

## A Strong Safety Net Produces Better Outcomes for Children

Children who grow up in countries where families can count on the support of a strong, universal safety net experience lower levels of poverty and better outcomes than those living in countries where the net doesn't provide coverage for all children.

As part of the Best Policy Mix for Children project, Canadian Policy Research Networks gathered data from five countries – Canada, the Netherlands, Norway, the United Kingdom and the United States – whose social policies span a range of philosophies on children's welfare. *An International Comparison of Policies and Outcomes for Young Children* by economist Shelley Phipps is the result. The first of its kind, the study explores and compares everything from tax and transfer programs to spending on health to children's anxiety levels in the five nations.

In North America, social policy targets assistance mainly to the poor. European strategies use a more universal approach. The United States, where assistance is targeted to the poorest of the poor, and Norway, where policies are aimed at providing some support for all children, are at opposite ends of the policy spectrum. While Americans enjoy the highest median income of the five countries studied, their country suffers the worst rates of child poverty. Norwegians, on the other hand, have the third-highest median income, yet the incidence of poverty among lone-parent families is lower than that for two-parent families in the United Kingdom and the United States.

The amount of money a country spends seems to matter concludes Phipps. Norway offers very extensive programs for children, including generous lone-parent benefits



**Suzanne Peters** passed away at her home on March 22 after a struggle with cancer. Suzanne was one of the founding leaders of the Canadian Policy Research Networks and the first Director of the Family Network. We will always remember this vibrant and vital person. See pages 16 and 17 for tributes in memory of Suzanne.



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and parental leave programs, and has consistently better outcomes for children. Just spending more, however, is not always associated with better outcomes for children. Sometimes, it matters how the dollars are spent. The United States, for example, spends more than any other country on health care, but has the worst outcomes: higher mortality rates and lower birth weights, for example. Phipps points out that much of the total expenditure on health in the United States is private. She suggests that a vital characteristic of a successful health care program appears to be that it provide access for all – including those who may be especially vulnerable. The most effective safety net, in other words, should stretch to catch all young children.

**Readings:** *An International Comparison of Policies and Outcomes for Young Children*, by Shelley Phipps, CPRN Study No. F|05, 1999.

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## BEST POLICY MIX FOR CHILDREN

### Project Update

What is the best policy mix for Canadian children? You'll be hearing and reading plenty about that question over the next few months. Much of the research for the Family Network's Best Policy Mix for Children project is now complete, three papers are now available and five more are scheduled for release during the spring, summer and early fall. This project will provide a greater understanding about discrete policy and program interventions and the outcomes that these interventions produce for children – and help to answer the questions: what's best for our children and what can we do to help?

The research emerging from the Best Policy Mix for Children project is already garnering attention in the media and the policy and research communities across Canada. On April 27, Judith Maxwell presented a

report on the project to the House of Commons Human Resources Development Canada Sub-Committee on Children. *Comparative Family Policy: Eight Countries' Stories*, which examines the development of policy strategies that affect children and families in Europe and North America, was released in January 1999 and has been the subject of over 30 articles in newspapers across Canada.

Project manager Sharon Stroick will be presenting research papers on the project at two international conferences this summer. The final product will be a synthesis report authored by Stroick weaving all of the individual components of the project together. Stroick's report will be presented at a Family Network roundtable in June and released in the fall.

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## THE SOCIETY WE WANT

### Making Our Voices Heard

The Society We Want public dialogue project was created to help Canadians say what is on their minds – and be heard. To make this happen, however, Canadians need to know more about The Society We Want. "We're working hard to conquer the 'so what' factor," explains Rhonda Ferderber, Manager of the project. "Canadians want to talk. They like to talk about things that matter to them.

But they need a catalyst and they need to know their opinions will go somewhere and make a difference." Otherwise, they'll shrug their shoulders, say "so what," and turn their backs on the dialogue. To overcome the "so what" factor, The Society We Want is making its voice heard – loud and clear – in many different ways and in many different corners of our country, encouraging Canadians to share

their perspectives about the issues that matter to them.

The Society We Want Public Dialogue Kit has been revised following its pilot phase and the first new Issue Guide, on the health care system, was released in January. The new guide forms part of the Public Dialogue Kit. Public response has been both encouraging and positive. "The response we're getting shows that people have a



thirst for this kind of opportunity," says Ferderber.

The kit details how to hold a dialogue with a group of 8 to 10 participants. It includes materials for both the participants and moderators, including information on the issues to be discussed and feedback forms which, when completed, provide research information for the Canadian Policy Research Networks.

"We're trying to get the word out to everyone, everywhere," explains Ferderber. "One of the major exercises for this phase of the project is to include Canadians in all their diversity – all ages, all regions, all cultures. Being the kind of country we are, there are diverse perspectives to be heard and considered." To that end, outreach co-ordinators have already been hired in Ontario and British Columbia and there are plans to hire co-ordinators in Alberta, Saskatchewan and Quebec soon. The co-ordinators will work at a provincial and local level raising awareness of The Society We Want and convening dialogue groups.

Several key Canadian organizations are already actively involved, including the Anglican Church of Canada, the Association of Canadian Clubs, the Canadian Ethnocultural Council, the Catholic Women's League, the Movement for Canadian Literacy and the United Way of Canada. "We want to make a difference – a lasting, positive difference – and here is The Society We Want to help us do that," states Barbara Crowder, National Director of the Association of Canadian Clubs. This network of 49 clubs and over

10,000 members within Canada aims to strengthen Canada by providing forums to promote understanding and pride in being Canadian. "Our members share a sense of deep social responsibility," explains Crowder. "Getting involved with public dialogues will give our organization an opportunity to reach into our various communities, fostering a better understanding of the issues that shape our country." All the member clubs are now aware of the new Issue Guide and the groundwork has been laid for dialogues in several clubs across the country. In addition, a dialogue is planned for the Association's annual meeting in October 1999. The Public Dialogue Kit is "not only attractive to look at and user friendly but it's also designed to produce results," concludes Crowder.

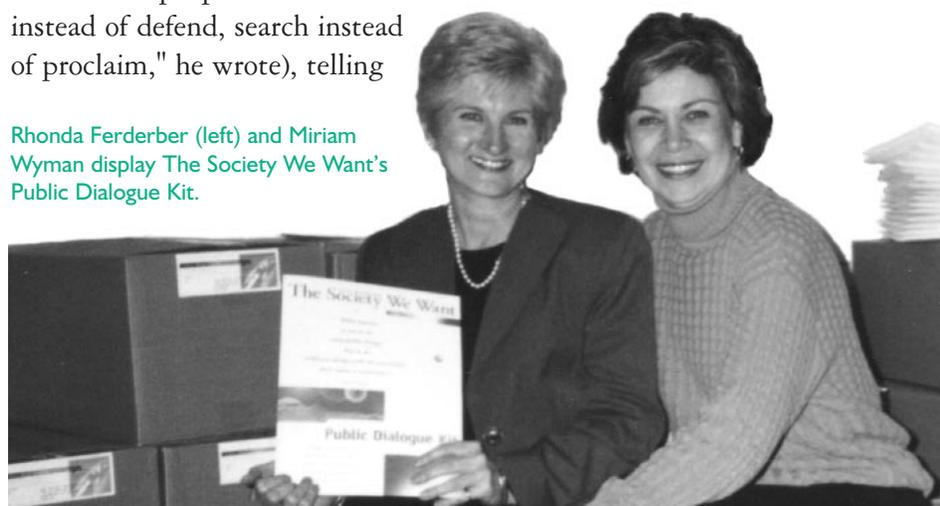
Announcements concerning the new Issue Guide were sent to community newspapers and multicultural organizations across the country. The mainstream media is responding to the release of the new Issue Guide. *Toronto Star* columnist Cameron Smith devoted two articles to explaining the project ("a continuing series of questions where people contribute instead of defend, search instead of proclaim," he wrote), telling

readers about The Society We Want and the fact that the Canadian Policy Research Networks uses the information collected in its research, reporting to leaders in government, business and community organizations. Finally, he encouraged readers to order a kit and get involved.

"Our materials are thought-provoking without being adversarial," comments Ferderber. "The Society We Want has no political agenda. It is a tool that Canadians can use to talk about issues that will shape the future of our country. It provides an opportunity for citizens to bring their views to the attention of decision makers. Citizens do add value. We're beginning to see it happen . . . The Catholic Women's League of Hamilton/Oakville, for example, as part of their annual conference, is organizing 30 public dialogue groups using the new Issue Guide."

Work is proceeding on guides related to the changing nature of paid work in Canada and on children and family.

**For more information or to order a Public Dialogue Kit, contact Rhonda Ferderber, [rferderber@cprn.org](mailto:rferderber@cprn.org) or Miriam Wyman, [mwyman@cprn.org](mailto:mwyman@cprn.org)**



Rhonda Ferderber (left) and Miriam Wyman display The Society We Want's Public Dialogue Kit.



# Who's the Boss?

## Where do we draw the line between self-employment and paid employment?

This was one of the key questions raised at a roundtable discussion held in February to assist the Work

workers to wholly dependent, protected workers. But, asked participants, how do we locate workers along this continuum?

This is one area they want the Changing Employment Relationships project to tackle in the coming months. Roundtable participants were drawn from large corporations, government agencies,

diverse perspectives and spent a day discussing them to aid the Work Network refine its research questions and begin to design a survey and a series of focus groups for the project.

All agreed that employment relationships are changing before our eyes. In the 1990s, for example, self-employment accounted for

about three-quarters of total employment growth. That development, together with many other changes, sets the "standard employment model" – full-time, continuous employment with a single employer – that emerged in the decades following World War II on its ear. Now, the question "who's the boss?" has become particularly relevant. And, pointed out roundtable participants, that simple question prompts a series of other questions.

Who's responsible for the work? Who's responsible for costs of training and lost income during downtime? What impact will these changes in the employment relationship have on society?



Janet Riopel and Graham Lowe discuss the changing world of employment at a recent roundtable discussion. Riopel represented Changing Employment Relationships project funder, Syncrude Canada Ltd., at the roundtable. "It's very healthy to think about the large framework that employers and employees face," said Riopel about the roundtable process. The discussion highlighted the fact that "today's employers and employees must be strategic and creative in their thinking," she commented.

Network in its research into changing employment relationships. We know that there's a range of employment relationships from truly autonomous self-employed

small businesses, unions and professional associations, education and training providers and included the self-employed and individual workers. More than 30 participants brought together their

**We're moving from "a working society" to a "society of workers."**

Many of the roundtable participants also commented on the increasingly individualized nature of employment relations and pondered the impact these changes are likely to have on social cohesion. Participants focussed on the components of the employment relationship itself – values, expectations, commitment, loyalty. How are these changing, they wondered? And how do Canadians view their employment relationship?

All of these questions – and more – will be addressed by the Changing Employment Relationships project, which is designed to generate practical knowledge about the implications of changing relationships for human resource development, income security, employment standards, collective bargaining, work and family, quality of work life, and retirement and labour market transition policies. Central to the project is the development of a comprehensive framework for understanding employment relationships, how they are changing, and the policy implications of these changes. This framework will attempt to capture the diverse forms of employment relationships that are emerging and how these vary. Consider, for example, how many workers have left the traditional office environment for mobile, networked, virtual or home-based work. And each of these working environments has its own unique form of employment relations.

The practical knowledge generated by this project will help many currently struggling with changes: employers worried about recruitment and retention of loyal employees, unions grappling with

how to adapt collective bargaining to new employment relationships, and individual workers concerned about economic security and increasing demands on their time.

The information gathered and the questions posed at the roundtable

discussion will serve as the foundation for a discussion paper to be published this summer. The Advisory Committee will meet in the fall to review that paper and detailed research plans for this project.



Donna Goodz-Klaiman, Director, Professional Education and Development, Canadian Association of Occupational Therapists shares a laugh with Jim Carter, Manager, Public Relations, Association of Canadian Search Employment and Staffing Services.



Leah Vosko, Assistant Professor, Labour Studies and Political Science, McMaster University and Harry Shannon, Senior Scientist, Work and Environment, Institute for Work and Health discuss the Changing Employment Relationships project.



## Cross-border Learning: Two Forums about Health

"The health care systems in Canada, the United States and the United Kingdom are similar enough to provide useful information to one another, but different enough to provide fresh insights," states Sholom Glouberman, Director of the Health Network.



Marie Fortier, Acting Deputy Minister, Policy and Consultation Branch at Health Canada, spoke at the most recent meeting of the Canadian-American Study Group on Policy-Making for Health.

That, he explains, is one of the reasons two forums – The Canadian-American Study Group on Policy-Making for Health and the Canada-UK Health Exchange Program – deliver unparalleled opportunities for shared learning. Another is the mix of people these forums bring together.

"Both groups attract people who are leaders in their fields," says Glouberman. Participants represent a broad range of expertise and interests. They're capable of learning from one another at a very high level about the issues facing their respective health care systems. Plus, they can return home and put what they've learned into practice, he continues.

Participants will head to London, England, in July for the fourth annual Canada-UK Health Exchange Program. Glouberman and David Knowles of the British health care foundation, the King's Fund, serve as program directors of the forum, which is co-sponsored in Canada by the Canadian Policy Research Networks and the Change Foundation and in the United Kingdom by the Institute for Health Services Managers and the King's Fund.

This innovative program attracts top Canadian and British health care policymakers and executives, including senior government officials, trustees of hospitals and academics. Participants can once again look forward to a "management raid," where members of the group will be brought to a health care organization. They'll have the

opportunity to interview staff of that organization in order to develop an understanding of how it's dealing with and effecting change. "In the past, we've visited Ontario's Ministry of Health and hospitals in both England and Canada. These raids provide a revealing picture of each organization. They're powerful learning tools," states Glouberman.

Restructuring of health systems, policy shifts and primary-care-based delivery systems top the agenda of this summer's program, which runs from July 12 to 16. Participants

**Participants in these two forums learn from one another at a very high level about issues facing their health care systems.**

will hear from outstanding speakers, meet British colleagues, and become familiar with the major management, policy and health delivery issues facing Britain today. The fee for the program is \$3,000.

The Canadian-American Study Group on Policy-Making for Health gathered in Toronto from February 18 to 19, 1999, at a meeting coordinated and administered by the Health Network. This group regularly attracts leaders from both the policy and professional worlds, providing a cross-section of the entire health industry. Participants, including Lisa Berkman, Chair of

the Department of Health and Social Behavior, Harvard School of Public Health, David Levine, CEO of the Ottawa Hospital, Jo Ivey Boufford, Dean of The Robert F. Wagner School of Public Service, and Philip Lee, Professor Emeritus of the Institute for Health Policy Studies, make this an important forum for continuing professional development, resource sharing, and creative and multi-disciplinary approaches to health sector issues in the two countries.

At the most recent meeting, Marie Fortier, Acting Deputy Minister, Policy and Consultation Branch at Health Canada, spoke about the restructuring that has involved the devolution of health authorities in almost all the Canadian provinces over the past few years. In her address, Margaret Hamburg, Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation with the U. S. Department of Health and Human Services, contrasted the current issues in the United States with those in Canada.

This group will meet again in September 1999.

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# Seeking Support – How Families Deal with Difficult Times



**Informal support networks are the first line of defence for many families. Friends were the most frequently used assets.**

"The little world of childhood," wrote Swiss psychologist Carl Jung, "with its familiar surroundings is a model of the greater world." And families – the places where those little worlds of childhood occur – come in all varieties, equipped with an array of different assets and strengths. While some families struggle, many others cope successfully and even thrive despite the most difficult of circumstances.

How are families coping with the trials and troubles that daily living throws their way? What are the resources people turn to in their darkest days? Family Service Canada, a network of 120 agencies across Canada, with the research assistance of the Canadian Policy Research Networks, conducted a snapshot study of clients accessing

the services of family service agencies during one week in 1997.

Most people in need looked first to informal networks – family and friends, for example – reports Joe Michalski, a research associate with the Family Network and author of the study. Only after exhausting those resources did people turn to professional supports ranging from child care to emergency shelters to mental health specialists. These services, which clients found most helpful, are those most at risk of experiencing fiscal cutbacks and staff reductions. Those who accessed professional services tended to be poorer and from families in distress. In other words, support may not be there for those most in need, further marginalizing those already struggling for survival in our society.

The survey results revealed an interesting collection of results:

**Adult females are most likely to use professional support services.** This finding suggests that family service agencies with a mandate to service the general population need to engage in more formal outreach activities to other members of society, including children, men, seniors, visible minorities and newcomers.

**People presented with a wide variety of issues.** Problems were not limited to family relationships and parenting issues. Health and disability, violence and abuse, basic needs, work and school – these are just some of the diverse array of issues for which families seek help.

**Informal support networks are the first line of defence**

**for many families.** Most had access to or had recently turned to informal support networks consisting of friends, parents, children and other family members. Friends were the most frequently used assets – over 90 percent of clients identified them as a resource.

**The importance of certain types of professional supports cannot be underestimated.** In general, mental health professionals, nonprofit organizations, in-home support workers, child or senior care, emergency shelters, women's groups, mutual support groups, and 12-step programs were frequently ranked among the top 10 "most helpful" assets.

"The results of the study are useful for service planning and delivery across family service agencies," comments Michalski. "We can

identify those clients who are more isolated and more 'at risk' for negative outcomes because of a lack of supports. In a nutshell, we still need counselling services to support individuals and families experiencing a wide range of acute crises. At the same time, we need more preventive and community-based services that focus on problems that are creating stresses for families." Michalski is now building on the results of the study, preparing a report that examines the implications for community-centred research and practice.

**Readings:** *The Assets of Canadian Families, 1997: A National Survey of Clients Accessing Family Service Agencies*, by Joseph H. Michalski, CPRN Study No. F|06, 1999.

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## THE NONPROFIT SECTOR

# Laying Down the Basics



Downloading – it's one of the buzzwords of the late 1990s. We all know what it is and we know that the nonprofit sector ends up performing many downloaded services. But who ends up doing all the work that's been downloaded to the voluntary or nonprofit sector?

While the profile, role and expectations of the nonprofit sector have reached new heights in recent years, we know very little about the impact this development has had on that sector, on the people who work in it and the jobs they perform. Basic questions need to be

answered. How many people work in the nonprofit sector? Are their

**We know very little about people who work in the nonprofit sector and the jobs they perform. Basic questions need to be answered.**

wages and benefits competitive? What jobs are they doing? How do the working cultures and structures of organizations in the public, private and nonprofit sectors differ? What is the role of the nonprofit sector in the human capital development of Canadians? The

Canadian Policy Research Networks is working with other research organizations to fill the knowledge gaps by raising key questions and identifying steps for further research into this increasingly important element of our society.

Given the limited state of existing information on the nonprofit sector, the work begins with the basics. *The Voluntary Sector in Canada: Literature Review and Strategic Considerations for a Human Resource*

*Sector Study* was prepared for Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC) by the Canadian Policy Research Networks and the Canadian Centre for Philanthropy, with the help of researchers at the University of Montreal – Professors Deena White and Paul Bernard, and Ron Hirshhorn. This study recognizes that research on the nonprofit sector is often complicated by the lack of consistent nomenclature and offered recommendations to define the sector, including the provision of a classification system to aid future study of the sector.

A classification system allows us to identify similar organizations and distinguish them from others. A workable system allows for flexibility while ensuring a high level of coherence, permitting comparisons of both the differences and similarities among organizations in the sector as a whole. A coherent Canadian classification system does not now exist. *The Voluntary Sector in Canada* proposes a three-dimensional classification system that examines the members of this sector in three ways:

the type of organization – mutual benefit or public service,

the types of action – the production of goods or services, advocacy, community action, for example, and

the domain of action – health, culture or environment, for example.

While acknowledging that the available information about the size and scope of the nonprofit sector is incomplete, the study points out

the importance it plays in the Canadian economy: the 75,000 organizations registered as charities are estimated to employ 9 percent of the labour force. Two-thirds of this employment is full time. In addition, these charities employ the services of over 1.6 million volunteers in a typical month.

"Work in the Nonprofit Sector: The Knowledge Gap" appeared in the Canadian journal, *The Philanthropist*, in September 1998. This article focussed on employment and human resources in the sector, raising two major questions:

Does the nonprofit sector have the human resources capacity that will be necessary to meet increased responsibilities?

Is the right policy framework in place to support attractive career opportunities and satisfying working lives for people employed in the sector?

Written by Katie Davidman and Gordon Betcherman, Canadian Policy Research Networks, Michael Hall, Canadian Centre for Philanthropy, and Deena White, University of Montreal, the article concludes that two important steps must be taken to advance research in the nonprofit sector: definitional work and data development. In other words, for an informed debate on the important roles we are asking this sector to play, we need more information.

HRDC and the Voluntary Sector Roundtable are considering the next steps that will follow this work. Those steps might include a "sector study" of a sub-sector within the nonprofit sector examining the human resources challenges it faces.

**Readings:** "Work in the Nonprofit Sector: The Knowledge Gap," (1998), 14 *Philanthrop.* No. 3, pp. 34-48.

Canadian Centre for Philanthropy and Canadian Policy Research Networks.

*The Voluntary Sector in Canada: Literature Review and Strategic Considerations for a Human Resource Sector Study*, Human Resources Partnership Directorate, Human Resources Development Canada, 1998.

For further information, contact Katie Davidman, [kdavidman@cprn.org](mailto:kdavidman@cprn.org)

## FAMILY NETWORK

### New Family Network Director

Jane Jenson was appointed as the Director of the Family Network, effective June 15. Jane is the author of *Mapping Social Cohesion: The State of Canadian Research*, a study published by the Canadian Policy Research Networks last fall. She is currently working on a second study with Sherry Thompson, entitled *Comparative Family Policy: Six Provincial Stories*.

"Her contribution to social science research is exceptional. Jane will be an outstanding leader for the Family Network," says Judith Maxwell. Jane will continue to meet her full-time responsibilities at the Université de Montréal and will be based in Montreal.



# The Government Workplace at a Human Level

"How is the nature of work changing? What kind of skills will government employees need to get their jobs done? What kind of

ducted in the private sector before, but there's never been a survey exclusively designed for government," he explains. That exclusive

people are getting together, planning and performing their work. At this level, we can see the input of each employee and what they need to get their work done," he states.



Anil Verma and Zsuzsanna Lonti

training will these people need? How is the nature of work changing within the government? What does all of this mean for the future?" asks Anil Verma, a research fellow with the Canadian Policy Research Networks. Practical questions. Verma is working toward providing practical answers based on the groundbreaking Survey of Workplace Issues in Government, a key element of the Human Resources in Government project.

According to Verma, the survey, which focuses on change in human resource practices within government, is a "first" in Canada. "Studies like this have been con-

focus presented significant design challenges.

How, for example, could the government workplace be divided into operational units? "In the private sector, there are clear concepts about what constitutes a workplace. You examine an office or a plant, but in a government setting it's difficult to define. Is it an entire ministry or department? We needed to study the government workplace at a level where we could see people and their work," Verma states. He defined a government "establishment" as a unit comprising 5 to 100 people. "That brings it down to an operational level at which

Together with research co-investigator, Zsuzsanna Lonti, Verma is currently analyzing data collected from 802 directors and managers of these government workplace units, averaging approximately 30 workers. The federal government and the governments of Alberta, Manitoba, Nova Scotia and Ontario participated in the survey, providing information from units performing all kinds of work ranging from the provision of services to the public to policy development and research. (Union representatives were surveyed separately.)

"What government does and how it does it is changing," explains Verma. "With this survey, we're trying to identify the human resource needs of the government in the future. The focus is on changing needs and skills." To that end, the survey posed questions aimed at uncovering the pressure points in the government workplace. The respondents were asked, for example, about the changes they've seen in their work units over the past three years. Specifically, they were asked to grade the importance of certain factors such as the need to better inform citizens, the public demand for more and better services, and

the effects of shifting government policy and program priorities.

Information was collected in many other areas, including changes in the nature and volume of work, number of workers, recruitment practices, training, performance measures and workplace innovations. Collecting this information proved to be complicated. Performance of businesses, for example, can be measured and compared by examining the bottom line of each business and asking: "Is this company profitable?" There is no such common measure in government workplaces that allows such a straightforward comparison of performance. Respondents were

also asked whether any activities previously carried out by their units had been privatized or downsized. Case studies of governmental units will provide a qualitative complement to the information the survey has yielded about the changing nature of work.

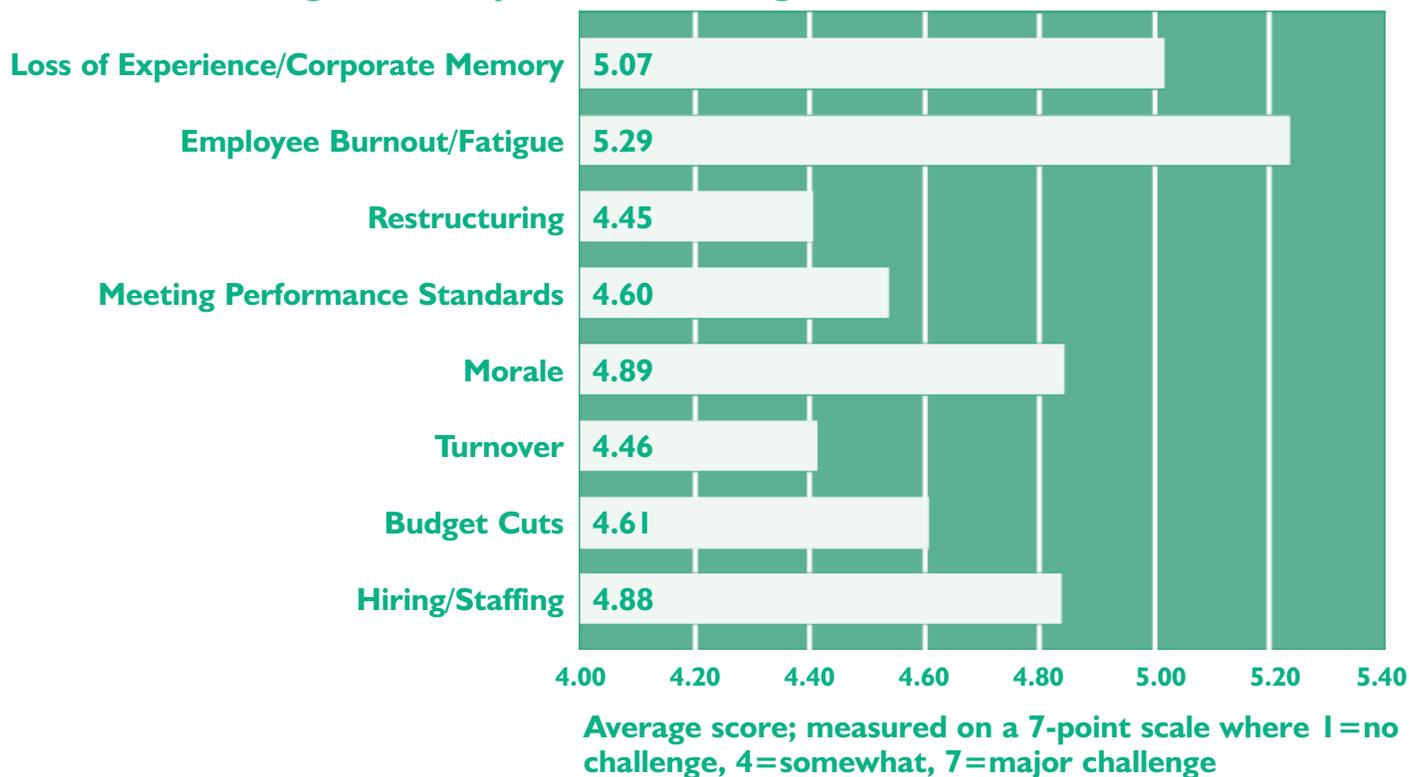
The fieldwork is now complete. The responses reveal many government workers dealing with more work and fewer coworkers. Managers feel their workplace units must deliver. "Greater emphasis on results" for the services they provide was ranked the biggest environmental pressure. Respondents listed "shifting government policies/priorities" and "budget constraints" as the

next two weightiest pressures they are facing in their workplaces.

As a response to those environmental pressures, the nature of government work is changing. Almost 34 percent of managers reported that in 1998 their workplace units were doing the same kind of work they did back in 1995 but they were performing it in a different way. An additional 33 percent reported doing slightly different work and nearly 17 percent stated that their units are doing very different work in 1998 compared to 1995.

A report will be published at the end of 1999.

## Government Managers Identify Future Challenges



The Survey of Workplace Issues reveals that changes in the nature of government work resulted in significant challenges for the future. Managers identified employee burnout and fatigue as the greatest hurdles their workplace units will face in the coming years. Anxiety is high in the government workplace.

Note: Results are preliminary, unweighted data.

# Results Are Rolling In

The fieldwork is completed and we're beginning to see the results of the Work Network's pioneering undertaking – the Human Resources in Government project. The next step? Sending the results back into the field and putting them to work.

In March, members of the Advisory Committee of the project met in Ottawa to discuss the work in progress. Researchers reported significant and steady progress – the project is begin-

ning to yield new practical knowledge that governments need to transform the public service after a decade of profound change. The reports contained on pages 10 to 15 detail some of that progress.

Then, in the fall, it's back out into the field. There are plans to meet with many of those people affected by the transformation of the public service. In keeping with the underlying philosophy of this project (researchers, for example, have worked diligently to break down

the public service workplace into human-sized units), this exercise will not be a "top-down" exercise. Rather, meetings will take place – across the country – with government and union representatives and employees from all working levels in the provincial and federal governments. Those meetings will serve as forums to discuss the implications of the findings of the project for workplace change in government.

# Changing Labour Relations, Restraint and Restructuring in Government



**C**utting the compensation bill. That was the aim of virtually every level of government in Canada during the 1990s. What sets this decade apart, however, is not only the aim but the actions taken to reduce those compensation costs.

Nearly 30 years ago, collective bargaining was introduced into public sector labour relations. But times have changed. Instead of obtaining restraint at the negotiating table through hard bargaining or cooperation with their employees, government employers in the 1990s have increasingly relied on the threat and use of legislation to override collective agreements.

An almost ubiquitous disregard for the collective bargaining process was one of the major findings of a Canadian Policy Research Networks study coordinated by researcher Gene Swimmer, Professor of Public Administration at Carleton University. Only 4 of the 15 ruling governments studied were prepared to bring about labour change like private sector employers, through cooperative or adversarial bargaining. As governments increasingly attempt to emulate private businesses in their management techniques, they have largely rejected the private sector model of collective bargaining.

The "genie is now out of the bottle" concludes Swimmer in his introduction to a set of case studies researched by several academics from across Canada. The studies focussed on labour-management relations, restraint and restructuring from 1990 to 1998 in six public sector jurisdictions: the provincial governments of Nova Scotia, Ontario, Manitoba, Alberta, British Columbia and the federal government.

Large deficits were a common problem across the federal and provincial governments during the early 1990s. To trim their expenditures, governments focussed on reducing

## Two Provinces, Many Approaches to Labour Relations in the 1990s

### Nova Scotia – Legislation

- 1991 – Conservative government imposes 2-year freeze on all public compensation
- 1993 – Liberals win majority under John Savage. Government legislates 5 days off between November 1, 1993 and March 31, 1994 (equal to 2% pay cut); transfer payments reduced by 2%
- 1994 – Savage imposes 3% salary reduction coupled with a 3-year bargaining freeze for all public employees
- 1998 – Liberals win minority under Russell MacLellan. Government reaches agreement with Nova Scotia Government Employees Union (NGSEU); reinstates 3% salary rollback and then increases by about 4% over 2 years
- Provincial government employment also fell, mainly from transfer of health employees to private sector legislation

### Ontario – Cooperation, Legislation and Bargaining

- 1992 – NDP government and Ontario Public Service Employees Union (OPSEU) agree to small increase in salaries (3% over 2 years) in return for job guarantees
- 1993 – NDP calls for “Social Contract” negotiations to cut public sector compensation; when talks fail, they legislate 4 to 5% reduction in compensation for 3 years via unpaid days; parties allowed to negotiate an alternative way to meet reduction target
- 1995 – Conservative government elected, based on pledges to cut taxes and balance budget
- 1996 – Conservative government removes successor rights and pension windup provisions from Crown employees
- Conservative government adopts hard bargaining approach to remove OPSEU’s job guarantee; leads to 5-week strike; job guarantees removed but still protections against privatization
- 20% drop in civil service employment between 1995-1997

the costs of public services. That, in turn, meant lowering labour costs. When dealing with unionized government employees, governments can select from three options to cut labour costs. They can:

be adversarial, demanding employee concessions at the bargaining table,

assume a cooperative approach, “opening the books” to union officials to jointly establish the extent of the financial problem and then jointly attempting to resolve it, or

unilaterally change compensation and working conditions through legislation (an option

not available to private employers). The legislative option can take two forms: passing a law to impose compensation restrictions or threatening to introduce specific legislation if concessions are not accepted at the bargaining table.

The final option proved to be most popular among governments in the last decade. Swimmer notes that there are important trade-offs among the three options. The case studies, which emphasize the political considerations of the actors in the restraint and restructuring process, conclude that the legislative option has proven to be fast and dependable for the governments employing it. “Although it will likely unleash the wrath of union leaders and rank and file employees, the legislative approach

will be applauded by the business community and it may not be a difficult sell to the public at large,” concludes Swimmer.

The results of the case studies do not indicate any attempts by governments to attack the legitimacy of unions as organizations or to permanently remove union rights. But there is no doubt that the entire political calculus of how a government should address public sector labour relations has changed. And, notes Swimmer, this leaves us with a question. How will unions react in this new environment?

Oxford University Press will publish, in late 1999, a volume containing the six case studies plus an overview chapter.

**For further information, contact Gene Swimmer, [gswimmer@ccs.carleton.ca](mailto:gswimmer@ccs.carleton.ca)**



# Similar Snapshots

**C**utbacks, downsizing, aging workforces and restructuring. Government workforces have experienced profound change in the 1990s. *An Era of Change: Government Employment Trends in the*

*1980s and 1990s*, by the Canadian Policy Research Networks researcher Joseph Peters, provides an overview of these transformative employment trends. The study, part of the Human Resources in

Government project, reveals significant similarities between the federal and provincial jurisdictions in how these changes occurred.

These three snapshots detail some of those similarities:

## SHRINKING WORKFORCE

The federal and provincial government employee has **fewer co-workers**

	FEDERAL GOVERNMENT	PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT
A government employee was		
in 1987	one of 291,900	one of 292,000
in 1991	one of 313,000	
in 1994		one of 306,900
in 1997	one of 269,000	one of 237,000

## FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

### Changing Occupations

#### More Familiar Faces

From 1982 to 1997, the number of **management and administrative occupations** increased by 37%.

In 1987, **female executives** accounted for 9.6% of all executive positions. By 1997, 23.3% of all executive positions were occupied by women.

#### Disappearing Faces

From 1991 to 1997, the number of **clerical occupations** shrank by 39.7% and **non-unionized employees** dropped by 43.6%.

#### New Faces

From 1991 to 1996, the number of **computer systems analysts** increased by 10.9 % and **computer programmers** jumped by 19.2%.

## PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT

### Changing Occupations

#### More Familiar Faces

From 1982 to 1997, the number of **management and administrative occupations** increased by 47.3%.

Data for **female executives** only available federally.

#### Disappearing Faces

From 1991 to 1997, the number of **clerical occupations** decreased by 16.1%. From 1991 to 1996, the number of **health and social policy researchers** dropped 25.1%.

#### New Faces

From 1991 to 1996, the number of **computer systems analysts** increased by 7.8% and **financial auditors and accountants** leapt by 23.0%.

### Aging Workforce

The federal government employee is getting older:

■ In 1976, the median age of employees was 35.

■ In 1997, the median age had climbed to 41.

### Aging Workforce

The provincial government employee is getting older:

■ In 1976, the median age of employees was 34.

■ In 1997, the median age had climbed to 42.

# TRIBUTE IN MEMORY OF SUZANNE PETERS

Too many strong, bright and exceptionally fine women are dying in mid-life. Suzanne Peters is one of them and, if she were here, she would immediately engage in an analysis of that situation. She would ponder the reasons – social, environmental, medical – for the high incidence of cancers among women. She would think about the impact of health-system cuts on families, caregivers and nurses; she would want to understand the science of this brutal disease that is unrecognizable as fatal until it is too late.

She would seek a way to do something about the painful silencing of many of her generation's best people.

But Suzanne Peters is no longer here to have that conversation and to imagine a solution. A month after her 52nd birthday, she died of ovarian cancer diagnosed only eight months before. Her death was not timely. She had not finished mothering; she had big ideas about social policy to continue working on; she was eager to travel, to write a novel, to paint. She was, as her visiting nurse said, a strong, beautiful woman in the midst of life.

Suzanne was not someone you put in a box with a label and a lock; she wrestled constantly with that sense of containment. Her projects and ideas were grand, bigger than life like Suzanne herself: a nationwide

public dialogue process, national conferences on women's unpaid work. She was passionate about whatever she undertook: a doctoral thesis on organic farming, research on women's poverty and abuse, wilderness learning for people with



disabilities. . . . Her public person was reassuring (friendly, open-faced) and intimidating; she was very tall, very determined, and very, very smart. But inside the serious academic, the shrewd analyst, the brazen fundraiser was the other Suzanne,

wild at heart, given to big leaps of insight she knew would shrivel and die in the light of day.

Her private person was surprisingly vulnerable, warm, with an unexpected sweetness. She wore bold colours, bright-rimmed glasses, big hats and a long, leopard-like coat. She loved to dance, drive cross-country with a friend, garden, and talk forever about books, men and politics. Her friendships were forever.

She drew sustenance and sense of self from friends and from her children, both born in Montreal: Matthew Isaac Peters in April 1980, and Emma Claire Peters in July 1982.

Even in dying, she gave life to family and friends who became her care team, with the gentle guidance of Trinity Home Hospice. She brought, until the very last moments, her quick interest in us, her compassion for our helplessness. She generously shared the gift of her spiritual awakening. She never stopped reaching out to embrace us, emotionally, intellectually, and finally physically. Even as we grieved, we were guided by Suzanne into an understanding of life, love and

death that we will carry with us, and use again and again as we need to, and we surely will . . .

**Marian Botsford Fraser** is a Toronto writer and friend of Suzanne Peters. This article first appeared in *The Globe and Mail*.

*A memorial gathering was held on April 10 at the First Unitarian Congregation of Toronto. The following are three of the tributes from Suzanne's friends and colleagues:*

My friendship with Suzanne began in October of 1974 with a thumping on the door of my small studio in Montreal, a block from the McGill campus. . . . There she was, in all her glory – rosy-cheeked from the autumn chill, that big amazing smile on her face – the smile that seems to come up in every tribute to her today.

"C'mon . . . We're going out to hear some jazz. Dizzy Gillespie's in town."

We did go out, and we got in to see Dizzy at a club called "In Concert." The show was great. Suzanne swung to the music; Dizzy smiled at her.

Sue and I strolled home after two sets – it was well past midnight. I thanked her for stopping by and bringing me out. She said she would do it again. And she did.

Sue and I went through a bunch of jazz artists that year and in years to come – McCoy Tyner, Archie Shepp, Art Blakey – and we went to some of Montreal's funkier cafes and restaurants. And movies. And we feasted on Sue's magnificent cooking. (Pesto pasta was my favourite. I had never even heard of it before.)

We shared long intense walks and talks. . . . Suzanne was very proud of her friends – always telling stories, displaying pictures of them. Those of us who were Suzanne's friends loved her very much. We all felt very loved. . . . I have an image of Suzanne in the back of my mind right now saying to me: "Michael, don't make everyone so terribly sad. Do something to cheer them up a bit." And she's saying that in the same tone of voice she used at a party at Axel and Sylvie's some time in the late 1970s when she told me: "Michael, don't eat all the deviled eggs. Leave some for other people."

**Michael Lipkin is an editorial co-ordinator for an educational publishing company in Chicago.**

For the last five years of her career, Suzanne was the founding Director of the Family Network of the Canadian Policy Research Networks. I invited Suzanne to join me in this enterprise shortly after she closed the Policy Research Centre for Children, Youth and Families. At the time, we had no money, but she was not a person to shy away from risk.

When we brainstormed the mission statement, it was Suzanne who insisted on using the word "caring." That word has become a beacon that has attracted many people into our fold, and one that I am immensely proud of.

Suzanne's voice stood out like a clarion call. Her landmark study, *Exploring Canadian Values* was published in December 1995 at the peak of the federal and provincial spending cuts. . . . That study was a marvellous debut for the new think tank that we created together and which she did so much to shape. The most ambitious projects she launched are still in progress. The public dialogue, *The Society We Want*, has just been reborn. Other studies are forthcoming and there is a rich menu to carry us forward.

This is a remarkable legacy for a woman who worked, for most of the time, out of her own home. The testimonials we have received in recent weeks have come from some of Canada's most distinguished scholars and senior public officials. She was able to bridge these two solitudes because she trusted the voice of citizens.

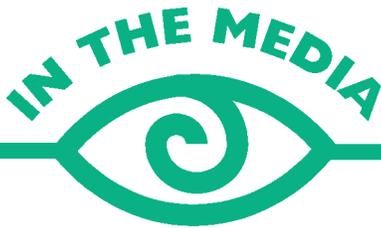
We at the Canadian Policy Research Networks express our deep respect for her work and our great love for Suzanne, the person. She made our meetings creative and fun. She danced at our parties. She bombarded us with more ideas than we could ever follow through. Her legacy will live on in our work and in Canadian public policy.

**Judith Maxwell**

Suzanne Peters was one of that most rare of scholarly researchers – one who actually understood and worked with real policy matters. . . . Suzanne was a person of vision, and had dreams of a better world, but she thoroughly understood that we get there one step at a time – and all too often, two steps back and one forward! Her eyes positively lit up when she saw an opening to make an intervention in a government's thinking at a strategic moment. And every setback in policy and budget terms she saw not as a stop sign but as a turn sign . . . how to reach the goal despite the obstacle was her enthusiasm. . . . She knew how to use data not only honestly but effectively in communicating ideas to people who didn't want to hear the news – she didn't lecture, she engaged with interesting ideas. She understood budgeting and strategy settings; she understood organizational behaviour. She had a real nose for good people with good ideas and she didn't waste time getting down to business.

When we lured Suzanne to Toronto in 1991 to head the Policy Research Centre for Children, Youth and Families, it was a great moment for the province. Here was a personality! Here was a determined policy wonk, someone who really loved the field, who was not on a detour to another life but was going to be in the policy business under any circumstances! And she worked so hard at this. I count 27 publications in the eight years since she moved to this field of research from working papers to referred journals, papers on vulnerable people, on children, on families. Those publications came from endless meetings, long hours of research, of submitting proposals, of editing, of organizing forums, consultations, meetings . . .

**Lorna Marsden is the Chancellor of York University.**



"Canada near back of pack in family-support system."  
"Canada lags in benefits for families." "Family benefits? Ours don't rate compare with Western Europe." Over 30 newspaper headlines heralded the publication of Kathy O'Hara's study, **Comparative Family Policy: Eight Countries' Stories**. The study was also discussed on radio and television shows from Halifax to Kelowna.

On the issue of the social union, the Canadian Policy Research Networks was a key commentator in both the electronic and print media. Judith Maxwell delivered her message – "the social union is about how Canadians take care of each other" – on CBC-TV's **Newsworld** and **National Magazine**. Her commentaries concerning the social union appeared in both **The Globe and Mail** and **The Ottawa Citizen**.

Sholom Glouberman was invited to discuss health care restructuring on **Newsworld**. **The Globe and Mail** featured Graham Lowe's essay "Job Quality: The Missing Link Between School and Work." **The Toronto Star** highlighted The Society We Want's Public Dialogue Kit, encouraging readers to order one.

## PUBLICATIONS

These reports are also available free of charge on the Internet at <http://www.cprn.org>

**Comparative Family Policy: Eight Countries' Stories**, by Kathy O'Hara. CPRN Study No. F|04. 1998. 62 pp. \$9.95.

This is the first in a series of research papers attempting to answer the question: What is the best policy mix for Canadian children? Author Kathy O'Hara goes to the origin of family policy in countries chosen for their diverse social values and political histories: Canada, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, the United Kingdom, and the United States. The study begins with a brief overview of each country's family "story." The study also explores the values in each country with respect to gender roles and the implications for children, and the influence of values, ideas, actors, and institutions in the development of family policy.

**An International Comparison of Policies and Outcomes for Young Children**, by Shelley Phipps. CPRN Study No. F|05. 1999. 134 pp. \$9.95.

This survey, the second in a series attempting to discern the best policy mix to improve the welfare of Canadian children, looks at outcomes for children in the context of such indicators as changing employment patterns, work, family status, health and education in five nations: Canada, the Netherlands, Norway, the United Kingdom and the United States. According to author Shelley Phipps, this is the first attempt to establish benchmarks on specific outcomes for children across countries. The results show a strong, universal social safety net leads to the greatest reduction in child poverty and better outcomes for children.

### Project Funders:

The Atkinson Charitable Foundation  
Health Canada  
Hospital for Sick Children Foundation  
Human Resources Development Canada  
Laidlaw Foundation  
Lawson Foundation  
The provincial governments of British Columbia, Ontario and Saskatchewan

**An Era of Change: Government Employment Trends in the 1980s and 1990s**, by Joseph Peters. CPRN Study No. W|03. 1999.

This study, the first in a series from the Human Resources in Government project, paints a portrait of the new government workforce through its review of employment trends in government.

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**For discussion purposes, this newsletter can be photocopied.**

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Researcher Joseph Peters assembled data from Statistics Canada and sources provided by the federal government and the governments of Alberta, Manitoba, Nova Scotia and Ontario. Peters used these statistics to examine employment trends for all governments in nine key areas: total employment, employment type (full-time, part-time, term), function, occupation, age, gender, employment equity, unionization and pension coverage.

**Project Funders:**

- Alberta Personnel Administration Office
- Human Resources Development Canada
- Manitoba Civil Service Commission
- Nova Scotia Department of Human Resources
- Ontario Management Board of Cabinet
- Public Service Alliance of Canada
- Public Service Commission
- Treasury Board Secretariat

**The Assets of Canadian Families, 1997: A National Survey of Clients Accessing Family Service Agencies**, by Joseph H. Michalski. CPRN Study No. F|06. 1999. 100 pp. \$9.95.

Family Service Canada undertook the survey with its member agencies to identify clients' strengths and assets including family, friends and community. The survey found that families only access agencies once they have exhausted informal supports and are truly in crisis, concluding that any further reductions in funding or staffing of these agencies may further marginalize those groups already struggling for social and economic survival.

**Project Funder:**

Family Service Canada

**Final Report of the External Review Committee on Canadian Policy Research Networks Inc.**

December, 1998. 30 pp. Free of charge.

This report, presented to the Board of Directors of the Canadian Policy Research Networks, lauds the organization's neutral stance and its ability to pursue open inquiries and enable Canadians' shared values to inform its work. The report also identifies a number of challenges and issues facing the organization, the primary one being a need to secure diversified and stable funding. The report sees a need for long-term strategies that can be pursued to achieve balance among its sources of funding by securing greater financial support from the provinces, the private sector and foundations. The External Review Committee envisions an organization that continues to develop in a well-defined niche, bridging the gap between academic research and government policy.

**Sponsor Corner**

**The Laidlaw Foundation** is a public interest foundation that uses its human and financial resources in innovative ways to strengthen civic engagement and social cohesion. The Foundation uses its resources strategically to stimulate perspective development and foster innovation and community development. The well-being of children and youth is central to the Foundation's mission. It has selected activities where it believes that progress is possible and where outcomes can be sustained.



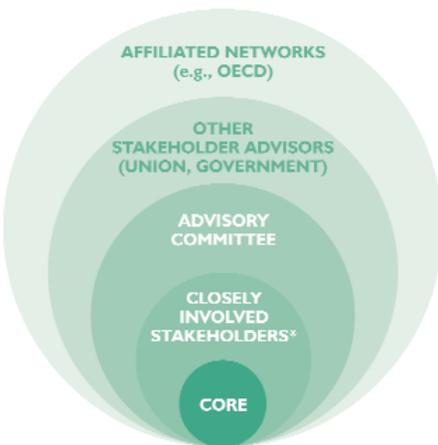
# Networking Is Learning

We at the Canadian Policy Research Networks have been on a steep learning curve since we started the Networks in December 1994, and as we continue to learn, you can expect to see the organization change.

The most recent learning experience has been valuable feedback on the activities of the Canadian Policy Research Networks from 42 stakeholders interviewed for the External Review Committee, chaired by Robert D. Brown, past Chair and CEO of Price Waterhouse. The Brown Report is available on our website, if you want to see it in full.

The stakeholders included funders, partners, researchers, and some of the diverse array of policy experts and advisors who had participated in roundtables or advisory committees over the past four years. They believe that the network approach works well, especially when combined with the face-to-face connections made at meetings. But they also had lots of ideas about how to make it work better.

## THE WORK NETWORK IN 1998



\*intellectuals and sponsors

The core team consists of the Network director, project manager and researchers dedicated to a program of research. Some of them

work in Ottawa, but many are working virtually from their homes or offices across Canada.

The stakeholders will include the funders, research partners and interested parties assembled for the specific purpose of completing this program. Some will bring money and ideas, others will bring research expertise or "real world" expertise in the subject being addressed.

Stakeholders also include people affected by the research outcomes as citizens, community leaders, advocates and frontline workers.

The stakeholders interviewed in 1998 told us they want a more sustained relationship, more frequent contact, and more insight into the whole enterprise – not just the program to which they are connected. They also worry that the core team is too fragile to sustain the complex web of relationships created over time. They want short briefings to help make the work more accessible to busy people. And they want our work to become more visible in the public debate.

With that clear expression of demand, we have already begun to re-invent the way we work with our stakeholders.

Advisory committee members are receiving regular "status reports."

In February, we launched e-network, a weekly e-mail bulletin on our activities, which goes out on Friday. You can subscribe by sending an e-mail to [join-e-network@lists.cprn.org](mailto:join-e-network@lists.cprn.org)

The network newsletters, which were each being published twice a year, have been consolidated into this corporate newsletter, Network News, which reports four times a year on all our activities.

We will – selectively – add capacity to the core staff of the Networks to give them greater capacity to man-

age the day-to-day relationships with stakeholders.

And we plan to distill the key messages of our larger projects into short briefing notes. For example, the Work Network is designing a series of four-page Research Highlights to be prepared for each report coming out of the Human Resources in Government project, reported on pages 10 to 15.

We chose the network approach for three reasons: it was cost-effective, it took advantage of emerging Internet technologies to permit the best people to participate in the research, no matter where they lived, and it created closer links to stakeholders across this big and diverse country. We will keep looking for ways to use technologies to connect the Networks to their key audiences.

What we have discovered is that it is also tremendously rewarding for the research itself. By keeping the research team in sustained communication with the eventual users of the research and with the people who will be affected by the policy conclusions, we can produce more relevant, more thoughtful, and more distilled ideas and frameworks.

The Brown Report recognized this: ". . . key ingredients of CPRN's success are a philosophical approach that is multidisciplinary, collaborative and focussed on shared learning, skills at synthesis and facilitation, and the lack of ideological stance in its work."

In short, the research function and the communication function have become interlocked in an intensive process of shared learning. We learn, and so do you. Thanks for being part of the enterprise.

President,  
Canadian Policy Research Networks