

Fostering Better Integration and Partnerships for Housing in Canada: Lessons for Creating a Stronger Policy Model of Governmental and Community Collaboration

**Michel Molgat Sereacki, Université de Montréal
CPRN Internship Program**

August 2007

This project was made possible by funding from Social Housing Services Corporation (SHSC) and York University. The views reflected in the research papers do not necessarily represent those of SHSC and York University.

The Housing Internship and Scholar program is organized and run by CPRN's Director of Housing and Environment, Michael Buzzelli, and is funded by SHSC and other sponsors. The program's overall aim is to develop Canada's housing research and policy capacity by attracting and retaining the best and the brightest in the housing sector. The program is an intensive four-month policy research training experience that results in the publication of original housing policy research. For more information on SHSC research, go to www.shscorp.ca.

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Abstract

This research paper analyzes potential avenues for strengthening housing governance through the collaboration between levels of government. Collaborative and horizontal governance initiatives have shown themselves to be interesting alternatives to the management of “complex files” such as housing. Using existing literature on collaboration and horizontal governance, the paper constructs an analytical framework for examining cases from Manitoba, Quebec, and Newfoundland and Labrador. The lessons from the three cases echo important elements from the literature highlighting considerations for future endeavours; most notable is the importance of good design, and adequate political, material and financial support to the success of a project or initiative. Among the recommendations made, it is important that the federal and provincial governments take a more proactive role in strengthening the link between housing and their respective policy directions.

Executive Summary

As the links between housing and other elements of social policy have become clearer, so too has the need for methods of better managing such complex files. Indeed, research has shown the central role that housing plays within the larger web of social issues and services, illustrating the need to adequately “operationalize” a cross-sectoral approach in governance. Initiatives in horizontal and collaborative governance have garnered more attention in the past several years as they are implemented in various formats throughout the country. These initiatives hold promise as a way of better establishing mutual support for housing and other social issues such as health, and strengthening partnerships with other levels of government and the community.

Several authors have suggested a national model of housing delivery, in which the provinces, municipalities and the community would play an important role. This paper recommends avenues for creating stronger models of collaboration for governments and the community in housing. The literature on horizontal governance has been accompanied with a growing body of case studies as these types of initiatives become more popular. Using the lessons learned in existing research, an analytical framework was used to examine three cases focusing on collaboration between provincial, municipal, and the community levels:

- The Government of Manitoba implemented the Neighbourhoods Alive! In 2000 as a multi-pronged approach to neighbourhood revitalization. Using a community-led model of operation, locally designed and led initiatives focus on several aspects affecting neighbourhoods: housing, physical improvement, employment and training, education and recreation, and safety and crime prevention.
- The province of Quebec employs formal and informal frameworks in the fields of social housing, and social housing assistance respectively. In the case of social housing, the provincially managed programs rely heavily on community groups and municipalities to build and deliver housing units through the various funding programs.
- Newfoundland and Labrador launched its Strategic Social Plan in 1998, an ambitious and novel community-led approach to regional revitalization in which local groups would have helped in policy creation, and program implementation. The various political entities were to be supported by a Social Audit, a collection of extensive socio-economic data. It was eliminated in 2005.

The three cases highlighted several key lessons, echoing findings in the literature. Most notably was the importance of creating clear and effective partnering strategies, outlining the various roles, and the methods of evaluation and accountability. The adequate investment of resources was also crucial, as the proper political, material and financial support is a “make or break” element for programs or initiatives.

Several policy implications were derived from these lessons and the literature. For future collaborative initiatives, some of the recommendations that stand out are:

- Collaborative initiatives can be large endeavours, and require important initial investment in terms of planning, goals, and evaluation.

- The provincial and federal governments must strengthen the link between housing and their own policy directions.
- Governments must invest in adequate, long-term funding for housing, as this financial support is needed to ensure that collaborative initiatives be implemented and maintained.
- Provincial governments must ensure that the tools and resources allocated be flexible enough to allow for the various needs and realities.
- Provincial and municipal governments should ensure that community groups be a part of the policy process in housing, and ensure that proper support be available for them as they play an important role in terms of knowledge and experience sharing.

Collaborative initiatives are not a panacea, but they hold promise as a method of managing complex files such as housing. They can only be as strong as their weakest link or links, and as such it is of the utmost importance that future endeavours be well designed and supported.

Fostering Better Integration and Partnerships for Housing in Canada: Lessons for Creating a Stronger Policy Model of Governmental and Community Collaboration

1. Introduction

The issues facing governments are becoming increasingly complex, and change constantly; governments must therefore adapt the way they see and deal with these multi-faceted problems. As Neil Bradford outlines in *Place-based Public Policy*, we are living in an increasingly urbanized world, in Canada 80% of citizens live in urbanized areas, of which 67% live in the Metropolitan areas (2005: 1). He also highlights some of the challenges that have accompanied this urban boom: a growing economic concentration centred in the urban core, an increasing polarization between income groups and some geographical concentration of poverty, and a widening gap between growing and stagnant cities. Not only is there a growing awareness of the complexities of such issues, but also of their interconnection to other policy and social policy issues. This reality is reflected in the growing body of literature examining these connections.¹

Government has also increasingly recognized the challenges these issues represent. A Privy Council Office (PCO) Task Force reported that “many issues are complex and interdependent – they cannot be neatly compartmentalized along institutional lines” (Canada, 1996: 3). Bradford refers to this as the age of “Wicked problems”² and “Complex files” (Smith and Torjman, 2004). The former being problems that “cross departmental boundaries and resist the solutions that are readily available through the action of one agency.” The governmental take on the same issue is that of the latter term. These Complex files distinguish themselves by “many layered programs involving a variety of players who need to create links between issues” (Ibid., 2004: iv). The eye of the beholder gives nuance to the view of the issues, though the problems remain the same: complex issues that cannot be dealt with using a traditional model of governance, where management and accountability are arranged vertically within departments (Peach, 2004: 2).

1.1 Housing as a Complex file

Housing in Canada is a problematic issue as from the outset it is a system that privileges ownership over rental. This dual system, as Hulchanski describes it, is problematic as it “allocates differential benefits for two groups of citizens on the basis of whether they are in the primary or secondary part of the system” (Hulchanski, 2004: 222). This covers the 80%* of the population who own or buy their homes, but does little to promote other forms of housing such as rental units (*Evans, 2007: 5). Those falling in the “secondary” part of the system are to be “picked up” by the social net of housing assistance of some form, yet interventions and programs aimed towards those that fall outside the free market have not always been successful (Gill, 2002;

¹ He highlights recent work by TD Economics, 2002, *A Choice Between Investing in Canada's Cities or Disinvesting in Canada's Future*; C. Arundel, 2003, *Falling Behind: Our Growing Income Gap*; and C. Séguin and Divay, 2002, *Urban Poverty: Fostering Sustainable and Supportive Communities* to name a few.

² Bradford mentions several authors using the term Wicked problem(s): Perri et al., 2002, *Towards Holistic Governance: The New Reform Agenda*, New York, Palgrave; Sullivan and Skelcher, 2002, *Working Across Boundaries: Collaboration in Public Services*, New York, Palgrave ; and Paquet, 1999, *Governance through Social Learning*, Ottawa, University of Ottawa.

Dansereau, 2002b; Hulchanski, 2002; Pomeroy, 2004). This has been compounded by disinvestments and downloading of responsibilities in housing, by the Federal, and some provincial governments over the years (Carter and Polevychok, 2004; SHSC, 2007).

In Ontario, the downloading went “one step further” as the Province downloaded the responsibility of housing to the municipal level (Carter and Polevychok, 2004: 3). This occurred in several phases, the withdrawal starting in the mid 1990’s with a freeze on new development. In 2000 the Social Housing Reform Act (SHRA) was passed and established a new framework for funding, essentially transferring the responsibility to the municipal level (SHSC, 2007). This was done in an effort to simplify and streamline housing in the province. The effect was not as intended, and the cost burden was put on the shoulders of the municipalities, with some funding coming from the Federal government. As the Social Housing Services Corporation (SHSC) points out, the heavy dependence that this places on municipal property taxes as a source of funding is not conducive to creating truly sustainable housing; these taxes are not sufficiently elastic to weather the ups and downs of the economy, and place the municipalities at a greater financial risk.

The impact of housing on other areas of social policy is well documented, and it is now recognized as having a variety of outcomes; Doctor James Dunn’s 2002 report delves into the social and economic costs of poor health, and how social and economic policies and problems contribute to this. An example is data showing that people in lower income brackets use considerably more health services than those in the upper brackets, in this case \$216 million and \$97 million respectively (Dunn, 2002: 68). It is precisely within these lower brackets that the challenges of finding adequate housing are most strongly felt. In another report, Dunn identifies the seven dimensions of housing affecting social inequality and health: physical design and physical hazard, financial dimensions, location, political dimensions, psychological benefits, and social benefits (Dunn, 2003). Steve Pomeroy also stresses the important effects that housing can have on health, labour market and educational status, one’s earned income, impacts on the community and neighbourhood, crime and urban insecurity (Pomeroy, 2004).

One area where inequality significantly impacts quality of life and health-care cost is mental illness. A recent report from Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH) also illustrates this point. It studied the relationship between housing and health for people suffering from mental health and addiction problems. After studying people one year prior to, and one year after being adequately housed, they discovered a decrease in the number of hospital day stays and admissions. For people placed in mental health supported housing units these numbers decreased by about 50%, and represented an important step in establishing stability in their daily lives.

Housing is comprised of a continuum of complex issues that reverberate into other social policy issues. It is not as simple as those not being able to house themselves through the free market tending to be financially disadvantaged, although the income disparity is an important component: figures from 1999 show that the median income and median net worth for owners and renters was \$43,478 versus \$20,947, and \$145,200 versus \$2,060 respectively (Statistics Canada, 1999, in Hulchanski, 2002: 6). Renters do tend to be poorer than owners, but many vulnerable groups that are not able to buy find themselves in this position as well. For these “groups,” such as the homeless, urban aboriginal populations, people with mental illness or

addiction problems, the income gap is often only but one contributing factor. As these links become clearer, the importance of ensuring that policy takes them into account cannot be understated (Carter and Polevychok, 2004).

1.2 A National Housing Model: Room for Municipalities and Communities

Given the complexities of housing, there is a need for “a broader and more comprehensive approach, [...] both across and beyond the housing sector, and with specific responsibilities identified and coordinated collaboratively” (Pomeroy, 2004: 7). Building on the growing acknowledgement of the “wicked problems” and “complex files,” there has been an increasing interest in initiatives that would provide more cross-sectoral collaboration. Recent reinvestment in housing as a social policy has led to some recognition of the complexity of housing. This also seems to have coincided with the increasing interest in collaborative efforts and policies.

One answer to the challenges of housing in Canada has been the proposals for a national housing policy that would better structure the management and delivery of housing (Carter, 2005; Hay, 2005; Federation of Canadian Municipalities, 2004). There are many different elements suggested for its shape and functioning, but the key idea is to create a more productive, effective and sustainable housing system and policy for the country. The “operationalization” of this delivery model would necessarily have an important role given to municipalities, the community and community groups/NGO’s. Carter’s framework places a considerable amount of responsibility on the community, while the federal and provincial governments would play more of a “facilitator’s” role (Carter, 2005: 14). He has identified this particular aspect as being potentially problematic given that the time required in developing community plans could slow down the delivery of program assistance.

The SHSC also echoes the important role localities would play in its report, *Sustaining the New Partnership: Social Housing and the Provincial-Municipal Fiscal and Service Delivery Review*. It underlines the situation in Ontario where in their opinion it would be fiscally irresponsible to revert from the current model of housing, being administered largely by the municipalities, as it would be neither “quick nor cheap” (SHSC, 2007: 14). Furthermore, municipalities are the best placed to implement and manage the needs and community particularities of social housing. They stress that generally speaking, the municipalities and service managers have done a good job at managing the issue.

However, more needs to be done in order to balance out the situation as they point out: the government essentially runs housing in the province without a lot of funding on its behalf (SHSC, 2007). The SHSC, as well as the Ontario Non-Profit Housing Association’s (ONPHA) annual picture of housing in Ontario for 2006 highlight certain elements. They suggest more flexible financial and policy tools for the managing governments or agencies, keeping the municipal level as the appropriate tier to implement housing, and finally adequate, sustainable funding that is part of a long-term vision and strategy for housing.

Thus, the reality of a national model as briefly discussed earlier unavoidably means strengthening partnerships and collaboration within and across governments, as well as with the community and community groups. Several initiatives have been implemented that reflect this new policy direction, such as the Vancouver Agreement, the Urban Aboriginal Strategy, and National Homelessness Initiative (now the Homelessness Partnering Strategy). However, in the current inter-governmental agreements, community groups, and organizations and citizens have largely been excluded from partnership opportunities (Hay, 2005), even though they often bring a wealth of experience and knowledge. This illustrates the need for a model, or a working method that adequately represents all parties at their respective levels and stages of the delivery process, especially those currently under-represented.

1.3 Research Objectives

Housing represents a particular challenge in the vast cross-section of social issues that are related to it. Not only is there the “bricks and mortar” aspect, the actual building and maintaining of housing units, but as the VCH and Dunn’s studies point out, one must also contend with more than just the physical buildings but also of those people using them. A successful horizontal model would ideally facilitate housing issues being brought together with other sectors, such as health care. Initiatives of this nature exist, and have been in place in Canada for some time now, with a growing body of lessons and best practices that have been gleaned from them.

A national housing model could take many forms but as it would imply a more cross-sectoral approach on behalf of the provinces and municipalities, it is of interest to focus our attention on them in this paper. This research paper will therefore examine lessons from the literature on horizontal policy and partnership initiatives, as well as some selected cases in order to see how the lessons learned were put into practice, and what can be learned to strengthen the collaboration between provinces, municipalities and community groups.

1.4 Methodology

With respect to the greater role given to municipal and local involvement, we will examine some of the policy tools that have been used to foster successful partnerships in housing. In order to better understand what has been done, and what has been learned from some of these experiences we will start by examining some of the literature on horizontal governance. This will be used to establish a framework of analysis in order to better evaluate the cases. This will help in understanding what guiding principles were put to use in the cases, and how we can use their successes and failures as building blocks for future policy.

A cross-sectional approach is emphasized in the choice of cases so as not to limit these to only ones too closely related to housing. The cases chosen were the Province of Manitoba’s neighbourhood revitalization initiative, Neighbourhoods Alive!, which is a holistic approach to tackling issues of inner-city neighbourhood decline. The second case examined is the policy framework used in the Province of Québec to manage social housing programs, more specifically two housing programs, AccèsLogis Québec and Logement Abordable Québec, as well as the more informal structures used in providing housing support to various populations. The final case is the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador’s now defunct Strategic Social Plan, a

community driven strategic plan that was to better coordinate efforts for local and regional revitalization between communities and community groups and the government.

2. Horizontality, Collaboration or Partnership?

In response to this new complex reality, governments have been trying to more adequately respond by pushing to break down the “silo” mentality that exist in many government departments, ministries and organizations. Bakvis and Juillet state that:

“[...] given the interdependent and crosscutting nature of items on the government’s agenda, key policy objectives cannot be achieved without several different agencies, governments and external partners working together [, the] preponderance of critical management and policy issues have become horizontal rather than vertical.” (Bakvis and Juillet, 2004: 5)

The result, as stated, has been an approach that has tried to incorporate a horizontal as well as a vertical working method in order to better deal with social issues.

2.1 Definitions

Defining the varying concepts is fundamental at this point, as there exists the potential for misconception among the varying terms. The contexts in which some of these definitions have evolved have had an impact on the notion of the term as well. By briefly examining a few of them we can build towards a working definition.

Without being simplistic, horizontality entails something operating across a horizontal plane, in this case communication, policy and programs, across jurisdictional boundaries in the case of governments and governance. Another straightforward definition is that “horizontal management implies anyone or any organization, upon reflecting on a case, formally asks itself who else has interest in such a case and tries to associate that organization or that person with its development in an overall perspective” (Bourgault and Lapierre, 2000: 1).

Going a step further, Bakvis and Juillet define it as “the coordination and management of a set of activities between two or more organizational units, where the units in question do not have hierarchical control over each other and where the aim is to generate outcomes that cannot be achieved by units working in isolation” (2004: 8). They state that this style of management implies the use of several concepts to achieve this coordination, chiefly:

- *Coordination*: the practice of aligning structures and activities to improve or facilitate the likelihood of achieving horizontal objectives, to reduce overlap and duplication, and, at a minimum, to ensure that horizontal objectives are not impeded by actions of one or more units.
- *Collaboration*: defined as the active process of not only coordinating activities but also developing, agreeing to and implementing a strategy for achieving set objectives.
- *Partnership*: the formalization of collaborative arrangements and agreements beyond simple memos or memoranda of understanding (MOU) to the level of legal contracts for deliverables and payment.

These processes cover a spectrum of formal and informal methods of management that are used to achieve horizontal management. Central to the concept is not *just* operation on a horizontal level, as our basic definition would have it, but fostering methods to actively work at sharing and working in cooperation with other parties involved.

The definitions that Bakvis and Juillet use are heavily inspired by a public management view of what seems to be a rethinking of Federal government structures and methods of working. This is excellent, as the end result of any successful reforms of governance in Canada will necessarily have to include changes at the Federal level. This seems to fall short in the case of housing which, as a complex file, has evolved to incorporate many elements that fall outside of the Federal public service realm of management. Such elements are the heavy involvement of community groups (CG's) and non-profit organizations (NGO's), provincial, and municipal governments. These stakeholders are often partners in the planning, financing, building, operating, and maintenance aspects of public housing in Canada.

The problem with a strictly horizontal vision of housing policy is that it fails to take into account the many formal and informal links that have been forged and implemented on a vertical scale. In practice, as we shall see, things are not always as black and white: horizontal governance can imply a more bi-lateral or tri-lateral working style. As such, a truly inclusive and collaborative governmental model should work on both horizontal and vertical levels. The working definition, which we will use, shall be called *collaborative governance*, which seeks to better use resources and to address issues and needs by “improving the coordination of government across government departments, improving the coordination of different levels of government, and bringing government and citizens together in policy development” (Peach, 2004: 2). It is through this lens of collaborative governance that we will examine the cases and their policy implications.

2.2 Literature

These approaches are not entirely novel for the Federal Government, which has been examining issues of horizontality for some time. The recent 2005 Auditor General's report included a section dealing with horizontal initiatives of the Federal government. It applauded the various departments for their improvements in cooperating horizontally, although it was also critical of persistent weaknesses in collaborating effectively with key departments and ministries, and a lingering “case-by-case” mentality with regards to projects and initiatives (Canada, 2005a).

In a 1995 initiative launched by the Privy Council Office (PCO), a Task Force was assembled to examine issues identified during a Program Review. One element was to examine issues of horizontal policy management, focus on “improved coherence, and improved collaboration” (Canada, 1996, Foreword). Interestingly, aside from the title, the report makes no mention of horizontality *per se*, but rather examines avenues to ensure better policy coordination in light of the new reality of public issues.

Pressure to examine coordination came from several concerns within government regarding several issues (Ibid., 1996: 4):

- Cross-cutting policy issues, in which there was potential for poor or badly designed programs to cancel out effects of others.
- Globalization, which pushed for harmonization and a better capacity to review regulations and programs across the government.
- Fiscal pressures, stemming from failure of efforts to control spending by looking at performance and output. Pooling resources was seen as a new avenue.
- Overlap and duplication, evidently to be avoided which would in turn help cut costs and wasteful spending.
- Fair and equal treatment, for citizens from their governments.

These concerns indicated a need for better coordination, and as such the Task Force used round table forums and case studies to compile a series of lessons and practices that could be used.

The conclusions offer a continuum of recommendations aimed at as many parties. Of interest are their general conclusions as the more specific ones are aimed at Federal organisations and structures such as the PCO, Cabinet, Treasury Board (TB), and Ministerial and Deputy Ministerial committees. Their six lessons are the following:

- *Issue Definition:* Taking the time up front to define the issue and the expected outcomes, and involving other departments and partners *early* in the conceptual stage.
- *Leads and Participants:* Establishing clear accountability of lead and partner departments. This allows the lead to play a more corporate role and exert leadership, and ensures that partner departments remain collaborative and develop a sense of ownership for the initiative.
- *Central Agencies:* These agencies play an important, fundamental, role of facilitation and management of interdepartmental policy development. During periods of rapid change and heavy policy loads, the problems of policy coordination are significantly magnified and it is therefore important that Central Agencies play an active role: in clarifying relationships, establishing priorities, and managing the policy load of departments.
- *Developing Partnerships with the Broader Community:* External consultation is an important part of policy development and must be efficiently and effectively integrated into the policy development process. Partnerships with groups of the broader community (governments, aboriginal groups, community groups and NGO's) should be pursued as a means of drawing on a wide range of expertise and resources during the policy development process.
- *Realistic Timelines:* The rise of priority issues due to public and political pressure is a reality, but policy development, consultation, and coordination are time-consuming. The importance of clear and realistic timelines goes a long way in helping to frame the initiative(s).
- *Investing the Resources:* In terms of coordination and rules for implementation, as much as early direction on funding for implementation. All of this is important in managing expectations and designing workable action plans.

Although recommendations are aimed at Federal level agencies, organisations and structures, lessons represent good guideline base for collaborative governance at any level. One weakness that should be highlighted is that these recommendations seem to be created with a “pilot-project” type mindset, as they do not truly address the issue of sustaining programs or initiatives on the long terms. This is an issue that will be examined further on.

Shortly after, the Canadian Centre for Management Development (CCMD) published a joint study with the École nationale d’administration publique (ENAP) to research training and management issues. Fourteen scholars and many coordinators and public servants participated in the initiative, which examined thirteen cases and compiled observations, lessons, and challenges. The success factors they listed echo some of the findings of the PCO Task Force:

- *Framework of the mandate:* A clear contract between partners, suppliers, users, and correspondents is required. It is important to provide adequate financial, political and administrative support.
- *Management of expectations:* Expectations should focus on the problem to solve and not the symptom or its symbol: diffusing a realistic dosage of expectations while keeping in mind vertical interests and livelihood of model.
- *Participants:* Facilitate formulas that enable “authentic” implication of participants. Those with good expertise are less defensive and more prone to change, striking a balance between enthusiasm and patience.
- *Conduct:* Defining a procedure to not only include minorities, but make them feel comfortable, enabling expression of their “real” point of view as their full contribution is often crucial. Avoid creating subcommittees those could/will “sectorize or verticalize” problems further, as too many could excessively formalize the operation, thus slowing it down.

These are by no means the only factors. The authors draw attention to other factors that can also influence the success of endeavours. The management and leadership skills and abilities of key individuals can be an impediment or a catalyst: such horizontal initiatives are up against several demanding obstacles including political will and involvement, challenging the traditional organizational culture, conflicts between participants and group interaction, national standards, and the project duration perspectives.

Bakvis and Juillet conducted a similar study, examining the growing idea of horizontality in Canadian governance, mostly at the Federal level. Their study of the “why” and “how” of horizontal management is supported by four case studies looking at the practical application of the theory, and presenting lessons and conclusions from these experiences. They identified five areas of study: catalysts and champions, costs and benefits, tools and resources, the role of central agencies, and accountability. Their findings pointed to several lessons that can be grouped under two headings, general lessons and those regarding Central Agencies:

- *General:*
 - Horizontality is enormously demanding, requiring considerable investments of time, staff time, finances, and the reporting burden. They highlight that costs are often under-estimated.

- Effective management often involves a careful balancing of competing interests and objectives, sometimes due to the paradoxical nature of organizations. The clearest example of this was seen in their case study of the Federal Climate Change Action Plan where Natural Resources Canada and Environment Canada's differences in values and premises contributed to creating tensions between them.
- Horizontality, they recommend should be used after careful thought given to its implications and costs, as additional investment is often required.
- *Central Agencies:*
 - Their presence was necessary in all phases of an initiative, from the basic set-up to follow-through monitoring.
 - It must be noted that not all stakeholders involved will remain "equal" partners, as it is typical for one department to take the lead, becoming the dominant player. They cite the Vancouver Agreement as such a case, as well as the former National Homelessness Initiative (NHI) although the latter was not a study case.
 - On this last point, the authors mention the role that Central Agencies would necessarily play in helping to keep all parties involved implicated and active in the process. The paradox in this being the probability of mounting tensions between line departments and Central Agencies.

Again, the lessons are of particular relevance to the Federal level of government where they originate from, and are aimed at. However, the commonalities between all recommendations will help us build towards a framework to evaluate the lessons from the cases in the next section.

The final report by Ian Peach looked more specifically at Provincial horizontal management initiatives. He examines several cases from six provinces (Newfoundland and Labrador, Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia, Ontario, Saskatchewan and Alberta) as well as examples from the United-States (Oregon and Minnesota) and the United Kingdom. The key lessons here are of interest as they operate on a provincial level, and include a more local vision of collaboration. He identifies five key lessons:

- A clearly articulated strategic framework of goals and results-oriented benchmarks.
- A reduced demand for unnecessarily heavy procedure and centralized decision-making, rather to encourage innovation in benchmarking while maintaining reporting on goals and achievements.
- Using the budgeting process to create incentives for departments to cooperate.
- Providing significant recognition and performance bonuses to senior management and staff who encourage interdepartmental cooperation.

- Foster engagement of citizens and civil society organizations to:
 - Better understand issues and fill knowledge gaps.
 - Legitimize and strengthen citizen and stakeholder commitment.
 - Foster a public commitment level that will help program weather changes in governments, and resist its undermining from within.

Considering all these various elements that have been underlined in the reports, we can work towards a framework for analysis.

2.3 Framework for Analysis

These factors all figure as important in trying to compile a framework for analyzing collaborative governance that will be used to evaluate the cases studied. This will enable us to better examine the lessons from a policy outcomes perspective in an attempt to make these more relevant to furthering housing policy in Canada.

It is clear from the various evaluations, that clarity of the mandate, and of the goals to be achieved goes a long way in ensuring cohesion within the partners. Such a starting framework would also help in establishing a solid base from which to build, this would include clear timelines. The second important element is an effective partnership strategy, establishing the roles for all parties involved. Accountability is an issue that was often raised, and one that can help in maintaining the involvement of a partner. It will also contribute in evaluating the progress of the goals from the mandate through established benchmarks or reporting. This last element can be a challenge as not all factors can be effectively quantified into a traditional evaluation of progress. As Peach stresses, patience and room to innovate must be allowed as it can often lead to a positive outcome for all.

Thirdly, at the provincial, municipal and community level the importance of effectively involving citizens and society early in the process is important, stressed by the PCO and by Peach for several reasons. Early involvement can foster a stronger sense of ownership from all, but also legitimize the initiative. It contributes to better programming by allowing knowledge gaps to be filled, in the case of housing for example, community groups and municipalities are often an excellent way to gain knowledge of particular situations as they are closer and more in tune with the issues and realities of their respective locales. Any involvement should pay particular attention to creating a space in which all parties feel comfortable, allowing parties to truly express their concerns, points of view and comments. As the CCMD points out, ensuring that participants are able to find balance between patience and enthusiasm also facilitates this.

Finally, the keystone to any successful initiative is the adequate investment of resources. These are not only financial as the investment of staff time (for planning, consultation, and designing), tools (training, knowledge sharing, etc.), and infrastructure (such as office space) is often as important to effective management. Evidently the issue of a project or initiative's sustainability is at stake at this level, as too often the commitment of resources has been a "make it or break it" factor in the past. Adequate long-term resources are very important to the sustainability of an

initiative, but it is not the only determinant factor in whether one will succeed or not. For example, Peach's lessons stress that a well-designed program with a very high citizen involvement can also contribute to the success. It is to be assumed that a successful project would find a good balance between all the components.

In summary, the four components used to evaluate the cases are:

- A. *A clear framework and mandate*; which would include a clearly stated mandate and goals, as well as timelines.
- B. *Effective partnership strategy*; establishing roles for all involved, including accountability and methods of evaluation, reporting and benchmarking.
- C. *Fostering engagement from citizens and society*; effective, early engagement from communities, community groups and NGO's. This allows knowledge sharing, stronger legitimacy, and aids in ensuring sustainability for the life of the initiative.
- D. *Investing the resources*; an important and sustained investment of necessary resources (time, staff, tools, support materials, money) is key to ensure that an initiative is able to function effectively.

3. Case Studies

As the number of horizontal and collaborative initiatives and programs grows so too does the body of cases studied. Their particular interest comes from the lessons learned, which are potentially helpful to housing policy in Canada, and they have been selected in order to highlight certain lessons deemed important from a provincial, municipal, and community-based point of view. Not all are directly or even indirectly related to housing, as the important factor in choosing them was the experience they give us, and how it can be applied to Canadian housing policy.

3.1 Neighbourhoods Alive!

The Province of Manitoba's Neighbourhoods Alive! (NA!) strategy is a multi-pronged approach to neighbourhood revitalization aimed at several of the province's cities (Winnipeg, Brandon and Thompson). It takes a community-led approach to promoting "positive change," promoting this from the "ground-up" (Manitoba, 2007). Launched in 2000, NA! "is a long-term, community-based, social and economic development strategy that recognizes that building healthy neighbourhoods requires more than an investment in bricks and mortar" (Manitoba, 2007). It hopes to accomplish this by focusing on several key areas: housing and physical improvement, employment and training, education and recreation, and safety and crime prevention.

The core idea behind NA! is its use of a "community-led model" (CLM) of operation, using Neighbourhood Renewal Corporation (NRC's) as catalysts for priority setting, and implementation. Under the supervision of Manitoba Intergovernmental Affairs and Trade, a coordinator and project officers at the NA! office manage the program. Additional administration is done through a Ministerial steering committee and interdepartmental working group. The initiative provides funding for several programs, as outlined in their own literature:

- The *Neighbourhood Renewal Fund*, which helps neighbourhood organizations in their revitalization projects by providing various forms of assistance (cash, labour, materials, etc).
- The *Community Initiatives Program*, funding a variety of “activities that enhance economic development, increase safety and prevent crime, reduce at risk behaviour, contribute to better health practices, strengthen landlord-tenant relations and improve coordination and cooperation” (Manitoba, 2007).
- The *Neighbourhood Development Assistance* program provides funds to set up and operate NRC’s.
- The *Neighbourhood Housing Assistance* program uses grants to support housing ownership and renovation by community groups.
- The *Training Initiatives* program funds sustainable employment training initiatives for inner-city residents.

In partnership with NA! is the Lighthouses program run by Manitoba Justice. This fund supports partnerships aimed at supporting various educational, social and recreational programs for young people.

These five programs make for quite a cross-section of programs and initiatives. In its inception year NA! provided funding for 127 projects, which ran from helping the Winnipeg Housing Rehabilitation Corporation (WHRC) develop a long term business plan, long-term housing and training initiatives, training inner-city graduates as health care aides for personal care homes, to Daycare renovations and expansions.

A review of the program conducted in 2005 by the University of Winnipeg’s Institute of Urban Studies (IUS) concluded that the CLM and NRC model was effective in enacting positive change using locally determined objectives. It also underlined the strategy as having been particularly effective in bringing together the different parties involved and building partnerships. The IUS report found that housing was the area in which the results were most easily observed from 2001 to 2005 with about 900 units having been renovated or built. Safety programs saw reductions in arsons in many neighbourhoods, and most residents reported feeling safer. Some programs reportedly developed stronger community ties through programs and accessibility of community centres. Finally the community development initiatives also brought positive results through local programs, such as youth-led or employed “fix-up” programs.

However, several weaknesses were highlighted. With respect to housing, the data pointed to an increase in home values for the neighbourhoods that raised issues of affordability for residents, particularly regarding rental units. Residents and key informants pointed to a need to better monitor issues of affordability, in order to maintain a balance and ensure accessibility. Community economic development, although reported to be successful by many, saw a job training participation rate of only 12%. Of these people, the majority reported this experience to have been very beneficial, but more work is needed in attracting employment opportunities for locals.

The following will evaluate the NA! program in order to better comprehend the lessons learned on collaborative governance.

A. *A Clear Framework and Mandate;*

Superficially the goals of Neighbourhoods Alive! are quite broad, yet the key areas of focus and stated goals of the funding programs are more detailed. From the perspective of our framework, there was a discernable timeline, the “long-term” adjective allocated to NA! as a whole. There is nothing more specific, but this is also due to the very local nature of the projects themselves. This does say quite a bit about the long-term commitment from the Province, and the City, this particular vision and commitment to long-term change being quite interesting since, as the IUS report states, many people in the targeted neighbourhoods in NA! live in a context of “multi-generational poverty” and systemic problems. The timeline adequately reflects the nature of these problems as not being able to be done away with quickly.

B. *Effective Partnership Strategy;*

The partnering strategy employed by NA!, where local NRC’s are used, or are helped to form, and used as a channel and catalyst for community led project development and implementation. All parties involved reportedly see accountability as being reasonable, a balance having been found for reporting on progress. Some work needed to be done to ease the paper burden for some elements, such as justifying short-term grants for NRC staff members (Distasio *et al.*, 2005).

One crucial recommendation was that more work was needed to better coordinate efforts at the provincial and municipal level with NA!’s various programs.

Finally, on the topic of evaluation and benchmarking there appears to be some ambiguity as some goals stated are described as “soft attributes” in the IUS report. The report was based on surveys, interviews and forums as well as data analysis, and there appears to be a weakness with respect to this last element: complete data was not always available when the report was written in 2005. Without entering into a debate on quantitative research, it is admittedly difficult to evaluate some elements, such as the subjective perception of safety people feel by data. This is not highlighted with idea to denigrate research methodologies, but rather, there is perhaps room to innovate with respect to reporting on progress and benchmarking. The challenge is evidently to be able to show concrete progress in order to satisfy the dual realities of political accountability and short-term political goals, all while keeping any long-term change as the primary goal. Ultimately this balancing act between the different short and long-term demands may help or hinder program survival.

C. *Fostering Engagement From Citizens and Society;*

The nature of the CLM model used by NA! seems to have made good in fostering civil and societal engagement, as the communities themselves are motors for their own revitalization. The positive outcomes presented in the evaluation report show that involvement was indeed present. The NRC’s were in a better position to help identify issues and implement projects for and by the community, which in turn likely added to the legitimacy of the projects and NA! itself. As NA!’s coordinator expressed it, the NRC’s are “indispensable,” the local knowledge and existing staff they provide make them a core component in the program (Dilay, 2007).

D. Investing the Resources;

Neighbourhoods Alive! does provide for necessary resources of all types to be provided to the NRC's and groups involved. Funding comes from many sources, and is invested as time, staff resources, infrastructure, and cash. There is room for more resource investment, since the CLM model puts small community groups in the forefront many of who don't always have the proper staff to conduct internal evaluation for example (Daily, 2007).

Although the CLM and NRC model was a reason for NA!'s success, there were lessons to be taken from the experience. The report stated that funding was a "central" issue, as the NRC's frequently have to "seek ways to secure long term funding diversity" (Distasio *et al.*, 2005: 130). Long-term funding was generally needed since NA!, as it stands is project-oriented and does not necessarily allow these to become programs. However, the overall budgets for NA! have progressively grown, again indicating a commitment to the program. More work was also needed to foster training among NRC staff and building institutional capacity among community institutions such as schools.

3.2 The Société d'habitation du Québec and Community-Based Initiatives

Housing in the Province of Quebec is a provincial responsibility, falling under the jurisdiction of the provincial housing corporation, the Société d'habitation du Québec (SHQ). Although it cannot be taken as a program *per se*, it is actually made up of several; the governance structures regarding housing in Quebec were deemed of interest and included as cases. Intersectoral relationships have been present in the province for some time now in various forms. Officially the SHQ has added the concept to its mandate, and the term has become more commonplace in its documents (SHQ, 2001; SHQ, 2002). Evidently the presence of a term cannot guarantee its practice in government, however in this case the term recognized a practice that was already unofficially in use. The government's use of the term was more of an evolution in governance, and the result of much work on behalf of community groups and organizations as well as governments (Ducharme, 2007; Vaillancourt, 2002).

There are two areas of interest to be highlighted here; the first being the development of the structure of social housing provision and operation, and the second is the evolution of supported and assisted housing initiatives via the community level.

3.2.1 Social Housing Assistance

Out of the social movements of the 1960's emerged the Centre locaux de services communautaires (CLSC) clinics, having been inspired by the establishment of a community clinic in Pointe-Saint-Charles in 1968, a working class neighbourhood of Montréal (CCPSC, 2007). The CLSC's are a community gateway for health and social services, enabling access to family medical practitioners and certain specialists such as social workers and psychologists. These were amalgamated starting in 2003 and 2004 with neighbouring CLSC's, as well as the Long-term health and support hospices (Centres d'hébergement et de soins de longue durée-CHSLD) to create a "regional health and services network" named Centres de santé et de services sociaux (CSSS) (Québec, 2007). Prior to this there had been some fears as to the loss of the community services side of the CLSC's, as they became almost exclusively health services oriented (Johnston, 2002: 125).

According to Marie-Noëlle Ducharme of the Quebec non-profit housing network (RQOH), the evolution of some forms of assistance to social housing tenants was seen early on by initiatives such as the City of Montreal's municipal housing office (OMHM). In the late 1980's, the OMHM provided facilitators for their housing complexes and units, who helped establish and ensure security for the tenants. They also acted as mediators for tenants, and provided some measure of accompaniment for certain tenants. As more and more community groups got involved in providing housing for target groups, such as the elderly or at-risk youth, some incorporated specialized services using volunteers and professionals. Government funding was often a part of this process. These led to what one spokesperson for the OMHM referred to as "complex financial arrangements" (Morin, 2007).

An example is the Montreal non-profit organization la Maison l'Échelon (MÉ) that specializes in "intermediate and community" supported and assisted housing for people with mental illness. The organization has been around since 1979, and now boasts of roughly fifty full time and thirty part-time employees that help provide 24 hour, round-the-clock assistance and support to its tenants. It offers several types of living arrangements to meet the various needs of its clients: full time, round the clock assisted living for people who may or not able to graduate to less intensive assisted living, "satellite" apartments in which clients live on their own with 24 hour assistance in the building, a rooming house with part-time assistance as well a meal service, supervised apartments with studios for independent living with community space, again with part-time staff presence, and finally transitional apartments in which the clients are very autonomous, the staff formally following up several times a month. The majority of its funding comes from the Montreal-Centre regional health board and hospitals (Deschamps, 2000).

The organization started off using agreements with landlords to provide housing to its clients. As these relationships became progressively more problematic, they realized the benefits of being their own landlords and MÉ shifted its orientations accordingly. It was able to benefit from CMHC funding in 1986 to build a 26-unit complex, as well as to renovate a house to be used as a group home. In the early 1990's they registered for a Société d'habitation et de développement de Montréal (SHDM) program that was acquiring housing to transfer on to cooperatives and organizations serving specific populations. Through this program they acquired 75 additional units, as well as being able to create communal spaces within the buildings. Most recently the organization benefited from the ALQ and LAQ funding through the Solidarité 5 000 logements program in Montreal. It qualified for the chapter three funds, and was able to build 26 additional units.

La Maison l'Échelon also secured units in various housing complexes and buildings through agreements with two organizations. With the Société d'habitation populaire de l'est de Montréal (SHAPEM), a non-profit group that supports neighbourhood revitalization through social housing projects, mostly in the borough of Hochelaga-Maisonneuve. The partnership enables MÉ the use of a total of 40 apartments in two buildings belonging to the SHAPEM. In another agreement with the OMHM, MÉ has the use of 20 units in a larger 100 unit complex.

3.2.2 AccèsLogis and Logement Abordable Québec

Many of the more recent innovations in Quebec housing, much like in other provinces, evolved after the federal withdrawal from housing in the mid 1990's. Quebec has had a strong base of community organizations representing housing and social issues. Most of these groups have been around for some 20 to 30 years, such as the Groupes de ressources techniques or Technical Resource Groups (TRG), the first ones being founded in the mid 1970's.

In 1997 the province created the AccèsLogis Québec (ALQ) program in response to growing pressure to invest in housing. The program is composed of three major "chapters" each funding and addressing particular housing issues; the first is designed to fund projects for low-income households, the second funds projects for seniors needing living assistance, and the third component funds projects directed at special-needs groups. The former includes housing projects designed to address homelessness, victims of violence, at-risk youth or social integration for example. In the case of the second and third chapter projects, allowances are made to include specialized services in the funding. This component of the ALQ somewhat took over from the complex financial arrangements that were previously used to finance social housing assistance programs, without completely replacing them.

The funding load for all the projects is generally carried by the SHQ, but a minimum "local" contribution of 15% is required for projects to be admissible, in this case local refers to municipalities, community groups, non-profits and other such organizations. The interesting note here is that any of the aforementioned groups can apply to fund a project, be they a community group, a non-profit or a municipality. Projects are submitted to the SHQ for approval, and in the case of Montreal and Québec the corporation invested the cities with the power to grant approval.

The signature of the Canada-Québec agreement on housing in 2001 enabled the provincial government to create the Logement Abordable Québec (LAQ) program. As in the case of ALQ, the LAQ was composed of three chapters. The first was designed to fund social and community-based projects from cooperatives, non-profit groups and municipal housing offices, also with a minimum local contribution. The difference with LAQ's first chapter is that it is designed to help alleviate communities deemed in need of housing; by this the government meant situations in which the vacancy rate was below the 3% mark. The second chapter was designed to foster private rental housing projects, as there was a need to stimulate this area of the market to help the supply side and alleviate pressure on a stagnant number of rental units. For example in Montreal, condominium units represented some 54,3% of new constructions between 1996 and 2001. The number of rental units being built fell from 25.8% in the 1991-1996 period, to 15.1% in the 1996-2001 period (Gill, 2002: 53). The LAQ's third chapter was designed to fund housing projects for communities in northern Quebec.

Subsequently the province announced a large-scale housing initiative which would see the construction of some 13 000 units province-wide. This was partly brought on by the serious shortages of affordable housing units being felt by many communities across the province, especially the larger urban centres of Montreal and Québec, but also in Gatineau. In Montreal's case, benefiting from an SHQ mandate of approval for its territory, the federal, provincial and municipal funding was given for it to build 5 000 units, the initiative being named Solidarité 5 000 logements (Tremblay, 2002).

The dynamic that ensued from this situation was that it allowed for a good balance of flexibility and ease of implementation. In most cases, community groups worked with their local TRG to plan and submit the project, and carry it out. As a way of engaging the community it would seem effective as the groups planning the projects were perhaps more in touch with their target populations, and the local communities. The program was especially beneficial to the community and non-profit groups: they built 115 of the 132 projects funded by Solidarité 5 000 logements. From the perspective of accountability, the projects were approved according to a set of criteria, including the funding structure to which they were held. This method of governance enabled the SHQ to work with these groups and ensure that provincial interests were being met, as well as those of the communities and the groups planning the projects. The special mandates given to Montreal and Québec were also useful in this fashion, enabling some measure of respect for municipal orientations and official plans. The projects were generally successful, although not perfect.

In the case of Solidarité 5 000 logements, several factors contributed to a slower than usual rate of completion in the projects: the City's administrative units, undergoing a process of amalgamation, and subsequent "de-amalgamation" operated in a "void" for some months during this process. Other factors of influence were the under-estimation of decontamination costs, and availability of land, the rising cost of construction materials and labour due to a housing boom, as well as some projects being slowed down by the NIMBY effect. In this last case the S5L offices were initially not equipped with a framework to manage such instances, something that was later rectified for NIMBY issues.³

Once again using the collaborative governance framework we developed, let us study the ALQ/LAQ and housing assistance programs.

A. A Clear Framework and Mandate;

This element is slightly more problematic as we have examined much larger structures operating in the province. In the case of the ALQ and LAQ programs it would seem that the goals and mandate are quite clear: providing funding programs to enable housing construction for various specific goals as detailed in the respective chapters.

With respect to social housing assistance in the province, it cannot be called a program as such, but rather a collection of case-by-case situations that have gradually taken shape into something more formal. This seems to have largely been a more bottom-up approach early on, which more recently has also been from the top-down. The end result, should it come to fruition will be the collaborative framework between the SHQ and the MSSS.

³. This information on Solidarité 5000 logements was compiled and presented in a Masters MRP by Michel Molgat Sereacki; Molgat Sereacki, Michel. 2006. *Étude de cas de l'opération Solidarité 5 000 logements*. Montreal : Institut d'Urbanisme de l'Université de Montréal. Not currently published, but available for circulation.

B. *Effective Partnership Strategy;*

The ALQ and LAQ programming did involve effective partnership strategy, as the SHQ interacted and consulted with local groups when projects were submitted. At the same time it also ensured partnerships with the large urban centres, allowing decision-making to go to the municipal governments. The partnership between the community groups and TRG's were also very effective even though this working relationship is a long-standing one in the province.

There is no real partnership strategy for social housing assistance, aside from the components contained in the ALQ program. The working method of the agreements and partnerships is generally on a case-by-case basis; issues of accountability and follow up would be dealt with similarly. Vaillancourt points out the difficulties that often occurred regarding cost-sharing between partners, too often used to working on their own (Vaillancourt, 2002: 23).

C. *Fostering Engagement from Citizens and Society;*

The process invites local involvement in the form of local groups or municipalities bringing forward their projects, involvement is therefore present from the very beginning. These groups also often benefit from some level of community approval and legitimacy, as very often, given the history of housing in the province they are well known locally. The presence of the TRG's in almost all of the major cities helped get communities aboard: these groups are almost a fixture in the housing scene of their working regions, which adds clout to the projects.

The projects involving social housing assistance as well would have had early involvement from community groups through their direct participation. As in the cases of the housing projects, community involvement would come through the groups' local engagement within the communities, but again, their involvement adds to the legitimacy of the endeavours, as they are grassroots efforts by their very nature.

In both cases the public involvement and ground-up development would seem to help their sustainability, as the projects seem to maintain themselves.

D. *Investing the Resources;*

The most important issue regarding such programs, the question of adequate resources is divided: in the case of ALQ and LAQ, monies were available for the projects, although it was originally only for a finite number of units. Time and staff did not seem to be an issue for community groups, as the network of TRG's gave them access to important expertise and experience in developing housing projects.

The allocations given to new projects under the ALQ and LAQ are evidence to the gradual trend taking place in many parts of the country: the recognition of the interconnectivity of housing and health, and the special needs of certain populations and groups. In a recent article in the Quebec paper *Le Devoir*, Yves Vaillancourt stresses this gradual coming together of housing and health in the province (Vaillancourt, 2006). He refers to the current joint Ministry of health and social services (Ministère de la santé et services sociaux-MSSS) and SHQ initiative: a new flexible accord regarding the provision of health services support within social and community housing. This has been in the works for two years now, and is still at the draft level and not for circulation. This is something which should be followed up on in the future since, if signed, it will be the formalization of a collaborative agreement on housing and health services that emphasizes a certain flexibility and incorporates all stakeholders.

3.3 Newfoundland and Labrador: The Strategic Social Plan

The government of Newfoundland and Labrador's Strategic Social Plan (SSP) was launched in 1998 after a long consultation process, and was a community driven strategic plan to answer its socio-economic challenges. Ian Peach establishes an initial overview and analysis of the program in his 2004 paper, *Managing Complexity: Lessons of Horizontal Policy-Making in the Provinces*. It is not the goal for this section to unnecessarily repeat what has already been well done. Rather, Peach's paper presented many of the program's very interesting aspects and it was deemed of great interest to review these in light of the discussions regarding collaborative government. A recent case study by David Close of Memorial University provides excellent hindsight reflection on the program and its strengths and weaknesses. This is because the program was eliminated in 2005, shortly after Peach's paper was published.

As an initiative, the program has been described as being "the most ambitious horizontal policy-making process" and something "unlike any social plan ever seen" (Peach, 2004: 5; Close, 2007: 1). The SSP document was created after consultations that were led by a committee of volunteers after recommendations in an initial 1996 consultation paper. This committee, the Social Policy Advisory Committee, conducted "extensive consultations with people representing the general public, special interest groups, organizations, service providers and government employees" (Newfoundland and Labrador [NL], 1998: 3). The four goals of the strategy were to create the following:

- 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.

The plan essentially put a new twist on governmental horizontality by its use of volunteer organizations, or voluntary, community-based sector (VCBS) organizations as Close calls them: these groups were to deliver programs, the services being purchased from the groups as contractors, as well as being actors in policy development and implementation (Close, 2007). This was to be bolstered by an emphasis on partnerships and between all levels of government, especially between the province, the communities and volunteer organizations, forging better social policy and ultimately creating stronger links between social policy and economic policy. This was to be supported by a Social Audit, which was essentially a large scale collection of social and economic data that was available online, aiding the groups in making informed, evidence-based decisions (Close, 2007; NL, 2003).

Three major political entities ensured the link between the government and volunteer organizations: the Premier's Council on Social Development (PCSD), the Strategic Social Plan Office (SSPO), and Regional Steering Committees (RSC). The first was more of a consultative council, with considerable leeway in its actions, which was to "provide advice and guidance to

government on the implementation of the SSP” (NL, 2003: 1). Close notes that it was to benefit from considerable freedom of action, being asked to provide policy advice to departments, and even monitor the implementation of the Strategic Literacy Plan. It was successful in its wide range of action and activity for an entity designated as consultative, this in part due to its support from the two premiers that saw it in operation, Brian Tobin and Roger Grimes. As Close describes it, this factor added to the dynamic in which the members “left their sectoral hats at the door” greatly enabled it to raise awareness of social policy within the provincial government. He notes that it failed to help build links with the voluntary sector, even to the RSC’s, which meant that neither the VCBS or the former had any “direct channel” to the premier and cabinet (Close, 2007: 9). This is ironic for an entity benefiting from strong political support at the executive level.

The second mechanism, the SSPO, was designed to manage the Strategic Plan itself, and had quite a mandate: it was to provide “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 support for the Regional Steering Committees, research coordination, coordination of activities related to the social audit, and support work for the Premier’s Council” (NL, 2003: 1). The analysis that Close conducts found that this unfortunately seemed to be quite a workload for an eight-person organization. This was not helped by the fact that its budget had not grown in the four years of its existence. Furthermore, he expressed concern for what was essentially the SSPO inventing its role along the way, not entirely surprising given that it was operating in uncharted territory. This does however reinforce the idea that not much planning was initially given to providing policy instruments, which could suggest that the plan was not a top priority in the government’s list.

There was one Regional Steering Committee for each of the Province’s six SSP regions. The committees had members representing various governmental departments such as health and education, as well as the federal, provincial and municipal levels of governments and other partners. They were designed to implement the “coordinated and integrated approaches” and achieving stakeholder and community involvement in the social development of their regions (NL, 1998: 18). As Close highlights, this was done in order to better kick-start the intersectoral partnership needed for the SSP, but had the perverse effect of “squeezing out” volunteer organization membership: his research examined two RSC’s totalling 65 people, of which only six were from the voluntary sector. Resources were also an issue for the committees; each one was supported by a Regional Planner and given some funding for travel but little else.

Prior to its cancellation, Peach wrote optimistically regarding the perceived public engagement of the SSP and Social Audit. It was thought that this level of public involvement would help insulate it from partisan challenges, as at the time of writing the election of a new government in 2003 did not seem to have had an impact on the plan. This was not to be the case; the new administration replaced the SSPO by the Rural Secretariat and did away with the RSC’s.

The analysis that Close gives us is quite interesting, and reveals inherent flaws that ultimately, taken as a whole undermined the program. He identifies five problems, the first being a lack of “deliverables,” as it did not have any concrete policies. This is understandable since the SSP was designed as a mechanism for the government and the volunteer organization to meet and

generate policy ideas, hence the process was the policy as Close says: its goal was to create proposals that would be refined and blended into the larger social policy framework to address issues (Close, 2007). This did not help the plan as this lack of concrete policies meant it had little presence.

The second and third elements related to the political culture and tradition of the province: what he calls an informally institutionalized preference for centralized government, and relatively low priority assigned to social policy innovation. Although there have been experiments in decentralized government, St. John's remains the seat of decisional power. Both of these elements were compounded by a lack of investment of resources, be it time, money and energy.

The final two elements had to do with the lack of time and resources dedicated to implementing the plan, and allowing it time to mature, thus assessing it in operation and fixing any bugs that came up. In the first instance, Close notes that if the original document was light on concrete measures, this is somewhat understandable since it was an entirely new approach to policy and collaboration. However, this lack persisted, and operational measures as to how to evaluate whether the goals were being met, and what shape the SSPO would take never really came to be. Finally, the lack of time allowed for the program to evolve did not enable it to "find its way," perhaps becoming a larger part of the social strategy. The lack of time and energy devoted to the sustenance of the plan seems to be for Close, an indication of it simply not being a priority for the government. A lack of a true post-mortem evaluation of the SSP by the government, and its stagnant budget for the four years it operated while the Province's increased considerably all point to this being a possibility.

To sum up the plan using our framework, we end up with the following:

A. *A Clear Framework and Mandate;*

The goals of the plan were quite clear, although very broad except for the last point. The mandate of the plan as a response to the needs of the population was also clear. There was no timeline for any of the stated goals, but this may make sense given the policy production nature.

B. *Effective Partnership Strategy;*

The partnering strategy did specify roles for the parties and partners involved. As for methods of evaluation and reporting the data collected from the Social Audits could help, but it was designed to help in the decision-making process. Ultimately, there were no clear methods of reporting and evaluation laid out. This is in part due to the fact that some things were quite novel and therefore did not necessarily have any antecedents for benchmarking.

C. *Fostering Engagement From Citizens and Society;*

The volunteer organizations and communities were engaged early on, starting with the consultation process. The volunteer groups being part and parcel of the process as well, since it was partially designed around their involvement. This is positive but was hampered by the fact that the link between the groups and the other political entities were not solidified did not help. In terms of sustainability, the civil society involvement may have helped but ultimately could not prevent the plan from ending due to other factors.

D. *Investing the resources;*

This is perhaps the weakest element of the SSP, as there simply was not enough attention given to investing the necessary resources throughout: the initial weaknesses in thought and planning that Close points out, to the stagnant budgets and staff allocations.

Close concludes that the SSP was a great effort in the realm of acknowledging civil society as an actor in policy, and attempting to build a framework for governance that recognizes the importance of horizontal collaboration. The much heavier use of, and reliance on community groups certainly distinguishes it from other initiatives, but it was ultimately undone by what seems to be a lack of planning regarding the shape that the partnerships would take, and by a lack of political and financial support.

3.4 Lessons

Having examined the cases through our framework, several lessons stand out. Although the cases themselves are somewhat dissimilar, the importance of their lessons becomes apparent when looking at them as a whole. The aim here is to see what exactly the cases can tell us regarding collaborative initiatives.

- **A key to the success of a program is the partnering strategy, as it outlines the roles and methods of evaluation and accountability.** In the case of NA!, the strategy was rather effective in using the initiatives at the community level as a catalyst for change. The relationship did evolve over a period of time during the initial phase, but it did so to the advantage of the program: the goals and mandate were effectively backed up by a well thought-out plan for implementation. In the case of the ALQ and LAQ, the use of already existing frameworks helped enormously, but nevertheless the process was thought out to include the realities of the large cities.

On the flip side of the coin was the SSP program, where the goals were clearly stated, as were the roles of each but the lack of a thoroughly developed partnership strategy complicated the process by leaving gaps such as in the reporting and evaluation. This would have been an important element in helping to provide “deliverables” that would have supported the program. Evidently in this case other factors were involved as well, part of the difficulty arising from operating in unfamiliar territory, so to speak. In the case of NA! the need for better coordination between municipal and provincial services was demonstrated as something that should be an ongoing effort. The complex frameworks that are used to fund assisted housing in Quebec are also an example where a lack of clear partnering can make situations more difficult, even though they have effectively evolved in a type of policy void until more recently.

- **Timelines, and clear goals given in the mandate are important support tools.** All three programs had relatively clear goals and mandates, which in at least two cases seemed to complement the strategies for partnerships, supporting these by framing the way in which they were implemented. In the case of the SSP, the goals and mandate was clear, but was not accompanied by other elements such as political and financial support, and well developed partnership roles and frameworks.

Timelines were perhaps not as crucial in the three cases studied, but they are important as they can give an indication to the level of commitment from all parties. This is perhaps best illustrated in the way social housing assistance was administered in Quebec: there was no clear mandate or goals other than unofficially wanting to help and support people in social housing. It will be interesting to see how the development of a new policy for assisted living in housing will affect the partnerships and strategies in the future, and is something that will be worth following.

- **All cases enabled us to see the importance of involving and engaging the community and citizens early on.** This dynamic is a mutually beneficial relationship as it permits an almost complementary exchange of knowledge and support, as in the case of NA!, the ALQ and LAQ projects: the participation in the former allowed for communities to start revitalizing themselves and taking charge of their environments and issues. In the latter it enables a more grassroots answer to specific housing problems and for certain populations.

As in Peach's analysis, the involvement of these groups can also help by increasing legitimacy, and perhaps better weather political events such as changes in government. This seems to be true in the case of NA! and the programs in Quebec, as the local involvement does seem to have lent support for the programs. This was not so apparent in the case of the SSP that he examined, cited as being potentially able to weather such an event, which it ultimately did not.

- **The importance of investing adequate resources is crucial,** and perhaps the most immediately apparent through the analysis of the cases. This may not come as a surprise, but does reinforce the idea that proper support, be it political, human or material can be a "make it or break it" type factor. Adequate funding, staff, time, and political energy have made the difference in the case we studied. NA!'s investments in their front-line organizations, the NRC'S, has meant they can carry out initiatives as outlined by the community.
- **The fate of any successful collaborative endeavour ultimately rests on a balance of all elements of the framework,** echoing a conclusion that was mentioned by some of the authors (Close, 2007; Bakvis and Juillet, 2004). As was the case for the SSP, where weaknesses in one area may not have caused the same outcome, rather it was a combination of lack of planning and thought given to the structures, measuring the outcomes, as well as insufficient investment of resources that contributed to it cancelled.

There is no "one-size fits all" solution as the cases show, each one is a particular way of managing issues. The lessons illustrate that regardless of the shape that a program may take, it is crucial to have the support of all parties involved including the community, to have adequate resources to back it up and see it through, and to make sure it was well thought out from the beginning. This is important for future policy initiatives, as learning from these cases and others will ultimately help make any future programs more effective and inclusive.

4. Policy Implications

The lessons highlighted by the three cases studied, as well as from the literature point to important policy implications for housing. In this age of downloading, provinces and municipalities have had to become more proactive in establishing effective frameworks for delivering and managing housing, and in many cases partnerships and collaboration have been one method of achieving these goals. As we have seen, a poorly planned and supported initiative will not be of much use, regardless of how well intentioned it is.

The calls for, and suggestions regarding a national housing policy or framework have all been accompanied with an important role given to the provincial and municipal levels of government, and community actors. As such, the lessons we have seen in the literature and the cases examined point to important policy implications for future collaboration in housing. Generally speaking, several things stand out for any future collaborative initiatives:

- Collaborative efforts in governance are large endeavours and as such require a correspondingly **important amount of initial investment to be made up front** in terms of planning, goals to be accomplished, and their evaluation. This is time well spent and seems to pay off further on down the road since the success of a program is more likely when all its components contribute effectively and support each other.
- **Enough thought must be given to the role central agencies play within collaborative initiatives, and to their support.** In the framework of analysis this element was tied into the investment of resources section, however, it is of enough importance to be examined on its own, as in most of the theory. **Central agencies are powerful allies and important catalysts** for programs; as the case of the SSP demonstrated, their involvement is not invulnerable to lapses in planning.
- **Adequate thought must be given to timelines** since many cross-sectoral issues of housing and health are not short-term problems. Accordingly there must be a willingness to ensure some form of stability for the longer term. This addresses the issue of the “pilot project” mentality where short-term initiatives are used to tackle long term issues as trials. This is fine if it truly is a trial, but part of effective collaboration is to enable a well-designed program to “ride out” its weaknesses over time, through the evolution of policy.
- **Ensuring that time and resources are committed to fostering an expertise and a knowledge base of collaborative governance.** These new initiatives are not a natural way of working for governments, thus it is normal to have a period of adaptation (Close, 2007). As collaborative and horizontal initiatives become more prevalent, it will be an asset to have people knowledgeable in effectively working in a collaborative environment. This includes time and proper efforts devoted to training and learning. Future evolutions and experiments in collaboration will help this, but also enables this “institutional and organizational memory” to be passed on within groups and governments (Thibert, 2007: 51).

Although it was not the specific objective of this paper to examine the issues at the federal level, there are certain important elements to highlight.

- **The federal government must strengthen the link between housing and its own policy directions.** An example given by Hay is the disconnect that exists between the Federal support for immigration and housing these new Canadians. It would make sense for policies to mutually support one another. More work must be done to explore avenues of collaboration within the Federal government's departments, as well as between them and other levels of government. Examples of this do exist and have been studied, such as the Homelessness Partnering Strategy.
- **It is important that housing get adequate financial support from the federal government,** as funding is crucial to ensuring that initiatives are able to operate in the long-term: the problems present in housing and other areas of social policy are not short-term in nature. Funding will likely come from many sources, but ensuring stable government funding allows initiatives to operate not as finite projects, but as constant, renewable programs. This would remove some of the insecurity from the financial burden placed on the provinces.

At the provincial level, each government has chosen different routes in their management of housing. Some provinces such as Quebec and British-Columbia espoused a more proactive role at the provincial level. Others, such as Ontario, chose to shift the responsibility to the municipal level. Again it must be stressed that there is no one-size fits all solution, nor should there be since housing needs vary from one region to another. This is especially true given the vast differences in the politics of the various provinces. There are, however, some more general recommendations that should be considered.

- **Provincial governments must also invest adequate resources in housing.** As we have seen, this support can take many forms but it is crucial that it be the right resources for the job. As for the federal level, secure funding allows programs to operate as constants, making them better able to address issues on the long-term.
- **More policy integration must also be done at the provincial level,** ensuring that housing is supported by, and supports other elements of social policy. This is particularly important at the provincial level since it is in many cases the main provider of services, such as health.
- **Provincial governments must ensure that the tools and resources committed are flexible enough to allow for the various needs and realities.** The structure of housing in Quebec is interesting in this respect, as it provides general programs aimed at various facets of housing in the province. The community groups or municipalities developing the housing are able to tailor the projects to their specific needs within the funding structure.
- **That the provinces take a more proactive role as a facilitator for housing.** For the province of Ontario, where the provincial government has disinvested itself of the delivery of housing, this has been advocated by the SHSC: the provincial government would set basic standards, leaving the actual delivery to municipalities as it is currently done. This would include working more closely with municipalities and community groups, such as ONPHA, enabling the development of policies better reflecting the varied needs and realities of housing (Turner, 2007).

Finally, there are also a few policy recommendations for municipal governments and community groups.

- **Ensure that time is spent working with local groups, allowing them to be a part of the policy process.** Manitoba's experience with NA! is an example of this, whereby the initiatives saw community groups, through the NRC's, working with the Province and cities. In Winnipeg, the municipal housing authority worked with local groups, as well as benefiting from the program itself.
- **For municipal governments to ensure that resources are available to support community groups,** in order to help them foster their knowledge and expertise. The TRG's, community groups and organizations are all important sources of support and knowledge, it is important that this be passed on. Such a practice is also mutually supportive and beneficial as it permits exchanges between municipal governments and the groups.

5. Conclusions

With housing and other elements of social policy being recognized as complex files, needing new methods of managing and delivering programs and services, partnerships and collaboration are becoming an interesting alternative. Housing and its impact on other areas of people's lives is too important a piece of the puzzle in the social fabric to ignore, and it is therefore imperative that new policies take these links into account. The increasing awareness of the interconnected nature of housing and social policy should be a catalyst in seeking out new methods of managing and delivering not just housing, but all elements of the social network.

Through the cases and the literature examined in this paper, we have seen that partnerships and collaborative governance can be effective tools for managing complex files such as housing, providing they have been well designed. The growing body of literature and case studies offers more and more lessons and best practices that will help guide housing policy in the future. Through the literature and the cases examined in this paper, it is clear that it is not an easy road to tread, and it will certainly have its growing pains in the future. It does hold promise however, providing a framework that affords avenues for participation from all parties and stakeholders involved in housing. The lessons highlighted afford interesting avenues as components of any future national housing model.

Collaboration holds promise in being a win-win situation for all involved, but it is not a panacea, and any initiatives will only be as strong as their weakest link. It is therefore important that all levels of government invest the appropriate resources in support of any future endeavours. It is equally important to ensure that all parties are participants in the process, as much as it is to ensure that the proper institutional support is given. The true value of any future programs will be reflected in their commitment to long-term change, ensuring a sustainable effort at dealing with housing issues.

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