



Engage!

Changing the System

Many of the issues facing our communities are complex and require big systems change.

Affecting change on issues such as poverty, crime and education necessitates the involvement of multiple community players.

When these players come together they create new patterns of working together and achieve mutually beneficial outcomes. This, says Dr. Steve Waddell, Founding Member of the Institute for Strategic Clarity and Senior Fellow at the Tellus Institute, represents societal learning.



Waddell defines societal learning as "a process of changing patterns of interactions within and between organizations and social units to enhance society's capacity to innovate."

Societal learning:

- Generally involves the three organizational "sectors": government, business, and civil society
- Is challenging to achieve
- Requires a shift in mental models and the development of new structures and processes
- Takes time to create transformations.

[More... on societal learning and big-systems change](#)

By: Louise Kearney

Industry designed training program in BC

Despite the booming construction industry in British Columbia, homebuilders have had a difficult time finding skilled workers, particularly framers.

In an effort to alleviate this problem the Canadian Home Builders Association in BC has developed the first industry-led training program.

Their Residential Construction Framing Technician program, which began in April 2004, produces certified framers through a flexible combination of classroom and on the job training over a period of 38 to 52 weeks.

CHBA-BC believes it has developed an effective and accessible training program and prides itself on that fact that the program is committed to opening careers to under-represented groups, such as Aboriginal people.

The work of CHBA-BC is an excellent example of competency-based training and illustrates how industry can make a positive impact towards labour market reform. To date over 80 people have participated in the program, including 60 Aboriginal participants. The CHBA-BC projects that there is sufficient training capacity in the region to train up to 300 framers per year if the demand hits anticipated levels.

 [on this initiative](#)

Related Links

- [About the CHBA-BC](#)
- [Market based pathways to sustainable incomes](#)

By: Kerrie Skillen

New Trail Builder: Saint John

Saint John has always prided itself on being a community that cares.

Spend a little time with anyone in Saint John and you'll soon find out about the scores of local initiatives that are making the community a great place to live – for everyone.

The community is about to take their efforts to the next level.

Thanks to the leadership of the Saint John Business Community Anti-Poverty Initiative, the Human Development Council and the Urban Core Support Network, a collaboration of local organizations and residents have developed a community plan that will guide their efforts to substantially reducing poverty in the community over the next 10 years.

In the short term, this includes assisting up to 2,000 people access better education to employment, secure safe and affordable housing and/or through expanded investments into children and youth over the next several years.

Members of Vibrant Communities welcome the network's latest "Trail Builder" and look forward to learning from Saint John's efforts.

 [on Saint John in Vibrant Communities](#)

Related Links:

- [Saint John community plan](#)

By: Mark Cabaj

Practical Engagement

This summer Tamarack hosted two tele-learning seminars on Dynamic Community Engagement. Nearly 150 people participated in these events.

The conversations in the two seminars highlighted people's interest in finding different ways to develop and encourage community engagement at a local level.

We've devoted a section of our website to help promote an understanding of some practical ways to implement community engagement.

We've highlighted six models and processes that we have found particularly helpful. We discovered these resources through an extensive research process last summer and we hope that you will find them useful as you consider the different ways to engage with your community and with each other.

 [models & processes for community engagement](#)

Related Links:

- [More on community engagement](#)
- [Participate in a discussion board on community engagement.](#) ( members only)

By: Kerrie Skillen

Celebrating Humanity

My oldest son (12) calls it the only true international community and for this reason he lectures me that I should be more interested in watching the Olympics with him – because of course my work is about building community. This logic softens after the fifth straight hour in a day that he is glued to a TV not only looking like but also smelling like a potato. They say of the 400-hour event there will be more than 500 hours of coverage – I am sure he watched most of it!

My youngest son (8) feels like he is really part of something – every time a Canadian did well in an event he would stand up and do a jig, chanting, “We’re good. We’re good. Oh yeah!”



I need to admit that it is hard in the midst of such enthusiasm to be cynical about the Olympics...and yet.

The Olympic Games are very commercial, filled with hype and dominated by world super powers – who have the money to “craft” some of the best athletes. So at times I do get cynical about them and feel that in a world that needs a bit more cooperation and a whole lot more inclusion the games fall short.

At these moments I need only revel in the enthusiasm of two boys - whom I protect daily from watching the evening news – feeling they are too young to immerse in the fears all around us. They understand that the Olympics is sport and they see the good will within the competition, they learn about other countries, are proud to be Canadian but cheer with equal enthusiasm for some obscure African country because, well, “It was their only medal in the games.” It is easy for them to understand togetherness and in some strange way it all seems hopeful. A hope that the world really is not insane and that good people everywhere can come together to play.

And of course when you are 8 and 13 what better reason to come together than to play.

Related Links

- [Athens 2004 official website](#)
- [Celebrate Humanity 2004](#)

By: Paul Born