



Engage!

Investing in Collaboration

Tim Brodhead on collaboration

As President and CEO of the J.W. McConnell Family Foundation, Tim Brodhead leads one of Canada's largest and most progressive foundations.

The McConnell Foundation recently announced a growing commitment to the work of citizen engagement, resilience and community collaboration.



Tim joined us on January 28 to share why the Foundation chose to make this commitment and why they have invested in [Vibrant Communities](#), a bold, national collaboration.

Tim Brodhead is one of Canada's leading thinkers and is an advocate for, and investor in, building strong communities. He is well known in Canada as a progressive and passionate voice for communities and community-based solutions. ([Click here to see Tim's bio.](#))

Communities are collaborating more often to effect deep change. Though collaboration itself is not a new phenomenon, we are observing a new trend in the way in which people and organizations collaborate. Multi sectors, often with business providing leadership, are working together to effect change.

Dissatisfied with present systems for dealing with social issues, these collaborations seek to improve or change complex systems.

Increasingly, we see collaborations tackle issues such as the environment, education, poverty, crime, settlement and urban aboriginal issues.

These collaborations all have one thing in common: a belief that if we can get “the system” to work differently we can effect change.

 [on investment in collaboration](#)

Related Links:

- [The J.W. McConnell Family Foundation](#)
- [Vibrant Communities](#)

By: Paul Born

Interest in the Social Economy Grows

In 2004, the federal government responded to the growing interest in the social economy by making a significant commitment to this approach to community economic development in its [Budget Plan](#).

The government is particularly interested in “social economy enterprises that operate like businesses, producing goods and services for the market economy, but manage their operations and redirect their surpluses in pursuit of social and community goals.”*

The first national conference on social enterprise development was held in Toronto shortly after the federal government’s announcement. CCEDNet, the Social Enterprise Alliance, the [United Way of Greater Toronto](#) and VanCity organized the Canadian Social Enterprise Conference in Toronto. 200 participants from all 10 provinces attended the three-day event in November.



According to conference organizer Anne Jamieson, the participants felt the event was very useful and hope a second national meeting will be held next year.

Many participants did not realize there were so many people working in the social economy field and appreciated the opportunity to network. They also welcomed the opportunity to discuss ideas and improve their knowledge of a broad range of business planning and management tools.

A report describing the conference proceedings will be released shortly.

Related Links:

- [2004 Budget](#)
- [United Way of Greater Toronto](#)

By: David Pell

* Government of Canada, Budget Plan

Saint John Blazes a Trail

Vibrant Communities Saint John has been working hard. In the fall they received approval for their community plan and became a Trail Builder.

The plan will act as the foundation of activities which will be supported by the over 60 organizations and community residents who currently participate in the Saint John initiative.

Saint John's community plan focuses on six key strategies. They include:

1. Engaging leadership from all sectors into a robust network committed to achieving their common poverty reduction goals.
2. Helping people move forward in their journey out of poverty through the encouragement and guidance of "mentors."
3. Strengthening the collective capacity of the community to reduce poverty.
4. Measuring impact by evaluating what works and doesn't work and documenting the key advancements and learnings.
5. Communicating the community's learnings and progress.

6. Championing continuous engagement, learning and improvement in poverty reduction efforts among all sectors of the community.

Focus areas of the community plan include: investing in children, education to employment, and ensuring safe and affordable housing for individuals and families.

With all of this in place Saint John is well on their way to substantially reducing poverty in their community.

 [on the Saint John plan](#)

Related Links:

- [Saint John in Vibrant Communities](#)
- [Saint John's full community plan](#)

By: Kerrie Skillen

Urban Canada Workshop Now Online

From October to December 2004, Tamarack hosted three tele-learning seminars focused on Urban Canada and the issues facing our cities. Material from these sessions has now been compiled into an online workshop.

Cities are a hot topic. With more than 80% of Canadians living in urban areas, Canada is the second most industrialized nation in the world and our cities are starting to show some strain.



In recent years the mayors of Canada's five largest cities came together as part of the C5 initiative to promote their unique needs. Statistics show that immigrants overwhelmingly choose to settle in large metropolitan cities. Mid-sized cities and municipalities are struggling to manage growth while suffering the effects of downloading. Federally, the government is generating a "new deal" for cities.

The online Urban Canada workshop offers the audio recordings of each of the three tele-learning sessions held from October to December 2004, as well as research and related material, and links to a discussion board.

Featured speakers included:

- Judith Maxwell and Neil Bradford, Canadian Policy Research Networks (CPRN)
- Alan Broadbent, The Maytree Foundation and Mary W. Rowe, Ideas that Matter
- The Honourable John Godfrey, Minister of State (Infrastructure and Communities) and Sherri Torjman, The Caledon Institute of Social Policy

The workshop is meant to serve as a launching pad for further learning on the issues facing Urban Canada. We welcome your feedback or suggestions for additions.

 [Go to the workshop now!](#)

In the workshop you'll find:

- Summaries and audio from tele-learning sessions
- Speaker Bios
- Related Resources & Links
- Links to a discussion board

By: Louise Kearney

Harnessing Community Potential

The power of the collective good is evident in Canada. From our national medical care system, to old age security, the child tax benefit, the Trans-Canada highway, and the cooperative movement, this country has many examples of the collective power of people working together.

But what keeps us from working together to address overwhelming community issues such as poverty - especially in times of rapid change?

First, we have a tendency to blame someone else for the problem. The private sector blames taxes and big government for making them less competitive; the voluntary sector blames business for poor pay and work conditions; the middle class blame the poor for lack of initiative; and the poor blame the rich for being greedy. Blaming keeps us from working together and is a primary barrier to multi-sector collaboration.

Secondly, there is fear. This keeps us from reaching out. We fear many things (even change itself) but mostly those things that make us feel vulnerable. In a rapidly changing economy we worry about our jobs, our skills and income



Like a giant chess game,
harnessing community potential
requires a comprehensive
strategy if we are to deal with
social problems such as poverty

security. This often leads to a backlash against welfare cheats and those not "pulling their weight" in society. This fear entrenches us and encourages us to surround ourselves with the familiar as exemplified by our election of policies and governments that promote agendas that hurt the poor.

Thirdly, there is cynicism and a lack of belief in community and the institutions that were built by and represent the community. Fuelling this cynicism is the perception that these institutions have failed us, or at the very least are not adequate to cope with the change.

Blame, fear and cynicism are a destructive formula that cause inertia, fuel anger, and promote the organization of people against each other rather than with each other, working together for positive change.

 [on harnessing community potential](#)

Related Links:

- [Community in a New Millennium](#)
- [A New Way...Community](#)
- [Change](#)
- [Poverty & Community Breakdown](#)

By: Paul Born