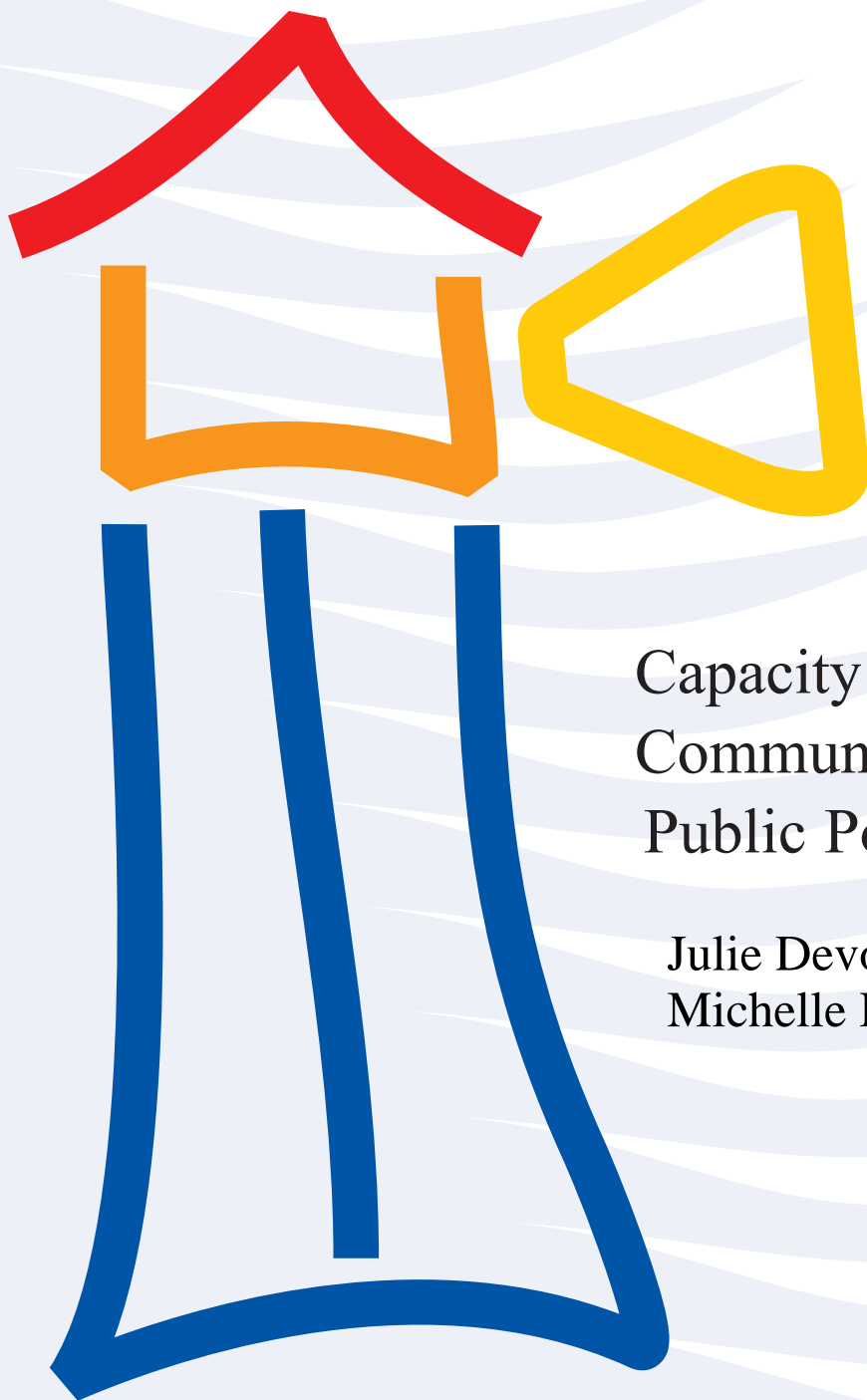


# Population and Public Health Branch

Atlantic Region



## Capacity Building: Linking Community Experience to Public Policy

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**Capacity Building: Linking Community  
Experience to Public Policy**

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## A NOTE ABOUT HOW TO USE THIS DOCUMENT

*Capacity Building: Linking Community Experience to Public Policy* is a resource designed to help people in the public sector and in the community to understand how to link community experience to the policy-making process. It considers how policy has traditionally been made, and the opportunities and challenges facing communities and systems as they strive to work collaboratively to create meaningful and inclusive public-policy processes. This tool specifically considers three questions:

- How can public policy makers tap into community experience at all levels of the policy-making process?
- How can citizens and communities move beyond lobbying as special interest groups to become engaged as partners with government officials and policy makers in meaningful dialogues and problem solving?
- How can public policy processes help to build the capacities of all sectors to work together for more credible and inclusive policy making and governance?

*Capacity Building: Linking Community Experience to Public Policy* provides ideas about how to:

- C understand the public policy process,
- C build capacities to link community experience to public policy, and
- C influence public policy.

Linking community experience to public policy can help to make the shift from:

- C disintegrating communities,
- C alienation from government, and
- C unresolved social problems

to:

- C engaged and empowered communities,
- C responsive and accessible governance, and
- C enhanced capacity for problem solving across sectors.

*Capacity Building: Linking Community Experience to Public Policy* can be used:

- C to increase personal understanding of the policy-making process;
- C as a tool to start discussions about your role within the community and in relation to government, or vice versa; and
- C as a resource to help communities and the public sector to identify their strengths and what they must learn in order to influence public policy.

Throughout this document, you will see boxes called **Something to Think About**. You can use those items for personal reflection or group discussion to help you identify both your own role, and the challenges and strengths involved in understanding, influencing and creating public policy.


## DEFINING “PUBLIC POLICY”

A policy is a guiding principle or a plan of action agreed to by a group of people with the power to carry it out and enforce it. Public policies are aimed at the whole population or at specific, targeted groups, and can be created by all levels of government as well as by institutions such as school boards, hospitals, workplaces or community organizations. Public policies are made through a process involving citizens, government officials and elected officials who, ideally, work together to set an agenda for the common good. Policies shape our daily lives by regulating such things as where and when citizens may use pesticides on their lawns, which medications and treatments a provincial drug plan will cover, or whether an employer has an obligation to hire women and visible minorities.


Policies typically reflect the value systems and beliefs of the group that created them. Those values and beliefs are usually not shared by all members of society; in fact, those values and the resulting policies may be in direct conflict with what a certain community values or feels to be in its own best interest. For example, a government may feel it is necessary to introduce a policy that requires people to pay more for prescription medications. People with chronic illnesses, who rely on many different types of costly medications, would probably not consider that policy to be in their best interest.

Many people think of the policy-making process as something that takes place only among the most powerful in society. People may be confused about how and by whom policy decisions are made, and feel that the average person is far removed from the decision-making process. This lack of understanding, teamed with potential value conflicts between communities and public policy makers and feelings of alienation, can result in people and communities feeling frustrated, angry and powerless.


Public policy influences the ways in which society and governments respond to and think about issues that impact the health and well-being of communities. It is essential, therefore, that communities learn to understand the policy-making process. It is also critical that policy makers learn how to work with communities and to tap into the wealth of knowledge, experience and diversity that can help create better public policy.



**Policy:**  
a plan of action agreed to by a group of people with the power to carry it out and enforce it.



**Community:**  
a group of individuals and/or organizations with common geography (i.e., north end community) or common identity (i.e., women's



**Community Capacity Building:**  
Strengthening the abilities of people, groups and systems to plan, develop, implement and maintain healthy communities.



Communities want to know that policy makers respect their experiences and knowledge. Policy makers want the confidence of the public, and to be acknowledged for their good intentions towards the well-being of the community. The gulf between community expectations and government intentions provides an opportunity for shared learning and linkages. Making a link between community experience and public policy can help citizens, communities and policy makers to address complex social and health problems like homelessness, poverty or safe environments. By understanding how public policy is made, communities can build their capacities to work with policy makers to find solutions to society's problems by learning to use their experiences and knowledge to actively influence which items policy makers address.

# THE CHANGING CONTEXT OF PUBLIC POLICY

## THE TRADITIONAL POLICY-MAKING PROCESS

The traditional policy-making process is one in which the relationship between policy makers and citizens is clearly defined. This is a vertical process, with policy decisions made at the top. Citizens and communities have limited opportunity for input.

### **The traditional process involves people in specific roles:**

- C as elected officials who make policy
- C as executive officers who interpret and communicate the policy
- C as managers who implement policy by directing, training and monitoring others
- C as service providers or front-line workers who inform the public and carry out policy
- C as members of the public who give feedback on policy and advocate for change.

In this traditional process, citizens and communities are rarely active participants in making decisions about policy. At best, they may be offered an opportunity to react to policy decisions that have already been made.

### **Traditional forms of citizen or community involvement in the traditional policy-making process include :**

- C elections
- C government-initiated referenda
- C legislative hearings
- C Royal Commissions
- C surveys and opinion polls
- C town hall meetings
- C policy round tables
- C advocating for change through petitions, demonstrations, letter-writing campaigns or other advocacy strategies.

In the traditional policy-making system, government and elected officials often hold “consultations” with communities to get feedback on policies that are already in place. They may also hold commissions, hearings or town hall meetings to get input on how to address an issue or to learn more about the concerns of citizens and communities. This traditional process, however, has led many citizens and communities to complain that such consultation is only window dressing and does not allow them to make meaningful contributions. They feel that in many cases, the policy makers have already made their decisions before they consult with the public, and that citizens and communities often do not know how the input they have provided will be used. This tension between policy makers and communities often results in distrust and an “us against them” outlook for all parties.

## MOVING TOWARD HORIZONTAL POLICY MAKING

Citizens are not the enemies of the state; they are the rationale for it. In the new consensus, democracy is not a spectator sport. The new democracy is about the participation of citizens. It is a journey where diversity is celebrated, the public good is negotiated, and intense deliberation and dialogue are conducted. It is about being involved. (Wyman, Miriam et al., *Learning to Engage: Experiences with Civic Engagement in Canada*, Canadian Policy Research Networks, Inc., Ottawa, 2000, p. 75-76)

Recent years have brought a declining confidence in the traditional policy-making process. Canada has a diverse society, and some groups have been systemically excluded by the traditional policy making process. Cuts and changes to funding and programs have placed a greater emphasis on working across sectors (working horizontally) to find solutions to complex social problems. Communities and citizens are becoming more vocal about their belief that government should not decide unilaterally when to consult, on what, with whom, and by what means. Both policy makers and communities have started the work of shifting the policy-making process from traditional consultations to one of citizen engagement – a process characterized by mutual trust and a sharing of power.

In February 1999, the federal and provincial governments (with the exception of Quebec) signed the Social Union Framework Agreement (SUFA). SUFA represents a growing desire on the part of both policy makers and communities to engage each other in meaningful, inclusive, transparent and collaborative policy-making processes – in policy making that is horizontal, with shared information and decision making across sectors. With SUFA, the federal and provincial governments have committed to “working in partnership with individuals, families, communities, voluntary organizations, business and labour, and to ensure appropriate opportunities for Canadians to have meaningful input into social policies and programs.” SUFA states that citizens will be engaged in the policy-making process at three stages: setting priorities, decision making, and reviewing and assessing results. In short, SUFA represents a step by policy makers toward a more inclusive, collaborative and transparent policy-making process.

This shift toward a more collaborative, horizontal approach to policy making encourages all parties to reflect and learn. It promotes a focus on common ground and recognizes that citizens and communities have important knowledge and experience to add to the debate. For example, instead of circulating and signing a petition (a traditional community attempt to influence policy), a community group might prepare a policy brief to present to government, or conduct a piece of community-based research and present their findings to policy makers. Instead of inviting community members to attend a town hall meeting or legislative committee for a consultation, government officials or elected representatives might encourage the formation of citizen’s associations or study circles that allow both citizens and policy makers a deeper understanding of an issue and an opportunity to share their knowledge, experience and opinions. Government officials and elected officials are open and honest about how the information gathered is to be used, and invite citizens and communities not only to take

part in the discussion, but also to help define the issues to be addressed and the process that will be used.

In order for such a commitment to be put into action, communities, government officials and elected representatives must each increase their capacities for working horizontally to inform and create credible and inclusive public policy. Each sector needs to identify and assess its beliefs about public participation in policy development by examining its own understanding of the process and the role each sector currently plays, and identifying the contribution each would like to make. Communities and policy makers need to understand their own capacities and to respect the contributions others could make to the public policy process.

## **MOVING FROM CONSULTATION TO COLLABORATION: HORIZONTAL POLICY PROCESSES**

Working horizontally means that policy makers and communities are committed to working collaboratively, across sectors. The traditional policy-making process is predominantly government-controlled and -initiated. In order to work horizontally, policy makers and communities must work together to make a space for citizen-initiated processes and mutual engagement. “Citizen engagement” refers to situations where governments have taken the initiative to involve citizens in policy development, including the clarification of values, principles and desired outcomes; “mutual engagement” provides for ongoing deliberation and communication between citizens and policy makers, with each group having input into defining the issues and choosing the action to be taken. Mutual engagement, or working horizontally, means that government officials and policy makers must increase their capacities to respond to citizens and communities and to ensure that their work is transparent and accountable. Citizens and communities alike must increase their capacity to engage policy makers more effectively.

### **BUILDING BRIDGES**

Linking community experience to the policy-making process requires a bridge. Some people have experience and skills in working across different sectors and with different parts of the public policy process. These are the “bridge people” who can help to build the link between community and policy makers. Bridge people help communities and policy makers to access each other, to listen to each others’ concerns, and to find common ground.

A bridge person may be someone who has worked in a community organization in the past, but now works in a government department – someone who understands a particular community’s experience and has knowledge of the policy-making process. A bridge person may work in a community organization and have skills in and an understanding of policy development, as well as credibility within the policy-making system. Bridge people understand the needs and realities of different sectors, and have the skills to build relationships and processes across sectors.



*Something to think about...*

**Are you a bridge person?**

**Does your organization have access to a bridge person?**

**How can bridge people be supported to build relationships across sectors and to link community experience to public policy.**

## **BUILDING CAPACITIES TO DEVELOP INCLUSIVE POLICY-MAKING PROCESSES**

Capacity is the power or ability to use one's own resources to achieve goals. Capacity building is the strengthening of the ability of people, communities and systems to plan, develop, implement and maintain effective health and social approaches.

Capacity building can include:

- C learning new skills
- C collaboration with other groups or sectors to share knowledge and resources
- C institutional and legal reforms
- C direct provision of resources (e.g., money, staff, office space, or expertise).

Building the capacity of an individual, community or system enhances its ability to address internal conflicts and to develop skills necessary for further action. This internal strength empowers the individual or community to work as an equal with other communities or systems toward the common goal of addressing social problems.

## **BUILDING PERSONAL CAPACITY TO DEVELOP POLICY**

Personal capacity is the ability to use personal resources to achieve goals. Personal capacity includes attitudes, skills and knowledge, including knowledge based in experience and interpersonal skills. Personal capacity is the power each individual has and can use in relationships within the community and within systems. Many people use their personal capacity to connect community organizations and government systems – these are the bridge people discussed earlier.

A person who has developed personal capacities for policy development may have:

- C an understanding of how policy decisions are made
- C the capacity to recognize one's own strengths and weaknesses, and to know and set one's own boundaries
- C the communication skills of listening, understanding and assertiveness
- C the ability to resolve conflicts with the intention of both achieving goals and improving relationships
- C respect for the experience and diversity of others
- C planning and evaluation skills for understanding issues and strategic interventions
- C leadership skills to motivate others
- C the ability to work collaboratively
- C credibility in and knowledge of one's community.



**Something to think about...**

**Which personal capacities do you have?**

**Which capacities would you like to build?**

**Which capacities could you help others to build?**

Recognizing the importance of power – both your own power and the power held by others or by systems – is also part of developing personal capacity. There are two ways to think about power as a tool or resource to achieve goals and build personal capacity: as a tool for domination, or as a tool for cooperation. Domination is the use of power *over* others by using (or withholding) resources to ensure compliance. Cooperation is the use of power *with* others by deciding together how resources will be shared and for what purpose.

Everyone has power and chooses when and how to use it. Many types of power can be used to influence public policy, including:

- C authority by job title or law
- C using skill in and knowledge about the policy-making process
- C controlling physical resources such as money, buildings and equipment
- C use of rewards or punishments
- C the ability to influence others because of strongly held values and beliefs.

A key part of building personal capacity is understanding your own power. Knowing what you can personally influence is critical to being able to understand the power you hold within a group, and the power that group holds within a system. It is also important to understand the power held by others. As you read this document, think about who holds the power to make policy decisions about the issues important to you. Often, a person may have a great deal of power by virtue of position or job title, but s/he may have little personal capacity to use that power effectively. Who holds the power to include communities in collaborative policy-making processes for the issues important to you?



*Something to think about...*

What power do you have to link community experience to public policy?

Do you use your power to cooperate or to dominate?

What different situations call for you to use your power differently (i.e., to dominate rather than to cooperate)?

## **BUILDING COMMUNITY CAPACITY TO DEVELOP POLICY**

Community capacity is a community's ability to identify, mobilize and address social and health issues. A community's capacity is directly linked to its ability to act effectively to influence change, and to engage government officials and elected representatives in meaningful, collaborative policy dialogue.

Community capacity building involves increasing the community's knowledge, skills and abilities in the following areas:

- C the ability to identify and name the issue
- C the ability to create a vision of how the issue should be addressed
- C the ability to articulate that vision to others
- C knowledge of government and non-government structures (such as hospitals) and systems and the role they play in the policy-development process
- C the ability to work collaboratively across sectors to identify opportunities for strategic intervention and ideal methods for intervention
- C knowledge of best practices to address a particular issue
- C the ability to generate and use various types of information to help identify needs, understand and communicate issues, and assess impacts of policy and interventions
- C allies in other sectors who can assist communities in developing strategies to influence policy
- C the ability to identify the most salient information and present it in the most useful format for policy makers
- C the ability to use various approaches simultaneously to influence policy (for example, generating information through community-based research, preparing policy briefs, circulating petitions, and making presentations at government-initiated consultations).





*Something to think about...*

**Which community capacities does your organization have?**

**Which community capacities do you want to build?**

**Which community capacities can you help others to build?**

## **BUILDING SYSTEM CAPACITY TO DEVELOP POLICY**

A system is a group of interdependent and interrelated public organizations, such as the health system or the justice system. System capacity is the ability of a whole system to plan, monitor and address public problems. Some systems function at a higher capacity than others, but just as with individuals and communities, all systems can increase their capacities to respond to the needs and experiences of communities in order to create better public policy.

System capacity includes the ability of a system to reflect on and use information from communities, and to synthesize what is learned into new procedures, policies, cultures and practices. Systems that do not do this well – they are inaccessible to communities, have hostile climates for workers, or make policy decisions without consultation – are unlikely to have become this way through the fault of one person. A person in a position of power may reflect the system's beliefs, but the capacity of an entire system must be enhanced for real change to happen.

System capacities include:

- C a commitment to engage communities in the creation of public policy at all stages, and to use community input in a meaningful and transparent way
- C a willingness to increase public confidence by encouraging open and consistent communication
- C knowledge of best practices on policies that are most effective in addressing a particular issue, and a willingness to listen to community expertise on best practices
- C an ability and willingness to assess the impact of policies in reference to gender, age, culture, income levels and other factors, and a willingness to use holistic approaches that cross sectors and consider the whole person, the whole community and the whole environment
- C facilitation skills to support collaborative processes for working across sectors and outside of traditional government silos
- C an ability to use plain, accessible language to clarify and de-mystify written policy

- C a willingness to integrate more traditional forms of expertise (such as epidemiological studies) with qualitative and quantitative community-based research
- C an ability to recognize and a commitment to address power and resource imbalances between sectors.



***Something to think about...***

**If you work in a system, which system capacities does your department have?**

**Which system capacities do you want to build?**

**Which system capacities can you help others to build?**

**How can your department build better ways of working across government departments and sectors to address issues in the whole community?**

## LINKING COMMUNITY EXPERIENCE TO PUBLIC POLICY

In the previous section, we considered some of the capacities that citizens, communities and systems must develop in order to be effective at working horizontally in the policy-making process. In this section, we look at examples of ways in which citizens, communities and systems can demonstrate their capacities and commitments to developing inclusive, meaningful and transparent policy processes.

### STRATEGIES FOR DEVELOPING PERSONAL CAPACITY

As stated in the previous section, personal capacity encompasses the power, skills and ability possessed by an individual to build effective relationships and engage in the policy process across sectors. Each of the capacities listed in the previous section can be developed in many ways, and the commitment to building personal capacity to working horizontally can be demonstrated through many different strategies. The following chart links the capacities discussed in the previous section to strategies for working on inclusive and meaningful policy processes:

<b>Personal capacity</b>	<b>Strategy for developing personal capacity</b>
<i>Ability to recognize one's own strengths and weaknesses, and to know and set one's own boundaries</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>C Seek out opportunities to learn about policy, the policy-making process, and participation strategies.</li> <li>C State one's limitations, interests and goals up front.</li> </ul>
<i>Communication skills</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>C Listen actively and respectfully.</li> <li>C Develop skills in research, writing and making presentations.</li> </ul>
<i>Ability to resolve conflicts with the intention of achieving goals and improving relationships</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>C Approach situations and people with the intent to learn and share.</li> <li>C Create opportunities to listen to other points of view.</li> </ul>
<i>Respect for the experience and diversity of others</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>C Learn about the role of systems and communities in public policy work.</li> <li>C Seek out people of diverse backgrounds and experiences with whom to work on policy issues.</li> </ul>

<b>Personal capacity</b>	<b>Strategy for developing personal capacity</b>
<p><i>Leadership skills to motivate others, along with the ability to work collaboratively</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>C Gain confidence and skills as a motivational leader by articulating vision to others in your community; gradually take your message to increasing levels of authority.</li> <li>C Seek out opportunities to learn skills in collaborative work through continuing education and involvement with community groups.</li> </ul>

## STRATEGIES FOR DEVELOPING COMMUNITY CAPACITY

Community capacity to engage meaningfully in the policy-making process can be linked to the following strategies:

<b>Community capacity</b>	<b>Strategy for developing community capacity</b>
<i>Ability to work with other sectors to identify opportunities and methods for strategic and meaningful collaboration</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ⓒ Develop citizen’s associations or study groups to encourage space for learning, discussion and sharing of experiences before entering into policy discussions.</li> <li>Ⓒ Take advantage of bridge people and get to know people who can open doors for you.</li> </ul>
<i>Ability to identify best practices to address a particular issue</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ⓒ Conduct community-based research and liaise with other organizations that may be interested in similar issues.</li> </ul>
<i>Capacity to generate information to help identify needs, understand and communicate issues, and assess the impacts of policy</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ⓒ Partner with organizations experienced in conducting needs assessments and policy briefs.</li> <li>Ⓒ Create information for policy makers that is constructive and well-researched.</li> <li>Ⓒ Present options and consequences, and justify your recommended course of action based on your research.</li> </ul>
<i>Knowledge of what types of information or formats can be easily used by policy makers</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ⓒ Liaise with a bridge person who can help you to understand your audience, and who holds the power to make policy decisions.</li> </ul>
<i>Ability to consider several approaches and to use them simultaneously to influence policy</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ⓒ Target various types of strategies and actions to appropriate persons and sectors.</li> </ul>

## STRATEGIES FOR DEVELOPING SYSTEM CAPACITY

In many ways, systems face the biggest challenge in learning to work horizontally. Traditional top-down decision-making processes are the normal way of creating and working with policy for most government officials and elected representatives. Governments showed a willingness to work collaboratively when they created the Social Union Framework Agreement. In order to move from consultation to collaboration, however, governments need to make a commitment to changing policy-making processes. People working in systems need to ask themselves the following questions to determine the level of their commitment:

- How do we decide how and when to involve citizens and communities in the policy process?
- On what terms do we engage citizens and communities?
- Do we involve other sectors in defining the issues and designing the process?
- Which decisions are made *before* the public is involved?
- Which decisions are open for discussion?
- How do we use input from other sectors? Do we make it clear at the outset how input will be used?
- Are we transparent – do we make it easy for other sectors to obtain information from us?


System strategies for linking community experience to policy development include:

<b>System capacity</b>	<b>Strategy for developing system capacity</b>
<p><i>Commitment to use community input in a meaningful and transparent way</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>C Clarify areas where communities can have a voice in the policy-making process.</li> <li>C Include communities early in the process, and ensure that they have the opportunity to help set the agenda for policy discussions.</li> <li>C Provide training grants to organizations that wish to build their capacities to engage in the policy process.</li> <li>C Ensure meaningful public roles on advisory groups or councils.</li> <li>C Recognize that communities are able to initiate and complete their own processes without the direct involvement of governments, and that the information generated through these processes has value and merit.</li> <li>C At the beginning of any process, be clear and open about how input will be used, and how information generated will be shared.</li> <li>C Commit to making policy decisions only at the conclusion of the process, and to taking all input from communities into account.</li> </ul>

<b>System capacity</b>	<b>Strategy for developing system capacity</b>
<i>Capacity for open and consistent communication</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>C Ensure that information is shared through a variety of means so that it is accessible to a diverse audience (i.e., through listservs, newsletters, mailings, notices, Web sites, advertisements, etc.).</li> <li>C Governments should build provisions for deliberative and trust-building activities into work plans and annual reporting so they are clearly accountable for their commitments to increased citizen and community engagement.</li> <li>C Information is shared well in advance of policy decisions.</li> <li>C Communities play a role in creating and reviewing documents.</li> </ul>
<i>Knowledge of best practices on policies that are most effective in addressing a particular issue, and a willingness to listen to community expertise on best practices</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>C Increase opportunities for communities to share expertise by encouraging the development of policy briefs and position papers, study groups and meaningful consultations.</li> <li>C Explore current models that are demonstrably engaging all sectors in ongoing communication.</li> </ul>
<i>Ability and willingness to assess the impact of policies in reference to gender, age, culture, income levels and other factors</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>C Seek out diverse community representation.</li> <li>C Seek out new sectors and groups with which to work.</li> <li>C Develop tools and processes to analyse the impact of policies on these factors.</li> </ul>
<i>Facilitation skills to support collaborative processes for working across sectors and outside of traditional government silos</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>C Train staff in facilitation.</li> <li>C Ensure that the policy process is sufficiently long to allow meaningful debate, learning and input.</li> <li>C Ensure that schedules are flexible and venues are accessible and neutral.</li> <li>C Ensure staff have adequate resources to facilitate intersectoral processes.</li> </ul>



System capacity	Strategy for developing system capacity
<i>Willingness to integrate more traditional forms of expertise (such as epidemiological studies) with qualitative and quantitative community-based research</i>	C Gather and analyse community-based research and make funding available for both qualitative and quantitative community-based research.



**Something to think about...**

**What needs to be done in your system to improve collaboration among sectors?**

**What can you do within the system to link community experience to public policy?**

## THE CHALLENGE

Many people feel cynical about the policy-making process. They feel alienated from it, and lack hope that they can make a meaningful contribution to social change. A shift, however, is possible. It begins with embracing the knowledge, skills, experience, energy and potential for change that already exists in our communities and organizations, and building capacities across sectors to move together into action.

This shift cannot come without hard work at capacity building. We need to create processes that will allow and encourage meaningful mutual engagement at all stages of the policy-making process. There is a need to develop structures that are citizen-driven and that use a holistic approach to address issues of health and social well-being. There is a need to recognize that creating public policy is not solely the domain of the powerful or influential; meaningful participation in the creation of policy is a responsibility and right of all sectors and each individual.

Success in linking community experience to public policy development will both require and be demonstrated by:

- C community development – communities identifying and drawing on their own strengths and resources, and voicing their concerns effectively
- C responsive government – governments seeking out community participation in policy development and planning with communities to share power and responsibilities
- C social and cultural diversity – governments recognizing the need for equity in the delivery of services, and all sectors building relationships that respect and embrace diversity
- C economic development – empowered communities creating local wealth and influencing external economic forces, and governments addressing financial power imbalances by allocating resources to allow all sectors to participate in policy processes
- C infrastructure – the resources for supporting community development and enhancing communities’ capacities to create wealth and well-being
- C environment and natural resource management – enhancing environments, and protecting and reversing the degradation of natural environments.

This snapshot of what success would look like reflects the need for holistic approaches to societal well-being and policy-making processes. The complexity of issues and the many players involved show the need for collaborative and coordinated processes.

Examples of collaborative and coordinated holistic approaches are available. Knowledge of policy, community and organizational development exists. Resources for building skills in communication, problem solving and collaboration are abundant.

The challenge for communities is to develop the capacity to contribute to policy processes. The challenges for systems and policy makers include valuing and recognizing community experience, developing policy processes that involve community at all phases and valuing and respecting all

individuals in the dialogue to find solutions. Systems and policy makers must develop capacities for listening to and using community contributions. All sectors must work together to develop capacities for holistic approaches to addressing issues that impact the health and well-being of all society.

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