

# **COMMUNITY-BASED ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION**

Prepared for:

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1997

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## **1.0. BACKGROUND**

The University of Wisconsin Cooperative Extension Department (College of Agriculture and Life Sciences) asked EcoLogic & Associates for assistance in their USDA/EPA project entitled "Community-Based Environmental Education Planning". Responsibilities included:

- ! an overview of the initiatives of the National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy (NRTEE)
- ! a description of some Canadian community-based EE delivery models
- ! a description of some international initiatives including work by UNESCO
- ! identification of the key components of a community-based EE model
- ! a description of skill sets required by instigators of community-based programming
- ! an annotated bibliography of resources including information on how to order or obtain the documents

It should be noted that many sections of this report are subjective rather than academic. EcoLogic & Associates was instructed to write material based on its extensive experience in the design and delivery of community-based programming. The primary author of this report is Anne Camozzi, President of EcoLogic & Associates. Editorial and clerical assistance was provided by Ms. Lisa Harrison of Anole Research and Communication. The annotated bibliography was bound as a separate document for ease of use.

## **2.0. CANADIAN COMMUNITY EE DELIVERY MODELS**

### **2.1. Round Table Initiatives**

#### **2.1.a Round Tables in Canada**

The National Round Table on the Environment and Economy was formed in Canada by the federal government as a response to a visit to Canada from Mrs. Brundtland in the late 1980's as she was preparing her report "Our Common Future". The purpose of the Round Tables was to be the major institutional response to try and integrate sustainable development into all aspects of Canadian society. The Round Table is composed of multi-stakeholder representatives from government, industry, environmental groups, community groups, First Nations groups and others. It is a non-governmental organization that works closely with government in the development of policy. The National Round Table works in many different sectors such as education, forestry, pulp and paper, and sustainable communities (to mention a few). It has been the major driving force in Canada to develop standards and criteria for consensus decision-making. This form of decision-making is the core of the Round Table process. In Canada, there is widespread belief that sustainable community development best takes place using this form of decision-making. This is based on the theory that if sustainability is to be developed, systems

must “be based on partnerships and networks, rather than on the traditional hierarchical approaches and models”<sup>1</sup>.

Round Tables were intended to be a place where senior decision-makers could meet to candidly discuss environment-economy issues and make recommendations to governments. It has been demonstrated that the multi-stakeholder nature of the round tables allows for an exchange of information that had not been done previously in Canada. This type of institutional development has grown at the same time that governments and industry have become much more involved in public consultation about a variety of issues.

As well as the National Round Table, many provinces and now even cities have established their own local round tables.

The general mandate of a local round table is to explore options and determine ways that the community or region can become more sustainable, taking the local environment, economy and social culture into account. Local round tables can facilitate and act as a catalyst for local initiatives by<sup>2</sup>:

- ! drafting a vision, principles, or goals
- ! providing information, teaching skills, and encouraging efforts in sustainable living
- ! reviewing government policies and programs
- ! addressing specific issues
- ! monitoring the state of local sustainability
- ! helping resolve conflicts
- ! enhancing community self-reliance through networking
- ! sponsoring “hands-on” efforts
- ! raising community awareness of sustainability

Each of the local round tables have been involved in education initiatives that are too numerous to document. What follows are brief summaries of some of the programs of the National Round Table’s Education Committee.

### **2.1.b NRTEE Education Programs**

The objective of the National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy (NRTEE) Education Committee is to develop, facilitate, and deliver programs and materials which encourage awareness of environment/ economy interactions and round table processes through a variety of learning settings. This is achieved through strategic initiatives divided into two

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<sup>1</sup>Canadian Round Tables on the Environment and the Economy: Their History, Form, and Function. Unedited Working Paper for Discussion. 1993. Ron Doering.

<sup>2</sup> Taken from Local Round Tables: Realizing their Full Potential, published by the National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy, pages 20-22.

categories: 1) engage learners through professional development and 2) increase awareness and stimulate debate about the relationship between the environment and the economy.

The following are community-based EE projects developed by the NRTEE Education Committee.

For information on any of these projects, contact Carla Doucet, Policy Consultant, NRTEE, 30 Beechwood Drive, Peterborough, Ontario, Canada K9J 1M4; Ph: 705 749 0415; Fax: 705 749 1287; E-mail: [cdoucet@oncomdis.on.ca](mailto:cdoucet@oncomdis.on.ca).

### **Community Based Social Marketing**

The Education Committee, with a variety of national, provincial, and local partners, held a series of highly successful introductory workshops across Canada on this community based social marketing during 1996. Community based social marketing takes several forms, but its most cost-effective version involves training community volunteers, or block leaders, who visit local homes to discuss environmental and economic issues. This involves addressing community norms and engage others in dialogue about responsible environmental behaviour and economic consequences.

The main objectives of this project are to introduce the concept of community based social marketing to organizations that want to learn about how to change how Canadians relate to the environment, and for the Education Committee to partner in workshops for municipal decision makers, program developers, NGO's, and government workers.

It is believed by the NRTEE Education Committee that conventional approaches to changing attitudes, beliefs, and behaviours to achieve a more sustainable society rely heavily on public education, with its implicit premise that changes attitudes and values translate into changes in behaviour. The Education Committee found that such approaches had an unimpressive track record, with little change to behaviour. Community based social marketing was developed as a new approach.

Workshops for training community program designers were well-attended, with an average of 35 participants per workshop who were taught the skills for the effective design of environmental and economic programs, as well as being encouraged to include strong evaluation criteria in their programs. Participants evaluated the workshop content and delivery as exceptional and highly practical. As a result of these workshops, 16 further workshops hosted by a variety of organizations and institutions will occur in the future.

### **Youth Round Tables: Training the Trainer**

The NRTEE Education Committee commissioned and published a youth kit entitled *Model Round Table for Youth Kit* with the main objective of introducing and popularizing an

alternative decision-making technique (round tables) to youth, educators, facilitators in formal and non-formal educational settings by providing concrete activities for exploring sustainable development issues and the round table process in the classroom. The purpose of this project is also to establish partnerships with educational organizations and augment other youth round table work completed to date.

This training module was created after a series of outreach sessions to determine where the Education Committee could best direct its energy. The results of these led to the decision to build on the success of the Model Round Table for Youth Simulation which has been held with over 3000 high school students across Canada. Tests in pilot workshops in Manitoba were very positive and the feedback will allow the NRTEE Education Committee to revise the module to make it even more effective.

The Education Committee has established a partnership with the national not-for-profit organization Learning for a Sustainable Future (LSF), which is dedicated to enhancing the capacity of education systems throughout Canada and principles of sustainability. LSF plans to integrate the model round table for youth process into its workshops.

### **Working with Professional Associations**

The NRTEE Education Committee seeks to build on its previous work to expose members of professional associations to the concept of sustainable development, the round table process, and consensus decision making through this project. Using workshops, the Committee will work with professional associations to capitalize on opportunities to present information at conferences and meetings.

The need for this project was targeted by the CCME (Canadian Council for Ministers of the Environment) 1995 Environment Scan which found that many professionals, given their increasing workloads, are unable to monitor issues and trends related to sustainable development. If left uncorrected, this lack in education and training could be harmful.

The NRTEE hosted, in partnership with the Association of Professional Engineers and Geoscientist of British Columbia, a pilot workshop in December, 1996. The purpose of this workshop was to evaluate the format and content of workshop material for presentation to larger groups. Based on the feedback received, the Committee is currently working on a marketing plan to present the workshop across Canada.

## **2.2. Province-Wide Case Study: Sustainable Communities Initiative (SCI)**

SCI is a community partnership which works with individual communities in the province of Alberta to develop plans for sustainability. Participating communities are encouraged to form a

local group to develop a picture of a healthy, dynamic future - environmentally, socially, and economically. The group then identifies actions which can accomplish this. SCI assists in the identification and pursuit of local goals by providing support such as facilitation services, participation from local partners, and resources for communication and education.

The SCI Alliance partners work with communities across Alberta and include Alberta Environmental Protection, FEESA, An Environmental Education Society, and TransAlta Utilities. These groups developed the SCI in 1994 in response to a report by the Alberta Round Table on the Environment and the Economy, advocating a progression from support of community activities one week a year during Environment week to supporting community actions focussed on long term goals. The main objective of the project is to help communities take meaningful and effective action using local resources and partnerships to work for a sustainable future.

Environmental awareness and education in SCI communities are an intrinsic part of the drive to become more sustainable. Environmental education is a component of the 'Starter Kits' provided by the SCI, which cover such topics as Waste Minimization and Transportation. Composting workshops and environmental auditing of small businesses has taken place. FEESA is also involved in environmental education for formal educators, which may include SCI community members. These programs are 1 to 3 day workshops or 8 day institutes covering such topics as energy and forestry.

Success of the communities in meeting their goals is measured according to 59 indicators selected by the Round Table which portray their vision of a healthy environment and economy. These quantitative measurements are incorporated into each community's plan.

For more information contact: Carrie Pecush, Community Resource Development, FEESA, An Environmental Education Society, 9<sup>th</sup> Floor, 10150 - 100 Street, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada T5J 0P6; Ph: 403 421 1497; Fax: 403 425 4506; E-mail: feesa@freenet.edmonton.ab.ca

### **2.3. Workplace Case Study: Burnside Industrial Ecosystem Project**

Burnside Industrial Park is located in Dartmouth, Nova Scotia. The Park has more than 1,200 secondary and tertiary manufacturing businesses, service industries and a working population of 18,000 people. It is mainly comprised of small and medium sized businesses employing between two and fifty people. The businesses represent a wide range of industrial and commercial sectors.

The Park as an Ecosystem program grew out of thesis research conducted under the aegis of the School for Resource and Environmental Studies, Dalhousie University, Halifax, Nova Scotia. The objective of the program was to make more effective use of resources to reduce the overall amount of waste discharged outside the boundaries of the Park.

In 1992, a survey of 278 businesses identified some of the materials used and disposed by businesses in the Park, and identified manager and employee attitudes toward the reutilization of wastes. Ninety percent of the businesses surveyed expressed interest in reutilizing wastes, and nine-five percent expressed an interest in energy efficiency and waste minimization. Subsequent surveys were conducted, by questionnaire and follow-up phone calls, covering industries in the printing, vehicle maintenance computer, chemical, metal processing, paint and coatings, and electronic sales and service industries. A waste assessment was conducted by each industry, and recommendations made to reduce waste. Follow-up calls were used as a tool to track the effectiveness of the assessment recommendations, and to determine how serious the company was in becoming environmentally conscious.

Among the needs identified were:

- X better information is needed on waste minimization opportunities
- X information sharing needs to be encouraged
- X competition should be encouraged in the recycling business
- X an educational program should be designed to encourage waste reduction

Information access was cited as a major impediment to change. Though there is a proliferation of documents and fact sheets available on waste reduction techniques and technologies alternative materials, recycled products and other information, managers indicated that they do not have much time, and do not know where to look for appropriate information.

In March 1995 the Burnside Cleaner Production Centre was established to provide services to businesses including waste assessments and seminars on waste reduction and pollution prevention opportunities.

Encouraging businesses to participate in a waste assessment is a governing factor in the success of the Burnside Cleaner Production Centre. The following methods were used to overcome some of the barriers to participation:

- X When contacting firms, it was made clear that the assessment would be scheduled around the firm's time constraints so as not to interfere with their daily routine.
- X The creation of a pre-assessment questionnaire allowed businesses to provide the assessor with valuable insights to their business processes, reducing the time necessary for site assessment.
- X To counter cost misconceptions, the Centre was established as a not-for-profit organization in the hope that this would increase the participation level. Firms were encouraged to make donations if savings accrued from the implementation of assessment recommendations.

Four years after the initial needs assessment, it is shown that it is possible to modify existing conditions in the Park to substantially improve waste minimization. Problems and barriers that were identified in this case study were addressed and solutions offered. Recommendations surrounding environmental education include:

- X Businesses have been bombarded with 'Save the Environment' messages over the last decade, most of which have been ignored. Most businesses do not relate to these messages and often feel that there is nothing they can feasibly do to change their practices and have a positive impact on the environment. Most small to medium sized businesses are focussed on remaining competitive in the short term. Industrial ecology concepts must be presented to industry as a business opportunity rather than as an opportunity to 'do the right thing'. In communication with businesses and industries in the Park, care was exercised to avoid terms that managers associate with legal problems or impending government regulation.
- X Many businesses could not implement programs such as recycling, because information was not easily accessible. Businesses need easy access to information such as case studies, fact sheets, list of companies involved in the 5R's, environmental regulations applying to their business, and new technologies on the market.

For further information contact Raymond P. Coté, School for Resource and Environmental Studies, Dalhousie University, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada, B3H 3J5; Ph: 902 494 3632; Fax: 902 494 3728.

#### **2.4. Federal Government Initiative: Action 21 Network**

Environment Canada is the federal government department which is responsible for environmental matters of a national level. It has several interesting programs which should be of interest to those involved in community-based environmental education.

Action 21 is a program which provides funds to non-profit community groups who have projects that promote action about the environment. Education and communication are encouraged as part of the program. The program, which functions, slightly differently from region to region, has a national set of criterion for evaluating projects which are interpreted by local federal government employees and steering committees with public input. It has presented many challenges to government employees in now to evaluate programs and projects.

The program includes an Action 21 Network to foster public awareness of successful Canadian environmental projects and to celebrate outstanding individual accomplishments in order to encourage others by example. Further information on the program is presented later in this report<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup>For more information contact: Action 21, Environment Canada, Les Terrasses de la Chaudiere, 10

A new trend in federal government relationships with communities is to develop multi-stakeholder partnerships including participation from other government departments. A good example of this is the Community Animation Program (CAP) which is co-delivered by Health Canada and Environment Canada to help build the capacities of local communities to improve human and environmental health. More information on CAP is written later in this document but the important aspect of this program that should be noted is the emphasis on “partnerships”. Certainly, in Canada at least there is a growing public trend towards partnerships of all forms. This has often meant that program developers have had to learn new skills and develop new attitudes towards how programs are developed and delivered. This aspect is discussed later in this report.

## 2.5. Community Case Study: River Watch

Concerned with proper management of aquatic resources, and enforcement of legislation to protect fish and fish habitat for the future, four associations with angling interests collaborated to form the Inland Fisheries Advisory Committee (IFAC). This Committee is comprised of representatives from the:

Nova Scotia Salmon Association  
Nova Scotia Wildlife Federation  
Fisheries Institute of Nova Scotia  
Canadian Association of Smallmouth Anglers

The principal purpose of IFAC is to advise and assist government in fisheries related matters. In keeping with this mandate, a training program for volunteers was considered helpful to assist government agencies in protecting, enhancing, and promoting the recreational angling industry in Nova Scotia.

Against this background, the River Watch program in Nova Scotia was born in 1996. It is intended to help volunteer participants develop knowledge, skills, and attitudes required to recognize violations and barriers to fish habitat, encounter violators, and deal with both effectively. Perhaps more importantly, Fisheries Monitors engaged in the River Watch program may prevent violations by educating landowners, anglers, and others in ways that encourage investment in ensuring healthy conditions for fish in the future.

River Watch is a cooperative program between government and private citizens. Financial resources are scarce, but money is not the only reason that River Watch relies on volunteers. The program allows opportunity for enthusiastic and willing people to take responsibility for that part of the environment that they value.

Fisheries Monitors and others in community organizations pay particular attention to that which is most needed in their area. Training of Fisheries Monitors is one component of the program. A manual is used to call attention to the skills required to carry out the job, and to offer a consistent approach to the development of those skills. A second manual is designed to help experienced Fisheries Monitors train new recruits.

The program also includes a workshop training component. The objectives of this are to:

- X develop in selected volunteers the skills necessary to ensure peaceful administration of their responsibilities;
- X provide sufficient information for participants to develop an ecosystems approach to the recreational fishery;

- X encourage anglers, landowners, and other members of the general public to join government in the enforcement of regulations designed to protect fish in their ecosystems.

The training program uses adult education techniques and principles. River Watch has been in operation for less than one year during which time approximately 100 volunteers were trained. Formative evaluation of the training and program operation indicated it to be of value in protecting the waterways and aquatic resources in Nova Scotia.

The Nova Scotia Salmon Association is the lead body for IFAC in implementing the River Watch program jointly with the NS. Department of Fisheries. For further information contact Terry MacIntyre President, Nova Scotia Salmon Association, PO Box 523, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada, B3J 2R7; Ph: (902) 867-4340; Fax: (902) 863 6055; E-mail: nssalmon@atcon.com.

## **2.6. Non-Profit Organization Case Study: Clean Nova Scotia Foundation**

The Clean Nova Scotia Foundation is an independent, non-profit citizens' organization dedicated to cooperative environmental action, and includes individuals, families, and businesses. Its mandate is to "serve the people of Nova Scotia in their pursuit of environmental rejuvenation and preservation". They sponsor a number of programs in the province, such as the Wasteless School Challenge and the Waste Busters Bureau, which help to educate and motivate people in Nova Scotia to positive environmental actions. EnviroTowns is one of the community-based action programs coordinated by them.

### **EnviroTowns**

The main objective of the EnviroTowns program is to help communities achieve their environmental and sustainability goals by heightening awareness of the interrelationship between communities and their environment. The results-oriented program manual challenges all parts of the community to share responsibility for the environment and offers a general framework for adaptation by each community in the pursuit of their objectives. The EnviroTowns program seeks to change attitudes to the overall environment rather than specific issues such as littering or energy use.

The EnviroTowns manual provides guidance to the assessment, planning, action, and review processes - and advises how to gain broad community support. After endorsement of and commitment to the program by a municipal council, the EnviroTowns Committee is formed by local representatives from a cross-section of the community. A recognized community leader and a volunteer coordinator adapt the procedures explained in the EnviroTowns manual to the community's needs.

The role of the Clean Nova Scotia Foundation is to offer resources and support throughout the process. They introduce the EnviroTowns Committee to other community groups, guide the planning of program goals, and assist and train those carrying out the projects.

The EnviroTowns project may lead to significant benefits to the community in the form of sponsorships and volunteer services. Beyond reaching their own sustainability goals, other benefits may include economic growth through increased tourism, business development, and environmental technology.

The EnviroTowns project has been only one of the successful projects of the Clean Nova Scotia Foundation. The CNSF has produced an array of environmental education materials for all ages and for many different topic areas. They also acted as a regional facilitator for the Community Animation Program. The organization is built on the theory that local communities can be empowered, trained, and networked to increase their capacity to act in ways which will benefit the environment.

For more information contact: The Clean Nova Scotia Foundation; 1675 Bedford Row; P.O. Box 2528 Central; Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada B3J 3N5; Ph: 902 420 3474; Fax: 902 424 5334; E-mail: [cnsf@fox.nstn.ca](mailto:cnsf@fox.nstn.ca).

### **3.0. UNESCO AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMS**

Unlike Canada, there have been few linkages in the United States with the extensive environmental educational developments at the international level through UNESCO, UNEP (United Nations Environment Program) or the IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources) Commission on Education and Communication. These organizations have been pivotal in spreading the word about non-formal environmental education and in encouraging sustainable community initiatives at the international level. Another important organization is ICLEI, the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives, which was started to address local Agenda 21 planning. ICLEI's projects and newsletters have documented sustainable community projects world-wide.

Of course, sustainable community projects are not just about education but its surprising to note just how important education and communication are throughout all of these international documents and reports. There is a special section in the Annotated Bibliography which highlights some of the most relevant books, newsletters, and conferences summaries. As an introduction to some of what is available, it is suggested that the University of Wisconsin attempt to obtain some of these resources.

Understanding and gaining knowledge of these important international initiatives can give the local community-based planner access to a wealth of ideas, resources, and networks and should be investigated. Because the federal government of Canada has traditionally been more involved

with these organizations, knowledge of their resources and operations is much more widely known North of the border.

Community-based EE does not have a precise prescription and readers will not find ready answers in these resources but they will be exposed to new ideas, new thoughts, and a much more global view of education, which is ultimately critically important in the development of any community EE program. It is hoped that even the smallest of North American communities will not look so inwardly and begin to expand their vision of the world so that they are thinking about their brothers and sisters to the North, South, East, and West. With constant developments in technology and communications, the world is getting smaller and smaller. The concerns of a village in the Philippines are linked to the concerns of a small rural community in Wisconsin and it is these important global linkages which can become an important cornerstone for western environmental educators.

#### **4.0. KEY COMPONENTS FOR SUCCESSFUL ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION**

The key components of successful EE delivery models include the following steps:

- ! understanding and assessment of community needs, both environmental and learning
- ! understanding of the key goals of environmental education
- ! development of key objectives for the education program
- ! design of the program including process, resources, format, timing and content
- ! implementation of the program using skilled and well-trained facilitators
- ! evaluation of all stages of the programming

This is the basic structure of the program planning process. However, within that process, the program must lead to **participatory action** in the environment and changes in knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Without changes in all three of these domains, education can not be deemed successful.

Probably the two most overlooked phases in this sequence are the needs analysis and evaluation phases. This is not surprising because these are areas where traditionally communities are lacking in skills. However, these two steps are probably the most important for successful programming. If learning programs are designed without understanding needs, then usually the program is not relevant to the learner. Additionally, if programs are not evaluated properly, then there is no opportunity to monitor success and make adjustments to the program.

One of the biggest problems in the development of successful community-based EE is that most of the people undertaking community education programs fall into one of the following categories:

- ! passionate environmental advocates with plenty of environmental knowledge but little understanding of educational pedagogy, including different process methods and the need

for balance

- ! passionate educators who have little environmental knowledge
- ! government officials (federal, state, or local) who feel a “need” for a program but who have no real background in community development or EE

There is a need to meld environmental knowledge with pedagogical or andragogical knowledge and this is not always an easy task to achieve. An additional problem is that many educators are trained only in pedagogy or formal education, rather than adult education or andragogy which is much more appropriate for environmental education at the community level. Successful programming, therefore, is designed by someone with both an understanding of the environment as well as education.

But how does one find such a creature in the local community? How can community leaders be trained in such processes? This is one of the fundamental challenges facing successful community-based environmental management and one for which there are no clear answers. This problem is enhanced by the fact that most federal and provincial (or state) funding agencies also have little understanding of the processes of environmental education and have difficulty evaluating the relative merits or pitfalls of potential community programs. In a time of dwindling resources and increasing need, the need to be able to better define appropriate programming and develop evaluation criteria is heightened all over the globe.

An additional problem is that many environmental education programs that have been developed have led only to awareness campaigns and have been more communication than education. This means, that despite enormous expenditures of time, energy, and money there are not fundamental changes taking place at the community level.

Part of this problem has to do with programs that are not action-based or designed and delivered inappropriately. A bigger problem, however, may be that processes and techniques within the education programs have not been designed to encourage local ownership and control. Good community-based EE programming must be designed using good educational principles such as participatory approaches, role-playing, case studies, etc., but also must encourage consensus decision-making and be able to deal with disputes and conflicts. Many environmental educators are not equipped to deal with conflicts and have little understanding of how to resolve the deep and divisive issues common at the community level. Education without skilled facilitation that responds to these differing values will never succeed.

It is a fact of life that there are many stakeholders in any given community and that usually these stakeholders have very differing values about the environment. As an example, when thinking about a river, imagine how many different ways that river is valued:

- ! a farmer values the river as a source of water for his livestock or crop
- ! an industrialist values the river a source of water for a factory
- ! an angler values the river for its fish

- ! a canoeist values the river for its recreational potential
- ! a Native American values the river as a source of food
- ! a naturalist values the river for its beauty and its flora and fauna
- ! an ecologist values the river for its impact on the local groundwater, for its place in the ecosystem
- ! a scientist values the river for what it can teach her

The list goes on. Very often environmental education programs are designed with only one value perspective which ignores other community values. While different stakeholders in the community are unlikely to change their values, they can learn to respect differences of opinion and work together to create action-oriented environmental education programs. This is the "tricky" part of environmental education, the part that creates the most problems. There are several solutions, however which can help determine whether a program will be successful. Effective and efficient EE programming at the community level:

- ! encourages and invites **ALL** members of the community to participate
- ! engages the learners in consensus decision-making and planning
- ! creates changes in knowledge, skills, and attitudes
- ! recognizes the program's bias and respects other values (there really is no such thing as "value-less" education)
- ! strives at all times for balance of facts and arguments and uses good science when it's available
- ! facilitates rather than teaches
- ! has a system for conflict resolution
- ! helps participants to understand their differences while at the same time encourages group participation and cooperation
- ! is cooperative rather than confrontational
- ! is built on the concept of partnership
- ! is based on an evaluation criteria which measures success both at the learner level and at the environmental level - it is important to know whether the program is really making a difference
- ! builds the capacities of local communities to continue to act

There is not sufficient time in this analysis to give all the key components of success. Further and deeper explanations of successful community-based programming are outlined in the book *Adult Environmental Education: A Handbook on Context and Methods* which accompanies this paper.

Ultimately the key indicator which will tell you whether or not you are engaged in quality programming is whether or not there has been significant and lasting change in the environment at the local level. This implies that evaluation will be on-going and that programs will be designed to have a lasting, rather than temporary impact.

## 5.0. SKILL SETS FOR PLANNERS

Planners and instigators of environmental education at the community level can come from many different sectors. They may be:

- ! government officials responsible for evaluating projects and providing funding
- ! community leaders who are seeking funding and planning programs
- ! university administrators working in partnership with communities

Whomever these planners are, there are key skills areas which are critical for the success of the programming. Of course, there are many different skills but highlighted below are areas of critical importance:

- ! understanding of the differences between non-formal and formal environmental education
- ! basic understanding of the principles and practices of adult education, especially needs assessment and evaluation (these people do not have to be experts in these areas, but at least should have an understanding of their importance). They should also understand the importance of objective-setting as well as have knowledge of all the components involved in design and facilitation
- ! basic understanding of sustainable community principles (knowledge of the three corners of the triangle and how they relate to environmental education)
- ! basic understanding of capacity-building and its relationship to community-based environmental management and action
- ! belief in the concept of cooperative partnerships
- ! belief in the importance of education
- ! basic understanding of the difference between education and communication
- ! skill at evaluating proposals and projects for their effectiveness in bringing about action and change
- ! skill in sharing vision and knowledge
- ! skill in facilitation and strategic planning
- ! knowledge and skills related to consensus principles
- ! skill at moving decision-making forward and helping others in making decisions (many good projects get stalled simply because a decision is not made)

In Canada, at least, many federal government employees have found themselves in the position of having to work with many different community groups and evaluate many different projects for which they had little or no expertise. More recently, some government departments (notably Health and Environment Canada) through programs like Action 21<sup>4</sup> and the Community

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<sup>4</sup> Action 21 is a national funding program designed to encourage and support community environmental action at the local level. For more information about this program contact Ms. Pat Dolan, Director, Environment Canada, 10 Wellington Street, 27<sup>th</sup> Floor, Hull, Quebec K1A 0H3.

Animation Project<sup>5</sup>, have been moving to partnerships both internally with other federal government departments but also externally so that they are just another member of the community. This approach, when tried, has been very successful and is a useful model to follow.

Governments and universities in order to be truly successful must see themselves as members of the community, not outside of it. It is rather ironic that many government officials in Canada at least, talk about the community as if it was a different and foreign entity, yet each one of these people was born in a community and lives in a community. In order to have truly successful EE programming, we have to break down these barriers and work together in a fashion that has the environment in mind. Skilled program planners will have a visionary view of community and see themselves as part of the community rather than outside of it.

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<sup>5</sup> The Community Animation Program is a joint program administered by Health Canada and Environment Canada. Now entering its third year it has been a community-based program aimed at capacity building at the local community level which leads to action and healthier environments and communities. For more information, contact Ms. Edith Morber, Environment Canada, Marketing Officer, Environment Canada, 10 Wellington Street, 27<sup>th</sup> Floor, Hull, Quebec K1A 0H3.