6 months to a couple of years) and reflect an early stage of occupancy. In general, the reports are more descriptive than rigorously evaluative. One of the reports adopted goal-based assessments of housing and community development activities as well as measures of resident satisfaction. Several of the reports used indicators to demonstrate greater stability and improved functioning, health, and quality of life among residents. It appears that assessments of the various techniques used in housing development and management and service provision were considered in subsequent project development and service planning.

¹⁸ *Evaluation of 980 Shuter Street*. 1987. Toronto: Alan Etherington and Associates.

¹⁹ *Evaluation of StreetCity*. 1991. Toronto: Phillips Group of Companies.

²⁰ *From Shelter to Home: Evaluation of Jarvis Houses Project*. 1994. Toronto: Don Pierson.

²¹ *Savard's: A Descriptive Analysis*. 1999. Toronto: Katherine Boydell, Brenda Gladstone, and Pam Roberts.

Changing Environment

Over the past five to ten years, agency staff are increasingly dealing with clients with serious mental illnesses. Some staff need additional training to meet this demand; their role more approximates that of a professional social worker. The agency's limited ability to deal with these more specialized needs are affecting intake and tenant screening decisions. In response, support programs are becoming more formalized.

Funding reductions have not resulted in staff cuts, but have lead to significant organizational change – the transition stage required a temporary increase in management positions, and the new structure has added an extra layer of management.

Based on client needs, certain program could be expanded or strengthened; these include food access programs, financial support programs such as budgeting and finance management, and eviction prevention.

3.0 Organizational Structure

The Executive Director reports to the Board of Directors. Four managers and three of four supervisors report to the Executive Director.

There are 55 bargaining unit members:

- 38 community housing workers, five housing support workers, and two community outreach workers in the Tenant Services Department
- three maintenance co-ordinators, three job maintenance workers, and one mental health and addictions worker in the Property Management Department
- one accounts payable co-ordinator, one accounts receivable co-ordinator, and one tenancy-lease co-ordinator in the Finance and Administration Department
- one fund raiser in the Housing and Program Development Department, there are also 40 relief staff, all of whom are members of the bargaining unit. Finally, there are another two positions, that of administrative co-ordinator and human resources administrator (both excluded from the bargaining unit).

3.1 Board Structure and Functioning

The Homes First Society has a formal, autonomous Board of Directors that consists of 14 persons, including four who are tenants (names and affiliations are listed in Appendix A). Directors serve two-year terms, and there is no limit on the number of consecutive terms that may be served. They are not paid for their services (this is prohibited for non-profit organizations by provincial law). Candidates are recruited by a three person Nominating Committee, with suggestions from Board members and senior staff. Directors are elected by HFS members at the Annual General Meeting (AGM).

The board has no executive committee. There are two co-chairs, a vice-president, secretary, and treasurer. There are no additional explicit roles, but the Board “knows where expertise and interests lie and is prepared to delegate.” Other board members sit on

standing and ad hoc committees. These include: Tenant Support Committee, Operations and Management Committee, IT Committee, Fundraising Committee, HFS Foundation Committee, and Nominating Committee. Ad hoc committees are struck to deal with particular policies and major issues, such as organizational restructuring and collective bargaining. Committee meetings provide opportunities for managers and Directors to review and evaluate policies and objectives.

The board meets monthly, at which a report is presented by the Executive Director. Other managers are encouraged to attend, and they serve on committees.

By-Laws

HFS has by-laws that establish the organization and composition of the Board of Directors and membership; specify that decision making, whenever possible, will be accomplished by consensus; and indemnifies Board directors against all costs and expenses. A liability insurance policy covers individual board members from financial responsibility. There have been no situations where liability has been an issue. There is a conflict of interest by-law (which was imposed by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing), but there have been no issues regarding conflict of interest. (Full text of the By-Laws is available).

There is no formal code of conduct for the Board of Directors, but there are informal expectations regarding respectful and constructive communication. There have been no serious issues regarding conduct within the Board.

Board Model

According to the typology developed by Garber and Associates (2001), the HFS Board of Directors best fits the ‘policy board’ model. Except in crisis situations, the Board primarily advises and determines strategies and broad policies, rather than directs operations. It influences daily operations of the agency only in terms of setting overall goals and strategies. The Board is responsible for setting some policies, e.g., the anti-discrimination policy, and dealing with major staff issues and contentious issues, e.g., when some tenant-employees were charged with criminal offences.

Over the previous year, major organizational re-structuring has required more of the board’s attention, notably in hiring an executive director. After a six-month period, the acting Executive Director was hired in an open competition. During this time, the board was “quite involved” in dealing with financial issues and the hiring process. They have since withdrawn from addressing any operational issues.

The board plays a key role in fundraising. Traditionally, HFS solicits donations twice a year through a direct mail campaign. Now, a major capital fundraising campaign is being launched, with a goal of raising \$4 million for new housing development, tenant support services, and capital improvements.

Mission

In brief, the mission of Homes First is to provide affordable, permanent housing and transitional supports for people who are homeless and/or have the fewest options in society. With input from staff, the Board elaborated the principles of the mission statement during its 1998 retreat to include the provision of support services to assist tenants in their transition to permanent housing and more independent living. (See Appendix B for the full text of the mission statement).

Strategic Plan

The Board establishes key directions and priorities; these are given to the management team to ‘flesh out’ and returned to the Board for approval. This is the process for developing the agency’s strategic plan, which the Board reviews yearly.

After a year long collaboration with management, the Board drafted its current three-to-five year strategic plan. In turn, management has developed an operating plan based on the strategic plan. Similar strategic plans have been developed in the past, but this is the first time operation planning has been keyed to the strategic plan.

The Major Challenge: Managing the ‘Transformation’ and Deficit

The last couple of years have been a “watershed” time for HFS, a time of transition, reflected in a changed organizational structure that was largely driven by a significant budget deficit and an ultimatum by a major government funder. In the process, HFS is adopting more conventional management methods and systems. The core work of the agency has been separated into two key departments: property management and tenant support, as well as more centralized administration. The tasks of property management and providing support services to tenants are no longer performed by all staff. Job descriptions have become more specialized. For example, the tenant support service staff are now applying case management principles to their work.

There was also considerable downsizing (HFS now manages fewer housing projects, and 14 employees left the agency within an 18 month period). In the opinion of some former employees, the new staff structure signals a turning away from the original innovative philosophy of the agency, which for many years functioned with a very low degree of hierarchy among staff.

A new “fund accounting framework” has been implemented that can track and demonstrate to funders and donors how their dollars are used to support the work of HFS. Monthly financial reports are now made available to the manager of Finance, the ED, and the Board for their information and long-range financial planning. Certain administrative functions have been centralized. For example, there is a new Tenancy Lease Coordinator who handles intake procedures, rent calculation, income verification, and rent collection, tasks previously carried out by staff at each housing project.

The deficit remains the major challenge facing the board, along with finding funding to continue to develop and maintain housing and provide support services. Several HFS housing projects lack sufficient funding for support services.

First Major Capital Funding Campaign

The “Rebuilding with Respect” campaign is intended to enlist the corporate sector to help HFS to fulfill its mission. With no government funding for new housing development, HFS is turning to the private sector with a goal of collecting \$4 million for housing development, tenant support services, and capital improvements. A foundation, separate from HFS, is being created to administer the campaign and allocate campaign funds in a manner that makes transparent exactly how the funds are being used.

Retention of Tenant-Board Members

Another challenge facing the Board of Directors is how to better retain tenant-Directors, perhaps by offering them some training. For various reasons, it has frequently been difficult to fill the four positions reserved for tenants on the Board. Since HFS employees are not eligible to serve on the Board, a few tenant-Directors have had to resign because they have taken part-time jobs with HFS. This is a repeated problem as those tenants who are more likely to undertake Board responsibilities are also more likely to be job-ready.

The difficulty of retaining tenant-Directors may be considered a weakness of the Board. It may be that this model is not very viable. While the tenant-Directors provide valuable input on some issues from the residents’ perspective, they are at a disadvantage in contributing fully to the Board’s discussions and decisions regarding many matters. Prior to each Board meeting, the Executive Director has been meeting with the tenant-Directors to review the agenda, background material and reports, and issues to be discussed so that they will be better prepared and able to express their views and thoughts. The Board is considering whether to develop a two-day in-house training course for future tenant-Directors.

Board Effectiveness

The current HFS Board of Directors is considered effective – “the most functional Board in the past six years.” In part, this is due to the complementary cross-section of skills among Board members (includes a lawyer, professional fundraiser, philosopher, IT CEO, chartered accountant, social worker, government bureaucrat, and CO of the Toronto Community Housing Company). The wide range of professional skills and experiential knowledge among the Board members (i.e., in law, business and non-profit management, community development, human resources, and finance, as well as a close understanding of tenants’ concern and issues) is considered a valuable asset to HFS and a strength of the Board. A diversity of views and full spectrum of ideologies promotes the careful examination of a wide range of suggestions and rich debates. Also, the level of commitment is high and Directors are highly involved (e.g., Directors have attended meetings with government funders to explain and negotiate for the interests of HFS).

There has been little turnover among the non-tenant Directors, and several directors have served for multiple terms. Burnout is not currently an issue, although the Directors are extremely busy and are hard-pressed to commit the considerable amount of time required by the agency.

There is no formal structure in place to evaluate the Board of Directors. During its yearly retreats, the Board conducts an informal self-evaluation according to specific criteria and questions.

4.0 Administration and General Staff

The Executive Director has overall authority for daily operations and is accountable to the Board of Directors. There are four managers who are accountable to the ED – a manager of Property, Housing and Program Development, Human Resources, and Finance and Administration. Three of four supervisors are also accountable to the Executive Director.

The Fund Raising Coordinator is under the Housing and Program Development Manager.

The Human Resources Administrator is under the Human Resources Manager.

Under the Property Manager are

- the Maintenance Coordinator (West)
- the Maintenance Coordinator (East), and
- the Maintenance Coordinator (24 hour or high support projects).
- the Tenants First Supervisor

Three Tenant Services Supervisors oversee project-specific Community Housing Workers.

Under the Finance and Administration Manager are

- the Purchasing and Receivables Coordinator
- the Administration Coordinator
- the Tenancy Lease Coordinator, and
- the Accounts Payable Coordinator.

Approximately 63% of the annual budget is spent on salaries and benefits. Manager salaries range from \$42,500 to \$50,000. The wage rate for full-time employees is \$35,368 to \$36,783. Relief staff are paid \$15 to \$17 an hour. These salaries are mid-range for the sector, while the benefits are considered better than the norm.

Virtually all employees are part of the staff union. In the past, the union has played a role in setting hiring and firing practices. This is now limited to the terms negotiated during collective bargaining.

Policy and Program Changes

As noted above, staff have input when the Board alters the mission statement. Either staff or the Board, or both together, can change policies. During the organizational restructuring or transformation, the mission statement was used to re-focus the work of the agency and guide program planning. Programs deemed tangential to the revised mission statement were dropped. On an ongoing basis, the principles of the mission statement serve as a guideline for program planning and operations decisions, down to the daily work level.

Public Accountability

Information about the agency is available to the public through the annual report and financial statements (by request), a newsletter sent to donors, and media coverage (usually project specific, may be favourable or critical). Some HFS managers speak in public during United Way campaigns or by request.

Handling of Complaints

There is no formal complaint process for tenants, but tenants are encouraged to call the Executive Director who may initiate an investigation, if warranted. Any complaints made by HFS residents to City of Toronto staff (Hostel Services Department) are relayed to HFS for resolution or remedy. If an investigation is subsequently conducted by HFS, City staff are advised of the process and outcome. If a complaint involves racism or harassment, there are policies in the lease that outline a formal process for resolution.

If a complaint involves an unionized employee, the relevant supervisor handles the process, and it is reviewed by the Executive Director.

Staff Hiring and Evaluation

Over recent years, a more standardized method of hiring has been adopted. The three-step process includes a written requirement (to assess knowledge); an oral interview with three individuals (usually managers); and a verbal presentation made to hiring panel members. No screening, i.e., police or security check or bonding requirement, is required for hiring, only references.

During the early stage of the organization's development, a commitment to collective and collaborative work models led to the use of group-based self-evaluation of staff. Later, managers were responsible for conducting performance appraisals. Since 1999, regular staff supervision has been implemented and annual performance appraisals are being initiated for all staff.

Some HFS tenants are employed by the agency on a part-time basis, most commonly as maintenance workers. (They are not members of the bargaining unit.) Employment of tenants is promoted through the Tenants First program. Some former tenants are now

support service workers. Generally, the income level of residents with full-time employment requires them to pay the full market rent, and they choose to move out.

Staff Burnout

Staff found it very difficult to cope with all the changes during the transition period, and there was a great deal of stress associated with the organizational restructuring. Most of that is over now.

Strengths and Weaknesses of Staff Structure

HFS has moved from having a single salary level for all staff, which offered no advancement opportunities, to having several departments requiring more specialized skills (i.e., maintenance, support services, and finance). Most of the current staff prefer this.

5.0 Voluntary Sector

HFS makes limited use of volunteers, other than the Board of Directors. Occasionally community volunteers perform some renovation work or cooking. Some tenants volunteer as well. Volunteers are not screened, except informally. No direct services to tenants are provided by volunteers, in part due to union restrictions. Not surprisingly, liability issues have not arisen. The main area of volunteer involvement is with the capital campaign. The Challenge is to keep the momentum going in a campaign that is proceeding slowly.

Only Directors receive training for their HFS work, most of it at Ontario Non-Profit Housing Association (ONPHA) conferences. Neither Directors nor other volunteers are instrumental in developing inter-agency collaboration, most of which is cultivated by the management team, but the Board is very important in forming public-private sector partnerships. For HFS, this is a key factor in the Board's critical role of addressing financial difficulties (outlined below).

For the past three years, a Volunteer of the Year has been nominated at the annual general meetings in recognition of outstanding service. In 2001, the award was given to an artist who developed and implemented (with limited direction and assistance from staff) a ten-week painting workshop and a one-day sculpting workshop that was available to all HFS tenants. Volunteers are apparently motivated by the desire to do something about homelessness. They want to see the effects of their contribution, and HFS is willing to let them meet its tenants and tour its buildings.

There seems to be general agreement that volunteers should not be used to provide direct services at HFS. In part, this may be due to the fact that there are no funds for staff to organize volunteers.

6.0 Core Funding Sources

The process of setting the annual budget is fairly conventional. The management team initially drafts a budget based on forecasting. The Board reviews this draft and finalizes the budget. The Board and the Executive Director are responsible for overseeing the agency's assets and liabilities. The Executive Director monitors and controls expenditures within the limits set by the Board; otherwise, Board approval is required. Any budget overruns would be added to the accumulated deficit.

HFS has charitable status and provides tax receipts for donations. Twice a year, in the spring and fall, HFS mounts a direct mail solicitation of donations. The timing of this is somewhat limited by the necessity to work around the United Way's fundraising campaign. On occasion, HFS is the "charity of choice" for other fundraising organizations. HFS managers sometimes speak to service clubs and professional organizations, and the agency receives some funds from such sources. Requests to foundations are made regularly. HFS recently created a new Housing and Program Development department that provides assistance to all its departments in requests for funding from governments, foundations, corporations, and individuals. None of these fundraising sources brings in a significant amount of money (see below).

As noted above, HFS has a significant accumulated deficit (which absorbed a reserve of about \$325,000 a couple of years ago). The total agency budget for the year 2000 was almost seven million (\$6,716,200), with a deficit of about three-quarters of a million (\$768,500). Most of the accumulated deficit is due to significant losses incurred during the development of a new project (Savard's) and outstanding accounts receivable (government funding for specific projects, including the organizational transformation costs, and the prolonged closing of StreetCity). (Full financial statements for 2000 are available).

HFS has faced serious funding difficulties since 1998. A joint Board and management effort to address this was mounted at the outset, and it continues. In 1998, this involved going to their primary funder, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, who, on the basis of the findings from an operational audit of HFS, insisted that the organization be restructured (or be "taken over") and pledged to fund the costs for this process (funds that are still outstanding). To complicate matters, government staff reductions left fewer experienced people to make funding decisions. HFS was vulnerable to funding decisions that were affected by interpersonal conflict, and a constant change of contact persons led to instability and uncertainty.

Another source of funding difficulty involves the closing of StreetCity. Since the City of Toronto refuses to allow the eviction of the remaining 18 tenants during the cold weather season (because of the "bad press"), the agency will continue to lose money on this project until the spring. The City of Toronto guaranteed that the agency would suffer no financial losses from the closing, but \$200,000 of the agency's deficit is attributable to it.

With provincial downloading, the primary funder for HFS will be the City of Toronto. Devolution of social housing management to municipalities in Ontario means that

operating agreements must be renegotiated with the City of Toronto. This is the responsibility of the Executive Director who is confident that the change will be beneficial as she has formed good relationships with City staff.

Funding Sources

HFS has operating agreements and receives funding from the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH) and Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) to provide non-profit housing and housing subsidies to its tenants and their families. The following indicates the projects funded by each organization:

- MMAH
490 Huron St., 175 Vaughan Rd., 87 Bellevue Ave., 50 Earl St., 29 Wales Ave., 800 Adelaide St. W., and 434 Gerrard St.
- CMHC
90 Shuter St.
- HRDC (Human Resources and Development Canada)
Tenant support and administration (since 1999)
- OCHAP (Ontario Community Housing Assistance Program)
90 Shuter St.
- City of Toronto
393 Front St. (StreetCity), 805 A & B Wellington St. W. (Strachan House and Savard’s)
- MOH (Ontario Ministry of Health)
805B Wellington St. W. (Savard’s)

Approximately 80% of revenues are from public sources. The revenue amounts, sources, and percentage breakdown are as follows:

Rental income	\$901,089	13%
Government subsidies	\$5,419,870	81%
Donations	\$237,885 (from foundations and individuals)	4%
Other	\$157,338	2%
<hr/> Total	<hr/> \$6,716,182	<hr/> 100%

Joint Applications for Funding

HFS has been involved in several joint applications for funding of projects. Last year, an unsuccessful funding proposal was developed and submitted with the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health. A successful application was developed by HFS and Field to Table (Food Share) to provide complementary services and submitted to the Homelessness Initiatives fund, administered by the City of Toronto. For the latter, several

meetings were held with staff from both agencies to co-ordinate the writing of each agency's section of the proposal. More recently, a proposal to develop temporary, transitional housing received funding under the SCPI program. This proposal involved several agencies, including the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, Native Men's Residence (Na-Me-Res), and Food Share.

One HFS staff position dedicated to new development and brokering has been funded by the United Way. Otherwise, the staff time spent in preparing proposals and developing partnerships is unpaid. Agencies with a mission similar to that of HFS are part of an informal network maintained by managerial staff. Collaborative efforts are usually mounted in response to funding availability.

In some cases, government funding programs have placed onerous requirements on service agencies. For example, many local service agencies have had to drop, or significantly alter, the training programs that were previously funded by HRDC because the eligibility criteria were changed. Since the summer of 2001, funds are no longer available for training programs, only for job readiness programs. Program recipients must now be Employment Insurance (EI) eligible, which disqualifies a great number of people who would otherwise be interested. This requirement effectively means that HFS residents are ineligible. The impact of these changes on HFS was considerable: tenants lost training opportunities; staff descriptions had to be changed and renegotiated with the union; and there are new demands to produce statistics. "It's almost not worth the hassle." In a similar vein, attempts to obtain funding from SCPI have proven frustrating, chaotic, and have required too much staff time. In future HFS prefers to initiate ideas for projects, and then find the funding for them.

7.0 Structural and Strategic Partnerships

HFS has shown an ability to adapt to, and foster, change. The agency began in the mid-1980s by successfully creating partnerships with various levels of government to provide housing supply and subsidy funding for low income single adults at a time when such a funding program did not exist. Since the mid-1990s, HFS has had to cope with turbulent times marked by an increasing need for housing and support services and diminished government funding.

Inter-agency contact and referrals are staples in the work of HFS. On a fairly frequent basis, the agency deals with food banks and detox referrals (i.e., to the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health and St. Michael's Hospital). Certain agencies – shelters, mental health services, and outreach services – are contacted on a daily basis. HFS maintains contact with two staff at the Hostel and Housing Services Department of the City of Toronto and a dedicated staff person at the City's Support for Daily Living program. The agency also deals with a housing administrator at the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, although the relationship is constantly in flux; the Ministry contact person has changed four times in the past year. The agency communicates with a regional consultant at the Ministry of Health regarding the operating plan for Savard's. Funder criteria have not affected the membership or structure of the agency's partnerships.

In 1999, HFS organized and hosted a conference called Future Search, inviting representatives from five other agencies (Police Services, two other housing providers, and Food Share) to share information and explore the future of tenant support services. Access to nutritious food was identified as a priority need. Subsequent to the conference, a formal partnership was developed with Food Share to provide HFS tenants with informal instruction in basic nutrition and food preparation techniques in a community setting. These workshops have evolved into community kitchens in some buildings.

HFS has formal partnerships with St. Christopher Housing (for which HFS manages a housing project) and the Toronto Community Housing Corporation (for which HFS provides support services in one building). There is an informal partnership with the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH), which refers clients for designated units in one of the HFS buildings. There is also an agreement for the Health Bus from Wellesley Hospital to regularly visit Strachan House (and previously StreetCity).

Native Men's Residence (Na-Me-Res) is one of several agencies that partner with HFS to serve individuals who have not connected with community service agencies, the hardest to house, and the chronically homeless. The "Gimme Shelter" program links housing support workers from Native Men's Residence with housing and shelter providers, including HFS, Seaton House, Out of the Cold, and Dixon Hall. Cross-promotion of services and information is common, especially in the form of referrals.

HFS has initiated events to share ideas with colleagues nationally and internationally. In March 2001, HFS organized and hosted a forum with staff from agencies in Vancouver (Portland Hotel) and New York (Common Ground) who share similar clientele and provide similar services. City of Toronto staff, private sector developers, and other local housing providers were also invited. Further such meetings are planned, for example, a spring visit to Vancouver.

HFS has also developed a close partnership with a private sector IT and management consulting firm.

7.1 Corporate/Private Sector Partner

After government funding for the agency was reduced by 26% in 1998, targeted recruiting to the Board introduced more "political balance," "a business perspective," and a higher level of skills. This was when Jeff Smith, Vice President of Chartwell Inc., a management consulting firm, joined the Board.

Chartwell estimates that it has contributed the "in-kind" equivalent of half a million dollars to HFS in information technology and management consulting services, including a strategic plan prepared according to business standards and formats. Since traditional, manual management information systems are still used by HFS (except for some finance functions), the agency is limited in its ability to conduct performance measurement and demonstrate its effectiveness. The funds required to implement more sophisticated

information and management systems are expected to come from the capital campaign under development. Smith has taken the leadership role in developing the first major capital campaign for HFS, called Rebuilding with Respect.

Rebuilding with Respect

By networking at a senior level within the corporate sector and appealing to “corporate social conscience,” Smith has attracted 14 senior executives to work on the development of a foundation that would administer the capital campaign and allocate its funds. In this way, private sector contributions would make up for the lack of government funding. The foundation would be at arm’s length from HFS and have its own Board of Directors. Several prominent and influential people (i.e., Paul Godfrey, Alan Tonks, Mel Lastman, and Jeff Lyons) are lending their support and connections to the foundation’s development. It is expected that the foundation will be certified by January 2002.

Ontario’s Promise

Initiated in November 2000 Ontario’s Promise²² is a province-wide “movement to help children and youth,” a “made in Ontario” version of the America’s Promise initiative that was created in 1997 by General Colin Powell, U.S. Secretary of State. It provides an impetus for partnership between public, private, and charitable sectors and has raised more than \$33-million of increased support for the voluntary sector. More than 135 organizations (corporations, community agencies, service clubs and professional organizations, and government) have joined as partners.

As an “Agency of Promise,” HFS is partnered with Chartwell Management Consultants to provide computer training to children and their parents living in HFS buildings. The training is intended to address the “digital divide” that exists between those who do and those who do not have access to the computer skills deemed essential for the new knowledge-based economy. Contingent on funding availability, the plan is that Chartwell staff would collect computers and other information technology that has been donated by various corporations (e.g. banks) and would commit a few hours per week with a child to “get them comfortable with information technology.” Each child would be given a computer to use at home (and perhaps keep). About 76 children and youth have been identified as eligible for the proposed program.

As part of the Ontario’s Promise program, Chartwell has received media attention and is “promoted for [their] exemplary corporate citizenship in Ontario’s Promise publications and events.” HFS’s contribution is similarly acknowledged.

Motivation

Just as with other volunteers, those from the corporate sector have a desire to see the beneficial effects of their contributions on clients make a difference and obtain

²² Information on Ontario’s Promise is drawn from a 10-page marketing supplement that appeared in the Globe and Mail (who is a partner and donated the space) on September 14, 2001.

“emotional payback.” There appears to be some dissatisfaction with umbrella charitable organizations, such as the United Way, and a preference for closer “donor stewardship.”

Federal SCPI Program

HFS is one of more than 50 agencies, community-based organizations, groups, and coalitions that comprise the Community Reference Group that provided advice and ideas for the development of Toronto’s Community Plan for Homelessness. HFS participated in the Community Reference Group consultations, which established the funding priorities currently used to determine which proposed projects receive SCPI funding.

The Future of Partnerships and Collaborations

There is general agreement that the social service sector is in a desperate situation and is exhausted due to increased demand for services and substantially reduced government funding. Whether HFS is able to sustain itself financially in the future is an “open question” that interviewees answered with cautious optimism and hope that the capital campaign will be successful and the deficit eliminated. While strategic partnerships and inter-agency collaboration are accepted as viable methods of securing service delivery, there are limits to the benefits of appealing to the corporate sector and relying on donors. “The private sector can offer a lot, but it cannot provide operating funds.” One challenge lies in the nature of charitable solicitation which, to be successful, requires putting a “human face” on service users, e.g., producing a video of clients and telling their stories. This may violate confidentiality requirements and the privacy of clients. “That’s why government funding is easier.”

The HFS Board’s direction is to become an accountable business organization and not-for-profit entrepreneur. This fits with the rhetoric of government, but “government funders do not seem to understand this way of operating. They continue to act as they have in the past.” As the examples noted above demonstrate, the actions of government funders have put HFS in serious financial difficulty, suggesting a lack of mutuality or accountability in their partnerships.

Many agencies exhibit a willingness to partner or collaborate, but there is no infrastructure and resources to develop a proactive, practical strategy for creating and sustaining partnerships. Communication and planning functions for complementary services must be developed. When there are funding opportunities to develop partnerships, agencies scramble to both collaborate and compete. It would be more constructive if a coordinated structure existed for the Boards of local housing providers to specialize, collaborate, share resources, and develop and organize complementary service partnerships. Clear lines of responsibility would be required. One of the drawbacks of government funding reductions is that there is no single agency responsible for addressing people’s needs; rather there is a “hodge podge” of funding sources and requirements.

8.0 Homes First Society’s Board of Directors

Homes First Society's Board of Directors consists of fourteen members representing the private and public sectors and the Homes First tenant community.

Co-Chairs:

Tita Ang-Angco

Project Director, Long Term Care Redevelopment Project, Ministry of Health
and

Jeff Smith

Partner and Vice-President, Chartwell Inc.

Treasurer:

Nelson Lynch

Resource Development Co-ordinator, St. Christopher House

Secretary:

Carroll Guen-Hart

Consultant, Self-employed

Members:

Maryetta Cheney

Human Resources Consultant, Self-employed

Sharon Daniel

Tenant Community Member

Glen de Freitas

Chartered Accountant, Self-employed

Suzanne Duncan

Barrister and Solicitor, Department of Justice

Richard Earle

President, SeaChange Corporation

Marcia Mascall

Tenant Community Member

Kimberly Quinlan

Tenant Community Member

Rainer Soegtrop

Chief Operating Officer, Toronto Housing Company

Ken Sosa

Community Development Worker, Children's Aid Society of Metropolitan Toronto

Murray Weber
Tenant Community Member

9.0 Homes First Society Mission Statement

The mission of Homes First Society is to provide affordable, permanent housing and transitional housing for people who are homeless and/or have the fewest options in society.

To achieve its mission, Homes First Society will use its financial and human resources within an anti oppression and anti racist framework to work with the strengths of tenants and community partners to ...

Principles

- Ensure equity of access to resources, equality of opportunity to participate in decision making at Homes First Society and freedom from discrimination on the basis of gender, sexual orientation, race, ancestry, place of origin, ethnic origin, citizenship, colour, creed, age, marital status, record of offences, receipt of social assistance, family status and ability.
- Develop and manage affordable, permanent housing for homeless people and those with the fewest housing options, and to ensure a continuing supply of safe, durable housing.
- Support tenants in overcoming the effects of displacement, isolation and dependence.
- Provide the tools and opportunities for tenants to control their own lives and take leadership in the community.
- Ensure meaningful tenant involvement in decision-making at Homes First Society and remove barriers to full participation in their housing communities and in society.
- Advocate for social change and new approaches that will ensure the right to decent affordable housing, dignity, quality of life, and equal opportunities for individuals and families marginalized by poverty and homelessness.
- Ensure a workplace environment that encourages meaningful staff participation in strategic planning and program development.

Case Study: Manitoba

Case Study of:
Main Street Project

Winnipeg Main Street Project: Profile

Origin

Established in 1972 at the request of the Winnipeg Police Department and the public in order to provide services to people in crisis situations on Winnipeg's "Main Street Strip"

History

The Main Street Project (MSP) has experienced significant growth since its origin in 1972, expanding from crisis services to victims of violence and alcohol abuse to a much broader range of programs that include transitional and long term housing, a detoxification center and counselling. The organization has grown to meet the needs of an increasing number of homeless and at risk people in the City.

Mandate and Philosophy

The Main Street Project exists to work with those individuals in the City who are in need and unable to function due to alcoholism or other chemical dependencies or are homeless. The role of the project is to help these individuals through their periods of crisis and assist them to make the best possible use of rehabilitation and support services that exist in the project itself, or in other agencies in the City of Winnipeg. The MSP currently views itself as only one agency operating within a broader range of service agencies to address the needs of homeless people.

The Board

An 18 member Board, with staggered terms of one to three years, meets monthly and currently oversees the daily operation of the organization. Members of the Board sit on or chair key committees including Programs and Services, Executive, Personal and Finance. The Board is in transition from a managerial role to one more focused on strategic and long term planning. The Board is also placing a greater emphasis on collaborative partnerships. It is attempting to move from the Managerial to the Policy Board Model (see Section 4.3) The Executive Director is gradually being given more responsibility for day-to-day operations. Board members are drawn from organizations that are key funders and individuals that can bring specific expertise to the organization.

Strategic Planning

The Board has recently begun to place more emphasis on strategic planning, long considered a weakness of the organization. The process is being facilitated by public consultation, facilitated by a consultant. The extensive involvement of the Executive Director in the SCPI community planning process and as co-chair of the **Community Partnership on Homelessness and Housing**, a collaborative partnership that brings together over thirty organizations involved in the provision of housing and other services to the homeless, is also strengthening the strategic planning process. Involvement of the Executive Director and other Board members in this extensive collaborative partnership has improved strategic planning potential through the development of a better understanding of needs, gaps, resources available, and possible referral agencies. The Board and the Executive Director consider external contacts and the external environment essential to the strategic planning process.

Current Issues

One pressing issue currently facing the organization is the gap between resources and needs. The organization cannot absorb the increased demand without increased monetary and staff resources. MSP uses volunteers on a very limited basis, depending instead on a core of well-trained staff. With the increasing demands the organization faces it is reconsidering this policy as staff burn-out is becoming an important issue. Moving the Board from its current micro-management role to greater involvement in strategic, long term planning is the other key issues the organization is currently focusing.

Partnerships

Partnerships are strength of the organization. It has maintained seven core-funding partners since its initiation in 1972. Three of these core partners are municipal entities; the City of Winnipeg, City health and Welfare and the Winnipeg Police department: two are provincial agencies; Provincial Welfare and Manitoba Housing: the Federal Canada Mortgage and Housing and United Way a funding agency.

In addition to these core-funding partners broad collaborative partnerships have been developed because of the involvement of the Executive Director and Board Members in the SCPI planning process and the broad based Community Partnership on Homelessness and Housing. These collaborative arrangements and the formal and informal partnerships that have developed have strengthened the organizations relationship with Aboriginal groups in the City, broadened the base of organizations that Main Street can refer individuals to for rehabilitation and counselling services and facilitated their strategic planning process through development of a better appreciation of community needs, services and gaps and where the organization fits into the overall housing and support service continuum for the homeless. Involvement in these collaborative organizations has also broadened their partnership base beyond the three levels of government to include many community-based organizations, other funding organizations as well as academic and research institutions. These broad based partnerships not only strengthen their funding potential but also will facilitate the strategic planning process of the Board as they move from the Managerial to the Policy Board model.

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1.0 Introduction

Main Street is a program that is nearing its 30th year of operation in the City of Winnipeg. Throughout its long history, it has evolved and changed with the needs of its clients. This has included enduring the painful transition from an agency helping the homeless and those with chronic alcohol related illnesses, to dealing with the harsh realities of increased substance abuse problems. The original goal of bringing people in one door and seeing them go out better persons has dissipated into simply trying to make do with an increasing under supply of supports and a continuing reliance on referrals to help people in the best way they can. However, in light of these difficulties, the Main Street Project continues to invest in helping those who need it most and at a time in their lives, when few options exist.

1.1 History

In 1972 the Main Street Project began with a request by the public and the Winnipeg Police Commission to help with police services in the area. The Project focused on patrolling Main Street where they came across many people in crisis situations. Those individuals who were victims of alcohol abuse or violence were taken to the hospital or the Main Street Project office, where they received the necessary counselling or referrals to other social agencies. As the Project continued, more programs were added to their mandate. An emergency overnight shelter with a drop-in center was established to deal with increasing numbers of people in need of a place to stay. In 1974 a Detox unit containing twenty-eight beds was developed. In 1982 the Project renovated a warehouse on Martha Street to house the majority of their programs. In 1992 a new Intoxicated Persons Detention Area was constructed which had 20 secure rooms. The Mainstay Residence was constructed in 1993 to provide transitional and long-term housing. Through the years and changes the mandate has remained the same.

The Main Street Project provides its clients with Crisis Intervention, Emergency Referral Services, Street Patrol, Emergency Shelter, Intoxicated Persons Detention Area, Sub-Acute Detoxification, and the Continuing Care Unit, which provides assessment, case management, counselling and community development. The organizational structure of the Project takes the form of a Board of Directors, along with committees including the Program and Services Committee, Executive Committee, Personnel Committee, and the Finance Committee. Instead of relying on volunteers the Main Street Project Inc. employs full-time staff. (Main Street Project Inc. 1997).

1.2 Philosophy

“The Main Street Project exists to work with those individuals in the City of Winnipeg who are in need and unable to function due to alcoholism or other chemical dependence or because they are intoxicated, injured, abused, lost or homeless. The role of the Project is to assist those individuals through their periods of crisis and to assist them to make the best possible use of rehabilitation and support services that exist in Winnipeg” (Main Street Project Inc. 1997:2).

2.0 Board Structure

2.1 *Board of Directors*

The Board is made up of a number of committees, which include: the Program and Services Committee, the Executive Committee, the Personnel Committee and the Finance Committee. All committees have been very active in the last few years. Regular Board meetings are monthly while each committee meets monthly or as necessary.

Out of a possible 18 members, there are 13 active members of the Board at present (2000). The average terms for board members are set at one and two years, while the President of the Board of Directors has a three-year term. The goal of MSP is to have people on the Board who represent different aspects of the community and to represent the people they serve. Many of the Board members have been found by word-of-mouth or have been identified through the funding partners. Often, individuals having expertise in areas like finance and law are sought out and nominated. The one official position on the Board is a member of Winnipeg Police Services. This is because they are such a key part of MSP with the Intoxicated Person's Centre. It should be noted that as the board's structure and role are evolving, there might be changes to the above noted structure in the foreseeable future.

In terms of accountability, the Board is answerable to the seven key funding partners: Winnipeg Police Service, City of Winnipeg, United Way of Winnipeg, City and Provincial Welfare, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation and Manitoba Housing. This is directly related to the funding requirements of the partners, who each have their own set of requirements that must be followed. This includes financial responsibility related to the allocation of monies by each of the funding partners.

2.2 *The Role of the Board*

Currently, a re-evaluation of the Board is being undertaken and is aimed at helping to determine the Board's structure and its role: what is it that they should be doing and whether they should be more active in strategic planning are questions they are presently asking. The re-evaluation process also includes reviewing the above noted mission statement to determine what, if any, changes are needed. The Board has been focused on managing operations but wants to be more strategic and operational in creating policy environments. As it stands, it was suggested that the Board has too much influence over the daily operations in terms of micro-management. The authority of the Board causes staff to expend excessive effort on the preparation of materials to present to the Board. For example, it was noted that reviewing each check issued on a monthly basis is time consuming and is wasteful of resources that could be better used on program delivery. By making the necessary changes, the functionality of the Board is expected to improve, ultimately becoming more strategic in direction.

2.3 Strategic Planning

This is one area the Main Street Project Inc. is working on redeveloping in the upcoming months, although no details have been formalized. Currently, they are in the process of undertaking a complete program assessment. This is in conjunction with a consultant to give feedback (still in progress). One of the most significant areas where strategic planning is most needed is in finance. As the Executive Director states, “we need to find wiser ways of using existing resources. It’s not about increasing money”.

2.4 Current Issues

The most pressing issues related to the management and organization of the MSP are best summarized by the Executive Director who stated, “there is a dam in our river and it has backed up into this huge lake and we are drowning in the lake and so we need to break the dam, and the only way to do that is to engage people in a bigger thinking process. We’ve run out of shelter space, we’ve run out of the ability to absorb the people coming in with out breaking down the dam.”

Over the last year, the ongoing development of a new strategic plan and the changing direction of the Board structure has been the focus, the most pressing issue. In the next 12-24 months, the changing direction of the Board and giving more control to the Executive Director will be a priority. “Where do we go from here? What are we trying to accomplish? What has the Main Street Project done? Have we been doing it well?” and “How can we do it better?” are all essential questions that require attention. Redefining who they are and what they want to be is fundamental to their success. Movement away from micro-management and toward a more defined role of strategic direction and guidance is essential to their future. At present, there appears to be a reduced efficiency because the Executive Director has to report all expenses and issues to the Board. This is seen as being an ineffective use of resources and one MSP is planning to change with its internal reorganization of both the Board and its administrative structure.

2.5 Strengths and Weaknesses

One of the core strengths of MSP is its representation of the people served and its community-based approach. They are an open organization with the minutes of the Board and annual reports being made public. Because the bulk of their funding comes from public sources, they are accountable to the public and thus they feel that it is the public who best judges their strengths. One of the biggest advantages MSP has is their adaptability to a changing environment both social and economic. This is achieved through a solid and well-trained staff compliment. Furthermore, despite the fact that their client load has increased by more than 50% and that funding has remained the same over the last ten years - they have persevered. They have also been able to meet the needs of an increasing number of client’s. In short, their strength has been an enduring effort to provide persons who have become homeless with the best possible treatment.

A current weakness noted was related to the transition that is taking place at MSP, “This was not a year without its struggles. Concerns raised by staff and management suggested to the Board that MSP was going through a period of significant turmoil - turmoil that was having an impact on morale and compromising our ability to do the work we want to do” (Main Street Project Annual Report: 2001). This quote highlights a significant issue for the board to resolve but with its planned reorganization, the board of the MSP is expected to become stronger following the transition period this should also bode well for improving the staff problems.

3.0 Administration and General Staff

3.1 Structure

At the moment, the Executive Director is in charge of general operations. Project Managers or Supervisors have control of the various operational aspects of each program but most of the administrative and financial aspects are seen to by the Executive Director and, to a lesser extent, an accountant. Both a strength and weakness of the structure at MSP is the grouping of jobs and skills that are inter-changeable. This job-sharing environment helps to disseminate workloads, providing relief to workers when needed, and offers flexibility to the staff by allowing job rotation. However, with so many people able to do the same job, there is little room for upward mobility. This has caused retention and recruitment problems. Given the current shortfall in funding and the increased workload, there are no solutions in the near future. Overall, there are currently about 60 employees at MSP.

3.2 Hiring and Evaluation of Employees

Staff is hired by a mixture of program management team members and line supervisors, mostly on an individual program basis. In most cases, more than one person is on the hiring committee to ensure that the process is effective. However, variation occurs depending on the area of the program and the position being filled. Potential employees are subject to a Criminal Records Check and must have a valid driver’s license and CPR certificate. The Code of Ethics is under review and will be strengthened for staff and Board members. At the moment, no former clients are employed as staff members. While there is no policy on this, MSP encourages the progress of clients and if possible, they will hire former clients. In fact, some of the former clients who were hired as employees at MSP, were later able to move on to other jobs.

The Board is evaluated by the general public at their annual general meetings, which are open to the public. These meetings are held in the community and citizens are encouraged to attend and ask questions. Staff evaluations were last completed two years ago with no specific format. Ultimately, the evaluations will be performed by immediate supervisors, on a regular basis, following a specific format.

One of the most pressing issues raised by the Executive Director was the issue of staff burnout, which remains high as people are being asked to do more work. This has created

a very challenging issue for MSP to surmount. To the point, the Executive Director wrote, “we experienced (2000-01) more staff turnover this year than we like to see, with both recruitment and retention presenting a challenge. There are a number of contributing factors, including pay and benefits. We hope that the Organizational Review, undertaken under the leadership of the Board of Directors, will help us understand the dynamics better so we can begin to reverse this trend in the coming year” (Annual Report 2001).

4.0 Voluntary Sector

Presently, there are no volunteers working at the Main Street Project as they use volunteers only a very limited scale. In fact, the only volunteers are off-site and are involved in collecting furniture and clothing donations for those in need. In some cases, former clients of the project have become volunteers – to give back. This has also given past clients the ability to become more stable in their life and it is hoped this will expand once the use of volunteers becomes more formalized and organized.

However, there is a Coordinator of Volunteers (Ken Harper) who is seeking to establish a more substantial volunteer program. One idea is for volunteers to help with housing programs. Applications, policies, job descriptions and a volunteer handbook are being developed. Ken is actively recruiting volunteers from a variety of sources and has put together a proposal for United Way “Days of Caring”, a cleanup event called “MSP Excitation Project”, where volunteers, clients and staff of MSP will cleanup the debris littered streets and properties around MSP. The event will be followed by a community barbeque.

5.0 Structural and Strategic Partnerships

5.1 Funding and Partnerships

The primary funding partner for MSP is the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority (WRHA). The Mainstay Residence receives funding from a number of sources including Manitoba Housing, Employment & Income Security, United Way of Canada and the City of Winnipeg. SCPI gave \$253,000 to MSP in 2000. The Intoxicated Person’s Detention Area is funded through a fee-for-service contract with the Winnipeg Police Service.

At the moment, there are no formal partnerships to deliver programs. However, there are a number of informal partnerships that have been the result of a shortage of space or a specific need. An example of an informal partnership would be the nearby Salvation Army who may assist in providing some emergency shelter units during peak periods in the coming winter. However, overall, MSP delivers all of its programs single-handedly. This is an area the MSP is expanding on. They see SCPI as a great resource for bringing people together to discuss potential options for forming partnerships.

To improve partnerships, there needs to be ongoing support (both staff and financial). However, it was noted that there is a need for more value to be placed on the actual process of building partnerships. In fact, it was noted that the process of building

partnerships and meeting with other organizations consumes too much time and resources - which, MSP and others do not have. Therefore, public/ private and non-profit sectors need to work together to deal with better ways on connecting with each other so as to maximize the benefits but also lessen the burden on their respective organizations. For the most part, MSP sees its current partnerships as loose and mostly informal alliances. MSP has a number of joint projects with the Salvation Army that are pending. One is residential care for seniors and an overflow program for the winter months. A third program is related to support for inhalant users.

The most important agencies MSP is likely to deal with on a daily or frequent basis includes Income and Assistance agencies (pension, welfare and others). These agencies are crucial to helping get people back on their feet. Other key agencies include addictions and health agencies like the Mount Carmel Clinic, police services like the Intoxicated Person's Centre, and emergency services such as Urgent Care.

6.0 Core Funding Sources

The main source of funding comes from the Province of Manitoba WRHA (61.9%), followed by the City of Winnipeg Police (10.7%), the Province of Manitoba (8.0%), the United Way of Winnipeg (5.9%), the City of Winnipeg (5.6%), the Federal Government (3.8%) and the Manitoba Housing Subsidy (3.7%). While the organization does have charitable status, MSP does not solicit donations and has no plans to move into active fund-raising in the near future. While there is a collection of clothing as a means of fund-raising, it is a very small component of the organization. Most donations are in-kind and spontaneous. In kind donations is one area that MSP would like to focus on in the future.

MSP uses seven processes to set its budget because there are seven core-funding partners who each have specific requirements (each with their own forms and requirements) regarding finance. The budgets are set according to the responses of the funding partners. This "reactive" approach is problematic because MSP cannot be "proactive" to its own (MSP) needs. Real cost budgets may correct this problem in the future. The annual operating budget, as structured by the Executive Director, for the year 2000, was \$1,836,888. Ultimately, the budget must be approved by the Board, which reviews it and passes the final version.

Funding has been stable but frozen. Only a few of the funders have increased their grants over the last few years. The majority of grants have been frozen for the past nine years. Add to this an increase in the cost of living and an increasing number of clients, and the result has been an overload, which continues to cripple the project as a whole.

7.0 Core Client Base

Although the numbers of those accessing MSP's services have increased, the demographics remain relatively consistent. Sixty-one percent of those served are of Aboriginal descent (down a little from past years), and 70% are men. Although the current client tracking process does not permit accurate counts, it is clear there are a

growing number of women being served and a growing number of individuals with chronic physical and mental health challenges. Women make up 25% of the clientele, an increase from 10-15%, as experienced only a few years ago. Overall, the average age of clients was down during 2000/2001, with increases in Mainstay and Continuing Care and decreases in all other programs. The reasons for those in need have also changed in recent years: there has been a significant shift from predominantly alcohol-based abusers to substance-based abusers.

Records are kept on clients but there is limited follow-up with chronic users simply due to a lack of resources. As the Executive Director points out “when all else fails, you cut follow-up...if you have to cut something you cut follow-up because it’s the only thing you can get away with. You can’t cut shelter, basic food or beds.”

8.0 Programs

8.1 Objectives

With the exception of the detoxification program, programs at MSP are geared toward treating the symptoms of homelessness and not the causes. Several health programs are in existence: the intoxicated person’s detention area, sub-acute detoxification and the continuing care unit. Social programs offered include: crisis intervention, emergency referral services, street patrol, case management, counselling, and the community development program. The emergency shelter and Mainstay Residence make up the two housing programs. Compared to previous years, MSP’s core programs are significantly busier in 2000-2001.

8.2 Crisis Intervention

The objective is to have continuous access to emergency service for those in a state of crisis. From April 1, 2000 to March 31, 2001, 2243 individuals were served and the numbers continue to rise. Crisis intervention provides a drop-in centre (with soup, coffee and a place to socialize), transportation to and from hospitals and other medical facilities, counselling and referrals for clients. From April 1, 2000 to March 31, 2001, there were 8,148 admissions for crisis services, an increase of 15% over the last year. Although the importance of these services for the clients is recognized, responding to the increased need is placing a significant strain on resources.

Individuals, who walk in, are referred by other agencies, or who are intercepted by the street patrol and are in a state of crisis, are those who qualify for this program. Strengths of the program include preventing further injury, abuse, or death to those in crisis, providing safe and supervised accommodation, referring stabilized persons to the Continuing Care Unit, ascertaining obvious medical needs, and assessing the person’s desire to go through detoxification.

8.3 *Detoxification Centre*

MSP provides a 10-day non-medical detoxification program for individuals with substance abuse concerns. Of the 32 beds available for detoxification in Winnipeg, MSP has 25. The Detoxification Centre's objective is to provide supervised withdrawal from substance abuse and to provide referrals when required. It is an opportunity to eat and sleep more regularly and to receive assistance from the staff to develop plans for themselves. Helping clients to pursue long-term recovery is an important part of this program. Clients are encouraged to acknowledge and understand the health issues that are facing them and to make more positive choices for themselves. In order to qualify, individuals must wish to undergo supervised withdrawal from chemical abuse.

From April 1, 2000 to March 31, 2001, 662 individuals were served. Over the 2000/2001 fiscal year, the number of admissions to the detoxification program has remained the same - just under 1,300. However, the number of bed care days increased from 7,122 to 7,507 (5%). This means that clients are staying longer on each admission. Last year, 540 clients stayed 6 days or more; in 2001, that number increased to 610. With the detox program full nearly all the time, the staff have less time to spend with each. Furthermore, the budget for food, laundry and other basic expenses is stretched beyond its limit. New ways to ensure that clients in the detoxification program are getting the attention and support they need has to be a priority over the next couple of years.

8.4 *Emergency Shelter*

The Emergency Shelter provides overnight shelter for those in need. Individuals, who walk in, are referred by other agencies, or who are intercepted by the street patrol and are in a state of crisis, are those helped by this program. Strengths of the program include preventing further injury, abuse, or death to those in crisis, providing safe and supervised accommodation, referring stabilized persons to the Continuing Care Unit, ascertaining obvious medical needs, and assessing the person's desire to go through detoxification.

From April 1, 2000 to March 31, 2001, 1512 individuals were served. The significant increase in shelter admissions over the last year is troubling. Admissions to shelter rose from 19,730 in 1999-2000 to 21,817 in 2000/2001, a one-year increase of over 10%. Presently, the shelter is at full capacity and, at times, beyond capacity. Clients are not turned away but it is difficult to house more individuals than they have space to house. MSP remains committed to finding a more stable and independent living for its clients.

8.5 *Continuing Care/Case Management*

The objective of the Continuing Care/Case Management is to assess the needs of clients and to provide counselling, support and referrals. This program helps to stabilize clients within their own community and reduces the client's dependence on the project and its services. From April 1, 2000 to March 31, 2001, 381 individuals were served in the Continuing Care program.

For many years, the Continuing Care Team has consisted of one full-time Case Worker and a Community Development Worker. Thanks to government funding, a Housing Counselor and three new positions have been added to the Team. This has also allowed MSP to meet the range of needs presented by the homeless individuals participating in the core programs. With a strong team, MSP is better able to meet clients' needs and to provide direct support to clients at MSP and in the community. The team members continue to grow and challenge themselves to offer services that both support and empower MSP clients. The team will support, and be supported by, the work of the MSP Crisis Workers.

8.6 *Mainstay Residence*

Providing supervised accommodations and helping individuals stabilize their lifestyles, in terms of obtaining independent accommodation in the community, are two objectives of the Mainstay Residence. This program also functions as a last resort for other agencies that are unwilling or unable to accommodate other clients. Mainstay provides room and board, with 24-hour supervision at its 71 Martha Street location. Over the past few years, MSP has provided services to three distinct groups of individuals - those who are chemically dependent, older clients (aged 62 to 84 years of age) and individuals experiencing significant mental health challenges. The number of men and women in the latter two groups has increased. They require a greater degree of support and care and ask to stay at the Residence for longer periods of time.

The criteria for acceptance include men and women who are disadvantaged, chemically dependent, in distress or homeless. Strengths of the program include improving the quality of life for clients, encouraging self-examination and goal setting, providing life and social skills training, providing a secure, stable environment where clients can have their basic needs met. From April 1, 2000 to March 31, 2001, 79 individuals were housed during the year. The average occupancy level for 2000/2001 was 96% while resident bed care days totaled 11,868. Due to the growing number of long-term clients, MSP is less able to offer the short-term transition services to more independent clients from our other programs. Unfortunately, MSP is not presently equipped to fully meet the needs of the more challenging population they are serving. For this reason, MSP is actively engaged in a comprehensive review of program and budget issues at Mainstay. An assessment of individual client's needs will be undertaken, along with an environmental scan and analysis of available statistical information. The agency will then be in a position to better describe the range of client needs and to better identify the supports and services required to meet those needs.

8.7 *Intoxicated Persons Detention Centre*

Individuals detained by the Winnipeg Police Service under the Intoxicated Persons' Detention Act are transported to the Main Street Project. The police access the building through a separate entrance and clients are housed in individual rooms in a specially designed facility on the north end of the building. This service is the only involuntary program at MSP.

The Intoxicated Persons Detention Centre has one main objective: to house intoxicated individuals apprehended by the police in a locked facility. This program offers clients a safe place to stay while they are intoxicated. Once sober, they return to the community - no charges are laid against them and no further penalties are assessed. By providing this service, clients are detained, are able to access emergency medical services if necessary, are briefed on the available services upon their release, and are offered counselling, detoxification or rehabilitation.

From April 1, 2000 to March 31, 2001, 4386 individuals were served. Admission numbers have fluctuated over the years to a high of 8,008 in 1998/1999. In the 2000/2001 fiscal year this program has experienced a drop in admissions to 7,524. As is the case in many of MSP's programs, this reduction in admissions (and revenue) has presented the organization with a financial challenge.

8.8 *The Client/Community Advocacy*

The goal of this service is to identify social needs that are not being met.

8.9 *Community Development Program*

The aim of this service is to help those clients who require ongoing support to maintain stability in their life. This program has established a housing registry to inform clients of possible accommodations and tries to enhance the comfort level of clients and their new accommodations. The program also acts as a liaison between tenants and landlords and helps to resolve problems with clients' past landlords - in order to assist in the provision of housing. Delivering food, conducting home visits, training/screening/selecting volunteers, and maintaining the project's warehouse are all activities provided by the service.

8.10 *Street Patrol*

The two main goals of the Street Patrol program are to provide street patrol services in Winnipeg's core area and to seek out individuals in crisis and bring them to the Crisis Centre.

8.11 *Counselling*

Long-term counselling is provided to all clients upon referral.

9.0 *Summary*

The Main Street Project is a vital component of Winnipeg's front line battle in dealing with the many issues related to homelessness. However, it was noted that, for the most part, they have been relegated to dealing with the *symptoms* of homelessness as opposed to treating the *causes*. First and foremost, this has resulted from a lack of outreach and

follow-up programs, which are essential but seemingly, the first to be cut during times of fiscal uncertainties.

One of the most interesting aspects of the Main Street Project is its lack of volunteers to assist in program delivery. This is quite a departure from other agencies, which have more reliance on the use of volunteers to supplement staffing shortages and to provide program delivery. However, as in agencies across the country, MSP is under tremendous pressure to deliver programs within an environment of shrinking commitments from various funding partners. This has resulted in front line staff having to absorb more responsibility for program delivery and administration. Yet these two areas are the least likely to be the recipient of new dollars from agencies who appear more inclined to promote programs that have a “measurable outcome” as opposed to assisting the organization run more efficiently. Related directly to this is the fact that MSP does not actively solicit donations. Although this may be seen as a shortcoming of the organization, in many ways it may be a positive as having secured funding sources has allowed MSP to be more structured and less susceptible to declines in cash donations.

The issue of staff burn out appears high on the list of urgent issues for MSP. Staff are being asked to absorb a 50%+ increase in client numbers without the necessary support network. The key issue noted by the Executive Director was that even though most staff are highly “cross-trained” to cover the various jobs, the inability of MSP to retain workers through promotions and such has resulted in a stagnation of the employment base. They simply cannot retain staff long enough and offer them adequate compensation and/or promotions. This has resulted in the loss of significant staff during the course of the 2000/01 operating year.

With respect to the board structure, MSP is an excellent example of a board in a state of transition. As noted, MSP wants to redefine the role of the board. This was highlighted by the desire to move away from the “hands on approach” or “micro-management” of operations. More so, they want to give the Executive Director more autonomy and discretion with day-to-day operations. With this being said, the board also wants to move into a more strategic role as it tries to rediscover itself. As noted, the board is in the midst of ‘soul-searching’ to see what role they should play in the provision of services to persons who have become homeless, and what their role in the community should be. The board structure is also one that intends to remain strong and active but again, they want their role to focus on giving strategic direction to the Executive Director and guiding Main Street into the next phase of their existence rather than accounting for each \$5 or \$10 cheques issued.

Main Street has embraced SCIPI as an initiative that has helped to strengthen the connections within the “homeless community.” but it was also stressed that MSP is hesitant to use the money from SCIPI to start new programs only to see them cut at the completion of the program. SCIPI is also credited with forming some informal “networks” that are hoped with continue after the program ends. The Executive Director did note that the SCIPI grant allowed them to hire an outreach worker but as she stated, when times are tough, the first to go is both outreach and follow-up.

In terms of program delivery, MSP runs all its programs solo but they have had to develop “informal” relationships on occasion such as the temporary overflow housing agreement with the nearby Salvation Army. There did not appear to be much desire to move into more joint-partnerships in the near future but with the changes occurring, this may be something they will be forced to consider.

Considering all the obstacles in the way of MSP they have been able to succeed in delivering essential programs. This is strengthened through the solid commitments of the funding partners and the continued efforts of the Board of Directors to reinvent themselves into a more forward moving organization.

10.0 Lessons Learned

- Find core funding partners who are stable and committed long term.
- Limited use of volunteers has both strengths and weaknesses: it may limit the ability to maintain services in the face of budget cuts but it reduces training needs, liability concerns and reliance on a workforce over which an organization has less control.
- An active and strong board (and one that is willing to change) is perhaps the single most important issue.
- Staff and board member burnout are real issues.
- Staff retention programs and policies are required to help strengthen the organization and improve retention of key employees.
- Homeless Initiatives need to focus on improving administration and management as funding focused on these areas improves the efficiency of the organization.

Case Study: Alberta

Case Study of:
Calgary Drop In Centre

Calgary Drop-In Centre: Profile

Origin

The origin of the center goes back to 1961 when the Calgary Roman Catholic Diocese and the Calgary Interfaith Community Action Committee began providing services to the homeless and people suffering from addictions. In 1977 the two groups amalgamated to form the Calgary Drop In Centre (CDIC).

History

Focusing initially on short stay housing operating out of one project, the center responded as needs of the homeless and street people increased and now has 445 units of emergency shelter in five projects. A range of other programs provide meals, job training and placement, health care, counselling, recreation and other supports for marginalized people who find themselves without permanent, adequate and affordable housing.

Mandate and Philosophy

CDIC's mandate is to provide housing and other support services to homeless people. Housing is viewed as only one component of a broad, comprehensive set of services designed to help people improve their skills and achieve a more independent life-style. The main focus of the Centre is to create a friendly, non-invasive, safe and supportive environment as an alternative to the streets and bars and to provide an atmosphere where personal growth can take place. With the very low vacancy rate and high cost of housing in Calgary CDIC now finds itself in a situation where they are providing housing to people who are working but unable to access adequate, affordable housing.

The Board

The current Board consists of 12 volunteer members, although the organization is attempting to increase this to 16 and legislation permits 20. Board members represent various constituencies in community, government and the private sector and bring a diversity of experience to the organization ranging from legal, to health care, accounting, business, housing and community development. The Board has very little involvement in day-to-day operations of the Centre, leaving these tasks to an Executive Director and other senior managers. Its role is providing overall direction in a policy sense, promoting the organization and playing a very active role in fundraising and development of partnerships. Although patterned after a Policy Model, the active involvement in fundraising, promotion and partnership building means it also illustrates characteristics of the Advisory and Business Board Models.

Strategic Planning

The organization has a Strategic Plan dated 2001 but is currently developing a more current document with the help of an outside consultant who facilitates Friday and Saturday planning sessions. The planning time frame is 3 to 5 years, although it was felt 5 years was too long given the uncertainties surrounding funding and rapid changes in the housing market. The Board and Executive Director view strategic planning as an on-going and continually evolving exercise that has to have both an internal and external focus. Involvement of Board members and the Executive Director in a number of

collaborative partnerships, including the development of the **Community Action Plan**, sponsored by the Homeless Initiative Ad Hoc Steering Committee under SCPI has improved strategic planning by increasing the organizations understanding of broader community needs, gaps and resources. These collaborative partnerships help strengthen the external focus of the organization.

Current Issues

The most significant challenge facing the organization is trying to deal with the substantial demand with the resources they have in place. CDIC has 445 emergency shelter spaces but has accommodated up to 700 people on some nights. There is concern that they are “warehousing” the problem as opposed to addressing the symptoms. Expansion of the Board, securing long term sustainable funding, improving long term strategic planning and maintaining their substantial volunteer base are other issues the organization is currently attempting to address. Successful fund raising, particularly from the private sector sources has been a strength of the organization.

Partnerships

The Board, staff and volunteers of CDIC are all active in formal and informal partnerships with other community agencies, governments at all levels and the corporate and business community. Some notable examples include The Calgary Homeless Foundation (partnership on an endowment fund), “In From the Cold” (a partnership with churches who open their doors to feed and house homeless on cold nights), the United Way, The Salvation Army, Alberta Family and Social Services, Alberta Mental Health, the Inter-Agency Group, Aids Calgary, Calgary Urban Projects Society and the City’s Community Development Department. CDIC was very involved in the SCPI community planning process and the development of the Community Plan, and works closely with HRDC and CMHC. Fundraising in the private sector has resulted in productive partnerships with energy, resource and technology companies. CDIC uses partnerships in a very strategic manner to: obtain information on needs, resources and service gaps; in the development of its strategic plan; for referrals of people to other agencies, sharing of services; fundraising and information dissemination and awareness building. It also draws Board members from key partnering agencies to strengthen CDIC’s collaborative efforts.

Funding Sources

Over the long term the City of Calgary has been the most important funder, particularly for sustaining funds necessary to operate day-to-day programs. Much of the capital required to expand the physical plant has come from private community donations and the private sector. Other major sources of funds over the years include the United Way, churches and the provincial and federal governments.

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1.0 Background

1.1 History

The origins of the Centre go back 40 plus years. Starting in 1961 services were initially provided under the auspices of the Calgary Roman Catholic Diocese and the Calgary Interfaith Community Action Committee. These two organizations provided services from different locations in the east end of the city. In 1977 the two groups amalgamated, and the present Calgary Drop-In Centre (CDIC) was founded. The Centre is governed by the Board of Directors of the Calgary Drop-In Centre Society, an incorporated, non-denominational, non-profit, charitable organization. Programs are administered by full-time staff and volunteers.

The Centre operated for many years from a single facility at the Riverfront-Main location but in 1996 another building "Centre 110" situated at 110-11th Avenue S.E. was acquired to handle increased demand for services. In January 1998, a third Centre, C111, was opened and in March 1999, a fourth Centre, C2032, was added as the demand for services increased. Centre 111 and 2032 were developed in partnership with the City of Calgary, Community Development and Alberta Family and Social Services.

In October 2001 "Build Us a House", a new six-story facility at the Centre's Riverfront site became the new location for the Calgary Drop-In Center. Many meetings between contractors and general managers took place in regard to the building of the new center. Conveying the message of "Hope and Dignity" to the people of Calgary, with regard to the homeless people living in Calgary, was a primary focus. Fundraising was a huge success thanks to the hard work by volunteers, the Board and by the Executive Director, who was successful in obtaining monies from corporate and government sources.

1.2 Philosophy

CDIC's mandate is to provide housing and other support services to homeless people. The main focus of the Centre is to create a friendly non-invasive safe and supportive environment as an alternative to the streets and bars, and to provide an atmosphere where personal growth can take place. Housing is viewed as only one component of a program designed to help people improve their skills and achieve independence. Everyone is welcome and accepted. The individuality of each person is respected and help is given when requested. With the very low vacancy rates and high cost of housing in Calgary CDIC has also found itself in a situation where they are providing housing to people who are working but unable to access adequate affordable housing.

2.0 Board Structure

2.1 Board of Directors/Executive Director

The current board structure of CDIC consists of 12 active members. The by-laws of the CDIC state that there can be a maximum of 20 members on the board at any given time.

With the exceptionally busy schedules of the current members and their workload on the board, they would like to add four more members, bringing the total to 16. This would also give the board more flexibility to form more sub-committees as needed. It would also expand the agencies contacts and encourage more formal and informal partnerships.

Liability of the board has not been a major issue at the CDIC and although they are liable for financial problems within the agency. The Board does have liability insurance. They take great care in ensuring that the operation is in good financial order. In terms of accountability, the Board is accountable to the government and to all the funding partners. This ensures fiduciary management by the Board to their funders and the public.

The CDIC has a strong Executive Director who reports directly to the Board of Directors. The Executive Director attends all Board meetings and is accountable to the Board for the day-to-day operations. At Board meetings he voices his opinion and gives a report, but has no vote. He oversees all of the daily operations and provides policy and program direction. He is also responsible for drafting the annual budget, which is set in the fall with the help of an administrative assistant. The Executive Director monitors and controls all expenditures and approves financial transactions. As the Board of Directors are liable for any financial issues that arise, they approve the budget.

The operational staff structure is based on having a number of Directors who are responsible for various programs and the various supervisors and staff component that report directly to them. Directors are considered “second-in-command”, under the direction of the Executive Director. However, they are responsible for ensuring the objectives are met with the staff under their direction.

The Board does not have a nominations committee to facilitate the appointment of new members. However, when four more positions are available, this will be established. Board positions are not posted but usually found by word-of-mouth, referrals from other Board members or the Executive Director. There are a number of community members that have voiced their interest in serving on the Board but the current Board acts very strategically in Board appointments. They are looking, not just for people who are interested, but people who are prepared to make a long-term commitment and are able to bring other areas of expertise and good connections with key community, business and government agencies.

Because the Board has little involvement in the day-to-day operations of the organization it cannot be considered a Management Team Model. It fits more appropriately in the Policy Model as it is involved in providing overall direction. However, because of the Board’s work to promote and enhance the organization, its efforts to provide advise on broader strategic issues associated with fund raising and its strong partnerships with the private sector it also has characteristics of the Advisory, Policy and Business Board models.

2.2 *The Role of the Board*

The Board, as indicated, is a policy-making board but it also plays a very strong role in fundraising. The Board does not deal with day-to-day operations of the agency. All micro-management is the responsibility of the Executive Director while Board members have decision-making authority for policy issues. Changes made to policies, guidelines or mission statements are approved by the Board of Directors. Each month the supervisors meet to discuss and evaluate policies and any pressing issues. This ensures policies and objectives are being met and it allows for any pressing issues to be directed to the Board as necessary. There is a good flow of information between the Board and the general staff. This usually flows through the Executive Director, who will take complaints and issues back to board meetings.

2.3 *Strategic Planning*

The Board's last strategic plan is dated November 2001. However, only a "loose plan" currently exists. It could still be considered in the development stage. In the last two years, the agency has been developing a plan by having Friday and Saturday sessions with various facilitators. An outside consultant from Edmonton was hired, financed with money from an anonymous donor. It is a very difficult time to plan for homelessness because there has been a recent explosion of homeless persons in Calgary. Revisions of the Strategic Plans are discussed in time frames of 3 to 5 years, although it is felt that 5 years is perhaps too long a term given the uncertainties surrounding funding and the rapid changes that can occur in the housing market in Calgary. The Board, and the Executive Director, view strategic planning as an on going and evolving exercise. Strategic planning has to have both an internal and an external focus. Often it is difficult to predict and project many of the externalities that are so important to strategic planning. A plan with broad objectives and directions is needed to provide focus and guidance to an organization but the Board feels it is important to understand that strategic plans are always evolving. They cannot be static documents.

2.4 *Current Issues*

In the next 12-24 months, the biggest challenge facing the Board is dealing with the explosion of homelessness. The number of homeless persons is very high. Therefore, the challenge of meeting their financial commitments in terms of food, clothes, shelter, and re-training is made even more difficult. The climate in wintertime is only one factor making the situation worse. Since September 11th 2001, tourism has decreased, leading to a loss of low-paying service jobs, which will, in turn, have a negative effect on the working-poor.

2.5 *Strengths and Weaknesses*

One of the strengths of the organization is the nature of the Board itself. The Board members come from a variety of backgrounds and areas of expertise: qualities that make a strong, diverse Board. Furthermore, the staff illustrate dedication to the cause and

compassion to their clients. Most of them understand what it's like to walk in other people's shoes. Another strength has been the success of the Board, the Executive Director and volunteers to fundraise. The strong partnerships with the corporate community, governments and other community-based organizations like the Calgary Homeless foundation have facilitated the organizations fund raising endeavours.

One area CDIC could improve upon would be to increase the number of staff in all areas. Like many other non-profit organizations, the organization is often overloaded with work. With only 12 Board members at present, the Board would like to increase their members to 16 so they can be more effective. In addition, at the general staff level, there is evidence of "burn out" in certain areas like intake, food, hygiene and health services. The time demands alone place additional stress on those already working without coffee breaks and sometimes lunch breaks. For example, it is especially difficult for a person to leave their job during meal times. A lack of communication with volunteers is also sited as a major weakness within CDIC. More work should be done to better utilize volunteer resources.

3.0 Administration and General Staff

3.1 *Structure*

The diversity and success of the programs and services offered are due in part to the full-time staff and volunteers, along with a volunteer Board of Directors. There are currently 86 paid employees. The numbers of volunteers is highly variable, depending on initiatives the organization has underway. For the most part, CDIC considers itself to be a "flat organization" with a great deal of independence between the various program areas. The staff, the Directors and the Executive Director work together as a "team of equals". Supervisors and staff have the authority and ability to undertake the necessary steps to ensure that the organizations objectives are being met. Any issues or difficulties that may arise can be brought to the attention of the Executive Director and if the Executive Director cannot resolve these difficulties he will turn to the Board for advice and guidance.

3.2 *Hiring and Evaluation of Employees*

In the case of the Board, no evaluations have been conducted. The regular staff are evaluated on a yearly basis by their immediate supervisor. In cases of upper management, the Executive Director is responsible for their evaluation. The screening process for potential employees consists of a police security check. A code of ethics is maintained within the organization and is described in a manual that sets out the behaviour that is expected from all employees. Confidentiality processes and compassionate attitudes are also reinforced and are of great significance because of the nature of the clientele with whom the staff work.

A Program Director, is responsible for hiring new staff. The process of hiring includes a resume, interview and a reference check. In some areas like counselling, the organization

looks for a minimum of a BA in social work with preference for a Master's degree, although this seldom is the case. In other areas, the agency hires individuals based on job descriptions indicating past experience. Experience is often considered more important than education for many of the positions. "On the job" training is offered with the exception of technological/computer training.

The organization pays particular attention to client complaints. Clients can either submit written letters or communicate their concerns to other staff, who inform the Program Director that a client wants to meet with her. She will try and communicate with that person within twenty-four hours to talk about the issue and take the necessary steps to resolve the concern.

The agency has also been successful in the employment of past clients. In fact, of the 86 employees currently with CDIC, it was estimated that perhaps between 15-20% are past employees. This includes some of the Adult Care workers who have been referred from the agency in conjunction with Social Services and Welfare. Some of these people are on "job-shadow" for six months and if they prove themselves in that time, they will be hired by the Drop-In Center. The screening process is the same as other staff, although if there was a problem of alcohol or drug addiction, for example, that person would need to prove that they have been clean and sober for about a year.

4.0 Voluntary Sector

The community is encouraged to involve themselves in the services of the Calgary Drop-In Centre. Volunteers are very important to CDIC. Over 800 volunteers work for CDIC in a variety of support functions, but it was noted earlier that this number is highly variable. Volunteers increase the pool of available human resources and complement the paid staff.

All potential volunteers must make an appointment to come in and fill out an application form. A Security Clearance done through the Calgary Police Service is mandatory. An orientation to CDIC is given by the Volunteer Coordinator in order to acquaint the volunteers with the philosophy, goals and services of the Centre. A list of some of the areas in which volunteers can work includes: kitchen, clothing preparation, cleaning, painting, fundraising, music and art lessons, mentoring of clients, computers, legal services, pickup and delivery of donations, English as a second language, and Internet training.

Volunteers at CDIC are instrumental in daily operations and in furthering the agency's partnerships and inter-agency collaboration. Sharing volunteers with other groups such as Mustard Seed and Calgary Urban Projects Society is commonplace. A long list of volunteers from various organizations, including CDIC, are part of a collaborative effort to address the educational and recreational needs of the homeless and marginalized population. Thanks to the ongoing support in the community, 16-17 events were held for residents in the City last year, including river rafting, bowling, and swimming in hopes of improving the lives of many persons.

During financial difficulties, the volunteers provide the agency with physical goods like sandwiches from the churches or hygiene products -- much of which are donated by the volunteers themselves. The summer months are another time when volunteers are especially needed to help out. Without them, the organization would not survive. However, more volunteers are needed due to the fact that the Drop-In Center has tripled in size. Greater utilization of volunteers is also needed in the food services and janitorial services departments.

Until recently, there was no formal process for recognizing the work done by volunteers. However, acknowledging donors and volunteers in some aspect is normally done within a week of their donation. Last year a volunteer appreciation dinner was held, where CDIC invited stakeholders to attend and give out awards and door prizes.

5.0 Structural and Strategic Partnerships

5.1 *Funding and Partnerships*

Staff, volunteers and the Board have been very active and successful in structuring strategic formal and informal partnerships with other community agencies, governments and the corporate and business community. The Executive Director, in particular, is encouraged to work in partnership with other agencies. Examples of partnerships include Board members who serve on other agency's boards such as "In From the Cold" (a program whereby churches open their doors at night to house and feed homeless people) and The Calgary Homeless Foundation. Members (and the agency in general) are encouraged to create partnerships with other organizations that look after similar types of people in terms of needs. CDIC works closely with Calgary Urban Projects Society, the Salvation Army, the United Way, Mustard Seed (a drop-in center run by a Christian organization), Alberta Family and Social Services, Alberta Mental Health and Aids Calgary, to name a few. Referrals and information sharing is common.

A very effective and formal partnership is the organizations participation in a group called the Inter-Agency Group that meets on a monthly basis. Made up of 15 to 20 agencies, including representation from the federal and provincial government and police force, they discuss issues that affect the homeless. Operating for the last ten years, the group is able to serve as an information and networking circle. Agencies collaborate by meeting to share statistics, to discuss problems, to take inventory of the services that are being provided and to identify potential sources of funding. The same kind of information sharing is also done through its newsletter "*The Street Esteem Scream*" that provides a list of the programs and events offered by all of the partners of the Street Esteem Program, which includes CDIC. The Street Esteem Program has been invaluable in providing access to training such as First Aid and also in organizing outings for homeless persons to places like the Calgary Zoo or even hosting dinner events. The Street Esteem Program is also aimed at breaking down barriers between the homeless community and others. By hosting events such as community barbecues and events over the last ten and a half years, CIDC working with this partnership organization has generated some very positive results.

6.0 Core Funding Sources

Provincial and civic governments, the United Way, churches and private donations provide funding. Gifts to the CDIC Society Endowment Fund are tax exempt/deductible and can be made as cash or securities of any kind, objects and works of art, personal property of value, real estate, life insurance or gift annuities.

CDIC obtains a significant amount of money from their ongoing fundraising efforts. A full-time fundraiser is employed and works with the corporation. To help fund the construction of the building, \$16 million dollars was raised. Events like the annual golf tournament also help to raise money for the agency. The most successful approaches have been to speak with corporations and to utilize films and other forms of promotional material. CIDC's success in obtaining private sector funding has been one of the strengths of the organization and, in the opinion of the Board justifies the employment of a full-time fundraiser.

Despite the success in fund raising because some supporters only fund year to year, management is having to work harder and harder to secure money in order to sustain the organization. The organization has never closed a program. In fact, some programs have expanded but, at present, there is a lack of money to run them. This is due to single-year funded programs. By having only one year funding terms for some projects, it is often necessary to find other funders to continue to run the program for consecutive years. Fund raising from community and private sector organizations will never replace the need for core sustaining, long-term funding arrangements with the various levels of government in the opinion of the Executive Director and the Board. Over the long term, most of the sustaining funds (to operate day to day programs) have been secured from the City of Calgary. The Board and the Executive Director feel that fundraising from community and the private sector is best directed to capital initiatives while funds for on-going programs operation should come from more long term, sustaining government programs.

The CDIC has joined with the Calgary Homeless Foundation in establishing an endowment fund. Income from the fund will be used to help support CDIC future development. The endowment fund represents an effort to build a more stable long term source of funds so that activities of the organization are not as subject to the often rapid changes in funding levels and programs at the government level.

7.0 Core Client Base

Most (80%) of the clients are Caucasian although there is a small percent (10%) of people of varied ethnicity (recent immigrants). Aboriginals make up approximately 10% of the clientele. Traditionally, most of the clients are men but there are an increasing number of women and families needing shelter (Community Action Plan, 1998). Statistics for Calgary show that many of these people are highly educated (20%) and almost half (45%) are employed with average earnings of \$7.40/hour (Community Action

Plan, 1998). In addition, 30-40% have serious mental health problems, while 34% are involved in substance abuse. Half of the Calgary's homeless have never been homeless before and the majority has been on the streets for less than three months. Records are kept on clients and there is follow-up service for each person.

8.0 Programs

The Center provides a variety of programs that address the cause of homelessness and provide solutions to the problem. Examples of services/programs include emergency shelter, transitional services, clothing, job placement, counselling, medical services, and hygiene programs.

8.1 *Emergency Shelter*

CDIC has the capacity to provide shelter to approximately 445 people a night but has provided shelter for up to 700 people on occasion, illustrating the crowded nature of facilities in the face of rising demand.

8.2 *Food*

The organization serves approximately 1200 individuals a day, serving approximately 2500 meals and providing over 240 lunch bags a day to workers.

8.3 *Clothing*

New and used clothing donated by the community at large is available every day at designated times or on an emergency basis. In keeping with the mission statement of the facility, clothing is provided free-of-charge to all persons who express the need for it. The heavy use of the clothing facilities requires a continuous supply of items such as: footwear, socks, underwear, shirts, pants, sweaters, hats, coats (light and heavy), and mitts (winter).

8.4 *Labour Office*

The Casual Labour Office is open 7 a.m. to 3 p.m., Monday to Friday, with an answering service available after business hours and weekends. The office receives job orders from employers seeking temporary or permanent workers, and work crews available for contract services. Community Work Crew Services, as well as contract work arrangements, can be made through the office. Manufacturing and assembly services of small components or products can be carried out in the Centre 110 location. All quotes are free. Jobs are assigned on a number draw and on the skills available. In 2002, 9,100 people were placed in casual day jobs and 95 in permanent jobs. The job-bank/job-finding skills service has helped by providing resume writing, interview techniques, computer training and other relevant skills. Many clients obtain full-time employment with the help of these services. The computer-training program will need to expand in order to expand the job-skills program.

8.5 *Counselling*

Counselling services are provided in a timely and effective fashion to individuals who use the Drop-In Centre facilities. Counsellors are available 7 days a week from 8a.m. to 12p.m. Services include: assessing clients' needs, addressing short- and long-term goals, advocating and referring clients to existing agencies, providing knowledge of resources available in the community and addiction counselling. The day shift operates from 8a.m.-6p.m. while the evening shift runs from 2p.m.-12p.m.

8.6 *Medical Services*

Medical services are provided on Monday, from 8:30-11 a.m. Services are provided through a partnership with Calgary Urban Project Society (CUPS) at the Riverfront location.

8.7 *Social Services*

Social services are provided from 8-12p.m. each day at the Riverfront property through a partnership with Alberta Family and Social Services. A life skills course is in the beginning stages of its development and needs to be expanded.

8.8 *Hygiene*

All Centres have shower and laundry facilities for free use by the clients. The Centres can provide more than 50 people per day with laundry and over 200 people a day with showers. The heavy use of hygiene facilities requires a continuous supply of items such as soap, deodorant, shampoo, combs, towels, disposable razors, toothbrushes, toothpaste, first aid supplies, aspirin, etc.

8.9 *Wood Workshop/Training*

This is a new program, which is being offered to the clientele who show interest in the carpentry trade. The goal is to provide a suitable amount of training and practical experience with a focus on finishing carpentry. Training covers all aspects of the carpentry trade, ranging from shop safety to layout and building of a project. In order to give clients the opportunity to work on something, they are in constant need of projects and materials.

8.10 *Internet Research*

This is another program that the Centre offers in order to facilitate access to searches on the Internet in terms of employment, technical training, housing and others. Presently, there are two locations where clients have access to computers. The Riverfront location has two terminals and is accessible on Wednesdays (10-12a.m.) and Fridays (4-6p.m.). In order to increase this access time, the Centre is looking for volunteers to supervise and

teach computer skills. Centre 110 has two terminals and is accessible from 9-12p.m. each night.

8.11 Recreation

With the help of a volunteer group called “The Bridge Project”, the Centre is able to undertake regular recreational events such as Calgary Flames games, live theatre, swimming, bowling, recreational groups and free spirit nights. The Bridge Project’s goal is to lead and facilitate projects that will bridge and unite society. All activities take place within a friendly and trusting environment. The ultimate goal is to reach out to the clientele by making a positive impact in their lives and to plant a seed of hope for their future.

9.0 Summary

The growth of the homeless population in Calgary has precipitated the increased need for agencies like the Calgary Drop In Centre. Over the years, the CDIC has had to rise to the occasion to meet the financial shortfalls in both reduced funding and drops in in-kind donations. However, given the level of success in the capital expansion plans – CDIC appears poised to continue to be at the forefront for assisting homeless persons in Calgary. Some of the most pressing issues faced at CDIC are being echoed in other centers as well. Perhaps the most important and common issues are staff burnout and a shortage of operating dollars. These issues are shared by a number of homeless agencies that struggle to find remedies. In fact, dealing with these two issues may be the most challenging tasks facing homeless agencies.

The overall growth of homelessness population in the Calgary area has become a serious issue for the community to deal with. Non-profit agencies, churches, government and interested parties have struggled to meet the increased need for those in need of assistance. The Calgary Drop-In Centre has experienced a 400% growth rate in service demand in the past five years, and presently provides shelter and support services through its four locations in Calgary.

In light of these challenges, the successes of the CDIC are attributable to a number of important factors. The structure of the board has allowed the Centre to be one that is focused on the development of policy and giving advice and direction as opposed to the micro-management of the organization. This has been a critical aspect of the organization as the homeless population in Calgary continues to grow. The success of the organization is also strengthened by the active participation of volunteers who provide essential services. With over 800 volunteers, CDIC has been able to provide a high level of service and volunteers are seen as instrumental in the provision of programs. However, the strong reliance on volunteers is also seen as an issue during some periods when volunteer participation rates tend to drop off.

Funding is also a major issue and as the CDIC is reliant on the solicitation of donations, the stability of the organization can be easily weakened if there is a sharp drop in

donations. This is in contrast to other organizations such as the Main Street Project in Winnipeg, which does not actively seek donations and has no volunteers. For Main Street, this has allowed them to budget with a stable revenue flow as opposed to the highly fluctuating revenue flows for agencies who are more reliant on raising funds through charity drives and donations. The CDIC faces similar challenges in dealing with more homeless people with less money and resources than are needed. The antidote to this scenario is vastly more complex than simply increasing funding. More permanent solutions may lie with agencies' abilities to deal with the causes of homelessness as opposed to treating the symptoms. Outreach and follow-up programs are costly and more often the first to be cut during tough times.

Case Study: British Columbia

Case Study of:
Victoria Cool Aid Society

Victoria Cool Aid Society: Profile

History

Cool Aid was established in 1968 to provide short-term shelter to transient youth and adults. Responding to a growing need for shelter and services and the increasing complexity of the problems and needs, from its initial single Cool Aid has become a multi-faceted organization offering a diverse range of housing and social services to respond with care to the life needs of children, youth, men and women in adverse situations. The Society has established itself as the 'bottom-line' resource in the social safety net.

Mandate

Cool Aid exists to serve and provide for the essential needs of individuals while respecting their innate value and autonomy. Cool Aid provides basic services (food, shelter, housing, overnight care to minors, health care services, job training and placement, daycare for children, and related services) of high quality at as low a cost as possible; provides a safe and supportive environment for persons who may suffer from such problems as social and economic hardship, mental illness or disability, or substance abuse; advocates; and works with social and community organizations to respond to changing trends and service gaps in the region.

The Board

Cool Aid is governed by an elected, community-based 9-member board. The Society uses a Nominating Committee and board members stand for two-year terms, with half elected each year. There is no constraint on the number of consecutive terms a member may serve. The Board meets monthly and decisions are by majority vote, but it is rare that consensus is not reached. The board has a number of standing committees and ad hoc special committees. Committee chairs are usually members of the executive, providing a direct link to the board. Over time the board has evolved from an operational to a policy role of setting direction through the strategic planning process and establishing the overall policies that guide the Executive Director. The Board's main interface with staff is through committee work. Board agendas are divided into two main parts – General Business and Governance Orientation and the board uses a 'Decision Support Framework and Checklist'. It is felt that the board structure "fits with the management and philosophical approach of the organization.

Funding Sources

Over 80% of revenues come from government (primarily provincial, but including federal, municipal, and the regional health authority sources), with the remainder mainly from rents and fees). While Cool Aid has a track record of fiscal responsibility, given the dependence on government funding, sustainability is uncertain. To become less dependent on government funding, the Strategic Plan is being realigned: to establish a foundation to do fundraising and develop capacity and entrepreneurial skills. To secure alternative funding, Cool Aid has developed different programming, trying joint ventures with other Cool Aid programs and developing a strategy to promote core-funded programs. Cool Aid has not relied on fundraising to any great extent to finance its

operations: donations, targeted fundraising and gaming account for only 3% of revenues. A staff person has been hired, part of whose job responsibility is to fundraise.

Strategic Planning

Cool Aid is guided by a three-year Strategic Plan with Annual Operating Plans setting out how the Strategic Plan will be implemented from year to year. The Plan sets out the vision, mission, guiding principles, strategic objectives, tactics, and includes an environmental scan. Performance targets are attached to each of the 4 strategic objectives, specific strategies are identified to achieve targets, and program goals are outlined. The Plan is regularly monitored through quarterly reports (committee and staff) to the Board and a manager has been assigned to be Coordinator for Strategic Planning – it is currently being updated. The planning process has involves staff, managers, and board, assisted by external facilitators. It is felt that process has “transformed the organization” making it “more businesslike.”

Current Issues

Cool Aid is trying to position itself to respond to an uncertain business environment and changing program delivery requirements. Specifically, Cool Aid’s challenges are to: effectively manage and restructure services by strengthening human and financial resources, maximizing client benefits through improvements in programs/ service; become an integral part of the discussion and decision-making process with respect to social services; ensure greater accountability, transparency, and collaboration in the delivery of social services; facilitate greater collaboration, partnership and alliances between government, other social service providers and businesses to improve social service delivery; and making the Vision a reality through advocacy, public awareness, teamwork with other non-profit agencies

Partnerships

Strategic partnerships and networking with a diverse range of governmental and community organizations are important to Cool Aid’s operation and aim of improving the overall delivery of services. The organization is more intimately networked than many agencies because of its variety of programs and services – driving more partners and networks. Formal funding and negotiated program delivery partnerships have been developed as part of a collaborative community response to client needs. Two examples are joint undertakings with the former Capital Health Region, one involving the development of a database to track mental health client information, with funding from Health Canada, the other involves the Cool Aid Community Health Centre. Cool Aid is also an active participant in various local, regional and provincial associations and alliances, e.g. business organizations; financial institutions; educational institutions; and organizations such as the BC Non-Profit Housing Association.

Cool Aid takes a strategic approach to developing and improving its collaborative networks and partnerships: approving proposals for collaborative initiatives with other service providers; consulting with other service providers for shelter enhancements; distributing comprehensive communication/information packages; sharing expertise through tours, open houses and their website; developing criteria for corporate

sponsorship and acquiring corporate sponsorship; sharing expertise; completing a number of individual program goals that will enhance, innovative and problem solving; and maintaining close contact with funders (e.g. by sending regular reports and 'positive (not just negative) news' stories, regular contact by e-mail, extending invitations to visit and thanking the funder.

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Victoria Cool Aid Society

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This case study is based on eight interviews (Executive Director, Board Chair, 3 Board members, 3 Managers), plus pre-survey information provided by the Executive Assistant, as well as extensive information drawn from reports and the Website.

1.0 Purpose of the Society

- To respect the innate value and autonomy of the individuals we serve and to provide for their essential needs.
- To provide basic services of high quality at as low a cost as possible, including food, shelter, housing, overnight care to minors, health care services, job training and placement, daycare for children, and related services.
- To provide a safe and supportive environment for persons who may suffer from a multiplicity of problems such as social and economic hardship, mental illness or disability, or substance abuse.
- To advocate on behalf of persons whose options and self-determination are limited.
- To work with social and community organizations that have similar objectives to ensure an effective response to the changing trends and consequent service gaps in the Capital Regional District.

2.0 History/Overview

The Victoria Cool Aid Society has come a long way in its 33-year existence. The organization began in 1968 as the Cool Aid Hostel, which was established to provide short-term shelter to transient youth and adults. It was, in effect, very similar to the other youth hostels of the day. Today, however, the Society bears little resemblance to its original incarnation. What began as a modest undertaking designed to serve a tiny demographic in Greater Victoria has grown into a multi-faceted organization that operates a diverse range of social services directed at those in the community who are most vulnerable.

Cool Aid is best known and has a well established history of working to address issues related to housing, such as accessibility, affordability, alternative housing programs and homelessness. In addition to housing and shelter, Cool Aid offers an extensive range of social service programs to support men, women, youth and children in the community by providing childcare, recreation, medical services and employment training. Through the provision of these accessible and affordable services Cool Aid is able to meet individual needs and make a positive contribution toward creating a healthy and vibrant community. The Society has established itself as the “bottom-line” resource in the social safety net within the Capital Regional District (CRD).

3.0 Vision, Guiding Principles, Mission

Cool Aid is guided by the following trilogy:

□ **Vision**

In partnership with our community, we will seek out needs and provide opportunities to help create a just and healthy quality of life for all.

□ **Guiding Principles**

- We demonstrate reliability, good faith and integrity in all our relationships.
- We make and keep our commitments.
- We are accountable for our actions and measure and share our contribution to the community.
- We support and value participation, build partnerships, and encourage shared leadership in our community.
- We treat all people with respect, dignity and fairness.
- We look at the environment through the eyes of our clients.
- We are innovative, learn from our experiences and the input of others, and make effective change.
- We are action-oriented and advocate for those we serve.

□ **Mission**

The Victoria Cool Aid Society responds with care to the life needs of children, youth, men and women in adverse situations. By creating and supporting a range of effective immediate to long-term services, we build hope, lives and community.

4.0 Services and Programs

Services and programs can be divided into four general categories or foci, “which have given our programs a new way of working together”.

4.1 *Shelter and Community Support System*

- **Streetlink Emergency Shelter** (established 1968)- an emergency shelter for temporarily or chronically homeless adults. Clients receive meals, referrals, hygiene services, mental health services, housing advocacy, community liaison, and crisis and life skills counselling.
- **Sandy Merriman House** - (established 1995/acquired by Cool Aid 1998) offers safe and supportive shelter, hygiene services and drop-in facilities for women who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless.
- **Kiwanis Emergency Youth Shelter** – (established 1987) a short term emergency shelter for youth between the ages of 13 and 18 who, for a variety of reasons, are unable to remain in the family home.
- **Outreach Services** - (established 1986) operates as a bridge between those at risk and the necessary supports. Cool Aid’s Outreach Program provides a full range of

assessment, counselling and referral services for the mentally ill and chemically dependent homeless, and those at risk of becoming homeless, in Victoria's downtown community.

- **Cool Aid Community Health Centre** – (established 1970) provides medical care for people who do not have health coverage. Many of the patients utilizing the Medical Clinic suffer psychiatric-related illnesses and/or other chronic health problems.

4.2 *Housing Continuum - Supportive Housing*

- **Housing Programs** - consisting of **Swift House** (established 1991) and **Pandora Project** (established 1997) provides a total of 58 units of safe, supportive and affordable housing for persons who suffer from mental illness, drug/alcohol dependency and various other problems that make it difficult for these individuals to secure stable housing. Cool Aid's housing initiatives are recognized nationally as being both innovative and effective. In addition to the 58 units of adult housing, the Pandora facility includes eight units of transitional housing geared toward teaching life skills and good tenancy skills to youth.
- **Garden Gate Residence** - (established 1981) a residential atmosphere where within two to twenty-four months, individuals with mental illness receive psychosocial rehabilitation and learn to live independently.
- **Mike Gidora Place** - (established 2000) – provides 45 units of affordable small suite housing and community space for the downtown Victoria community.
- **Johnson Manor** – (established 2001) – provides supportive housing for forensic adults in partnership with the Capital Health Region.²³

4.3 *Employment and Training*

- **Cool Aid Employment Services** - (established 1993) an employment and referral program assisting the unemployed in finding casual and permanent work. Job readiness and entrepreneurship programs have recently been added to our Employment Services Program.

4.4 *Skill Development, Activity and Lifestyle*

- **Cool Aid Daycare** - (established 1973) a quality childcare facility that provides support and resources for children and their families. Cool Aid, through its Daycare Program also serves as an advocate for quality daycare services throughout the province.
- **Downtown Community Activity Centre** - (established 1997) provides a much needed venue for recreational activities for the downtown community, and acts as the common area for the residents of the Pandora Project. As well as initiating

²³ The Capital Health Region was re-organized at the end of 2001 and is now known as the Vancouver Island Health Authority

various community-focused initiatives, the Activity Centre is also responsible for co-ordinating and administering several Mental Health programs/services.

Cool Aid's programs involve Health, Social, Housing, Financial, Employment, Life Skills services. There is a great deal of "cross over" amongst the various programs:

- Health – all to some degree. In particular Cool Aid Community Health Centre, Housing Programs, Outreach, Shelter Programs
- Social – all in particular Downtown Community Health Centre, Housing Programs
- Housing – Housing Program, Garden Gate Residence
- Financial – Cool Aid Employment Services
- Employment – Cool Aid Employment Services
- Life Skills – all

"To the extent that health, mental health, work, and poverty are addressed, Cool Aid is more than shelter – it connects people to community resources (health, housing, employment, day care)." Homelessness is "rooted" in the lack of housing. By trying to provide housing the society has "to deal with poverty, substance abuse, mental illness, lack of education. By addressing these problems through housing, after a couple of years clients don't see themselves as homeless and they can deal with other issues."

5.0 Board Structure

Cool Aid is governed by an elected, community-based Board of Directors which employs a comprehensive and open committee structure to maximize community input into Cool Aid's various initiatives. Under the Constitution, the Society must have a minimum of 6 directors. This number can be increased as determined by the society's members at a general meeting. Currently the Board has 19 directors. Board members stand for two-year terms, with half elected each year. There is no constraint on the number of consecutive terms a member may serve.

The Board meets monthly except for December and July. Decisions are by majority vote, but "it is rare that consensus is not reached".

Terms of Reference for each of the standing committees are included in Table 1.

5.1 *Standing Committees*

- Executive Committee: Members include the Chair, Vice-Chair, Treasurer and Secretary, with an option to include the Past-Chair. The executive committee "meets very rarely" to deal with emergency situations or matters referred to it by Board in-between Board meetings.
- Finance Committee: Terms of reference currently being developed.
- Human Resources Committee: Members include at least three members of the Board plus a member of the Executive. The Committee's Terms of Reference are

- to review on behalf of, and report to, the Board concerning all human resource issues in CAS and to monitor the general state and administration of Human Resources and the working environment in CAS.
- Planning Committee: Supports the Strategic plan and ensures the planning, development and evaluation of Cool Aid's response to community issues and individual needs is in line with the strategic plan.
- Housing Committee: The terms of reference for the Housing Committee are: to plan and develop housing options that recognize the diversity of community and client needs; to work in partnership with the private and public sector through a community development process to develop realistic and affordable housing opportunities; and, to develop action plans that will create responsive, immediate and sustainable housing solutions.
- Communications Committee: Terms of reference still to be developed.

“Each committee is responsible for reviewing policies in their area. The review is informal, although currently Human Resource and Finance Committees are responsible for formally reviewing the administrative policy section of the Policies and Procedures Manual as it is a task designated in the Strategic Plan. Policies can be brought up as an agenda item at committee meetings. If a policy is breaking down or not being followed it is a “performance issue”.

5.2 Board's Role/Board Members' Roles

The board's role as a policy board has evolved over time.

“Over the years, the Board has been able to change from a more operational role to one of setting direction through the strategic planning process and establishing the overall policies (after hearing from the operational side) that guide the Executive Director in how to run the organization. In earlier days, the Executive Director had to rely on the Board to be the administration. “

The Board's role is primarily one of advising; the Board is not involved in day-to-day policies- “a bit like the Carver governance model”. The Board is responsible for hiring the Executive Director and is involved in hiring of managers with the Executive Director and one other manager. The Board's main interface with staff is through committee work, particularly the human resource and finance committees.” On other operational matters, the Board is “called upon only when exceptional things come up”, although in some areas, such as finance (cheques) and human resources, issues are attended to immediately by the Board.

Appendix 3 provides an example of a **Board Meeting Agenda**. The Agenda is divided into two main parts – General Business and Governance Orientation. General Business items include: reports from the Executive Director and the Treasurer, Business and Development Projects, Committee Priorities and Motions. Governance Orientation includes: an overview of the Strategic Planning process, committee workplan orientation, and orientation sessions and program tours.

Appendix 4 provides an example of the Board’s **Decision Support Framework and Checklist**. This framework and checklist includes: identifying whether the request to the Board is an information or decision item; background information; overview (sufficient to answer the what, when, where, why and how); key assumptions used analyzing the item (e.g. funding, timing, costing recoveries, political, etc.); options or alternative courses of action that can be pursued; analysis (e.g. strategic fit, business priorities, financial, human resources, legal, risk assessment, and program linkages); a recommendation; and implementation (key milestones, schedule, communications strategy).

Day-to-day operations are in the “competent hands of staff”. The Executive Director has overall responsibility, the management team (Executive Director, Human Resources, Finance, Funding/Business Development, Executive Assistant, as well as Information Management – e-mail, and technical hard- and software.) shares administration responsibilities, each manager oversees their own section (except in hiring where 2 managers are involved). The Executive Assistant works with managers, Board, and Executive Director on an on-going basis.

“However, the extent to which the Board gets involved is affected by the degree you have an administrative infrastructure and do not need to use the Board” and “given the length of time the Executive Director (‘highly seasoned’) has been with the organization”.

The bylaws of the organization set out the roles of executive members. Otherwise “Everyone knows what skill they bring, strategic plan sets out roles. Board members volunteer for committees where they have an interest or expertise.”

- President: presides at all meetings of the society and of the board, is the chief executive officer of the society, supervises the other officers in the execution of their duties.
- Vice president: carries out the duties of the president during his absence.
- Secretary: conducts the correspondence of the society; issues notices of meetings of the society and board; keeps minutes of all meetings of the society and board; has custody of all records and documents of the society except those required to be kept by the treasurer; has custody of the common seal of the society; and maintains the register of members.
- Treasurer: keeps the financial records, including books of account, necessary to comply with the *Society Act*; and renders financial statements to the directors, members and others when required.
- Past president: advises and assists the other directors on all matters which are presented to the past president for advice and assistance.

The Strategic Plan sets out designated responsibilities, these are evaluated in the quarterly reports, the Annual Report, and through the committee structure – the mandates of committees include responsibility for the strategic plan and committee chairs are usually

members of the executive so there is a direct link back to the back to the board. (See Strategic Planning Section for more details)

5.3 Code of Conduct/Conflict of Interest

A conflict of interest policy is included in the Board Policy and Procedures Manual – it has “been in existence as long as she has been on board (over 10 years), refined and honed over time”.

With respect to a code of conduct, the Board signed on collectively to the Canadian Centre for Philanthropy code and adopted its code of ethics. One member advised it is currently being considered from a governance perspective. While some board members signed on, it is not clear that everyone has, particularly new members – one noted “not signed anything”. “Relationships throughout the organization are based on a “golden rule that no one should blindside anyone else.”

5.4 Accountability/Board - Administrators-Community

The Board is ultimately accountable for policy, human resources, financial matters, and tendering. For example, the Board is accountable to the provincial government through its contracts which include deliverables, required reporting etc., to the Foundation that is being established through provision of grants, to other agencies in terms of multiple agency partnerships, to contractors, developers etc. for a variety of housing projects, and to the membership and the community.

“There is no mandate requiring the Board to be accountable (other than financial) to any particular constituency. However, “we like to think we are accountable to the community. We want to start to do the Annual Report like a report card on the Strategic Plan and we need to get a report card back from the community.”

Particular instances that demonstrate Board accountability in policy problems or issues that might arise include:

- During the development of Mike Gidora Place, the Board was “involved in whole of financial picture, debating how it would be resourced, rent levels (market or subsidized) and what number of units would be one or the other.”
- Board review of Employment Services program when BC Government indicated it was going to pull out from funding.
- Annual performance reviews and goal setting for the Executive Director.
- Administrators who report to the Board, are evaluated by a committee chair, another manager and a staff person.
- Annual Report and Annual General Meeting: the Annual Report is posted on the website, is available at the AGM (along with financial statements), and is on file in the Public Library and Society’s office.
- The Human Resources Committee deals with policy issues, and job descriptions, policies and procedures are in place.

The society's operations are transparent through a diverse and open board structure; annual report information available to the general public; use of the web site, brochures, speaking engagements, media releases, etc. to provide information to the public. Routine tactics within daily operations include client surveys, and regular meeting with clients to share decision making as appropriate.

With respect to liability for financial problems (really risk management) - "The Board needs to know there are really strong policies in place, as boards are liable for risk management." Some board members expressed uncertainty as to the Board's financial liability. The agency has exposure in the following areas (in order of importance):

- Development and construction because of liens, etc.
- Human resources (e.g. wrongful dismissal, note: contracts with government have a 30 day notice so payroll is only to 30 days)
- Age of client group (e.g. vehicle insurance for day care as part of Cool Aid operations)
- Fire and theft risk and insurance is important in the homeless business – (e.g. in the shelter business with lots of comings and goings, there is need for security and locks)

5.5 Strengths and Weaknesses of Board Structure

Two key views, expressed during the interviews, sum up how the organization views the effectiveness of its Board structure:

- "fits with management style of the organization, board has been structured to fit with the organization, philosophies match"; and,
- "present structure allows for sub committees to deal with particular issues – feel comfortable with current structure".

Although with regard to the second point, one suggestion was that while the strength of the Board is in its diversity, this in turn leads to weaknesses in the Committees. In some instances issues and decisions could perhaps be better documented in reports from sub-committees to the Board. This concern related to the fact that like many organizations with long serving members, "there are some people who have considerable knowledge about the organization that is not documented and how do you replace the knowledge someone has?" This is an issue a number of non-profit societies face.

These two key views, however, were further qualified and/or clarified:

- Perhaps the fit "could be seen as both a strength and a weakness – the board is only as strong as other parts of the organization."
- "In 18 years there have only been 3 situations where the 'belief system' of a Board member has not fit the organization." Nominating Committee is really trying to select based on values.
- The Nominating Committee looks for "great credentials, necessary skills on the Board". There is lots of trust in the committee members' expertise and time they commit to issues that "increases confidence levels of recommendations".

- The various committees do most of the work and bring information to the Board, “this is efficient in terms of time (no one can do everything) and it keeps all informed”. There is “lots of trust in the committee members’ expertise and time they commit to issues which increases the confidence levels of recommendations.” It is “rare” for there to be dissension on the Board.

There was a suggestion that the Board would be strengthened by having Cool Aid ‘cross fertilize’ between boards and place Board Members on other boards, rather than have Executive Directors from other agencies on Cool Aid Board. This was based on the need to have people who have influence in different areas e.g. lawyer, mental health. This raises the issue of having people on the Board who are employed in related areas of work to Cool Aid, e.g. there are Board members who are working in seniors’ supportive housing and have to declare conflict of interest. It was felt the Board would be strengthened by having people involved from agencies that can partner with Cool Aid, e.g. City of Victoria, foundations, credit unions, etc.

5.6 Membership

The Society has a Nominating Committee made up of board directors, a management representative and the Executive Director, that looks for “great credentials, necessary skills on the Board”. Through a survey of existing board and committee members the assets and gaps of the existing board are reviewed and particular experience that needs to be recruited is identified. Depending on the year, the process may involve word of mouth, board recommendation or formal advertising. The Nominating Committee accepts requests for consideration and provides recommendation to the Board. Nominations are an annual Board agenda item.

“need solid nominating committee on an annual basis, need to look at historical perspective, what does the organization need, and how can balance be achieved on the Board”.

Board efforts are supplemented by the Executive Director, who is “always scanning for potential members through her community network.”

5.7 Burnout/Fatigue

Board burnout does not appear to be a significant issue. In fact, one view expressed indicated, “there is “no burnout on the Board”. Another view expressed indicated that “on occasion there is burnout/fatigue amongst board members. Still another view suggested that while there may be burnout, it is “not necessarily related to the Board itself, but their life in general – overtaxed. People do resign and leave, sometimes because they are overextended.” “The Board is a pretty diverse and mentally healthy group – two members have been on the Board for years and are very active.”

In fact, “association with Cool Aid, strengthens, heartens, inspires board members, they are uplifted by the work being done.” There is strong

“empathy for front line managers and staff though, as there are many difficulties serving homeless people.”

Burnout, when it occurs, usually takes the form of members not attending meetings or voluntarily resigning. When situations arise, the Executive Director looks at the situation to see what can be done at the operational level to assist the Board member, if that does not work she will contact the Board Chair or Committee Chair to talk to the member. Other strategies include recognition at the AGM, certificates of appreciation, and changing committee assignments.

If there is burnout in the organization it is more likely to occur at the staff level.

- Staff “burnout” is always present given the client group being served. The challenge is to “continually prevent and address burn out, you can’t wait for it to become an issue, need to address it right up front.”
- “ whole organization is under stress as the client base numbers and need increase and are combined with a lack of service – damned hard work.” “Things are worse on the street from 5 years ago: the vacancy rate is 0; the demand for services is very high and going to get higher, poverty has increased and poverty itself creates problems; there is anxiety about funding and no job security for the staff.”
- “Burnout? No and Yes – a number of managers have been at Cool Aid a long time, and most permanent workers have been there 5-22 yrs. Employees are on a casual list 2/3 yrs before they move into permanent positions. Even a lot of the casuals are staying on. However, sick leave and moral are other ways of showing burnout and these issues are being addressed.”

5.8 Board Evaluation

There is no formal process for board evaluation. However, the society is currently has “recently been in touch with the Ottawa Institute on Governance with a view to becoming more self-aware and quantifiable”. If the society completes the Institute’s assessment questionnaire, “ then it will be a quantifiable evaluation which will help with assessment.” The society has just developed a client satisfaction survey, and the Executive Director indicated that an internal scan survey could be developed for the Board. Regardless, the Executive Director indicated that the Board is “very effective” and that she “has a high regard for the Board – they have been mentors, supporters, advisors, reality checks, challengers.”

There is an attendance requirement of Board members that indicates that “participation is valued.” The Chair will talk to Board members if they are absent, without a concession from the Executive Committee, from either 3 consecutive scheduled board meetings or 50% of the scheduled board meetings in any 6 month period.

While the requirements for attendance are included amongst the Society's bylaws, the following view was expressed by one board member: "Tried to put in a requirement to attend meetings, with action taken if a member missed several consecutive meetings. Didn't work – now board members who miss meetings have to say why, and are required to catch up with business conducted in their absence."

While there is no formal self-monitoring, a number of examples were proffered to indicate that Cool Aid's board functions well:

- there is "a pretty high degree of satisfaction, both individually and collectively, people fill out their term and often a second term";
- board participation is high: there are 19 board members with usually 14 in attendance;
- the Board meets 1/month;
- every Board member sits on at least 1 committee;
- the executive committee meets only rarely (a "good measure of success");
- there is an "open, active Board who express themselves if something is not appropriate"; and,
- Board members are "interested, curious, in a learning state".

6.0 Administrative Structure and Issues

6.1 *Administrative Structure*

Cool Aid has no organizational chart – "been in progress for 33 years and haven't been able to commit to a "diagram" that effectively describes the organization. The Executive Director has overall responsibility, the management team (Executive Director, Human Resources, Finance, Funding/Business Development, Executive Assistant) share administration responsibilities, each manager oversees their section (except in hiring where 2 managers are involved). Executive Assistant works with managers, Board, and Executive Director on an on-going basis. The society has over 200 employees.

Administrative and corporate support services to all programs and corporate functions are provided through a centralized Administration. The mandate of Cool Aid's administration is to provide cost efficient, effective and appropriate services to facilitate decision-making and information exchanges to ensure that the Society as a whole and all individual programs operate in a coordinated and efficient manner.

Major functions include – accounting, payroll, human resource management, support to various governance mechanisms, communications with funding partners and the community at large, government relations, multi-agency functions, financial and fiscal management, treasury functions, and overall technological, administrative and planning support.

Cool Aid's administration views itself as having 3 major stakeholder components:

- the stakeholders/clients of individual service delivery programs of the organization;
- the corporate entity of Cool Aid as personified by the Board of Directors and various committees; and,
- interested stakeholders in government and the community at large.

Managers meet regularly on Mondays with the Executive Director, Finance and Human Resources Managers. Normally, at least one manager sits on a board committee. Their job is to represent the management group on that committee and to bring information back to all managers to let them know what is going on. Managers, through their quarterly reports, also have input into the Board.

The identified strengths of Cool Aid’s administrative structure include: its diversity of program areas, good rapport with administration, well qualified staff, opportunity for cross-pollination (“don’t get tunnel vision”), teamwork, opportunity for social contact, balance of skills and personalities. In the words of one staff member this helps staff “feel pretty solid”. Identified weaknesses include: “not everyone interacts all the time”, bit fragmented, and missing some skill sets (e.g. Information Technology). Ways of overcoming the weaknesses include: providing staff social activities (including having lunch together a couple of times a week in one program area) and sending staff from different sections to training sessions together (“helped quite a bit”).

6.2 Hiring

The Board hires the Executive Director, and Program Managers are hired by the Executive Director, usually together with a Board Committee Chair and another Program Manager.

The Program Manager hires program staff. In the case of Streetlink Emergency Shelter, the Manager is always accompanied in an interview. There is a formal process set out in the collective agreement (BCGEU). Openings are posted internally and externally at the same time - “saves time which is critical given funding time constraints”. If there is a suitable internal candidate, they are given preference. Usually a combination of educational qualifications and experience are looked for. These vary by program area – typical qualifications include education and experience in working with people with barriers, mental health issues and counselling skills.

Within Cool Aid, clients are occasionally hired, e.g. one of the employment counsellors and one volunteer placement doing receptionist work, Downtown Activity Centre has some. The aim is “to build strengths and use them”. Issues that arise concern an individual’s level of stability (e.g. medications) and confidentiality (access to information). However, the Shelter policy is not to employ people who have been clients in the last 2 years; this may be an unofficial policy. The principle is that people have to have the ‘distance’.

6.3 Training

Cool Aid has recently committed to a continuous learning environment. There is a training committee and Human Resources plan (which includes training and development). Core competencies are being defined i.e. basic standards of knowledge and skills that all staff will have to help them perform effectively in the provision of service and core training (brief solution focussed counselling, conflict resolution, and universal precautions) is being looked at for all staff. Individual training is also being looked at in terms of performance development and in addressing emerging recruitment needs. In-house training is provided (partly based on performance evaluations) that typically covers such areas as how to apply the mission statement, where should referrals be made, how to apply brief solution therapy. Staff are allotted one conference per year. This can be local or out of town, although cost is a factor.

Examples of staff training sessions include: one session offering some insights and skills on how to work more effectively with individuals having dual diagnoses; another concerning harm reduction. Core staff have had the opportunity to attend the BC Non-Profit Housing Association conference and a program of interdisciplinary workshops organized by Capital Health Region.

6.4 Evaluation

The Human Resources Committee has a system in place for evaluation of the Executive Director (the whole Board is not involved). The Committee has also developed a job description for the Executive Director (the Board Chair participated in this process) – this was linked to setting salary levels and included an external peer review. Program Managers are evaluated by the Executive Director, a member of the Board, and another Program Manager. Program Managers, with assistance from a Manager in another section, evaluate their staff. Cool Aid is approximately halfway through completing a performance review and development with the staff.

6.5 Policy Disputes

There is a formal process, “written down” for handling policy disputes. For example, if a policy dispute arises in a particular program area, the Manager will first try to resolve the issue, failing resolution, it then goes to the Executive Director, and then to the Personnel Committee. When there are policy concerns about a particular incident, it is the Executive Director’s practice to send a “briefing note” to the Board. Program managers are “fairly autonomous within their programs”, although they are required to work “within a framework of higher end policies (e.g. health and safety) that they cannot contradict.” It was noted “while there may be consistency in standards at the higher and lower ends of policy (application), there is a feeling that there may be pockets of inconsistency around meeting standards, possibly in the middle ground.”

6.6 External Complaints

The process for dealing with external complaints varies depending on the nature of the complaint. The general policy is “mandated” by the Society, but in some situations (e.g. alcohol and drug services with respect to private accommodation in supportive recovery) an external body such as the Ministry of Health mandates a specific process.

Otherwise, if there is an external complaint from a **client** about a program, the Executive Director sees if the Program Manager and the client can first come to an agreement. The Executive Director and Manager will strategize together about how to deal with the complaint. The Manager meets with the client to “hear what the issues are and to recognize the need to be heard”. While most complaints “are handled fairly easily, the Executive Director is willing to be the next stage for talking about it with the person who has laid the complaint.” If there is a complaint from the community, the Executive Director will try to work with the Manager on how to deal with it. If there is potential exposure for the Board, the ED will apprise the Board Chair, “give a heads-up”, of what “we are doing about it”. As a whole, the organization practices “issue management avoidance” (although the phrase issue management is not used, rather “there is a problem, this is a challenge”).

6.7 Strengths and Weaknesses of the Current Staff Structure

Management and the staff group is seen as “very flexible and non-rigid and this is good”. There is a fair amount of autonomy at the program level and the trend is open and not micro management. A current challenge is that Cool Aid has had to expand organizationally (staff, administrative functions, etc.) as it has taken on more programs. It is now a mid-sized non-profit society and needs to determine an administrative/staff structure that will work well, and provide for more delegation. This is viewed as far more positive than negative – the challenge is how do you become a mid-sized NP that can consolidate Human Resource policies and provide services to programs. Large organizations have to have more structure and the opportunity to delegate.

It has already been noted that Cool Aid does not have an organization chart – its structure does not lend itself readily to such organization.

There was also reference in interviews that Cool Aid needs to look at internal partnerships, as the society realizes that internally it is too stove piped and there needs to be collaboration in living and support services. In looking at the organization and saying, ‘how well are we recognized at what we do?’, Cool Aid has found it needs to enhance its public image about what it does. Even within it has found different branches didn’t understand each other. Inter-branch communication will help facilitate and enhance improved community understanding and recognition.

7.0 Volunteers

Although various programs utilize volunteers as required, Cool Aid does not have a formal volunteer program and has a limited volunteer base - the general volunteer base is “not well-developed.” Many of Cool Aid’s services are unionized - “volunteers could be an issue in these settings.” As well “the level of the issues presented is beyond the skills of lay volunteers - would advise against the use of volunteers and instead would encourage the hiring of people with training in the area of service delivery - work is relationship based, very hard for a non-expert to do.” This year’s Annual Operating Plan, however, indicates that the “administration will examine useful and effective ways to incorporate more volunteers in our programs and in particular in our fundraising events.” A “significant challenge is that we have no dedicated internal resource to develop, but we may be able to develop this under the Cool Aid Foundation.”

The Board of Directors is the society’s main volunteer base – “extremely well developed”/ “there are opportunities for volunteering time, energy and skills on the board, but few opportunities for program volunteering.” Board Committees and sub-committees frequently use volunteer community members, for example the Housing Committee has an architect and property manager who volunteer time as members. Clients also form part of the volunteer base - the “second sector”, also “well developed”. Reasons for getting involved include:

an interpersonal link with someone associated with Cool Aid, reputation of society and administration for work being done, the nature of the people who volunteer (love thy neighbour – giving, caring people), an opportunity to contribute to their city in a collaborative way.

There is no training of volunteers – “experience of volunteers is what they contribute” and there is also “no need to screen” volunteers – “we know them”. Board liability insurance policy covers all directors.

In terms of volunteers being instrumental in terms of Cool Aid’s partnerships and inter agency collaboration, Board members are the primary volunteer group at Cool Aid and while there is some activity in this regard, as one Board member noted, “it would be beneficial to cultivate more partnerships through Boards”.

There are “rewards when things are accomplished e.g. buildings, seeing successes at all levels.” Board members are honoured for past service, there is a Christmas lunch for the Board hosted by the staff, at the last AGM board members were given pins, long term volunteers are acknowledged. This includes clients who work in their residence for which they get only a small honorarium. Client volunteering helps to build self-esteem, provides them with an opportunity to give back to the society and an opportunity to help while they stay at a shelter.

8.0 Core Funding

“Overall the Victoria Cool Aid Society remains in good financial condition” and “the Society remains financially stable”. (Treasurer’s Report – Annual Report 2000/01) For the current fiscal year, Cool Aid has a projected balanced budget of \$6.5 million. In the previous year there was a small deficit of \$17,946. Almost 82% of revenues are derived from government sources (approximately 1% from municipal and federal sources, 23.4% from the Capital Health Region, and the remainder from the Province) and 18% from other sources (e.g. the majority from rents and fees). Key expenditures are wages and benefits (64%), operating expenses (21%) and administrative expenses (12%), of which half are administrative wages and benefits. Financing expenses accounts for almost 4% of expenditures. Financial information from the Strategic Plan is presented below and a Summary Budget (April, 2001 – March 31, 2002) is included in Appendix 5.

	1998/99	1999/00	2000/01	2001/02
Revenue				
-Governmental	\$ 3,808,000	\$ 4,445,176	\$ 4,489,628	\$ 4,512,076
-Non-Governmental	\$ 582,000	\$ 722,000	\$ 767,000	\$ 792,000
Total	\$ 4,390,000	\$ 5,167,176	\$ 5,256,628	\$ 5,304,076
Expenses	\$ 4,390,000	\$ 5,167,176	\$ 5,238,848	\$ 5,291,236
Assets	\$10,135,000	\$12,138,000	\$12,201,280	\$12,159,120
Liabilities	\$ 9,388,000	\$10,991,000	\$10,887,000	\$10,777,000
Number of Programs	9	11	11	11
FTEs	91.4	104.8	106.8	106.8
Total Employees	123	138.5	140.5	140.5

The last few years have been a period of rapid growth in both assets and liabilities. In 2001, Cool Aid had assets of \$13.2 million, an increase of \$1.2 million over the previous year. This is entirely due to the completion of Mike Gidora Place and the inclusion of the full value of the completed project in the financial statements. At the same time, the Society’s liabilities also increased to reflect the full cost of Mike Gidora Place. Liabilities have now reached \$12.5 million, an increase of slightly more than \$1.2 million. The net assets indicate how much of the assets on the financial statements the Society actually owns outright. The net assets are now at \$775,805, which is a small decrease of \$24,365 from last year. This reflects the operating deficit of \$17,946 and all the capital transactions that took place during the year, which were also in a small deficit of \$6,419. It is anticipated that next year should be a period of financial consolidation as the latest projects are “digested” by paying down debt. (Annual Report)

	1998/99	1999/00	2000/01	2001/02
Assets	\$10,135,000	\$12,138,000	\$12,201,280	\$12,159,120
Liabilities	\$ 9,388,000	\$10,991,000	\$10,887,000	\$10,777,000

8.1 Financial Accountability

Cool Aid is a reporting society. An auditor is appointed at the annual general meeting. The fiscal year runs from June 1-May 31 and the financial statements and audit of those statements are presented to the members each year at the annual general meeting. The board may, raise or secure the payment or repayment of money in the manner they decide, and, in particular but without limiting the foregoing, by issue of debentures (sanctioned by a special resolution). The members may by special resolution restrict the borrowing powers of the board, but a restriction imposed expires at the next annual general meeting.

Accountability for finances exists at several points in the organization – “attended to at different levels, simultaneously”. Program expenditures are regularly monitored and controlled by Program Managers, reviewed by the Finance Manager and Executive Director, and reported to the Finance Committee, Board Treasurer, and Board. Monthly financial statements are produced – “check ledger line once/month, check budget once/month”. Managers can sign off items up to \$500, the Executive Director up to \$5000, with the Board authorizing anything larger.

8.2 Budget Process

The budget is largely determined by existing commitments (staff and programs) – the “budget is ‘fairly set’, programs have run for several years, renewed rather than increased”. However, the Strategic Plan and Annual Operating Plan provide the larger framework, e.g. “what areas do you think are the most important, what’s needed in the community for clients and staff, what can we do to attend to that, how do we get funding, what funding is available. “

Developing the budget is an on-going process, Program Managers work with the Financial Manager and Executive Director, who in turn work with the Finance Committee before bring a budget proposal to the Board for approval. “By the time it gets to the Board, explanations are clear, so not a huge amount of discussion. The Board knows that the Finance Committee has given it a rigorous going over. “

8.3 Funding Difficulties

Intermittently, some of the programs have been cut back e.g. “to pay professional staff appropriately, had to cut some hours to increase the hourly rate.” Government ministries may promise money and then it doesn’t come – “have to spend time doing some contingency planning, it is a continuing threat”. When funding is not forthcoming, “this

is a problem because the society does not have a large bank account to cover pay cheques.”

Most of the Society’s programs either reported a surplus or a small deficit. However, there were two exceptions to this, the Streetlink Shelter and the Mike Gidora Place Housing project. The reason why the Shelter has a deficit is because the Society does not receive enough money to fully fund this program and this continues to be a concern. While Mike Gidora Place appears to have a large surplus, in fact a portion of the expenses relating to repayment of loan principal are not included as an operating expense for the program but rather, are included as a capital expenditure elsewhere in the financial statements. This does understate the true cost of the program to Cool Aid, particularly since this is a “stand-alone” program that does not rely on government funding. (Annual Report)

8.4 *Joint Applications for Funding*

Some Cool Aid programs entail joint funding programs, especially those involving the housing projects. When joint funding proposals are anticipated, a Task Force is set up comprised of staff, a Board Member, and representatives from the other agency(s) involved. Joint funding applications are also put together between program areas within Cool Aid. An example is the Homeless to Work and Outreach program application for SCIFI funding where there is a cross over for research and service delivery. Another example was an application for research and delivery on co-occurring disorders.

8.5 *Financial Sustainability*

In response to the question about whether the organization is financially sustainable, the answer is a “qualified yes”. As expressed by one respondent, “The organization has a track record of fiscal responsibility.” It is noted that Cool Aid is heavily dependent on contracts to deliver their services/programs; if contracts are cut, then services/programs will be affected. With the recent change in government in BC - “this is a possibility. As a source of revenue, government is always uncertain.”

To meet changing circumstances, the Strategic Plan is being realigned, the society is “in the process of shifting the mindset.” “The challenge is to be more corporate and look at activities that create income.” There is a recognition that it “will be bit of a rough ride for a while, may get cuts in some areas and may look different in terms of how we deliver services. But Cool Aid is pretty resourceful, extremely determined to serve clients, very creative, adaptable, name of the game, have to be.” Some specific approaches used or being considered, include activities directed at social entrepreneurship and alternate funding techniques:

- co-locating of services;
- fee for service/cost recovery (e.g. ask employers to pay a finding fee for employment service);

- Cool Aid’s partnership with CHR & Canada Health to track mental health clients, where the software being used is a revenue generator;
- setting up the Foundation recently to raise money and to establish an Internet Auction;
- working in a different way (e.g. to build future projects on the market without government subsidy by taking the difference between rent and actual costs and obtaining funds/financing to cover the gap, as was done with Mike Gidora Place); and,
- re-structuring the ways programs are funded, by turning profit/equity into other businesses.

The intention is to develop 2 main capacities to become less dependent on government funding:

- establish a Foundation to do fundraising and strategically develop the capacity, which Cool Aid is in the process of doing
- develop entrepreneurial skills

There is a “greater desire to work entrepreneurially rather than fundraise.” The Executive Director attended “the 2nd National Gathering for Social Entrepreneurs” in Miami 2 years ago and is shortly going to the “3rd Gathering” in Seattle. (see: www.nationalgathering.org) American non-profits are “way-ahead” of Canadians in developing entrepreneurial capacity.

To meet the challenge of financial sustainability, Cool Aid has struck a Business Development Task Force. Terms of Reference are as follows:

- Create a basis for alternative revenue by setting up the appropriate enterprise structure(s);
- Develop and/or review contracts, proposals or initiatives that Cool Aid proposes to enter into with third parties.
- Do a business review/analysis on each business proposal to evaluate its appropriateness and profitability, which will include identifying a time frame when the enterprise will be stable enough to allot a portion of its profit to Cool Aid;
- Task force to provide updates and reports to Cool Aid. Terms shall be reviewed on a yearly basis.

Expected deliverables for the next year, include:

- Ensure that the Task Force has the technical and other expertise required to carry out the terms of reference of the committee;
- Develop contracts with potential partnerships such as: Tao Tech; Capital Health Region (CHR); and Ben and Jerry’s;
- Establish a sustainable business plan. One of the goals of the plan will be to pay for administration costs such as the salary of Cool Aid’s Development Manager.

- Determine the type of business subsidiary that minimizes risks (such as loss of charitable status) to the Cool Aid Society.

To secure alternative funding Cool Aid has developed different programming, trying joint ventures with other Cool Aid programs and developing a strategy to promote core-funded programs.

One interviewee voiced a note of caution. “Cool Aid does a great job and is well positioned to supply services, there could be the opportunity for it to grow too big”, potentially creating a challenge in terms of financial sustainability.

9.0 Fundraising

Cool Aid has not relied on fundraising to any great extent to finance its operations: donations, targeted fundraising and gaming account for only 3% (\$197,978) of revenues, with gaming income making up more than two-thirds of that total.

Past fundraising efforts have been minimal and not highly successful as revenue generators.

- *“Have tried in the past – e.g. concerts, gaming events, auctions, social events – not a lot of success, limited profit.”*
- *“Fundraising is a constant struggle....”*
- *“There is not much involvement of the Board in fundraising.”*
- *“The organization does not have the resources to do much fundraising.”*

Historically, the view has been that the nature of Cool Aid’s services has precluded the need to fundraise: *“a lot are core services and the responsibility of government for which Cool Aid acts as the steward”*. As well it was noted that:

- *“It is pretty hard to fundraise operational costs – people don’t want to give for something they feel government or business should support. It is easier to fundraise for one-off capital events or projects.”*
- *“Municipalities outside of the City of Victoria (where most services are located) are reluctant to give. In soliciting funding from other municipalities (and other levels of government) it is important to stress that the homeless transcend all boundaries – at a minimum a regional view is needed.”*
- *“Former (recovered) clients do not have the means to give, so the client base does not lend itself to fundraising and there is no base of fundraisers.”*

However, with anticipated changes in the funding environment, Cool Aid has begun to address the need to fundraise and is in the process of establishing the Cool Aid Foundation. The Foundation came about through the initiative of the Manager of Finance and Administration and a Board Member with a finance/management background. When the Manager died suddenly, a pot of money was raised that went into the Foundation as well as donated funds from a former Board member. The Foundation Board initially was comprised of the executive of Cool Aid; now it also includes benefactors.

Recognizing that the organization lacked the “capacity” to fundraise, a staff person has been hired, part of whose job responsibility is to fundraise. A Manager of Development will work closely with the Communications Committee to prepare materials for use in attracting revenue. These will include PR materials for special events, brochures and/or flyers for Planned Giving, corporate donations, and putting together PR kit of materials for the Foundation and the Society. Legal and business questions that arise as a result of raising alternative revenues will be addressed by the Business Development Task Force.

10.0 Client Base

The client base is “the homeless – whoever is in the homeless population is the client base.” There is “no particular cultural/ethnic component, although Aboriginal people are over represented relative to their portion of the general population. However, the diversity of Cool Aid’s programs and services results in a range of clients.

Men, women, youth, and children in adverse situation in particular dealing with individuals who are marginalized due to a wide variety of circumstances including mental health, substance abuse, physical disability or financial challenge.

Cool Aid has an extensive database and specific client information which is used for registration, tracking outcomes, number of counselling hours, hours of employment obtained, reports and outcomes measurement. Recently Cool Aid has completed a number of client satisfaction surveys as a baseline using an approved format. There will now be the opportunity to repeat the surveys to see if there is any improvement in client satisfaction.

10.1 Adults

- **Streetlink Emergency Shelter**
Since it opened in 1968, the Shelter has gradually expanded and diversified its services to meet its clients' constantly changing needs. In addition to offering overnight accommodation and meals, Streetlink provides referrals, hygiene and mental health services, housing advocacy, community liaison, and crisis and life skills counselling. During the past year the 55-bed facility had an average monthly occupancy rate of 82 per cent, with a male/female ratio of close to nine to one. There were many nights of each month when the 45 male beds were completely full.

- **Swift House/Pandora Project/Mike Gidora Place/Johnson Manor**
Projects provide adult apartments for people who historically have had difficulty in finding and keeping affordable housing for a variety of reasons. The Pandora Project also includes eight transitional units of youth housing.

- **Garden Gate**
A six-bed group home facility whose aim is to teach people how to live with their illness in the community and be more independent. Residents are coming for shorter stays. Stays ranged from 5 to 10 months with 2 very short-term residents. In addition to the group home, Garden Gate manages a Satellite Program and a Transition Apartment Program.

10.2 Youth

- **Kiwanis Emergency Youth Shelter (KEYS)**
During the past year the shelter provided service to over 420 youth and families in crisis. The gender split was 57% females and 43% males – the highest differential in the history of the shelter, attributed to increased awareness by helping professionals of the risk factors for female youth particularly in the area of sexual exploitation. The shelter generally saw younger females and older males this year, which is seen as a result of providing under aged income assistance to more adolescent males. 72% of youth were *not* in the care of the Ministry, which represents a 5% increase from last year and a 10% increase in the last two years. This is consistent with the current philosophy to provide different services to youth without taking them into Ministry care. Staff provided 38 family sessions up from 22 the previous year; a 42% increase. Youth and families serviced come from all over the region: 40% of youth served were from Victoria/Saanich, 25% from the Western Communities/Esquimalt/Sooke areas, 20% from Downtown and 15% fell into the ‘other’ including elsewhere on Vancouver Island. Recently KEYS staff determined the issues that dominate the scene for youth and service providers are housing, sexual exploitation and residential detox services. As a result, KEYS has developed an increased awareness and subsequent strategies for dealing with youth during their substance misuse and their vulnerabilities as they find themselves quickly immersed in the sex trade, all the while struggling with the need for safe long term housing.

10.3 Women

- **Sandy Merriman**
A fifteen-bed shelter and drop in for women only, developed as a community development initiative to address the emergency shelter needs for homeless women. Many women had reported feeling uncomfortable and sometimes unsafe at existing shelters as they are predominately used by male clients. This year 481 women spent an average of nine days each at the shelter, and the average monthly occupancy rate was 77 per cent.

10.4 Downtown Population

- **Downtown Activity Centre**
Special emphasis on those who do not traditionally access recreational or social facilities, as a result of a community scan that indicated that many sectors of the

Downtown community felt that the Centre would fulfil an important role in the community. The Centre is open seven days a week, utilized by close to 3,000 users per month, and offers over 40 different programs.

- **Cool Aid Community Health Centre**
Recently expanded the Health Centre has an inter-discipline team that includes four physicians, four sessional specialists (MDs such as GI, psychiatry, etc.), three nurse practitioners, one nutritionist, one drug and alcohol counsellor, support staff, one pharmacist and an acupuncturist. The centre serves 50 - 75 clients per day and is open six days a week with some evening coverage.
- **Outreach**
Created to help people on the street access the social agencies that are available to them. The program provides assessment, counselling and referrals for homeless and other at-risk people in downtown Victoria. The steady increase in homelessness since the 1980s has resulted in the expansion of Outreach Services. What began, as a one-person operation serving 150 homeless people has become a five-person team offering support to a population that now exceeds 1000. Seniors Outreach serves at least 16 clients aged 55 and up in the downtown area. The total number of counselling sessions in this year will top 1200. The client group is predominantly male and between the ages of 25 – 54.
- **Employment Services**
Has about a 1000 clients in all programs. There are 3 main client groups: (1) people who have been seasonally employed in the resource sector who can no longer work because of disability or because of structural changes to the sector – help to see how they can use their skills in other ways, (2) people who have been mandated to come e.g. BC Benefits, long term, lots of barriers, and (3) newcomers to town (national/ international). Most clients are male (90%) and 15% are Aboriginal.

The Provincial Government has shifted the nature of its client referrals to its contracted employment assistance programs. They are diverting job ready participants to direct Job Placement Programs (JPP) and all multi-barriered clients to the assisted job search programs like CAES. This has meant a demographic shift and the program is now seeing more chronic clients with more problems.

10.5 Children

- **Day Care**
Daycare families come from a variety of socio-economic backgrounds. During the past year about 55 per cent of the children were from single parent families and 71 per cent of the parents were employed.

11.0 Issues

The following are examples of significant issues the Society has dealt with in the last few years.

11.1 *Community partnerships*

- Cool Aid Community Health Centre - “The board was heavily involved in making sure the “T”s were crossed. Struck a task force to follow the proposal development, to make sure some due process was followed regarding the relationships being formed. Looked at human resource and reporting mechanism issues. Discussed what kind of governance model should exist – should the CHC have its own board or be under the Cool Aid Board? Chose latter. Community based projects can have an advisory committee.
- Downtown Community Activity Centre (DCAC) was established in 1997 as a result of a community scan that indicated the need for recreation and social facilities and programs for the Downtown community. Responding to a multiplicity of needs and desires was a “major challenge”. However, open seven days a week, the DCAC has developed into a bustling place that is utilized by close to 3,000 users per month. Part of the Centre’s great success is due to the community partnership model established with the City of Victoria and the Capital Health Region. In the year to come the centre will go through a formal program review led by the DCAC Steering Committee. The business plan for reaching self-sustainability will be assessed and a new three–year business plan will be developed.

11.2 *Contract Funding*

- CAES (Cool Aid Employment Services) - Last year the provincial government cut funding for two programs (Casual Labour Pool and Skills to Work), and the survival of CAES was threatened. Staff were given notice. Along with several member agencies in the community, the Executive Director and CAES Manager collectively fought back and negotiated with the Ministry to reverse the decision. Continued funding was secured to keep the programs running. “The Board does not have Plan B if funds are cut off to the organization. “
- The Ministry has also shifted the nature of its client referrals to its contracted employment assistance programs. They are diverting job ready participants to direct job placement programs (JPP) and all multi-barriered clients to the assisted job search programs like CAES. This has meant a demographic shift and the program is now seeing more chronic clients with more problems. Program adjustments are being made to meet the challenges.
- Several years of under-funding led to the distinct possibility of a partial closure of Streetlink. The administration successfully negotiated with the Health Region and respective BC Government Ministry who provide most of the monies needed to support the shelter and the closures were averted.

- The daycare has continued to adjust to the reality of unaffordable and inaccessible daycare. Two years ago reduced numbers of parents who could afford licensed daycare led to a reduction in the number of daycare spaces from 25 to 16 and this past year the daycare faced the challenge of further declining enrolment. A flexible operating budget and staffing model have accommodated the flux in enrolment and kept the daycare operating. Participation in problem-solving meetings has assisted parents to access subsidy.

11.3 Personnel

- Changes in personnel put heavy demands on staff. A new Human Resources Manager was hired and there has been a successful building time for HR as well as rebuilding other parts of administration.
- Union negotiations have been completed successfully, after a long process with CSSEA to follow through with the costing and Ministry distribution mechanisms.
- A continual issue has been how to provide benefits for non-unionized staff given a shortage of government funding. With increased government funding, non-union staff were awarded increased compensation and the employee RRSP plan was “greatly improved.”

11.4 Administration

- Administration offices were moved to Mike Gidora Place. “It was successful because we had key people who were exemplary in organizational skills and meeting timelines.”
- Recent expansions in program activity resulted in hiring a Shelter Manager (previously the Housing Manager had this responsibility) and also hiring a staff person fully dedicated to fund raising.
- Two committees have been established to focus on technology and data collecting - two resource areas that have become fundamental in the social service environment. There is a need to do a review of Cool Aid’s technology – look at tactics for information management. A capital plan for technology has been established and information technology support has been strengthened.
- Implementation of a program data collection capacity has begun. This includes installation, training, troubleshooting and creation of reports.
- Through the CHR mental health database collaborative, using the Canada Health Info-structure Partnership Program (CHIPP) technology, a strong building block for future revenue generation has been established. A dedicated position to undertake this work has been created.

11.5 Accreditation/Licensing

- Under the previous provincial government, organizations receiving over \$200,000 in funding had to be accredited by 2004 (this may change with the new government). Given the breadth of Cool Aid’s programs and funding sources there may be up to 6 different external agencies to deal with concerning

accreditation. There is a need to develop organizational capacity (resources) to undertake accreditation, as a consequence this initiative has been postponed to April 2002.

- The issue of licensing/regulation/standards is ongoing. Licensing involves reducing risk and what is needed is to get shared risk standards (e.g. as in Alberta and Saskatchewan) developed from the point of view of the client and client family.

11.6 Housing

- Building Mike Gidora Place – “put the organization in the hole financially, picture has changed and it also represented a new direction for the organization.” “Mike Gidora Place just maxed everyone out, especially when Mike died – stressed, mourning.” Workload had to be picked up by other staff.”

11.7 Other

- The likelihood of a provincial election and a change of government over the last year affected programs and services. “It was very much a hold steady year which put a strain on our existing resources.”

12.0 Strategic Planning

Cool Aid is guided by a three-year Strategic Plan with Annual Operating Plans setting out how the Strategic Plan will be implemented from year to year.

12.1 Purpose of the Strategic Plan and Annual Operating Plans

The theme of Cool Aid’s 1999-2002 Strategic Plan, “*Compassionate Action*,” captures in a simple phrase the essence of the Society’s Vision, Principles and Mission. The 1999-2002 Strategic Plan builds on the Society’s earlier traditions and at the same time reflects their commitment to the future by positioning the Society for success in what is likely to be a very uncertain business environment.

The Strategic Plan outlines the strategic direction and major initiatives of the Victoria Cool Aid Society for the fiscal years 1999/00 through 2001/02. The Plan established the vision, mission, guiding principles, and 4 strategic objectives that “stretched (i.e. didn’t allow them to do it just comfortably) them to their vision“, tactics, identified who would do what, and allocated actions over time.

The Planning Assumptions underlying the Strategic Plan include:

- a growing demand for existing and new social services;
- an increased willingness by non-profit agencies and independent funding sources to partner with one another for more effective delivery of services;
- decreasing funding from traditional sources;

- an increased emphasis on accountability for all organizations accessing public funds;
- an increasing requirement that non-profit societies will become more creative and entrepreneurial;
- the development of new technologies are shaping the services of non-profit societies; and,
- interest by other agencies in learning of Cool Aid's past experiences, and in hearing what the Society has to offer as a social service delivery partner in the future.

An increase in resource re-allocation and staff will be needed to cope with Cool Aid's business requirements.

The four strategic objectives included in the Strategic Plan include:

- Strategic Objective 1 – To Improve our Services for the Benefit of our Clients. The focus of this objective is on complete and effective services for our clients. The Outcome from the implementation of this objective will be Cool Aid Programs that are effective in meeting the current and emerging needs of our clients.
- Strategic Objective 2 – To Strengthen and Develop the Resources Required by Cool Aid to Meet our Clients' Life Needs. The focus of this objective is on the development of Cool Aid's human and financial resources. The Outcome from the implementation of this objective will be a capable, aligned and well-equipped human resource able to increase and maximize the impact of the Society's financial resources.
- Strategic Objective 3 – To demonstrate leadership in effective and innovative models of service delivery Intended Outcome. The focus of this objective is on alliances, collaboration and partnerships for improved service delivery. The Outcome from the implementation of this objective will be service delivery models that go beyond the traditional single agency, single sector, delivery structure.
- Strategic Objective 4 – To Influence Decisions that Affect our Services, our Clients and our Community. The focus of this objective is on Cool Aid's leadership in bringing the Society's Vision to reality. The Outcome from the implementation of this objective will ultimately lead to "creating a just and healthy quality of life for all".

Cool Aid manages itself in accordance with this Plan and undertakes annual reviews of the Annual Operating Plan to monitor its progress in achieving the objectives and performance targets. As part of the AOP, Performance Targets are attached to each of the 4 strategic objectives, as well as specific strategies to achieve the targets. In addition, Program Goals are outlined (e.g. enhancement goals, innovative goals, and problem solving goals). Appendix 6 sets out the strategic objectives, performance targets and

strategies. Cool Aid is still in the process of developing performance measures for the organization's programs.

12.2 Strategic Planning Process

Cool Aid's first and current Strategic Plan was developed in a process that involved all levels of the organization – staff, managers, and board, assisted by external facilitators.

The planning process involved the full Board and management group. The Management group spent 12 days over 6 months, the Board spent 1.5 days. A series of 3 facilitated workshops were held. The Vision was developed with everyone contributing ideas (a record was kept that can be used for reference as to meaning, definitions, direction). A facilitator was used to help develop the strategic plan – “It was critical to assign someone internally to coordinate the process.”

Cool Aid is currently in the process of updating its Strategic Plan. This is an extension of the first plan, covering a span of 2 years. It involves revisiting the vision and follows upon an environmental scan. A core planning team (chaired by a Board member and including 4 managers and the executive director) has been established to identify needed changes to the Plan. Two focus groups, one comprised of Board and Administration and the other comprised of Management and staff. Staff and Board will be used to test the direction and provide input. The anticipated time commitment involved is 4 days for 5 of the managers, and 2 days for all managers, 1.5 days for other staff and the Board.

12.3 Annual Operating Plans

Through the Annual Operating Plan (AOP), the Strategic Plan is updated on an annual basis. The AOP outlines the Society's objectives, how they will achieve those objectives, the expected business environment (reviewed each year in October) and how the management team will report back on the achievements. Over a two-day period each October, the AOP is reviewed “and any irrelevant items dropped prior to its implementation in March as the Operating Plan.” The Plan is assessed in terms of relevance, what has been achieved, what needs to be carried forward and how that will impact on the following year's work.

Each of the foundation documents of our Strategic Plan is reflected in the AOP. Our mission is reflected in the routine goals for the current year for each program. Our strategic objectives move and stretch us towards our vision and the various strategies and tactics in the operating plan lead us forward achieving those four strategic objectives. At the program level, the problem solving and innovative goals outline the concrete steps we will take to move beyond status quo. Our guiding principles determine how we will carry out our work – with each other and in our communities.
(AOP 1)

12.4 Plan Monitoring

The following schematic outlines the planning and review process that Cool Aid uses on an annual basis to implement and manage its 1999-2002 Strategic Plan. These quarterly sessions create a “living and working Strategic Plan.” Through quarterly reports to the Board, “all components of our organization from the board through to actions of our staff in the programs have remained accountable to the plan.”

Quarterly Report for:	Planning Committee	Board
April – June	July	July
July – September	October	October
October – December	January	January
January - March	April	April

A manager has been assigned to be Coordinator, Strategic Planning – to send out timelines for tasks, quarterly reviews, etc. Managers meet regularly with HR and Finance staff and Monday manager meetings are aligned to the Strategic and Operational Plans, - “It keeps the process focused”.

In quarterly reports, managers outline how their program goals will be measured and the results that have been achieved and they submit their quarterly reports to the Executive Director. The Executive Director meets quarterly with all managers addressing the Human Resource, Finance and Community Service issues to ensure they are aligned with the AOP, Business Plan and Strategic Plan.

The Strategic Plan is used as the “frame” for the Executive Director’s quarterly reports to the Board – the Executive Director acts as “an information broker between staff and the Board” – “keeping the Strategic Plan living and working throughout the 3 year period”. Quarterly, the Executive Director provides the Board with a Business Environment Update, statistics/outputs on service delivery, client testimonials, and a report on performance targets achieved.

Board committees have developed work plans outlining their work to support the AOP and use the strategic directions in the AOP and Business Plan on which to base their decisions – “It is an on-going process, always addressing it.” In particular, the Planning Committee has a prime responsibility as reflected in its terms of reference:

1. To support the strategic plan over the three year horizon
2. To ensure the implementation of the strategic plan demonstrates partnership with our programs, clients, other agencies and the public and private sector through a community development process.
3. To direct and monitor society research projects.
4. To establish appropriate links and communication with other standing board committees to facilitate the strategic plan.

5. To report and recommend to the Board the ongoing monitoring process of the actual implementation of the Society's Strategic plan including:
 - Update of the Strategic Plan Environmental Scan
 - Review and refine the Strategic Plan Assumptions
 - Assess current year's Business Priorities through Performance Measurement Reports; and
6. To propose actions, if any, to address the above items 1 to 5.

12.5 Impact

- “The plan has brought change to how we work as an organization and the change management process has been critical to achieving our performance targets.”
- “The organization’s policies, guidelines, mission statements and principles are “what guide us” in a positive manner. The “challenge is the ability of an organization to continually manage and change policy as the need arises,” e.g. to fiscal responses/needs.”
- “The Board has been involved with the strategic plan – Board members participated in creating it, everything flows from it and is integrated with it, e.g. Annual Operating Plans, setting of business goals and Business Plan.”
- “Introduction of the strategic planning process and all the documents that flow from that – has absolutely transformed the organization – more businesslike, Board work is easier, better organized and will have good long-term consequences.” “For a Board member to see the planning and then reporting related to the planning, it gives them a handle on the organization, makes the Board work more effective. The process was initiated by a former Board member and facilitated by an external person. Managers’ objectives for the year have been tracked.”
- The Strategic Plan is used and referred to constantly – it is “used to keep everyone in line” and it “keeps everyone focused and permits a way of dealing with the single issue or ‘flavour of the day’ unless it fits in with the Plan.”
- The planning documents and quarterly reports generated by the management group are outstanding and they are invaluable to the Board.
- In theory the Strategic Plan is “applied with rigour, in practice we are ‘getting there’.” The organization is “still in the process of developing objectives and are starting to do evaluations of policies – they are a work in progress.”
- “The success of the Strategic Plan’s implementation is the result of having dedicated a skilled coordinator who can balance the many processes and tasks required to ensure the plan moves forward. The managers have all contributed throughout the year, each having a lead role in some tactics and a supporting role in others. The managers developed, implemented and reported on the Annual Operating Plan for 2000/2001, while the Board, through the Planning Committee, held us accountable.”
- The distinction was made that the Board itself does not have a Strategic Plan, rather it is the Cool Aid society representing a marginal population and providing a large range of services (larger than many Boards have) that has a Strategic Plan.

13.0 Strategic Partnerships and Networking

This discussion raised some interesting observations from the Cool Aid case study interviews. Cool Aid executive have given considerable thought to looking at a “Collaborative process through governance, for example how members are selected for the Board. How do you do collaborative governance especially during the development process? How do you share the governance model (responsibility and accountability) when there are different sizes of organization (capacity), different stages of evolution, and different levels of trust between organizations?”

Strategic partnerships and networking, internally and externally, are important to Cool Aid’s operation and aim of improving the overall delivery of services. The organization is more intimately networked than many agencies because of the variety of programs it offers – this drives more partners and networks.

“Part of strategic plan, done at all levels in the organization. On-going contracts that involve multiple contacts in the community. Great deal of networking goes on – ‘what Cool Aid is known for.’”

Cool Aid is “pretty networked, work hard to develop good partnerships.”

Cool Aid cross promotes services, resources and information with other agencies in the community, this is in part because Cool Aid is so multi-faceted and intricately networked regarding homelessness and related services. An agency “should be highly cross-promoting and therefore more holistic.”

Because of the variety of programs and services that Cool Aid offers, Cool Aid is an active participant in various local, regional and provincial associations and alliances. In fact, *“The primary goal for Cool Aid over the coming three years is to establish the foundation for the Society to work in concert with governments, other social service providers and local businesses.”* It is anticipated the revised Strategic Plan will include a statement about ‘shared leadership’ and what this means for Cool Aid staff and community leaders.

Cool Aid participates in several types of networks, collaborations and partnerships (see Check List for Related Agencies and Groups following)

- **Networking** – sharing information and knowledge, agencies are “ambassadors for each other.”
- **Partnering** – each partnering agency has a piece of the delivery of the product/program e.g. money, building – “fuse yourselves together, and then how much do you have to give up?”
- **Collaboration** – in between networking and partnering – some networks may do this where they feel in sync with philosophy, practice and standards (e.g. Open Door). The challenge is how to combine programs without amalgamating agencies.

“Collaboration is the precursor to partnerships – need that paradigm shift first – not every collaboration should be precipitated by crisis or force.”

Cool Aid is an example of a larger agency that might be approached by government to look at ways of getting the community involved in action, to do so they consider using words like “mutual clients” in order to work towards community collaborative goals. Cool Aid would prefer it is a “Community Strategic Plan” not “Cool Aid’s”, which helps to neutralize the collaboration. Perhaps the steps are first co-location, then move into collaboration and the end outcome is a strategic partnership. The challenge is how you acknowledge smaller organizations that have collaborated and been absorbed into a larger agency in the process, possibly this is achieved through the clients.

The suggestion was made that the Governance questionnaire could be an organizational tool for organizations trying to determine whether partnerships will work.

On the whole, criteria set by funders appears to have had little influence on the membership and structure of Cool Aid's partnerships.

Reasons for becoming involved in networking, collaborations and partnerships include:

- “get more bang for the money, more interesting as well”
- “over the last few years, lots of isolation and competition that has not worked”
- combining resources “can’t unlimitedly provide everything clients need to improve their quality of life”
- “a window opens, it is your choice”
- ”could not achieve the same level of results without partnerships - not now”
- “way of getting the community to take ownership of the issues”
- “deliberate and accidental based on environmental scan”
- “way it has to be”
- now with the Federal homelessness initiatives, people have to collaborate, slowly becoming more collaborative as a result”.

There are different kinds of networking and partnering:

- **With funding partners:**
 - Formal contracts with government, relationship with funders and ability to feel truly partnered is set out in Schedule A (deliverables, what and how you are doing) – “it is a partnership when it is the funder’s Schedule A also - both need to work to support the on-going relationship.”
 - Get all managers to report quarterly on how they have maintained their accounts (e.g. letter to funder to thank funder, keep funder apprised.
 - Get funder to visit.

- Regularly e-mail the funders – “to keep in touch”, give funder positive news and maintain contact regularly, not just when have a problem.
- **With community partners:**
 - Want the community partners to take ownership – “Streetlink is the community shelter, should have everyone involved - shared leadership, shared outcomes and shared resources”. The main community partners orbit around a cluster of services, network and partner around individual clients and around issues related to clients. This is relationship building. Examples of a community networks and partnerships exist on a number of levels within the community.
 - Partnering to respond to issues or concerns, e.g. the Downtown CRUNCH initiative
 - Partnerships to create new projects e.g. look at panhandling with the objective of certain populations in mind. An example of this type of partnership is the Downtown Street Enterprise (City of Victoria, Cool Aid, Downtown Business Association, BIA), where some are partners in kind, intent, or funding, representing a shared contract.
 - It is more difficult to develop partnerships when there is inter-agency competition for funding.

Examples of specific strategies undertaken by Cool Aid to improve networking and collaboration include:

- approving proposals for collaborative initiatives with other service providers;
- conducting a consultation process with other service providers for shelter enhancements;
- distributing comprehensive communication/information packages; sharing out expertise through tours, open houses and the website;
- developing criteria for corporate sponsorship and acquiring corporate sponsorship;
- sharing expertise on parent education forums, casual labour pool, and community development in recreation and housing;
- participating in the development of the provincial shelter network (Shelter Net BC);
- completing a number of individual program goals that will be enhancing, innovative and problem solving.
- maintaining close contact with funders e.g. quarterly account reporting, inviting the funder to visit, thanking the funder, using e-mail

Networking, collaboration and partnerships are carried out in a number of ways.

- Board membership is planned annually, not only to identify skill set needs but also to identify people with links in the community. Members of other organizations e.g. BC Non-Profit Housing Association and St. Vincent de Paul are invited to become members of the Board to encourage collaboration and networking. ID
- Formal program delivery partnerships are developed with other community agencies and all levels of government as part of a collaborative community response to client needs. Some key examples include:
 - Health Canada funding for a mental health information system, namely Victoria Innovative Seniors Treatment Agency (VISTA), a joint undertaking with the Capital Health Region.
 - Employment Services is working with DND Pacific Naval Base (Recruitment Steering Committee) to look at potential recruitment from CASE, some clients are “job ready” when they come to CASE but others are not. MG
 - Continued Provincial Government funding (capital and operating) for housing and client services programs.
 - Continued direct partnership with the City of Victoria through support of Johnson Manor and the Downtown Community Activity Centre.
 - Partnerships developed with the Downtown Community Activity Centre, Cool Aid Employment Services, consumer integration and pre-employment initiatives.
 - Various joint undertakings with the Capital Health Region, including mental health planning, supports to existing and new housing (including forensics and seniors), supports for the shelter system through Streetlink and Sandy Merriman, and Outreach for dual diagnosis.
 - Continued and expanded partnership with the Capital Health Region to provide the Cool Aid Community Health Centre – “Staff feel that this multi-disciplinary approach will lead to, among other things, less emergency room use, reduced frequency and duration of hospital visits, and better coordination of prevention services to address the downtown’s health and social problems”.
 - United Way funding that enabled Cool Aid to address issues of poverty, violence in society, substance abuse through our shelter and community support and employment programs, family stress and breakdown through KEYS and daycare, and isolation and loneliness through our housing, residential and downtown activity centre programs.

- Capital funding for housing and client services received from the Vancouver Foundation, Victoria Foundation, Real Estate Foundation of B.C., VanCity Community Foundation and Pacific Coast Savings Credit Union.
- On-going retail training partnership with Camosun College (provides instructor), Cadillac-Fairview (provides space) and Cool Aid (coordinates program) precipitated when Camosun wanted to bring the program downtown for better outreach to people who wanted training in retail.
- Advocacy and participation in a variety of working/advisory groups and committees:
 - Continued work with federal and national groups to ensure that the provision of affordable housing and addressing homelessness are priorities.
 - Continued work with the City of Victoria on the development of the community plan to address homelessness, the Sexually Exploited Youth Project, the Downtown Street Enterprise Project and in general through the Downtown Working Group and Social Planning and Housing Advisory Committees.
 - Participation in the CHR mental health renewal initiative by responding to the 87 recommendations to improve the mental health system.
 - Continued work with the CHR on supportive and assisted living for seniors as part of the continuing care renewal plan to ensure the shelters don't become the only housing option for the homeless.
 - Continued effort at the federal and provincial level to ensure young children and their struggling parents' needs are met. In particular, to ensure that the new provincial government remains committed to the full implementation of the Child Care BC Act.
 - Lobbying (including several meetings with ministry staff on both a provincial and regional basis) around the issues of dual ministry day care funding and accessing subsidy - Victoria now has a daycare office which has staff dedicated solely to doing daycare subsidies.
 - Collaboration – with Pacific Centre on a Youth Housing Committee – around a shared goal, geographic base, client group, complementary skill sets.
 - Networking through the Association for Service Providers for Employment in Community Training (ASPECT) - meet once/month, go over contracts, funding issues, core service review – how to do, share experiences, allows a direct connection with funder, results in “productive and useful exchange of information”.

- Work with the Victoria MP to ensure Victoria gets its fair share of federal funds “We see a growing partnership with Health and Welfare Canada and HRDC.”

13.1 *The Future and Strategic Partnerships*

Within Cool Aid there it is recognized that partnerships, networking and collaboration will become increasingly important. “I feel positively about a future in which strategic partnerships and inter-agency collaboration may be the standard for delivering programs and services effectively.” Cool Aid expects to build on its experience – in fact “Cool Aid could end up as one of the bigger agencies or be approached by government to pick up the pieces.”

“Cool Aid is quite an exceptional operation. It is probably the ‘Gold Standard’ of delivering mental health services in the Capital Health Region.”

However partnerships/collaborations need to be carefully nurtured – “not every collaboration should be precipitated by crisis or force.” Some important issues to consider in forming partnerships/collaborations include:

- How do you combine programs without it feeling like amalgamation or a take over?/ “How do you get people feeling part of the action?
“Words may help” e.g. ‘mutual clients,’ ‘community goals,’ ‘lost this piece but gained this piece.’ “Let people know what an organization’s interests are, be clear about not stepping on toes.”
- How do you develop a collaborative working relationship?
“Develop a shared vision about the underlying purpose and maybe the means to be used.” Use an outside agency (like the CHR) to help focus agencies on community goals.”
- How do you get over the moving from being an independent organization to being part of another organization?
“Focus on the client - it might be easier to go from 3 FTEs to 1.2, from being independent to being part of another organization.”
- Does staging or phasing help?
“Stage the process – co-location > collaboration > partnership.”

Governance issues are often a problem in establishing collaborative processes. For example:

- How do you do collaborative governance especially during development process (e.g. member selection for Board)?

- How do you share the governance model (responsibility and accountability) when there are different sizes of organization (capacity), different stages of evolution, and different levels of trust between organizations?”

It is “hard for a partnership to happen when there is a day-to-day operational board working with a policy board. The governance model can be a barrier to strategic partnerships – joint board membership is not always productive.” An example is the Downtown Activity Centre. Cool Aid had wanted the Downtown Neighbourhood Association to take over the running of the Centre.

However, the two agencies “were not equal, too many differences in terms of capacity – especially the DNA who lacked capacity to participate”. As a result, Cool Aid has continued to run the Centre but is presently doing a review to identify a possible partner.

Strategic partnerships and inter-agency collaboration are viewed as essential. There has to be cross-fertilization, and non-profits need to look at ways of delivering things more effectively.

“They need to channel resources better and reduce duplication – look at new technologies that help web-based information and files and sharing of information. There is also a lot of fragmentation across groups and there needs to be some way of collaborating. We want to have a healthy non-profit and volunteer sector, so want to make sure we collaborate.”

In this vein, for example, a Central Housing Registry is being established with the involvement of Cool Aid, Pacifica and M’akola housing societies in Victoria, and there are opportunities to share facilities and through the linking of software maintaining a common database (such as CHIP for mental health clients so people don’t re-invent treatments). There are lots of opportunities for addressing inefficiencies in the system, e.g. one-stop shopping for clients can provide, or generate, quality care and service for clients.

Cool Aid was instrumental in forming the BC Shelter Net, a fledgling net recently established. Shelters work in isolation, so historically there has not been a sharing of knowledge or standardization.

14.0 Challenges

Each year Cool Aid undertakes an environmental scan that outlines the challenges facing the organization.

14.1 *Socio-Economic*

- The social safety net has suffered from reduced funding; a phenomena which seems likely to continue.
- The prevalence of citizens living below the poverty line and those that are homeless, or at risk of becoming homeless, is increasing.
- The demand for a wide range of social services has grown significantly, and the role of the non-profit sector has expanded to fill the gap.
- In the absence of adequate public funding, non-profit societies are being assisted by an increasing number of businesses that understand the importance of caring for all members of society.
- The non-profit sector is gradually repositioning itself as the predominant social service provider. This role is especially evident in inner cities and downtown cores where the challenges of poverty are most evident.

14.2 *Demographics*

- Greater Victoria will continue to have a growing population, especially those aged 45 years and older. With this *greying* of the local population, there will be an increase in the demand for social services, especially in relation to medical services and affordable housing. It is also likely that the numbers of older individuals with mental illnesses will increase, placing an even greater burden upon the resources of local social service providers.
- With an aging population comes the possible benefit of increased volunteer resources for agencies such as Cool Aid. Conversely, this older demographic might also lobby local government for increased safety in the downtown core, particularly in relation to the growing numbers of homeless on Victoria streets.
- With significant growth in the CRD's Western Communities, there will be pressure on social service agencies to provide service in those communities in order to counteract the gravitation toward the downtown core.
- A lower birth rate is partly responsible for low day care enrolment, a problem felt by Cool Aid and other daycares in Victoria.

14.3 *Government/Political*

- Across Canada, governments are re-evaluating their role and function as a result of an inability to pay/provide for all of the social services required by the public.

- The 1990s marked the beginning of a serious government effort to examine alternative methods of program delivery. The resulting restructuring of government, especially given prolonged fiscal problems, has created a period of program fragmentation and general uncertainty about the future of direct government/public service program delivery.
- Concurrently, pressures on government to control or reduce costs in all program areas has led to the need for increased accountability and performance reporting by all agencies accessing public funds.
- As government becomes more *business-like*, the move to download services to local authorities or third sector (non-profit) providers grows.
- To reflect these fundamental changes, government has begun to refine its legislative and regulatory mechanisms with the result that non-profit agencies are having to partner not only with government, but also amongst themselves, for effective service delivery. The third sector must now position itself to counteract and mitigate the effects of federal, provincial and municipal services that are being downloaded without a corresponding reallocation of resources.

14.4 Social Service Provider/Non-Profit Sector

- With fewer dollars to allocate/share among the various social service providers, the prospect of partnerships, amalgamations and consolidations of non-profit agencies continues to grow.
- Shaped by the fiscal constraints of government, competition for funding among social service providers is greater today than ever before. The fiscal pressures on these organizations are forcing organizational realignment and presenting management challenges related to fewer salaried staff and increased workloads.
- The trend toward contracting-out and fee-for-service appears to be gaining momentum.
- For those non-profit agencies that are well established, the forces requiring them to be more enterprising should be easily managed. Indeed, the international trend of entrepreneurial non-profit societies is now appearing in Canada.
- The future is pointing toward an increased level of collaboration and alliance among government, business and non-profit agencies in order to serve the community's social service requirements. An increase in the need for closer community ties and enhanced consultation in the design and delivery of social services seems certain.

Arising from the Environmental Assessment, the following are the **key business challenges** for Cool Aid. These are being through the implementation of the Objectives and Strategies contained in the Strategic Plan.

- Having Cool Aid become an integral part of the discussion and decision-making process with respect to social services.
- Effectively and creatively managing the Society's operating model.
- Balancing the public's expectations for social services with their willingness to pay.
- Embracing the need for greater accountability, transparency, and collaboration in the delivery of social services.
- Positioning the Society for an uncertain business environment due to changes in program delivery requirements.

Over the period of the three-year Strategic Plan, Cool Aid's efforts will focus in four key areas:

- maximizing client benefits through improvements in programs/services;
- strengthening human and financial resources for tomorrow's needs;
- facilitating greater collaboration, partnership and alliances between government, other social service providers and businesses to improve the overall social service delivery model; and,
- making the Vision a reality through advocacy, public awareness, teamwork with other non-profit agencies, and a focus on "creating a just and healthy quality of life for all".

While the environmental scan identifies general trends, a particular challenge confronting Cool Aid (and other social service agencies in British Columbia) is the recent change in government. This

"could have a profound effect on Cool Aid and its ability to maintain its current service. Balanced budget legislation, a shift of funding from social services to health and education and a move towards performance based contracting in employment are the new realities. Less funding in shelters and other MSDES funded programs will inevitably lead to less service."

As well "urban issues of homelessness and lack of affordable housing may be less of a priority for rural and business oriented MLAs, changes in social housing program, capital freeze could affect projects if they are in the early building stages." Human resources and labour issues could be affected by changes in government policies – "deal with 5-8 ministries, changes in government direction could affect programming."

The new government took office in May 2001 and already the “Environment has changed significantly”. A major restructuring is underway in the province (including the Capital Health Region) affecting the organization of health care delivery. At this time, the implications for Cool Aid are not known. The Provincial Government Core Review is underway - “Kind of holding our breath till the Core Review is finished since the Province is our #1 source of funds.” Our clientele is quite vulnerable and if emphasis is on becoming independent, most of our clientele do not have capacity to be independent.”

The “most important challenge in the next 12-24 months is how we restructure/ define services given the fiscal environment (especially given that 90% of Cool Aid’s funding comes from the Provincial Government). (See also Funding and Fundraising Sections for a discussion of financial challenges.)

15.0 Responding to Change

A number of previous sections (e.g. the sections on the Client Base, Core Funding and Fundraising, and Partnerships and Networking) have discussed some of the ways Cool Aid has responded to changing circumstances over the last 5-10 years and how they intend to respond in the future.

Over the last five to ten years, the number of homeless people has increased and within this group there are: more people with alcohol and drug/dual diagnosis issues who are harder to treat and harder to house; more older clients (+55) “crustier types” who don’t fit into the long-term care structure; more people with mental health issues; and more people who “can’t be housed because they lack basic rules for living”. A lot of time is spent crisis fighting/fire fighting, with little prevention work being undertaken. ***“The challenge is how to deal with larger numbers of clients and improve efficiency while still trying to stay individual and client focused.”***

Cool Aid has evolved – and it will continue to evolve.

“Cool Aid has readily adapted over the years. Seeking out the need and responding with care has been a “motto” of sorts. Examples include relocation of service in Fernwood to downtown in 1991 due to the changing nature of the client group. Evolving the size and expertise within the board. Engaging in a strategic planning process which allows for proactive readiness to a changing environment.”

One of the significant features of Cool Aid is its ability to recognize the need for change (both internally and externally) and to embrace it. Two views, expressed during interviews, are illustrative.

- The “challenge is the ability of an organization to continually manage and change policy as the need arises”.

- Change in management or organizational structure has had “less to do with changes in clientele, programs, funding and more to do with desire to change as the organization matures. There have been a lot of changes in the last ten years that have been Cool Aid’s own choice, a sign of its maturity.”

When dealing with change, both Board and staff are strategically focussed on three key areas:

- how Cool Aid is improving its services to clients;
- how Cool Aid is strengthening and developing the resources required to meet clients’ life needs; and,
- how Cool Aid has demonstrated leadership in effective and innovative models of service delivery and influenced decisions that affect services and clients:

Cool Aid has been a pioneer and continues to break new ground. For example, Swift House was the first project of its kind in Canada - the community-based, tenant-driven model that emerged at Swift House has now been replicated many times in other Canadian cities. Mike Gidora Place represents the successful application of a management model based on the principles used in Cool Aid’s supported housing and adapted for use in a market-housing situation. The Downtown Activity Centre is “unique” – “we work *with* our community to develop, provide and support the programs the *community* wants, not what we think they want.” Sandi Merriman women’s shelter is an example of developing housing as “niche places” for grouping clients according to need. CAES emerged through recognition at the shelters of a need to find employment for some clients.

The list of which programs could be expanded or strengthened includes: supported housing, supportive recovery, transition housing from wet/damp/dry, day care. As well, there is a need to stabilize to some other programs such as counselling.

Strategic partnerships and inter-agency collaboration “may be the standard” for delivering programs and services effectively. In fact, it is anticipated that “Cool Aid could end up as one of the bigger agencies or be approached by government to pick up the pieces.”

Appendix 1: Check List for Related Agencies and Groups

Area	Agency/Organization
Federal Government	Health Canada HRDC (SCIPI) – meet monthly Department of National Defence (recruitment steering committee) – meet monthly
Provincial Government	BC Housing Ministry of Health Medical Services Commission Ministry of Children and Families Ministry of Human Resources (BC Benefits, post-secondary education) – meet monthly ASPECT – Association for Service Providers for Employment in Community Training Assn. Of Substance Abuse Programs (BC) Forensic Psychiatric Services Alcohol and Drug Services
Local Government	City of Victoria (Planning/Community Development) – meet 2 times/month District of Langford (housing project) Sooke School District (youth program)
Health/Medical	Capital Health Region ((Downtown Mental Health, Long Term Care, Housing, Health Centre, Downtown Outreach)
Community Social Services	Victoria Innovative Seniors Treatment Agency (VISTA) (VISTA was part of the working group with Cool Aid to develop Fairway Woods – a supportive special needs seniors housing project) Open Door Drop In Upper Room Detox YW/YM (youth shelter) Kiwanis (youth shelter) Dallas Society John Howard Bridges (employment) Spectrum (employment) Dual Diagnosis Group

Appendix 1: Check List for Related Agencies and Groups

Area	Agency/Organization
	Victoria Steering Committee on Homelessness (through SCPI) CRUNCH/Downtown Working Group Pacific Centre (social services) Supportive Recovery agencies Police
Community Business Organizations	Downtown Business Association Downtown Business Improvement Area Eaton Centre (space for retail training program) Chamber of Commerce Victoria Employers Agencies Network for S. Van. Is. Workforce 21/Apprenticeship Commission
Financial	Coast Capital VanCity Community Foundation Real Estate Foundation of BC United Way
Technology	LogiLynx PICO Technologies Canada Health Info-structure Partnerships Program (CHIPP) BC Shelter Net Voice Mail
Other	Camosun College University of Victoria BC Non-Profit Housing Association

Appendix 2: Committee Terms of Reference

1. BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT TASK FORCE

Terms of reference for the committee:

- Create a basis for alternative revenue by setting up the appropriate enterprise structure(s);
- Develop and/or review contracts, proposals or initiatives that Cool Aid proposes to enter into with third parties.
- Do a business review/analysis on each business proposal to evaluate its appropriateness and profitability, which will include identifying a time frame when the enterprise will be stable enough to allot a portion of its profit to Cool Aid;
- Task force to provide updates and reports to Cool Aid. Terms shall be reviewed on a yearly basis.

Deliverables of the Entrepreneurial Committee for the next year:

1. Ensure that the Task Force has the technical and other expertise required to carry out the terms of reference of the committee;
2. Develop contracts with potential partnerships such as
 - Tao Tech;
 - Capital Health Region (CHR); and
 - Ben and Jerry' s
3. Establish a sustainable business plan. One of the goals of the plan will be to pay for administration costs such as the salary of Cool Aid's Development Manager.
4. Determine the type of business subsidiary that minimizes risks (such as loss of charitable status) to the Cool Aid Society.

2. HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Preamble:

The Board of Directors, (Board) Victoria Cool Aid Society, (CAS) will establish a committee of Board members to be known as the Human Resources Committee, (HRC). HRC will elect a Chair from among its members. This committee will be a Standing Committee of the Board. The Board may delegate its authority to the HRC and the Human Resources committee will be guided in its activities by Cool Aid's Mission, Vision and Guiding Principles.

Meeting Frequency:

HRC will meet monthly, and additionally at the call of the Committee Chair, or the Board Chair. In the event there is no business for the Committee, each committee member shall be polled by the HRC chair or delegate, and majority agreement reached to suspend the requirement for the HRC to meet.

Membership & Confidentiality

- Membership of the HRC shall be at least three members of the Board plus a member of the Executive. A quorum shall be three members.
- CAS management staff members of the committee will serve in an 'ex-officio' capacity, but the HRC may hold meetings 'in camera' if it so decides .
- Except for the Executive Director, CAS staff members will not attend meetings where personal, disciplinary or other confidential matters are being discussed. Where matters concerning the Executive Director are being discussed, no staff member shall attend the HRC meeting. .
- Ex-officio members of the committee may not present motions to the Committee, may not second motions presented to the Committee and may not participate in any vote or other decision making process conducted by the Committee
- All discussions and proceedings of the Human Resources Committee shall be held confidentially by members of the committee, subject to reporting frameworks established from time to time by committee.

Terms of Reference:

To review on behalf of, and report to, the Board concerning all human resource issues in CAS and to monitor the general state and administration of Human Resources and the working environment in CAS.

Activities include:

- establishing policies concerning employee classification and the application of classification for all positions in CAS
- reviewing and monitoring employee relations, conditions of employment, organizational development, employee relations, recruitment, terminations, educational leave, HR funding, general HR policies, and the application of the terms of the Collective Agreement(s) within CAS
- presentation of recommendations to the Board for items to be included in preparations for the negotiation of the CAS collective agreement, reviewing and monitoring the negotiation of the CAS collective agreement(s), and making recommendations to the Board concerning acceptance or otherwise of the terms and provisions of the negotiated agreement.
- establishing general policies associated with employee relations, recruitment, volunteers, students, staff development.
- reviewing and monitoring management staff compensation and conditions of employment.
- review and make appropriate recommendations to the Board concerning the CAS Human Resources Plan
- reviewing all grievances which reach Step 3 of the Grievance Procedure ~ reviewing all management staff requests for leave of absence

Reporting

Proceedings, decisions, and other matters concerning the HRC shall be reported to the Board by the HRC Chair, or the Chair's delegate

3. PLANNING COMMITTEE

Introduction

A standing committee of the Board is required to support the Strategic plan and to ensure the planning, development and evaluation of Cool Aid's response to community issues and individual needs is in line with the strategic plan.

Policy

There shall be a standing committee of the Board of Directors called the Planning Committee. Accountability for high quality, effective and responsive services is embedded in our constitution and governance structure and vision statement. It is also the policy of the committee to work with the community to meet service gaps. In carrying out its activities relative to the planning, process of the society, the committee shall be guided by the guiding principles and commitments of the strategic plan.

Terms of Reference

The terms of reference of the Planning Committee shall be:

1. To support the strategic plan over the three year horizon
2. To ensure the implementation of the strategic plan demonstrates partnership with our programs, clients, other agencies and the public and private sector through a community development process.
3. To direct and monitor society research projects.
4. To establish appropriate links and communication with other standing board committees to facilitate the strategic plan.
5. To report and recommend to the Board the ongoing monitoring process of the actual implementation of the Society's Strategic plan including:
 - Update of the Strategic Plan Environmental Scan
 - Review and refine the Strategic Plan Assumptions
 - Assess current year's Business Priorities through Performance Measurement Reports; and
6. To propose actions, if any, to address the above items 1 to 5.

4. HOUSING COMMITTEE

Introduction

A standing committee of the Board is required for the planning and developing of future housing needs for the clients served by the Cool Aid society and its programs. The provision of housing and shelter is embedded in the constitution of the society as well as our intention to work with the community to meet service gaps.

Guiding Principles

1. We believe that access to affordable adequate housing is a right and necessity of all citizens.
2. We believe that affordable adequate and supported housing is necessary for many of our clients to stabilize, maintain and improve their lives.

3. We believe that a range of housing options should be available for people that recognize age, gender, income and special needs and individual opportunity for choice.
4. We believe in a community development process and a range of options should be available for our residents/clients to participate in our housing development process.
5. We believe that the resources needed to develop affordable housing for our clients have to come from a partnership process involving government, non profit, private developers, financial institutions, individual and corporate sponsorship.
6. We believe in forward thinking and examining needs and capacity in a pragmatic, realistic and creative manner.
7. We believe that the development of more housing is of an urgent nature due to the urgent housing needs of our clients.

Policy

There shall be a standing committee of the Board of Directors called the Housing committee. The terms of reference for the Housing committee shall be:

1. To plan and develop housing options that recognize the diversity of community and client needs
2. To work in partnership with the private and public sector through a community development process to develop realistic and affordable housing opportunities
3. To develop action plans that will create responsive, immediate and sustainable housing solutions.

Appendix 3: Example of a Board Meeting Agenda

ITEM	Desired Outcome	Time Required
1. *Agenda Approval	Decision	4 minutes
2. Introduction of 2001/2002 Board of Directors	Information	5 minutes
PART I - GENERAL BUSINESS:		
3. Election of Executive	Decision	5 minutes
4. *Approval of Minutes of May 29,2001	Decision	5 minutes
5. *Approval of Minutes of June 7, 2001	Decision	5 minutes
6. Business Arising from Previous Minutes (not included elsewhere in the agenda)	N/A	N/A
7. Executive Director's Report	Information	10 minutes
8. Treasurer's Report / Finance Committee	N/A	N/A
9. Society Wide Service Projects	N/A	N/A
10. Society Business Development Projects a) Mike Gidora Place b) * Health Canada / CHIPP Project	Information Decision	5 minutes 10 minutes
11. Committee Priorities and Motions	N/A	N/A
12. New Business	N/A	N/A
13. Announcements and Correspondence a) * Required forms -Address Form b) * 2001/2002 Board Meeting Schedule	Information Decision	2 minutes 3 minutes
PART II - GOVERNANCE ORIENTATION		
14. Overview of the Strategic Planning Process	Information	20 minutes
15. * Committee Workplan Orientation ➤ Finance Committee ➤ Human Resources Committee ➤ Housing Committee ➤ Planning & Evaluation Committee ➤ Communications Committee ➤ Business Development Task Force	Information	30 minutes
16. Orientation Sessions & Program Tours	Information	10 minutes
Adjournment		

**Indicates information on agenda item included in board package. Please review prior to the meeting.*

Appendix 4: Board of Directors - Decision Support Framework & Checklist

REQUEST TO BOARD:	This section should identify whether this is an <i>Information Item</i> or <i>request for a decision</i> and clearly articulated what is being requested.
BACKGROUND:	This section should describe the circumstances or events that lead up to the need to either inform the Board or request a decision.
DESCRIPTION:	This section should provide the reader with an overview description of the event or subject that is being presented for information or decision. This should be sufficient to answer <i>What, When, Where, Why, and How</i> .
KEY ASSUMPTIONS:	This section should state the assumptions that were made in analyzing the decisions and could include <i>funding, timing, costing recoveries, political, other</i> .
OPTIONS:	This section should identify the options or alternative courses of action that can be pursued. This should be at a summary level as each option or alternative will be expanded in the analysis section.
ANALYSIS:	<p><u>For each of the options or alternatives identified, the follow completed:</u></p> <p>Strategic Fit- how does this assist Cool Aid in achieving its <i>vision</i>, does it fit our <i>mission</i>, does it compromise any of our <i>guiding principles</i>, how does it support our <i>strategic objectives</i>.</p> <p>Business Priorities -how does this proposal impact both current year and long-term business priorities of the Society.</p> <p>Financial Analysis -budgetary impact, direct and indirect impact on funding sources, accounting and reporting implications.</p> <p>Human Resources -additional resources required, impact on existing resources, labour-relations implications.</p> <p>Legal -legal impacts for the society for this course of action; does it conflict with the Society Charter or impact our charitable organization status, are there any impacts on any other contracts that Cool Aid is bound to?</p> <p>Risk Assessment -identify the potential risks of pursuing this course of action. Consider the precedence this course of action would create and the impact on customers, stakeholders, staff, volunteers, etc.</p> <p>Program Linkages -what are the impacts on other Cool Aid programs, other community programs.</p>
RECOMMENDATION:	
IMPLEMENTATION:	This should identify the key milestones and schedule for implementation, including any communications or public relations strategy.

Appendix 5: Summary Budget – April 1, 2001 – March 31, 2002

Revenue	Budget 2001-2002	
Revenue - Government		
Min. of SD & ES	\$1,614,003	25.02%
Min. of SD & ES (Core funding req.)	\$36,000	.56%
Capital Health Region	\$782,599	12.13%
Capital Health Region (core funding req.)	\$10,000	.15%
Ministry for Children and Families	\$533,260	8.27%
BCHMC	\$509,531	7.90%
BCMHC cont. for vac.	\$-6,410	-0.10%
BCMC new rental cost	\$0	0.00%
Medical Clinic Funding – CHR	\$720,201	11.16%
Min. of Health – Alternate Payments	\$587,300	9.10%
Adult Forensic Services	\$321,800	4.99%
City of Victoria	\$33,300	0.52%
University of Victoria	\$6,000	0.09%
Canada Employment – summer	\$0	0.00%
Employment Training	\$37,367	0.58%
Min. of Community Development	\$70,000	1.08%
HRDC HTW Phase 1	\$27,067	0.42%
Targeted revenue	\$1,898	0.03%
Total Government Revenue	\$5,283,916	81.90%
Other Revenues		
Rents	\$513,373	7.96%
Vacancy MGP	\$-6,143	-0.10%
Fees	\$282,483	4.38%
ASPECT – included in fees	\$0	0.00%
TW4 Fees – included in fees	\$0	0.00%
Donations	\$29,820	0.46%
Interest	\$15,000	0.23%
Targeted Fundraising	\$20,158	0.31%
Treehouse deferred	\$0	0.00%
Gaming	\$148,000	2.29%
United Way	\$30,000	0.46%
Earned Revenues	\$65,000	1.01%
Other – Manchester House (ACCESS)	\$0	0.00%
Other – Gtr. Victoria Women’s Shelter	\$0	0.00%
Other	\$70,256	1.09%
Total Other Revenue	\$1,167,947	18.10%
TOTAL REVENUE	\$6,451,863	100.00%

Expenditures	Budget 2001-2002	
Operating Expenses		
Wages and Benefits	\$4,105,454	63.63%
Other Operating Expenses	\$1,324,458	20.53%
Financing Expenses	\$243,830	3.78%
Medical Clinic Expense	\$0	0.00%
Inter-Society Rents	\$0	0.00%
<i>Total Operating Expenses</i>	\$5,673,742	87.94%
Administrative Wages and Benefits	\$420,331	6.51%
Other Administrative Expenses	\$410,691	6.37%
Administrative Allocation	-\$52,901	-0.82%
<i>Total Administrative Expenses</i>	\$778,121	12.06%
<i>TOTAL EXPENSES</i>	\$6,451,863	100.00%
Surplus/(Deficit)	\$0	0.00%

Appendix 6: Strategic Plan - Strategic Objectives, Performance Targets and Strategies

Strategic Objective 1 - To Improve our Services for the Benefit of our Clients

- **Intended Outcome** - *The focus of this objective is on complete and effective services for our clients. The Outcome from the implementation of this objective will be Cool Aid Programs that are effective in meeting the current and emerging needs of our clients.*

- **Performance Targets**
 - We will review all Cool Aid lines of business over the horizon of the Strategic Plan (1/3 in 1999/00, 1/3 in 2000/01 and 1/3 in 2001/02) and introduce enhancements to each Program to improve client service and client satisfaction.
 - We will establish a baseline for client satisfaction (Client satisfaction will be defined by each program) in 1999/00, and show a 5% increase in satisfaction levels in years two and three.
 - We will develop comprehensive operating standards for Cool Aid's Shelter Programs by 2002.

- **Strategies**
 - Strategy: 1.1 - *Review and enhance all Cool Aid Programs* (e.g. identify strengths and weaknesses, incorporate client feedback).
 - Strategy: 1.2 - *Obtain client feedback on Cool Aid services* (e.g. annual client survey – needs and satisfaction with products, services, programs).
 - Strategy: 1.3 - *Develop processes for the enhancement of Cool Aid's Shelter Programs* (e.g. review programs, develop new standards for operation, modify policies and procedures to focus on client service and benefit, employee training).
 - Strategy: 1.4 - *Prevent, break or reduce the cycle of dependency on social services for our clients.* (e.g. first aid and foodsafe and other lifeskills training opportunities, community kitchen groups, Homeless to Work).

Strategic Objective 2 - To Strengthen and Develop the Resources Required by Cool Aid to Meet our Clients' Life Needs

- **Intended Outcome** - *The focus of this objective is on the development of Cool Aid's human and financial resources. The Outcome from the implementation of this objective will be a capable, aligned and well-equipped human resource able to increase and maximize the impact of the Society's financial resources.*

- **Performance Targets**
 - We will increase non-government funding from 11% to 15% of total revenues in 1999/2000 and maintain or increase that percentage in subsequent years.
 - We will, on an annual basis, allocate an amount equivalent to 1.5% of total payroll costs toward employee training and development.

- **Strategies**
 - Strategy: 2.1 - *All Cool Aid Pro-grams will operate on a cost recovery basis* (e.g. manage to established budgets and business priorities, improve administrative and operating procedures, generate additional revenues through the acquisition of alternative funding partners).

- Strategy: 2.2 - *Establish a culture within Cool Aid of "continuous learning". (e.g. implement a comprehensive training program, develop training plans for each employee and review on an on-going basis))*
- Strategy: 2.3 - *Align our overall human resources to meet our service delivery requirements (e.g. develop long term Human Resources Plan to ensure necessary resources, trained, equipped and aligned with strategic direction, included will be the improved integration of volunteers and students into program delivery processes where appropriate).*
- Strategy: 2.4 - *Generate market-driven revenues through the direct development and/or support of business ventures, and related activities, in a manner consistent with our Guiding Principles (e.g. establish revenue generating activities, including activities/events with other 'non-profit' and 'for-profit' agencies).*
- Strategy: 2.5 - *Develop and implement a comprehensive strategic management framework (e.g. manage society according to the Strategic Plan, undertake annual reviews of plan, implement a comprehensive Performance Measurement System to assist in prioritizing annual business priorities and to monitor performance relative to targets and objectives).*

Strategic Objective 3 - To demonstrate leadership in effective and innovative models of service delivery

- ***Intended Outcome*** - *The focus of this objective is on alliances, collaboration and partnerships for improved service delivery. The Outcome from the implementation of this objective will be service delivery models that go beyond the traditional single agency, single sector, delivery structure.*
- **Performance Targets**
 - On an annual basis, we will initiate collaborative opportunities for five (5) of Cool Aid's various lines of business.
 - On an annual basis, we will share our models of service delivery with at least twenty (20) social service providers/stake-holders across BC/Canada.
 - We will obtain the ongoing support of two (2) major corporate sponsors by March 31, 2002.
- **Strategies**
 - Strategy: 3.1 - *Identify and action internal and external opportunities for collaboration in our service delivery (e.g. look for opportunities to collaborate with other social service providers in the delivery of client services, including the development of a community consultation process for the design of improved service delivery; and, the development of a procedure for multi-party responses to Request for Proposals (RFPs).*
 - Strategy: 3.2 - *Develop a variety of methods for effectively communicating Cool Aid's service delivery models (e.g. share experience and expertise with other service providers through various means, including: Program communication packages, tours of Cool Aid facilities, hosting open houses, and through the ongoing maintenance of our Internet Home Page)*
 - Strategy: 3.3 - *Develop corporate sponsorships for Cool Aid (e.g. develop and implement an action plan to acquire business sponsors to reduce reliance on government funding)*

Strategic Objective 4 - To Influence Decisions that Affect our Services, our Clients and our Community

- ❑ ***Intended Outcome*** - *The focus of this objective is on Cool Aid's leadership in bringing the Society's Vision to reality. The Outcome from the implementation of this objective will ultimately lead to "creating a just and healthy quality of life for all".*

- ❑ ***Performance Targets***
 - For every Cool Aid line of business, we will ensure that there is a representative from the Society on all applicable regional/provincial advisory groups by 2002.
 - We will, on an annual basis, undertake six (6) significant initiatives to increase public awareness of social issues and/or Cool Aid's response to social issues.

- ❑ ***Strategies***
 - **Strategy: 4.1** - *Proactively work with all levels of government on the discussion, development and implementation of policies, procedures, regulations and guidelines affecting social services* (e.g. initiate a process of informing all local/regional decision-making bodies of Cool Aid's interest in participating, as a partner, in the decision-making process for social services, including formalizing an Account Management Process for Cool Aid's funding agencies – this will serve to strengthen relationships, foster improved two-way communications, and ensure that Cool Aid is continuously made aware of government/ministry business priorities)
 - **Strategy: 4.2** - *Develop and implement a comprehensive public communications strategy* (e.g. increase public awareness and generate public support for social issues through Cool Aid's sponsorship of seminars, workshops, conferences and discussion papers)
 - **Strategy: 4.3** - *Encourage the development of a strong and united voice for all local service providers* (e.g. maintain active membership in all local and provincial associations of social service providers, participate fully in all social service initiatives within the Capital Regional District (i.e. Crunch Project), be proactive in strengthening the network of social service providers with the CRD.
 - **Strategy: 4.4** - *Advocate for supportive social policies and for quality social services* (e.g. advocates for those in need through representation and submissions for adequate funding, appropriate and supportive policies, and for the removal of other barriers to the delivery of effective social services with the region/province.)