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Making the Case for Neighbourhood Investment: The ANC Policy Forum

What's the case for investing in comprehensive neighbourhood and community initiatives? What mechanisms enable governments and communities to better align their efforts? How do we evaluate these initiatives to ensure resources are well used and that lessons are captured to strengthen the work?

On October 25, 2005, the Action for Neighbourhood Change Policy Forum brought together approximately 130 participants to explore these key questions. Included were representatives from fifteen federal government departments, as well as community practitioners from the Action for Neighbourhood Change and Vibrant Communities initiatives.

The spirit of the event was captured in an opening video prepared by the National Film Board. Powerful images of concerned citizens signalled the extent of the challenges faced by some communities. Yet residents also expressed both determination and hope. Working together, with appropriate support from government, they saw concrete measures local people could take to revitalize their communities.

Guest speakers from Canada, the UK, Australia, the Netherlands and the US expanded on this theme. The Honourable Joe Fontana, Minister of Housing and Labour, signalled the Canadian government's commitment to the work initiated through Action for Neighbourhood Change. He called for renewed efforts to break down 'silos' that weaken the ability of federal government departments to collaborate in support of neighbourhoods.

Duncan Maclennan, a leading international researcher, described the logic that has led other governments to support place-based initiatives. Neighbourhoods, he said, are where a wide range of 'people policies' interact. By coordinating these policies and customizing them to address the realities of individual communities, local capacity can be more effectively built. Such 'micro policy' enables households and communities to take advantage of the opportunities that 'macro policies' create.

[More...](#) on the Policy Forum

Related Links

[Policy Forum presentations now online!](#)
[Policy Dialogue \(Caledon paper\)](#)
[Dialogue sur les politiques](#)

Resources

Neighbourhoods of Choice & Connection - This paper, prepared by Bruce Katz for the Joseph Rowntree Foundation's Centenary Event, examines the American response to areas of deprivation over the past several decades, in the hope of distilling policy and programmatic lessons for both Britain and the United States. As Katz points out, "A true rebirth of distressed areas... will only occur if we make these places neighbourhoods of choice for individuals and families with a broad range of incomes." Download the paper [here](#).

Neighbourhoods at the Tipping Point - Neighbourhoods at the Tipping Point is a study published by Jacksonville Community Council Inc. in 2003 which examines neighbourhoods in Jacksonville, Florida that are vulnerable to decline, and recommends steps that residents can take to strengthen their neighbourhood. Learn more [here](#).

ANC Updates – What's New

Neighbourhood mobilization in Simpson-Ogden

Since August, ANC-Thunder Bay has been hosting discussion groups in Simpson-Ogden's neighbourhood gathering places to engage residents with five key questions:

1. What are the neighbourhood's assets?
2. Who are the leaders?
3. What are the needs?
4. What are some possible solutions?
5. What are two solutions you would be willing to work on?

Each session has attracted between 5-15 people. Resident responses have been recorded. The information gathered will be grouped and key themes will be identified for visioning and planning in January. Information from the discussion groups will also be put into a web-based 'idea bank' for the Simpson-Ogden Neighbourhood. The discussion groups will be wrapped up by early December. Learn more about ANC-Thunder Bay [here](#)!

Community Forums held in Scarborough Village

ANC-Toronto held a Community Forum on consecutive nights in late October (27-28), to discuss how to start taking action and create lasting neighbourhood structures in Scarborough Village. Attended by close to 100 people, the forum was an opportunity for residents to discuss various priorities (housing, community safety, youth programming, ESL, public/community space, settlement services, employment). Residents indicated they want to create a neighbourhood association. Learn more about the ongoing work in Scarborough Village [here](#).

ANC First Quarterly Report Released

ANC's First Quarterly Report to federal government partners is complete. Highlights include: project set-up; early implementation; and establishment of local sites and neighbourhood selection. Download the Executive Summary of the report here:

- [English](#)
- [Français](#)

Full reports are available by contacting the [ANC national office](#).

Comprehensive Community Initiative Inventory Launched

Federal government involvement in innovative projects such as ANC is heartening. The sheer volume and variety of place-based approaches emanating from different government departments and different levels of government, however, can be confusing – particularly where they intersect (i.e. in local communities). Greater coordination and cooperation among governments, departments and voluntary sector organizations can increase the impact at the local level.

With this in mind, Action for Neighbourhood Change (ANC) is creating an inventory of information about comprehensive community initiatives (CCIs) in Canada, as well as of research related to this kind of work. And we need your help! Do you know of any CCIs that we can add to the inventory? Read more:

- [English](#)
- [Français](#)