

qathet Community Justice Strategic Planning
Benchmarkers Environmental Scanning Notes

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Survey of British Columbia

22 June 2021

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

I approached 11 Programs located in BC, outside of Vancouver Island, Gulf Islands and Sunshine Coast. This area is in the VIRRJA region and we have met with several of these programs in recent years. I wanted to survey programs we have not had contact with before.

I had responses from 7 programs including a zoom meeting, 2 phone conversations as well as by email. Detailed notes on each program below. In addition Kootenay RJ replied that their coordinator had moved to Kaslo and they did not have anyone to answer the survey!

HIGHLIGHTS FOR OUR STRATEGIC PLAN:

- Charity status is a huge help for funding
- Have a strong and diverse board
- Ensure a strong relationship between board and Coordinator/Executive Director
- Build really good best practices and structures in the program
- Have a Strategic Plan to show the programs' objectives of What and Why
- Make it very clear – facilitators/keepers are NOT mediators or counsellors
- Suitability and Preparation stages take time. Have as many meetings as needed. Ensure all questions answered, get a good sense if case appropriate for RJ. Get a fairly clear idea that the case will complete, otherwise reject the referral
- You must work closely with local governments and police in demonstrating the effectiveness of your program and build positive relationships with them
- Build a connection with local colleges and universities as students as often interested in volunteering
- Crime has a face in smaller communities and the best intent is to deal with the harm and allow everyone to continue to contribute within the community
- Celebrate successes often
- Hold preventative circles in classrooms – discuss topics such as values, emotions, conflict styles, communication skills, healthy relationships, the difference between conflict and bullying

- Mentorship program at Abbotsford- mentors engage youth in pro-social activities to build relationship, support youth in completing their agreements to repair the harm (support with community service, apology letters, getting a job)

Other Comments:

- North Shore RJ has a trust account to facilitate monetary compensation in an agreement
- Golden Adult Youth Diversion Program developing a program to work with seniors
- There is no single process or strategy used in peace building because no 2 situations are ever the same.

Funding

- Most large programs get funding from the municipality, Civil Forfeitures, BC Gaming and CAP grant.
- Funding is a challenge
- Abbotsford receives funding from the school district
- Charitable status opens many grant opportunities

Programs

- Anywhere from just one : Restorative Justice/response either primarily youth or all ages; to 4 including Schools Initiative, Restorative Community practices, mentoring, Resilience Spoke

Goals

- “Enhance the quality of justice in our communities through RJ”
- “Recognizing the need to approach justice in a different way”
- “Helping victims and aimed at holding young people accountable for their crimes”
- “Create a healthy environment for victims and offenders providing a viable alternative to the court system”
- RJ is an effective method to accomplish justice and both rehabilitate and educate those who commit harm, in turn resulting in lower recidivism rate”
- “Provide: RJ options; community awareness; in service, training and mentorship; support for the Hate and Race-based Response in our community”
- “Provide restorative responses to crime, harm and conflict in our community”

Accommodating Diversity

- Use and look for volunteers of all different backgrounds
- Use interpreters/translators when language a barrier
- Run the Resilience Spoke for the area
- Have a diverse board, staff, volunteers and have strong relationships with community organizations

Attract and retain volunteers

- Build a connection with local colleges and universities

- Volunteer appreciation activities/recognize volunteers at AGM
- Provide further training opportunities in-house
- Hold events during RJ week
- Advertising/promotion – online and flyers in places around town
- Strong HR policy, evaluation of volunteers
- Need cases to keep volunteers interested and involved
- Celebrate successes often

Getting referrals

- Commonly a problem
- Need buy-in from senior detachment staff as well as general duty officers
- Ongoing work to find solutions
- Very dependent on RCMP attitude
- RCMP refer files via email
- Office in the detachment allows for personal contact
- Other referral sources: Probation, ICBC, conservation officers, schools, community, self-referrals. Working on MOU with Crown

Training

- Orientation to RJ and organization (2 hours)
- Legal considerations as a volunteer (EG confidentiality, duty to report abuse, safety with a youth) and boundaries in working with youth (2 hours)
- communication strategies and skills (Full Day)
- For facilitators additional 30 hours in circle skills etc.
- On-going training requirements including skill practice sessions, guest presenters on topic such as substance misuse, victim services etc.

Evaluation

- Mid-point and closing questionnaires (for mentoring program)
- Questionnaire at end of circles
- Follow up with all participants
- Send anonymous survey by mail for evaluation
- Elicit, Evaluate, Elicit, Evaluate

Survey of Nova Scotia

July 2021

- - There is an Office for Citizen centred Approaches, where they develop policy through Restorative Practices around accessibility to historical buildings.
- - relationally focused. Reduce recidivism, client satisfaction.
- - the crimes are related to shoplifting and poverty. Food Security. Addictions. RJ puts a support plan in place and helps connect people with local services, and increase their job skills.
- - The brochures for the program have been translated into other languages.
- - . They will accept anyone referred to the program. On the application there is an Ethnicity box, and if it is ticked, they will refer the individual to the First Nations program. There are some resources specific for the Indigenous population.
- - Tools used are primarily circles. They don't always have the person harmed participating. Person referred will participate with a support person and agency reps, community of harm to represent the impact of the harm. Community rep will represent the harm against the victim as well as the community. 3 prongs: Offender, victim and community.
- - Support plan considers who has been impacted and how do we repair the harm? The referred offender needs help in repairing the relationship, need to provide support to the offender.
- - Process is seen as an educational opportunity, eg. Jewish community, and swastika
- pattern in the snow. No specific victim but the Jewish community was impacted.
- There are many ways a victim can choose to participate: letters, send someone in their place, talk to the agency case worker and surrogate victim to express the harm.
- Restorative principles- responsive, flexible, person-centered. For someone who does not show up to a circle, will always set up one more time. We reschedule, don't punish, try to be responsive to what their situation is, but also keep them accountable. If they choose to not come, then we are less forgiving.
- The pre-meeting can eliminate the barrier to people attending. Provide them with support and even provide them with a gas card for gas if that is the barrier. All the work happens in the pre-meeting. Case worker should dig in for answers. Person-centered approach not system-centered.
- Principles developed over time, we did not start off this way. Initially more system-centered. Fifteen years ago, the agency would have created an agreement, now they create, develop and build a support plan.
- : Willingness to talk to people. Victim (the referred person) – increase their satisfaction. They will go ahead even if the victim does not want to participate. They don't refer anyone as the offender, they are referred to as "session participants".
- RJ has dealt with financial harm, psychological harm, mental health, addictions- where they connect participants to addiction services right away.
- Example: a young woman was caught for drinking and driving. She had a glowing pre-sentence report. Judge referred it to Community Justice. Crown Counsel did not want to refer it. No victim involved. At the circle, they had a MADD representative, and the driving instructor also participated.

- There was also an example of a mother shoplifting for food/ diapers. She did not know where to get help. Community agencies were invited to the circle to hear the issues and offer support.
- At pre-meetings, make sure participants are appropriate. A parent may know that a youth is participating but they don't have to attend the circle. A youth can choose another adult to support them if they want.
- - Feels success rate is good based on the amount of people that don't reoffend; they move forward in a positive way.
- -eg. Death of a young man in custody in Cape Breton. Took almost 2 yrs to work through it; a public document was produced. Restorative Justice does not happen overnight- takes time.
- - "You don't know what other people are living."
- - If a victim does not want to participate, can just do a circle with the accused. Eg. Break-in- no food, alcohol probs, give victim an opportunity , victim will meet with staff and discuss what they need to do to make things right.
- - The victim can someone in their place, write a letter, or not participate.
- -RJ works around with why it happened, reason for the incident, bring in people to support them, ie. Food bank, addiction services or get a referral.
- - Police/ Crown: no record for the offending person if hours are completed. If they go before a judge – they may get a record but may be a reduced sentence if they participate in RJ.
- - Circles are facilitated by staff Bring in volunteers from the community as needed. Eg. 5 yrs ago, young man was struggling with addictions. Found a retired nurse with detox experience, was asked to participate in the circle to hold the person accountable and support him. The facilitator of the circle should be someone they know and trust. They have a story to tell and too difficult to repeat it over and over again. The process is not relational if the meeting is with strangers. It needs to be with the person who did the pre-meeting work. Board members are volunteers. They are kept engaged with continuing education and skill development.
- - -The probation\RJ combo is not a good model and she would not recommend it to other provinces. RJ did not get additional resources for serving adults, but can partner with Probation. It feels like there is a culture clash with Probation- different mindset. Initially in Community Corrections, it was adult diversion, then made partnership with Adult Restorative Justice.
- - Volunteers trained in mediation. In Mikmak nation= not supposed to apologize, supposed to "fix it" in their community. All about learning, teachable moments, based on traditional values. Consider the impact on others as well as the community. Circles are done with elders and community resource people. Most referrals come from the Crown, sentencing circles.
- They will take victim impact statements if the victim chooses not to participate, ensure that the victim's voice is heard. Victim does not have the veto, the veto belongs to the community.
- Bring support people to the circle.
- Mikmak- agreement on how to make things right,. Some of it may be personal growth, ie) Sacred 7 Teachings, try to incorporate culture, tradition and their community responsibilities.
- Magic happens before the circle = pre-work, moving people from position to interests.
- - All that work done before the circle – sealing the deal, "cherry on top".
- =Healing starts before the circle. Circle seals the deal.
- Not a program but a way of life.

- For the Mikmak, apologizing and community hours did not fit, not meaningful.
- Having grudges and treating each other with disrespect, not good for the future of the community.
- In some cases, the victim may be held accountable as well as the offender because the victim was the instigator and the offender retaliated.

Survey of Diversity Benchmarks

Diversity, Multiculturalism and Inclusion Overview

Canada's federal multiculturalism policy was adopted in 1971 by the Liberal government. A by-product of the [Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism](#) (1963–69). Multiculturalism was intended as a policy solution to manage both rising [francophone](#) nationalism, and increasing cultural diversity across the country. Canada was the first country in the world to adopt a multiculturalism policy. Federal multiculturalism policy will mark its 50th anniversary in 2021.

The initial idea behind multiculturalism was brought to popular attention by [John Murray Gibbon's](#) 1938 book *Canadian Mosaic: The Making of a Northern Nation*, which challenged the US-born idea of cultural assimilation, known as the “melting pot.” However, it was not until the 1960s that multiculturalism emerged as an object of national conversation about [Canadian identity](#).

The initial approach taken by the government might be described as “ethnicity multiculturalism.” During the early 1970s, financial assistance was extended to certain ethno-cultural organizations for the promotion of cultural heritage. Modest support was provided for folkloric and artistic ethno-cultural expression.

Prior to 1970, much of Canada's immigration was from European countries. However, the *Immigration Act* of 1976 lifted some restrictions on immigration from non-European countries. This shift encouraged us to rethink multicultural policies move away from supporting the cultural and/or folkloric expression of ethnic groups. As a result, equity or rights-based multiculturalism increasingly defined the policies and programs of the 1980s.

The [1982 patriation of the Canadian Constitution](#) added a [Charter of Rights](#). Section 27 stipulated that the Charter “shall be interpreted in a manner consistent with the preservation and enhancement of the multicultural heritage of Canadians multiculturalism. Many Canadians began to associate multiculturalism with other basic and rights and freedoms enshrined in the Charter, such as freedom of expression and freedom of religion. TGBTQ, Inclusion (special needs) etc.

However, the Quebec government did not sign the 1982 Constitution. And so, in 1987, the [Meech Lake Accord](#), the proposed constitutional amendment also called for the recognition of official language minorities, including the “recognition that the existence of French-speaking Canadians...constitutes a fundamental characteristic of Canada.” Meech Lake did not affect any of the provisions of the constitution that relate to [Indigenous peoples](#) in Canada or section 27 of the Charter, which related to multiculturalism

In the late 1980s, concerns resurfaced about Canadian unity. Some opponents of multiculturalism believed that ethnic minority attachments to the cultures of their countries of origin were the main threat to Canadian identity. In their view, multiculturalism encouraged divisive dual and multiple identities and, in so doing, prevented citizens from simply describing themselves as Canadians.

During the 1990s, federal multiculturalism policies and programs placed greater emphasis on eliminating barriers to economic and social participation of immigrants and designated minority groups. In 1995, the federal government passed employment equity legislation that, among other things, required that information be gathered in order to determine the degree of the

underrepresentation of persons in designated groups, notably the country's visible minorities. Since 1996, the [census](#) has collected information about visible minorities in Canada and multiculturalism aimed at eliminating [racism](#) and [discrimination](#), assisting institutions to become more responsive to Canada's diversity.

Most Canadians think of multiculturalism as a demographic reality that acknowledges the diverse ethnic makeup of Canada. However, there is ongoing debate over the message that multicultural policy conveys to Canadians, particularly to immigrants.

Over its first 30 years, the principal challenges confronting multiculturalism involved reconciling support for ethnic diversity, the preservation of the French language and the promotion of Canadian identity. While such debates have persisted into the 21st century, they've given way to the view that the message of multiculturalism promotes excessive accommodation of cultural and religious diversity at the expense of promoting social cohesion and common values. Others see the multicultural message as discouraging newcomers from adopting Canadian values. This, in turn, makes them less likely to participate in the mainstream culture and society and encourages the creation of ethnic ghettos or silos.

In recent years, there has been a greater acknowledgement and acceptance of mixed and multiple identities in Canada. While most Canadians appear to support the ideal of multiculturalism, research suggests that support for religious diversity and the LGBDQ community is still more divided.

Most cities in Canada have at least one multicultural program. The larger cities, like Toronto and Vancouver have programs dealing with similar issues- Indigenous, Caribbean, Chinese, etc. as well as diverse programs. The larger centres also have multicultural festivals-Chinese New Year, LGBTQ parades, Caribbean days, to name a few.

Smaller cities and towns usually have one centre which is funded for new immigrants.

Educational programs vary from University programs, organizations like the Canadian Centre for Diversity and the Canadian Multicultural Education Foundation, Affiliation of Multicultural Societies and Services Agencies of BC (AMSSA), government mandated training for employees, classes in schools, groups such as the Guides and Scouts leaders and books, utube videos, Ted talks etc on various topics for those who have a self interest.

One can even earn a Masters Degree in AI (artificial intelligence) and Diversity, which attempts to teach how to make certain that innovative machines associated with the human mind such as learning and problem solving, do not carry forward any biases.

Methodology

Initially, it was difficult to have responses to my letters. I'm not certain if this was because of staff shortages due to COVID or to lack of interest. I finally began to call numbers and verbally ask for an interview time, and that worked better.

I was able to interview three programs, two trainers, the Multifaith Calendar Association and two individual people of colour.

Questions asked

Can you describe your program and goals?

How is Diversity used in your community, schools, and legal system?

How long has your program been in use?

Where does your funding come from?

What were your perceptions of your community needs and how did this shape the areas that you are servicing?

Can you tell us about your growing pains and successes and what have you learned from them?

Can you tell us about how you attracted and retained your volunteers?

Who developed your program? Were there persons of colour, culture, religion, gender identity, etc? on the development committee?

Trainers

Rick Kelly, lives in Ontario but will conduct training anywhere in North America. He taught in the Child and Youth program at George Brown University, becoming increasingly aware of the need for dialogue and positive social experience between black and indigenous youth and the wider community. He has studied the programs in Chicago (IIRP), the UK, and Latin America.

During his years at George Brown University, He worked closely with organizations and work placements to mentor youth on the autism spectrum, LGBTQ, probation, and those at risk. He noted that his main concentration was with black and indigenous youth. His focus is asset development to give youth positive experiences and keep them off the streets,

After retirement, Mr. Kelly created his own training Centre. He has fee for service for funding and his training includes:

- Healing circles
- Restorative Justice techniques
- Mentorship-pairing youth and business owners
- Knowledge of cultures
- Transformational relationships
- Trauma informed work

Quote “Building a community is not like putting together IKEA furniture. It takes time, preparation and knowledge to build relationships.”

Emma Fisher-Cobb lives in Ontario and is one of twelve Canadian Trainers for Girl Guides of Canada. The goal is to bring about culture change in Guiding. Emma noted that there is a concerted effort to move from a white power structure to a culturally competent, trauma informed approach. The trainers are from have a mixture of cultures, and strive to make guiding a welcome place to be.

This is a full day training with four modules which moved to online training in Dec. 2020 because of COVID.

The trainers are paid mainly from cookie sales, but they also use volunteers for organizing, research and presentations. As well as Guiders, presentations are made to organizations such as the YMCA, medical students, school personal etc. They are always looking for volunteers to help with research, organization, branding etc. This workshop is presented free to all active Guide leaders.

Emma noted that Guiding is based in Christian roots with European values which have had a real transformation in the last ten years. The goal is to train Guiders to make guiding a more welcoming place, by accepting all cultures, religions, sexual orientations, abilities and family structures.

They also have just released an apology to First Nation's people of Canada, for the discrimination The Girl Guides of Canada perpetuated in the Residential Schools.

Emma notes she especially likes seeing the culture shift of people in the training-see people change habits of thought.

- <https://www.girlguides.ca/WEB/Documents/MZ/Inclusivity/Guiding-is-for-everyone.pdf>
- https://www.girlguides.ca/WEB/Documents/MZ/Inclusivity/Anti-Racism_Resources.pdf
- <https://www.the519.org/education-training/training-resources/our-resources/creating-authentic-spaces>

Programs

Skeena Multicultural Society, Terrace- Sasa Logan, program administrator.

Sasa noted that Terrace is a hub for several small communities and this program, which has been in existence for 20 years, works to welcome new immigrants.

Funding comes from the IRCC, BC Settlement, Resilience, and Multicultural Organizations. They do not do any fund raising and have not approached the city to fund any projects.

Sasa is the only full time employee but they do hire part time workers, as needed. There are currently about 30-40 volunteers who supervise creative projects, teach literacy, help with medical, financial and legal issues, assist immigrants or newcomers learn about services in Terrace. Sasa shared that she is an immigrant herself, and remembers how grateful she was to those who helped her feel at home in Canada.

Sasa shared two challenges that this organization has worked on in the past few years. Until this COVID year, Terrace has hosted about 200 International students, who often work in the fast food industries. This has been a challenge as many townspeople complain about their lack of English, taking jobs from local citizens and the changing culture of the city. There is also a large First Nations population. As a visible minority, people notice those on the street without

knowing that most of the population is hard working, culturally creative and positively competent citizens

She trains volunteers herself, meeting with them individually. She uses online videos, history of this program. Literacy books and techniques as well as social issues like, family violence, cultural competencies, faith based practices, education and encouraging friendships.

Sasa noted that her main challenges have been working with Boards. She said that her current Board is open minded, able to let staff make suggestions and share how best to implement programs. They appreciate creative ideas and support projects that are fun and innovative. The Board and staff have like-minded values.

She did share that her most challenging work were times when Board members were micro-managers, had personal goals which did not match the needs of clients or had biases against a particular culture of practice.

Sasa stays in touch with other programs, sharing ideas, new learning opportunities and funding sources

Multi-Faith Calendar secretary **Connie Waterman**

The mandate is to promote religious unity in Canada. They are administered by a Board, comprised of representatives of the major religious organizations in Canada, which includes Jewish, Hindu, Sikh, Christian, Moslem, Baha'i, Buddhism, Zoroastrianism.

The calendar is published once a year and highlights all of the religious and cultural celebration dates in Canada. They partner with the Canadian Multi-Faith Action Society and the United Religious Initiative.

The Board also promotes discourse among religious and cultural groups. It has been in existence for 45 years and is the oldest interfaith group in Canada. The calendar has been published for 35 years. Connie noted that this Board strives to have accurate information and make certain that information is not Eurocentric.

Funding comes from the sale of the calendar, which retails at about sixteen dollars, or eleven dollars for bulk sales. They sell about 10,000 a year, mainly to Universities, Schools and Faith groups.

Challenges include making certain that the information published is correct and working with a diverse volunteer Board. Connie noted that sometimes Board members have hidden or personal agenda which make it difficult for consultation. The Board tries to stay away from political or personal issues.

The Board also discusses finding safe spaces where Faith groups can come together and discuss ideas, important issues and needs that will help all Faith groups adopt a spirit of unity

Powell River has 3 distinct Multicultural Groups

quathet Diversity- . Ashley van Zwietering;-

Possible Questions to Ask as We Move Forward

- How many people in Powell River understand the Multicultural act?
- What is a Canadian value? What is a Powell River value? How do new people learn this?
- What is diversity?
- What are some racial/ethnic/religious issues in Powell River?
- How can we increase civic pride in diversity and for our core democratic values?
- How well do we know the diverse history of Powell River? Tla'amin?
- Is there a wide range of literature, CD's etc?
- Is there opportunity for discourse on diverse issues? Radio, publications, forums, courses.
- How important is diversity/multiculturalism/inclusion to Powell Riverites?
- How is this measured-how do we know?
- How are the programs we have, or are initiating, evaluated?
- How is funding allocated?
- How well do the programs relate to the local governments? Do we all work together to design and implement policies, as needed?
- Is there a place to report hate issues? Can this be dealt with immediately? How do people know?
- Is it important to have the two Powell River Diversity/Multicultural programs working together?
- How do we recruit, train and maintain volunteers?
- How well do we include the arts community including visual, performing, film?

Some Fun Ideas

From Terrace

- Pair a newcomer to Powell River with a local artist. Have the newcomer tell his/her story to the artist, who will design a picture around the story. The artist is given a small stipend. There is an art show and the picture is gifted to the story teller.
- Pick a day to celebrate Powell River by designing a scavenger hunt highlighting services here. Each time a store or service is "discovered" they answer a question and get a new clue to a new location. Family fun!
- Once a week or once a month. Have an ethnic dinner
- Have a living book at the Library. Could have people who have lived in other countries tell their story.

