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Community Building Conversations

When you're blazing trails in neighbourhood initiatives, it's sometimes hard to envision the path ahead. However, there are people and organizations pioneering this work across the country and beyond.

Action for Neighbourhood Change (ANC) has engaged several of these individuals in dialogue about their practice, their accumulated wisdom and the challenges they face in doing this work. The result is a dynamic conversation which we have captured and animated online, with speakers and participants sharing their rich depth of experience in neighbourhood revitalization.

Ira Barbell of the Annie E. Casey Foundation examines the impact of neighbourhood revitalization work by considering the Foundation's history, learnings and Making Connections Initiative.

Anne Kubisch and Pat Auspos of the Aspen Institute's Roundtable on Community Change discuss collaboration beyond the neighbourhood level and building capacity for collaborative work.

ANC also connects with Dr. Neil Bradford of the University of Western Ontario and the Canadian Policy Research Network to reflect on some of the learnings that have emerged from comprehensive community initiatives.

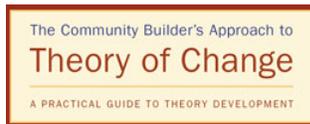
Make change and learn about making change in your community. We invite you to blaze the trails in neighbourhood initiatives along with us.

 [Read about ANC's dynamic conversation](#)

Related Links:

- [Learn about neighbourhood revitalization and community building](#)
- [Making an Impact with Ira Barbell](#)
- [Community Change with Anne Kubisch and Pat Auspos](#)

Resources



The Community Builder's Approach to Theory of Change: A Practical Guide to Theory Development – This resource from the Aspen Institute's Roundtable on Community Change provides an introduction to the concept and purpose of a theory of change. This is a valuable tool for organizations that are just starting out or are reworking their vision and practice in a creative renewal process. To read this guide, click [here](#).

It's Time to Start Connecting the Dots – In this address to The Pew Partnership, Lisbeth Schorr urges organizations involved in building stronger communities to “connect the dots in ways that would allow us to tell our story more convincingly to the wider world.” To read this keynote speech, click [here](#).



ANC Updates – What's New

Local government tool released

ANC's latest tool, *Strengthening Links with Local Government*, has been updated with valuable feedback from Communities Collaborating Institute participants, members of ANC and many others. Download this tool [here](#).

Documentary film to feature community projects

Award-winning filmmaker Sheila Petzold is producing a second documentary film for Action for Neighbourhood Change. *Five Neighbourhoods* will focus on community projects in the five ANC neighbourhoods where sustainable neighborhood renewal is under way and neighbourhood process can be seen at work. In examining the challenges faced by many communities across Canada, the film will celebrate the willingness and efforts of individuals to engage in the process of personal and neighbourhood change.

Final project meeting scheduled

The Final Project Meeting will be held February 28 and March 1 at the Delta Hotel in Ottawa. The meeting will reflect on challenges and lessons learned, and celebrate ANC's successes. As local work in the neighbourhoods continues, this will be an opportunity to build on what we have done, and look forward to maintaining and strengthening the connections we have made.

There will be a reception in the early evening of March 1 at which residents of the ANC neighbourhoods, ANC staff and the national partners will celebrate the achievements of ANC with funders, politicians, United Way CEOs and others who care about neighbourhood work.

Plan launched to disseminate knowledge

The ANC National Project Office has contracted Cheryl MacLennan to identify, capture, organize and devise a plan so that the information held by ANC will have ongoing value for future projects and research. In consultation with local sites and national partners, Cheryl will ensure that ANC's lessons will be available for reference by United Ways, government officials, neighbourhood residents, community development organizations and others engaged in neighbourhood revitalization.

Mining the ANC experience

After two years, the time has come to synthesize all the learning of ANC's dynamic action research project. Reflection sessions are now under way at all five sites, as well as at the national level. Under the leadership of the Caledon Institute, a final reflection paper will be written to provide advice and recommendations for any community or organization wanting to strengthen neighbourhoods.

Government explores the communities agenda

Building on her May 2006 presentation and her publication, *Shared Space: The Communities Agenda*, Sherri Torjman made the third of ANC's presentations to the Collaborative Community Initiatives Speaker Series hosted by the federal government on November 23. Participants from a wide range of federal departments were interested in Sherri's research regarding the way communities are organizing using a systems approach and the implications for all orders of government. One of the key roles the government can play is that of enabler, ensuring access to data, supporting collaborative work and encouraging development evaluation.