

**Strategic Social Plan
Annual Report
April, 2002 - March, 2003**

**Strategic Social Plan Office
Department of Executive Council
2002 - 2003 Annual Report**

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Overview of the Strategic Social Plan

In 1998, Government approved a *Strategic Social Plan for the Province: People Partners and Prosperity*. The Strategic Social Plan (SSP) is government's umbrella policy for social development initiatives. The SSP provides a long-term perspective and does not deal with specific changes to individual programs and services.

Implementation of the SSP is coordinated by the Strategic Social Plan Office of the Executive Council. Funding for the SSP supports the activities of the SSP Office in the Confederation Building, six Regional Steering Committees, the Premier's Council on Social Development, and the Community Accounts of the Newfoundland Statistics Agency. There is an Assistant Deputy Minister responsible for the SSP who reports to a designated Lead Minister.

The SSP Office: The Office has a staff of eight and provides overall direction and support for the implementation of the SSP, including internal and external communications, budget preparation and monitoring, general administration and operations support, departmental liaison, liaison with and support for the Regional Steering Committees, research coordination, coordination of activities related to the social audit, and support for the work of the Premier's Council.

Regional Steering Committees: The province is divided into six SSP regions: Northeast Avalon, Avalon, Eastern, Central, Cormack-Grenfell and Labrador. Implementation in each region is supported by a Regional Planner who works with a Regional SSP Steering Committee. Committees consist of representatives from health, education and economic zone boards, as well as representatives of federal, provincial and municipal governments and other agency partners.

The Premier's Council on Social Development: The Council provides advice and guidance to government on the implementation of the SSP. Council members are community representatives appointed by the Premier on recommendation by the Lead Minister for the Strategic Social Plan. Members are selected to provide a diverse mix of perspectives and experience. They serve as individuals rather than as representatives of their respective organizations. Members are selected based on criteria such as: regional representation, knowledge of social and economic development issues, a willingness to commit the time to Council and ability to represent special interest groups (e.g., youth, disabled).

The Community Accounts of the Newfoundland Statistics Agency: The key economic and social data and the analysis required for evidence based decision making is provided through the Community Accounts. The Accounts were developed specifically to support the implementation of the SSP and to allow for the Social Audit. A number of departmental officials, SSP Steering Committee members and community organizations received training in the use of Community Accounts throughout the year.

Lines of Business

1. The SSP promotes and fosters the linking of social and economic development; investing in people; prevention/early intervention; co-ordinated, client-centered service delivery; partnerships; and community capacity building.
2. SSP Office and regional staff work with departments, boards and partners to ensure that policies, programs and services are coordinated and that there is no duplication in service.
3. While the SSP is not responsible for the provision of programs or services, each of the SSP Regional Steering Committees does receive annual implementation funding. This funding supports the implementation of the SSP through local projects and initiatives.
4. The SSP commits Government to complete a Social Audit to explore what is working, why, how, and for whom by the end of 2003. The Social Audit will:
 - assess the status of the population for key social and economic indicators identified in the SSP;
 - analyze the status of particular client groups (e.g. youth, women, people with disabilities);
 - assess the impact of selected major social programs and services on various indicators; and,
 - assess government's own practices for consistency with the SSP vision and values.

Clients and Stakeholders

The primary clients for the Strategic Social Plan are the people and communities of the province. Stakeholders to the Plan include government departments, regional committees and the Premier's Council on Social Development.

Vision

The Strategic Social Plan states:

“Our vision for Newfoundland and Labrador is of a healthy, educated, distinctive, self-reliant and prosperous people living in vibrant, supportive communities within sustainable regions.”

Values

The Strategic Social Plan is guided by the following values:

Self-reliance	Equity	Social justice
Collaboration	Fairness	

Goals

The Plan's broad, long-term social development goals for the Province include:

- Vibrant communities and regions in which people actively participate in their collective well-being.
- Sustainable regions based on strategic investment in individuals, families and communities.
- Self-reliant, healthy, educated individuals and families living in safe, nurturing communities.
- Integrated and evidence-based policy development and monitoring as the foundation for the design, delivery and evaluation of social development programs and services.

Throughout 2002, the Strategic Social Plan Office and the Newfoundland Statistics Agency worked with departments to select and develop social and economic indicators for the *From the Ground Up* document. This cross-departmental collaboration helped lay the groundwork for later stages of the audit in which departments will be asked to identify programs for inclusion in the social audit.

Key Achievements and Priorities

The Strategic Social Plan was intended to be a process that would significantly impact the way in which government conducted its business. The benefit of linking social and economic development was clear, as was the value of having regional perspectives, the need for more effective partnerships both internally and externally, and the need for much more horizontal policy and program design.

Internal Coordination Initiatives:

Evidence of the implementation of the Strategic Social Plan within government can be seen through several initiatives including the following:

- Model for the Coordination of Services to Children (Education, H&CS, HRE, Justice)
- Inter-Departmental Committee on Supportive Housing (Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation, H&CS, HRE, Justice)
- Violence Prevention Initiative
- Consultative approach to the review and redesign of Income Support and Employment legislation in HRE
- Inter-Departmental Committee for the development of a labour market strategy
- Development and implementation of the Strategic Health Plan
- Inter-Departmental support for the development of key social and economic indicators for the Province

Social Audit: Community Accounts, a web-based information system was launched to the

public in September, 2002 as Phase I of the Social Audit. Community Accounts brings together a range of information on topics such as income, education, health and employment to give a picture of the social, economic and demographic well-being of communities, regions and the province as a whole.

In March, 2003, *From the Ground Up*, the province's first-ever report that measures well-being and quality of life in Newfoundland and Labrador, was released as Phase II of the Social Audit. The report marks the beginning of government's reporting back about people's well-being and quality of life. It takes the vision of the Strategic Social Plan and translates it into a series of key social and economic indicators.

Regional Tour: Throughout 2002, the Strategic Social Plan Office along with Cabinet Secretariat coordinated a SSP regional tour for the Social Policy Committee (SPC) of Cabinet. The purpose of the tour was to inform Social Policy ministers of the activities in the regions and to reaffirm government's commitment to the Strategic Social Plan. The SPC Ministers visited the Labrador region in January 2002, the Avalon, Central and Eastern regions in February, the Northeast Avalon region in March and completed the tour with the Cormack-Grenfell region in September, 2002.

Premier's Council Activities

- Provision of advice on the Social Audit is a key priority for the council. Through a working group consisting of members of the Premier's Council, the Newfoundland Statistics Agency and the SSP Office, the Council will continue to advise on the final phases of the Audit.
- In addition to providing advice on the implementation of the Strategic Social Plan, the Council has advised government on key initiatives such as the new social assistance legislation, the Strategic Health Plan, the Social Audit, and the Jobs and Growth strategy.
- Council members have been active in developing a workshop on the issue of social inclusion which will be delivered to the regional SSP Steering Committees and is being considered as a training tool for the public service.
- In November, 2002, the Council submitted recommendations to the Lead Minister on how government can strengthen its relationship with the voluntary, community-based sector and further develop that sector ("*Building Community Partnerships*"). In March, 2003, the recommendations were presented to the Social Policy Committee of Cabinet.
- In January, 2003, a subcommittee of the Council met with the Royal Commission on Strengthening and Renewing our Place in Canada.
- The Chair of the Premier's Council sits on the Strategic Partnership Committee as a link between social and economic policy development.
- Other areas of work for the Council in the coming months include providing advice on the: implementation of the recommendations from the voluntary sector

report, implementation of the SSP in the regions, supportive social housing strategy, social assistance policies and regulations and, remaining phases of the social audit. Council will also work to identify and build upon linkages between social and economic development.

Regional Initiatives

In 2002 -03, Regional Planners and Steering Committees were well established in all regions of the province. They had successfully developed initial plans, held retreats, clarified roles, developed executive structures and clearly defined agendas and workplans. The Steering Committees were becoming more cohesive and some of the early group development issues were being resolved, such that joint decision making and more successful resolution of regional issues was beginning to occur.

Northeast Avalon: The committee selected Early Childhood Development as its main focus of work. This will include researching the current situation in the region as well as best practice options and developing a long term work plan for the region. The Community Accounts information is being developed to provide neighbourhood data for the urban areas of the province.

Avalon: This committee identified a need to consult with communities to ensure more community participation and input into the direction of the SSP. They began preliminary work on early literacy as a focus for the region, have begun researching the needs for speech language specialists, and provided opportunities for social and economic partners to work together.

Eastern: The committee developed a multidimensional framework for discussion and action with an emphasis on volunteerism, community engagement and building working partnerships. They held a series of town hall forums which helped validate local priorities.

Central: This Steering Committee continued to engage communities of need in the region through small scale local initiatives. Leadership development, volunteer training and recognition, transition from school to post secondary, school retention issues and, community training opportunities have been part of the committee's agenda. This committee has also developed recommendations for early childhood enrichment, speech language pathology and initiated pilot projects to provide after school bussing for at risk youth.

Cormack-Grenfell: This committee developed a strategic regional plan and is currently working on enhancing the volunteer sector, implementing a human resource strategy and developing career awareness forums for youth. A regional volunteer committee has been formed, and surveys are underway to determine job needs in the region and the career aspirations of local youth.

Labrador: This committee has chosen to focus on four main themes for development in the region: Recruitment and Retention, Human Resource Development, Health, and Recreation. In addition to developing a tool kit for municipalities, promotional materials for all agencies hiring staff in the region, and exit and retention surveys, the committee sponsored the development of a Human Resource forum for the region, *Opening the Door to the North*. They also commissioned a survey of high school students to determine student's knowledge of careers, the economy and future planning. The committee has also developed culturally appropriate programs to assist Inuit nurses complete their Bachelor of Nursing, and have completed a Nurse preceptor pilot to prepare nurses for work on the south coast. Finally, the committee is responsible for the development of *Labrador Youth Online* (www.labratoryouth.ca) and it has formed recreation committees to provide training and leadership development.

Opportunities and Challenges Ahead

The SSP faces a number of challenges including completion of the Phases 3 and 4 of the first ever Social Audit. During the next year, the SSP must continue to support the ongoing work of the regional committees and departments. This will include building on effective communications and policy/program development practices among and between regional committees and departments to advance the goals of the SSP.

While some funding is provided to regional steering committees for implementation activities, the challenge is to encourage departments and agencies to incorporate best practices and lessons learned from projects and initiatives into their ongoing programs and policies. Some of these best practices may be specific to the individual services delivered by separate projects; other best practices will likely reflect more on how government can effectively work with the voluntary sector to deliver innovative services.

Financial Summary

Fiscal Year 2002-03

	Actual Expenditures	Estimates Amended	Estimates Original
Salaries	1,033,139	1,033,200	1,014,200
Employee Benefits	3,647	4,300	7,000
Trans & Communication	236,450	259,400	310,000
Supplies	27,334	28,500	23,000
Professional Services	127,586	127,600	83,400
Property, Furnishings & Equipment	106,657	107,500	95,200
Grants & Subsidies	383,556	392,200	412,200
Information Technology	36,269	39,400	50,000
TOTAL	1,962,427	2,000,000	2,000,000

The Strategic Social Plan budget includes funding to support the Premier' s Council on Social Development, 6 Regional Steering Committees, Social Audit implementation through the Newfoundland & Labrador Statistics Agency and the office within Confederation Building.