

"Working Together" Series – Paper #1

**Working Together in FCSS –
GIFTS AND CHALLENGES**

**Family and Community Support
Services Association of Alberta**

Family and Community Support Services

Family and Community Support Services (FCSS) is a municipal-provincial program through which a municipality or Métis settlement may provide preventive support and community development services. The province funds up to 80% of the net cost of FCSS programs, while local governments contribute at least 20%.

FCSS is an optional program – municipalities and Métis settlements choose whether or not they wish to participate. Within the broad guidelines of the *Family and Community Support Services Act and Conditional Agreement Regulation*, municipalities determine how they will organize their FCSS program, what community issues they will address, and what FCSS services, if any, will be developed in response to local priorities.

Family and Community Support Services Association of Alberta

The Family and Community Support Services Association of Alberta ("FCSS Association") is a provincial organization of FCSS programs. The Association is private, non-government, not-for-profit and voluntary (that is, membership in the Association is optional). The Association is a registered society operated by and for the member FCSS programs.

The mission of the FCSS Association is to unite and strengthen the FCSS community by representation and advocacy on behalf of member boards. The FCSS Association fosters networking, education and advocacy; investigates issues of common concern to community FCSS programs; and develops critical tools to assist communities and local programs to meet local mandates and needs.

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THANK YOU

- To Alberta Family and Social Services, whose support made the "Working Together" project possible.
- To the 62 individuals representing FCSS programs, municipalities and Métis settlements who participated in interviews and contributed insights, examples and sample documents by phone, fax and E-mail.
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- To the nearly 60 individuals in FCSS, Health and Child and Family Services who agreed to review draft versions of the six "Working Together" papers.

Family and Community Support Services Association of Alberta

Box 11054, Edmonton, Alberta T5J 3K4
Phone/fax (780)464-3136

Web site: [http://psn.sas.ab.ca/webboard/\\$webb.exe/~77](http://psn.sas.ab.ca/webboard/$webb.exe/~77)

The FCSS Association "Working Together" project

The FCSS Association's "Working Together" research project grew out of frequent questions and discussions among FCSS programs, about ways to work together within and between municipalities, and with regional authorities that affect communities.

With the support of Alberta Family and Social Services, the FCSS Association conducted a research project to learn the experiences of FCSS programs in working with others, in order to identify models of working together.

The FCSS Association board appointed a "**Working Together**" Committee to oversee the project:

- Sheryl Fricke, Strathcona County
- Colleen Jensen, Red Deer and District
- Greg Pratt, Barons-Eureka-Warner
- Wendy Gregorwich, Camrose and District
- Joe Bath, Wood Buffalo

Assisting the committee was the consulting firm of **Hutchinson Associates.**

1002, 10611-98 Avenue, Edmonton, Alberta T5K 2P7

Phone (780)429-3369 , Fax (780)424-4888, E-mail hutch@mrg.ab.ca

Consulting team members for this paper were:

- Bonnie Hutchinson, project manager, lead writer, researcher
- Margaret Holliston, lead researcher and writer
- Karen Titanich, researcher

This is one of six papers developed to assist FCSS programs in working together with others. The papers are:

Theme One: Working together overview

- Paper #1: Working together in FCSS – gifts and challenges (*this paper*)

Theme Two: Working together in FCSS communities

- Paper #2: Working together within municipalities and Métis settlements
- Paper #3: Working together between municipalities
- Paper #4: Working together with community organizations

Theme Three: Working together with regional authorities

- Paper #5: Working together with Child and Family Services Authorities
- Paper #6: Working together with Health Authorities

All papers are available on request from the Family and Community Support Services Association of Alberta

Box 11054, Edmonton, Alberta T5J 3K4

Phone/fax (780)464-3136

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Working together in FCSS – GIFTS AND CHALLENGES

PREVIEW

The purpose of this paper

The over-all purpose of this paper is to provide information that will assist FCSS programs in working with other organizations. Although this is the Introductory paper of the "Working Together" series, it was the last of the papers to be developed, and is based on a synthesis of patterns identified in the other five papers. This paper provides theoretical information about working together in general, and summarizes:

- Why FCSS programs work with others;
- Bridges and barriers to working together;
- Working across organizational "cultures;"
- Three challenges/opportunities for FCSS working together in the future.

The other five papers in the series provide information about working together with specific types of municipal, community and regional organizations. In contrast to the other five "working together" papers, this paper also includes consultant opinions.

The four main points of this paper

The "working together" project identified patterns that recur at local and regional levels. Based on these patterns, **the four main points of this paper** are:

1. FCSS works together with others because of its mandate, and also because working together helps to achieve program objectives such as strengthening community (*pages 3 to 6*).
2. Working together requires effort, time and skill. The project identified both bridges and barriers to working together (*pages 7 to 11*).
3. Working relationships across organizations and sectors have characteristics similar to cross-cultural relationships. FCSS can benefit from adapting cross-cultural understanding and skills to cross-sector working relationships (*pages 12 to 22*).
4. The consulting team believes FCSS faces three "working together" challenges – which are also opportunities:
 - Working effectively with regional authorities (*pages 23 to 26*).
 - Working with others to capitalize on growing interest in "determinants of health," "risk and protective factors" and "resilience" (*pages 27 to 28*).
 - Working with others to develop ways to "measure prevention" (*pages 29-30*).

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Working together in FCSS – GIFTS AND CHALLENGES

A. **WORKING TOGETHER IS WHAT FCSS DOES**

Researching the "Working Together" project re-affirmed that Family and Community Support Services (FCSS) programs do much of what they do in relationship with others:

- Other departments of their local municipality or Métis settlement;
- Other municipalities;
- Community agencies and organizations;
- FCSS programs in other communities and regions;
- Regional authorities in health, education and children's services;
- Provincial and federal government departments and programs.

FCSS works with others in many ways and for many purposes. In general the range is:

- **Information exchange** – for networking and general shared awareness.
- **Short term help;** mentoring – FCSS providing practical help (e.g., making photocopies) or helping to make connections between individuals and agencies with common interests.
- **Planning joint events** – FCSS as initiator or one partner in a community event.
- **Planning and carrying out community processes** – FCSS as initiator, facilitator or participant to involve many people in identifying and responding to community needs.
- **Contracted arrangements** for the purpose of providing specific services – FCSS programs can be both contractors of services and contracted service providers.
- **Becoming part of a larger organization** – FCSS as part of a multi-municipal program or Community Services department; FCSS as one partner in a joint community project.

Several people who reviewed earlier draft versions of this paper commented that the concepts of working together between organizations and systems also apply to working with individuals and families. Similar dynamics occur when working person to person or organization to organization.

B. WHY FCSS WORKS WITH OTHERS

1. Mandate to cooperate

The *FCSS Act and Conditional Agreement Regulation* states that an obligation of municipalities and Métis settlements in the FCSS program is "to encourage and facilitate cooperation and coordination with allied service agencies operating within the municipality." Thus, FCSS is legally obligated to work with others. Other municipal obligations are:

- To promote, encourage and facilitate the involvement of volunteers;
- To promote efficient and effective use of resources;
- To promote, encourage and facilitate the development of stronger communities;
- To promote citizen participation in planning, delivery and governance of the programs and services provided under the FCSS program.

These obligations would be difficult to carry out without cooperating with other agencies and organizations.

Even if cooperation and community involvement were not regulated, **FCSS philosophy** places a high value on people and organizations who are affected being involved in identifying issues and deciding what to do about them. FCSS perceives working with others to have intrinsic worth.

FCSS needs to work with others to accomplish its service goals. According to the FCSS Regulation, any services offered through the FCSS program must:

- a. Be of a preventive nature that enhances the social well-being of individuals and families through promotion or intervention strategies provided at the earliest opportunity; and
- b. Do one or more of the following:
 - Help people develop independence, strengthen coping skills and become more resistant to crisis;
 - Help people develop an awareness of social needs;
 - Help people develop interpersonal and group skills which enhance constructive relationships among people;
 - Help people and communities to assume responsibility for decisions and actions which affect them; and
 - Provide supports that help sustain people as active participants in the community.

As illustrated in the "Spiral of Capacity Building" model on the next page, processes that involve people in planning and responding to community issues all help to increase awareness, skills and capacities within individuals and communities. Thus, the **process** of working with others helps FCSS to accomplish its service **objectives**.

2. FCSS and the spiral of capacity building

The Spiral of Capacity Building¹ model emerged from a health project in Nepal that had involvement from the Division of International Development, University of Calgary. The community and professional people who worked together to evaluate their progress identified this "spiral" process by which their community increased its capacity to foster better health.

¹ The model is described in "Process Evaluation of Nepal Health Development Project" by Dr. Sheila Robinson and Philip Cox, Division of International Development, University of Calgary, 1994.

The two arrows were added by Ted Archbold of East Central Communities Association for Sexual Abuse Treatment (now Association of Communities Against Abuse). He identified the two factors of "head to heart" and "bridge of relationships" based on his experience helping rural Alberta communities to become involved in creating community resources for individuals and families affected by sexual abuse.

Robinson and Cox (see previous footnote) explain the "Spiral of Capacity Building" as follows:

"The 'spiral' model of capacity building developed by the NHDP ... assumes that behind every (visible new development) there are less visible but equally important changes in individual and group knowledge, skills and attitudes. Similarly, it assumes that behind every improvement in the design and delivery of (local services) there are changes in the way (service personnel) view their roles those of their colleagues, and the needs of their consumers. Indeed the model assumes that even where there are no visible improvements to look behind, there may be important changes taking place in the capacity of people and organizations to improve the quality of life. ...

"The Process Evaluation of the NHDP was founded on the assumption that new knowledge, skills, and attitudes influence ever larger circles of people within an organization, institution or community. In so doing, capacity building represents the means by which the NHDP achieves its purpose – a closer fit between consumer need and health service delivery.

"This concept is represented in (the diagram). The figure shows a spiral in a box. The spiral is narrow at the bottom and becomes wider as it winds upward. At the bottom... is the initial exposure to problems and ideas. As the ideas are discussed they might generate enough support to be transformed into a plan of action. Contained in this plan will be one or more activities. The activities of a capacity building process may bring groups of people who can affect the desired change(s) into direct contact with those organizing the activity. Once in contact, existing knowledge, skills and attitudes may be sharpened and new knowledge, skills and attitudes may be acquired.

"From this point on, knowledge, skills and attitudes may begin to affect ever widening circles of people. Changes in knowledge, skills and attitudes may lead to corresponding changes in individual behavior. Changes in behavior, exhibited by the person(s) directly involved in the activity, will influence changes in their own immediate work place or community settings. This may lead to concrete changes in the way things are done. Others may start to notice the changes and, if they like them, may support the new ways of doing things. Indeed, this level of support may increase to the point where the changes become institutionalized – a part of the way things are usually done."

The relevance to FCSS is that the "spiral" process is very similar to processes described by FCSS representatives when they talked about working with others in their community.² The very process of involving people is itself the method of achieving FCSS service objectives such as:

- Help people develop an awareness of social needs;
- Help people develop interpersonal and group skills which enhance constructive relationships among people;
- Help people and communities assume responsibility for decisions and actions which affect them;
- Provide supports that help sustain people as active participants in the community.

² Paper #4 of the "Working Together" series, *Working together with community organizations*, describes a community process often used by FCSS programs, and the ways FCSS works with others at each phase of the process. There are similarities to the "spiral" process described above.

C. BRIDGES AND BARRIERS TO WORKING TOGETHER

Interviews in this project reflect that "working together" does not just happen. Forming and maintaining working relationships across organizations and sectors requires an investment of time, effort and skill. Sometimes working together means decisions take longer and actions are slowed down. Relationships with people in organizations that operate differently can be frustrating.

Working together may be well worth the effort when:

- The issue affects more than one sector or stakeholder group;
- The issue can benefit from help and resources available from more than one sector or stakeholder group;
- Action requires the sanction and support of more than one group.

Most community issues with which FCSS deals have these three characteristics!

The interviews and other data gathered during this project identified recurring themes for "what makes it work." Seven areas in which there can be bridges or barriers to working together include:

- Perceptions, vision, values and goals;
- Leadership;
- Organization and system conditions;
- Relationships;
- Agreements;
- Personal characteristics;
- Strategies and processes.

Characteristics are summarized in the charts which follow. Several reviewers of this paper commented that the bridges and barriers may apply to relationships between individuals, as well as between groups or organizations.

BRIDGES	BARRIERS
<p>PERCEPTIONS, VISION, VALUES, GOALS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shared vision of healthy, happy communities • Perception of mutual self interest • Compatible vision, goals, philosophy, values • Focus on community needs and issues • Commitment to common goals on behalf of children, youth, families and communities – goal-oriented cooperation • Driven by mission rather than own survival needs; if another agency offers services in similar areas, seeks opportunity to work together for benefit of clients and community. • Agency or system sees human services as an investment with high payoff; sees working with others as an opportunity to amplify benefits. Delegates control to expand creative opportunities. 	<p>PERCEPTIONS, VISION, VALUES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No sense of shared vision or purpose <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Belief we have nothing in common • Incompatible vision, goals, philosophy, values <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on individual issues, advantages • Commitment to own organizational goals on behalf of own system or stakeholders; unwilling or unable to work for bigger picture <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Driven by own survival needs rather than mission; if another agency offers services in similar areas, seeks to protect turf and compete with or shut down other agency. • Agency or system see human services as an obligation or moral duty or "necessary evil" with a high cost. Needs strong control out of desire to ensure costs are contained.
<p>LEADERSHIP</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Directions, incentives and support of people in positions of authority to encourage local and regional cooperation across sectors. • At strategic times during a process, have "authorized" people at inter-group meetings. • Leadership that allows or encourages flexibility to make joint efforts possible. 	<p>LEADERSHIP</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No direction or encouragement to invest time and energy in cooperation across sectors. • No access to "authorized" people to lend support to process or to make decisions. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership that requires the same standardized procedures regardless of other external players.

BRIDGES	BARRIERS
<p>ORGANIZATION AND SYSTEM</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organization that systematically stays aware of external environment and seeks out opportunities for partnerships. • Cooperation, coordination, integration seen as shared responsibility of whole system and all individuals within it. • System or organization incentives and rewards for working with others outside the organization (e.g., "demonstrated cooperation with others as evaluated by them" as part of performance appraisal). • Good administrative systems to ensure information exchange and ability to evaluate what is happening. • Willingness to adapt administrative systems to make cooperation easier (e.g. common funding application forms). • Cultivating and nurturing relationships between key individuals in different systems. 	<p>ORGANIZATION AND SYSTEM</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organization or system that is "a world unto itself;" does not think of or value partnerships. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cooperation, coordination, integration delegated to specific person or work unit. Others feel "It's handled, it's their job, we have no responsibility." • Disincentives to work with others (e.g., no time to attend meetings or events with others; "do it on your own time" attitude to relationships with other community players. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administrative inability to compile and distribute information that helps evaluate what is happening. • Unwillingness to adapt administrative systems to make cooperation easier. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Little or no contact with people in other systems.

<p>RELATIONSHIPS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive history (success breeds success) • If negative history, willingness to talk about previous difficulties and make a fresh start. • Key players willing to sit down informally and figure out how to make it work • Regular networking and opportunities for formal and informal communication • Willingness to invest time in learning about one another's systems • Invite all the partners to the table • Partners have equal voices • Partner organizations have secure sense of their own identity, so it is safe for them to interact with others. • When conflict is a threat, partners help each other keep their perspective and focus 	<p>RELATIONSHIPS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No history of contact, or negative history. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unwillingness to move past previous difficulties and open the door again. • Key players do not know each other and do not meet informally. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Few opportunities for informal communication; no formal communication. • No interest in learning about one another's systems . • Only some partners involved in meetings. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some partners "more equal" than others; in-group and out-group. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partner organizations feel need to defend their turf. • When conflict emerges, partners withdraw or attack rather than re-focus on goals.
<p>PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kind, trusting, tolerant, respectful, patient • Ability to speak less and listen more • Openness to be vulnerable. Courage to embrace uniqueness of others who are different. • Willingness to keep coming back, even when frustrated • Know thyself -- know your own organization, know yourself as an individual player • Willing to be a team player • Include both "detail" and "idea" people in the partnership, and appreciate their differences. 	<p>PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Judgmental, critical, distrustful, impatient, disrespectful, unforgiving <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to speak more than listen • Need to protect self, be closed. Reluctant to get to know and understand "weirdness" of others who are different • Discouragement, giving up, cynicism, unwilling to come back and try again <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insecurity in personal or organizational identity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prefer to act alone • Include only people with similar styles; discount contributions of those who are different

BRIDGES	BARRIERS
<p>AGREEMENTS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Organic" membership – partnerships fit natural groupings and territories. • Free choice. Each partner recognizes that sharing is in self-interest. • Common interpretations of fairness. • Clear purpose and intended outcomes. • Clear understanding of what each partner will contribute. Clarify roles. • Regular formal mechanisms to communicate. Misunderstandings recognized early and dealt with. • Willingness and regular mechanisms to re-visit agreements and adjust. 	<p>AGREEMENTS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Membership determined by external reasons that feel artificial to those involved. • Members feel forced or coerced to be part of agreement; do not perceive self-interest. • Resentment over "not getting our fair share." <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fuzzy purpose and intended outcomes. • Assumptions about what each partner will contribute. Little explicit discussion. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Irregular or no formal mechanisms to make it easy to identify misunderstandings early so they can be handled. • No automatic regular review of agreements to make adjustments as appropriate.

<p>STRATEGIES AND PROCESSES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cooperation begins quietly behind the scenes. • Start at the beginning – again. Connect new players as they join. • Regular opportunities for information sharing among community groups, so anyone with an idea knows who to call. • Have someone (often FCSS) to connect initiating people with others. • "More than one way to do almost anything." Flexibility. • Shared location or shared opportunities for quick and easy contact. • Work on one or two concrete issues that you can put boundaries around. • Start with what's easy. Start where there is hope of success. Start small. • Give people something they can say "yes" to without changing their mandate or stretching their resources. • Create a few early successes to build momentum to cooperate. 	<p>STRATEGIES AND PROCESSES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public beginnings; no private opportunities for people to sound out each other • Carry on as if nothing has changed when a new person joins the process. • Few opportunities for people of different groups to come together regularly. Someone with an idea unlikely to know who to call. • No one to help connect people with ideas to people with common interests or resources. • Limiting the ways things are allowed to be accomplished. • Diverse locations and few opportunities for quick and easy contact. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Try to deal with the whole "big picture" before any action can begin. • Tackle the toughest issues first (a set-up for failure that may mean the process stops) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask people to do things that are visibly outside their mandate or beyond their resources (They will probably say "no") • Start with something unlikely to succeed, which gives people a reason not to cooperate.
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D. WORKING ACROSS ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURES

During the "Working Together" project, the consulting team noticed similarities between comments made when people talked about working with other organizations, and characteristics of working across cultures.

The word "culture" was first heard in interviews with FCSS representatives talking of their experience in working with other municipal departments (for example, "We noticed the recreation department has a different culture than we do. We learned to lighten up!"). The consulting team especially noticed similarities to "cross-cultural" dynamics when FCSS, Health and Child and Family Services representatives talked about working relationships between regional and community organizations.

If every organization and system has an organizational "culture," then "cross-cultural" issues are likely to surface when people of different organizations or sectors try to work together. This section provides information about cross-cultural dynamics:

- Clues that a situation may involve cross cultural issues;
- The iceberg analogy: visible and invisible culture;
- Stumbling blocks to inter cultural communication;
- Stages of developing cultural sensitivity;
- Strategies for working with different organizational cultures.

The intention in presenting this information is that, like the consulting team, other readers may also see similarities between cross-organizational and cross-cultural working relationships, and find it useful to adapt cross-cultural understanding and strategies to working together with others.

1. Clues that a situation may involve "cross cultural" issues

It is not always obvious that an interaction includes cross-cultural dynamics. However, there are behavioral, thought process and emotional clues that cross-cultural dynamics may be part of what is happening. Any of the clues listed below could mean something else. If you experience a number of the clues listed below, you might consider the possibility that "different organizational cultures" are affecting what is happening.

Behavioral clues that you might be dealing with "cross-cultural" issues:

- Some people in a group appear to think everything is progressing fine, while others are distressed, angry or frustrated.
- Some partners simply withdraw without explanation.
- You are aware that something is going on that you don't understand but you don't know what it is and may not even be able to describe it.
- A group appears to come to an agreement, but later discovers that different partners have very different understandings of what the agreement was.

- Months into a planning or negotiation process, different partners realize they have very different perceptions about what the purpose and intended results are.
- Things happen that are a complete surprise and that don't make sense.
- People feel physically drained or exhausted, or conversely, exhilarated or restless or stimulated during and after interactions.

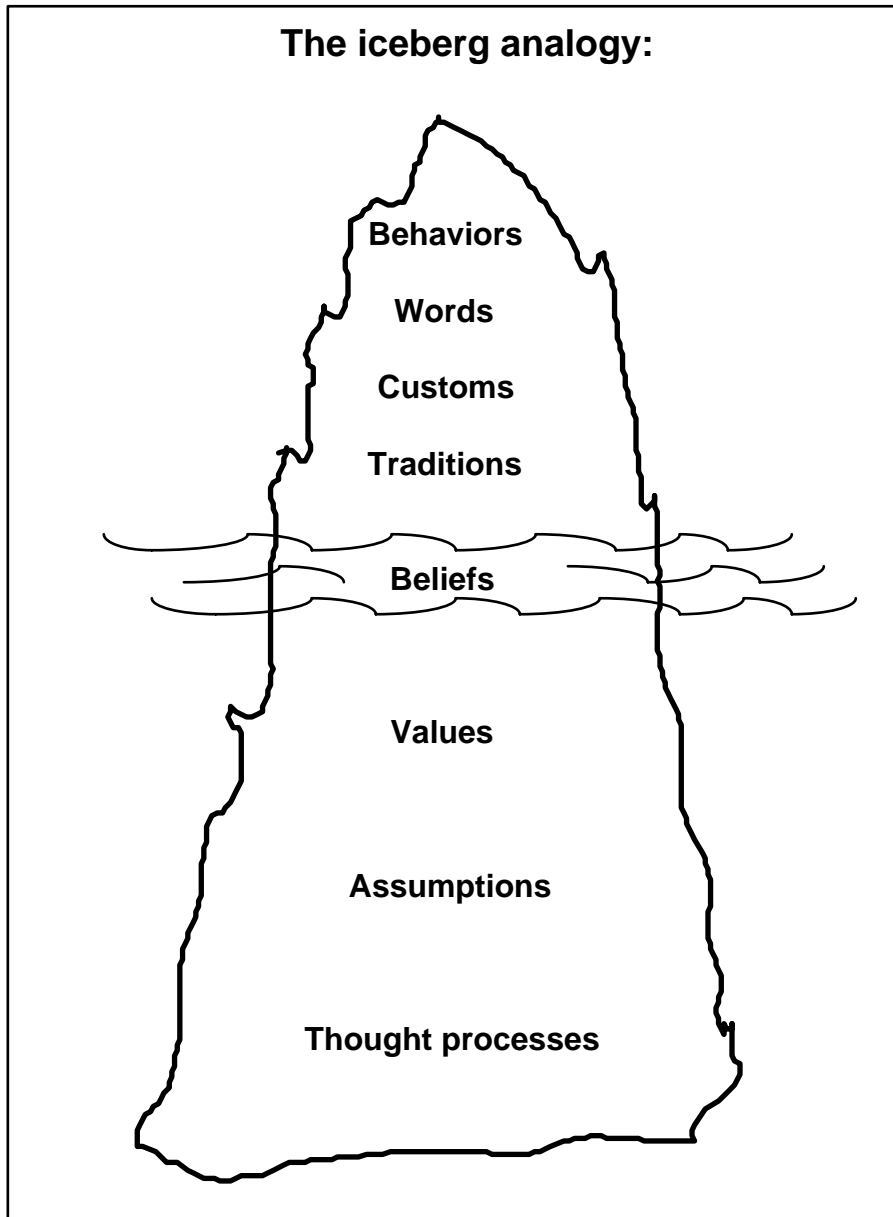
"Thought process" clues that you might be dealing with "cross cultural" issues:

- You find you are trying to understand the other culture or organization from the frame of reference of your own culture or organization, and it does not make sense.
- You begin to define the problem as having something to do with the personal characteristics of people in the other organization or culture.
- You feel confused; you don't understand what is happening or why. You begin to doubt your own perceptions and wonder if you're the crazy one.
- You think disapproving or judgmental thoughts about how people in the other culture or organization operate (i.e., not according to your values or customs or style).
- You find yourself making generalizations about all people from that culture or organization, or about "that system."
- Earlier in a process you see that there are differences, but minimize their depth or importance. Later, you see differences that are profound and for a while cannot think of any way to bridge the chasm.
- You feel intrigued by the puzzle of how to make sense of what doesn't make sense.

Emotional clues that you might be dealing with "cross cultural" issues:

- Feeling overwhelmed by the strangeness of the environment in this culture or organization.
- Feeling threatened, intimidated, suspicious or contemptuous of people or behaviors of the other culture or organizations.
- Feeling like walking away from the whole encounter – even while feeling obligated or forced to deal with it.
- Mixtures of hope and despair, pessimism and optimism, sometimes within the same person and about the same issue.
- Feeling exhilarated or excited about the adventure of experiencing this new environment.
- At first, feeling the need to hang on to something familiar or something you are good at. Later, feeling safe to be open to new ways of perceiving or experiencing.

2. The iceberg analogy: Visible and invisible culture



David Kohls developed this diagram to illustrate that much of "culture" is invisible. While we may be aware of different behaviors, words, customs and traditions, it is less obvious that under the surface may be different values, assumptions and even thought processes.

In cross-organizational working relationships, apparent similarities in behavior, language, and working style may sometimes mask profoundly different values, assumptions and even thought processes. It is useful to consider the possibility that people from different organizations could use the same words to mean different things, and perceive the same situation very differently.

3. Five potential stumbling blocks to cross-cultural communication³

In cross-cultural situations, five stumbling blocks may interfere with clear communication and understanding. The stumbling blocks are language, non-verbal communication, preconceptions and stereotypes, tendency to evaluate, and high anxiety. These same stumbling blocks may also be present in cross-organizational situations.

- a. **Language** – Vocabulary, sentence structure, slang and dialects can all cause difficulty in cross-cultural communication. A person struggling with a different language is at least aware when he or she is having difficulty. A worse problem occurs when each person *thinks* she or he understands. A person tends to cling to *the* meaning of a word or phrase, regardless of the context. The infinite variations, especially of English, may be so impossible to cope with that they are waived aside.

In cross-organization interactions, people may use the same words (e.g., "community development, prevention, joint planning") and not realize that the words actually mean different things to different people. As well, the use of acronyms (for example, FCSS, CFSA, PMT, PAFV) can interfere with communication. As one person said, "People in our community think 'FCSS' stands for Family and Community *Social* Services, and we've been here for twenty years!"

- b. **Non-verbal communication** – Every culture has a special "hum and buzz of implication." People from different cultures live in non-verbal worlds of sights, sounds, touches, tastes and smells which all have meaning. Each person takes what is seen, heard, felt and smelled and interprets it through the frame of his or her own culture. For example, in some cultures direct eye contact is considered a sign of being attentive; in other cultures direct eye contact is considered to be a sign of disrespect.

In cross-organization situations, participants may not realize they are interpreting the same sights and sounds differently. For example, one person may interpret a nod to mean "I agree and I am committed to this course of action," while someone else may interpret a nod as, "I understand what you mean but I haven't decided yet whether I agree or not."

As another example, one organization may be used to formal meeting agendas, motions and votes on decisions, while another organization may encourage free-flowing conversation leading to a general consensus. The different styles can lead to different interpretations of what is happening.

³ "Stumbling blocks" information is adapted from material developed by LaRay M. Barna, Portland State University (date unknown). Organizational examples are solely the responsibility of the consulting team.

- c. Preconceptions and stereotypes** – One function of culture is to lay out a predictable world in which the individual is firmly oriented. Stereotypes are the over-generalized beliefs that help us "make sense" out of what happens around us.

However, stereotypes interfere with being objective. Stereotypes persist because they make our prejudices seem logical and justified. They are sustained by the tendency to see selectively only those pieces of new information that fit the pre-conceived image. Thus, stereotypes seem to be concrete reality.

In cross-organizational situations, people from different systems can have stereotypes of people from other systems, and then interpret events and behaviors in a way which reinforces those stereotypes. ("FCSS/health/school/children's services people always...")

- d. Tendency to evaluate** – Each person's culture always seems right, proper and natural, so each person tends to approve or disapprove of statements and actions of the other person or group rather than try to understand the thoughts and feelings expressed. Based on information gathered during the "Working Together" project, this phenomenon is often also present in interactions between people from different systems or sectors.

The communication cut-off caused by immediate evaluation is increased when emotions are deeply involved – which they are sometimes when people from different organizations try to work together on a volatile community issue. Usually, this is just the time when listening with understanding is most needed.

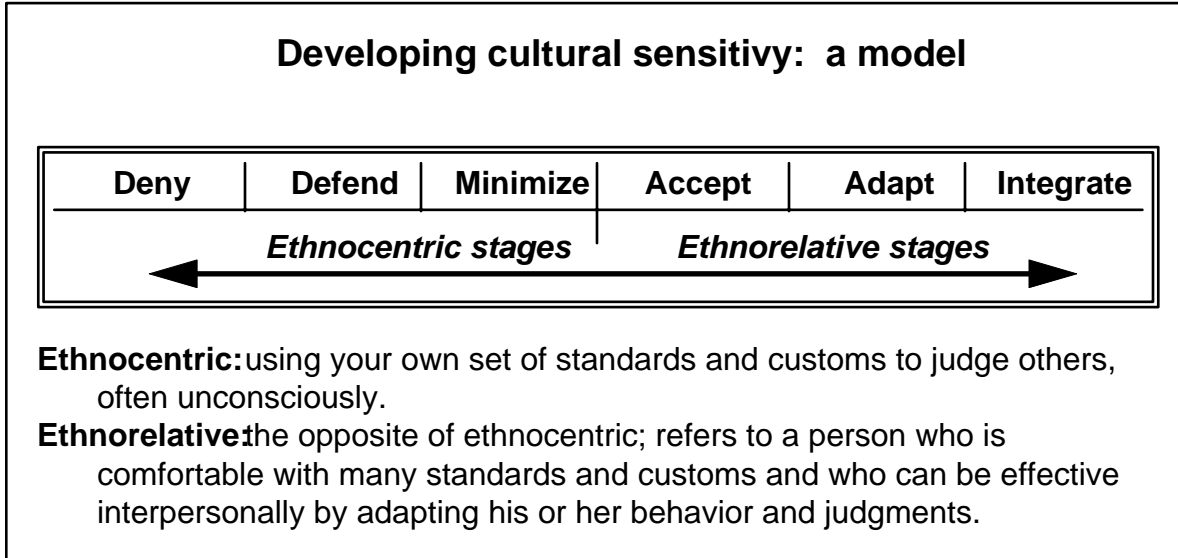
- e. High anxiety** – Unlike the other four stumbling blocks, anxiety is not distinct but underlies and intensifies the others. The presence of high anxiety or tension is common in cross-cultural experiences because of the uncertainties present.

The native of a country is uncomfortable when talking to someone from outside the country because he cannot maintain the normal flow of verbal and nonverbal interaction. The person from outside the country is under the same threat, with the added tension of coping with unfamiliar pace, climate and culture.

In some cross-organizational situations, especially those that involve passionate values or threats of loss or over-demand to some of the participants, high anxiety creates a charged environment that may intensify the hazard of mis-understanding due to the other stumbling blocks.

4. Phases of developing cultural sensitivity:

a. Making sense of differences



Milton Bennett⁴ identified six phases to move from being oblivious to cultural differences, to being uncomfortable, through to being comfortable in a variety of cultural environments. An individual may not move through all six phases – it is possible to remain in any stage. As well, we may move back and forth through the stages, depending on our level of comfort and the extent to which deeply-held values or beliefs are challenged.

For example, a person may be very comfortable in one cultural situation and move through the phases all the way to "adapt" or "integrate." In other situations with a different culture, the same person could stay in "deny" and never move on. As another example, a person who has become comfortable with most aspects of a culture may suddenly encounter something that is so distasteful to her values that she moves back to the "defend" stage.

In listening to representatives of FCSS who talked about what they learned about working with more than one municipality, or with becoming part of a Community Services department, and in listening to comments of people from FCSS, Health and Child and Family Services, the consulting team thought some of the comments seemed to fit different stages in Bennett's model.

⁴ The model is adapted from Milton J. Bennett: "A developmental approach to training for inter cultural sensitivity," *International Journal of Inter cultural Relations*, Vol. 10, 1986. Characteristics are summarized from Bennett's work. However, applying the model to cross-organizational situations is solely the responsibility of the authors of this paper.

b. The model applied to cultural and organizational differences

The notes below highlight characteristics and possible strategies at each stage as described by Bennett. The adaptations to cross-organizational situations are solely the responsibility of the consulting team and may not reflect the thinking of Mr. Bennett.

1. DENY

Cross-cultural examples:

- *"Tokyo is no different than Toronto – lots of cars and tall buildings."*
- *"All people are the same under the skin."*

Organizational examples:

- *"All of us want what's best for the community so we'll have no difficulty working together."*
- *"Every organization has governance, management and front-line workers so what works in one will work in another."*

Characteristics of a person in "deny" stage: An individual in the "deny" stage has few mental categories with which to notice differences. In its darker aspects, the "deny" stage may lead people to attribute sub-human qualities to those from different cultures and regard them with extreme prejudice.

Strategies to influence someone in the "Deny" stage: Use non-threatening cultural awareness activities (ethnic luncheons, entertainment, travelogues, talks on history, exhibits). Purpose is to help people begin to recognize differences.

Adapting the "Deny stage" strategies to work across sectors or systems:

- Interagency meetings may provide a gentle environment to become more aware of differences.
- Opportunities to visit one another's facilities or experience each other's work environments may begin to raise awareness of different pressures and goals.

2. DEFEND

Cross-cultural examples:

- *"All _____s are pushy, aggressive and rude. Don't give them an inch."*
- *"Women are not aggressive enough. They'll never fit in at the senior level."*
- *"You can't trust people from that culture. They'll sit quietly and not say a word, and then later you find out they didn't agree with anything."*

Organizational examples:

- *"They say they do community development, but they don't really. They think if you have people in a room and talk to them, that's community development."*
- *"Some municipalities have FCSS funds they don't even use. And yet there are community needs crying to be met. Where's the accountability?"*
- *"You can't trust anyone from that system. They come to the meetings and act like partners, and then they scuttle everything behind the scenes."*

Characteristics of a person in "Defend" stage: Feel threatened. Say judgmental things about the differences or create negative stereotypes. Promote one's own cultural superiority.

Strategies to influence someone in "Defend" stage: Emphasize things cultures have in common and what is "good" in all cultures. DO NOT at this stage argue that cultures are not good or bad but just different. A few people may reverse this stage and criticize members of their own group ("Redneck Albertans" "The Ugly American"). Some people may want to slip back into Denial because on the surface it feels more comfortable than the Defense stage.

Adapting "Defend stage" strategies to work across sectors or systems:

- Find common hopes or common pressures facing all the organizations ("We've all experienced cutbacks and increased demand for service...").
- Find the similarities underneath the differences. ("Even though we have different budgets and different stakeholders, we all have to satisfy our funders and clients.")

3. MINIMIZE

Cultural examples:

- *"The best thing to do when dealing with another culture is just be yourself."*
- *"Even though our skin color or country of origin is different, we all want the same thing for our children."*

Organizational examples:

- *"Our mandates have so much overlap it should be easy to work together."*
- *"We'll just invite them to our meetings so they know we value them."*

Characteristics of a person in "Minimize" stage: Belief that cultural differences are just superficial; the basic qualities of being human will suffice. Western values of individuality, openness and honesty contribute to this view. Sometimes this stage sounds culturally sensitive and allows us to avoid feeling incompetent in the face of many cultural unknowns. Moving into the next stage means shifting from an ethnocentric position that relies on simple principles to an ethnorelative stage where answers are not so clear.

Strategies to assist someone move past Minimize stage: For Westerners, use simulation exercises, personal stories, "representatives" from other cultures (choose carefully) to show how the same behavior can be interpreted differently. Acknowledge the normal discomfort people feel.

Adapting "Minimize stage" strategies to cross-organizational situations

- Personal sharing by organizational representatives to show how the same behavior in one organization may have a completely different meaning in another one.
- Hands-on visits or experiences in on another's organization (e.g., ride-alongs with police officers)

4. ACCEPT

Cultural examples

- *"I know my boss, an Aboriginal woman, and I, a white male, have had different life experiences but we are learning how to work together."*
- *"We've learned to accommodate each other's sense of time. I am learning to be more comfortable "going with the flow," and he is more willing to be structured and punctual."*

Organizational examples

- *"I suppose if I had to choose between more service to a few people, and no service to other people, it wouldn't be an easy decision."*
- *"I can see that you have to make sure there is equitable access to all citizens."*

Characteristics of a person in the "Accept" stage: People see and acknowledge differences, and even enjoy exploring differences. They are fairly tolerant of ambiguity and know there is no one right answer.

Strategies to assist someone in the Accept stage: Learning to recognize and respect differences distinguishes this stage from the Minimize stage. Stress seeing, acknowledging and respecting behavioral differences. Focus on verbal and nonverbal inter cultural communication styles. Encourage the view that what is different is also appropriate. Caution: Moving too quickly into discussion of values may be threatening and result in a move backward.

Adapting "Accept stage" strategies to cross-organizational situations

- Explore how procedures or customs of other organizations work.
- Learn (or explain) the reasons why these procedures have been developed, that is, the specific organizational circumstances that made such procedures important. ("The reason our school system requires permission for any external person to enter a classroom is..." "The reason FCSS has many committees and boards is...")

5. ADAPT

Cultural examples

- *"Can you explain the difference in status between the Chinese and the Canadians who were involved in the dispute?"*
- *"What else was going on in the community when he ran away from home?"*

Organizational examples

- *"Can you explain whether the people who met to negotiate had the same authority to make commitments on behalf of their organizations? What are the customs and requirements in each organization?"*
- *"What else was going on in the organization when they stopped attending our meetings? Was it budget time? Were they preparing for accreditation visits?"*

Characteristics of a person in the "Adapt" stage: People can intentionally shift their frame of reference (e.g., consider the question of status which is an important criteria in some cultures). They can "step into the other person's shoes." Note: some people can shift their frame of reference but still hold an ethnocentric view.

Strategies to help someone in the Adapt stage: Provide opportunities for people to practice their new ability in face-to-face interaction, e.g., a task for partners from two different cultures, or a problem-solving session for a multicultural group. Relate activities to real-life situations.

Adapting "Adapt stage" strategies to cross-organizational situations

- In a multi-sector group, participants discuss, "What does my organization need in order to make this work? What and how can my organization contribute to this?" Then together they figure out ways to accommodate the needs in order to gain the contributions.
- In any multi-organization process, ask about protocol, status, authority, time pressures and other variables that may affect each organization's participation.

6. INTEGRATE

Cultural examples

- *"I found living in Nepal the most satisfying period of my life."*
- *"Sometimes I feel like I don't fit in anywhere any more."*

Organizational examples

- *"I can walk into almost any agency in this community and feel at home."*
- *"I've spent so much time in interagency meetings I almost forget that I work for one organization."*

Characteristics of a person in the "Integrate" stage: Some people become so aware of the multiplicity of cultural ways they no longer can identify with any. At the other extreme, some people readily adapt to many situations and are pleased with their identity as a "citizen of the planet."

Strategies to help someone in the Integrate stage: Key step: establish one's own "cultural core" or personal value system. Some people choose to become mediators, to help two cultures understand each other. As with all Ethnorelative stages, Integration requires thought and effort.

Adapting strategies to cross-organizational situations

- Reinforce the essence of one's own organizational identity, to be grounded without need to be defensive when working with other organizations.
- Continue to seek out learning about other organizations, to deepen the understanding of both differences and areas of common ground.

5. Five approaches when working with different organizational cultures

- a. **Watch for visible and invisible differences.** For example, a visible difference is that a regional system has different boundaries and a different mandate from FCSS. What may be less visible is that the values, goals and even the thought processes of the two systems can be profoundly different. The invisible differences can lead to situations where different members of a multi-organizational process discover they have been using the same words but have quite different meanings. This in turn can lead to situations where some people feel violated, and others wonder what the problem is.

A strategy is to watch for signs that a group may be dealing with invisible differences, and be alert to varying interpretations of what group members say and do.

- b. **Expect to encounter surprises, misunderstandings, and discomfort** from time to time when working with people in other sectors or organizations. Misunderstandings do not mean there is anything wrong with any person or with any system or organization. Misunderstanding just means all the parties are dealing with differences and are therefore in "foreign territory."

A strategy is to assume that surprises or misunderstandings arise from conditions that people may not even be aware of (for example, cultural beliefs and thought patterns). Then try to bring those conditions into conscious awareness so it is easier to understand what is happening and why.

- c. **Expect feelings of judgment and disapproval (but don't stay there)** – A common reaction when dealing with something that is uncomfortable or unfamiliar is to feel protective of one's own way of being, and critical of things that challenge that way. Even people who disapprove of disapproval may have moments of feeling judgmental!

A strategy is to acknowledge one's own feelings, and then explore the differences in order to understand, so you and the group can move past judgment and open new doors that benefit the community.

- d. **Focus on the issue not the person; focus on the intention** – When you realize you are slipping into "judgmental" mode – especially when you are beginning to blame or stereotype another person – shift your focus to the larger issue and to your best possible intention for the community. The shift in focus may allow you to move past "defend" and "minimize" stages and be better able to help generate creative solutions.

- e. **Have the courage** to risk changes in our values and perceptions. When FCSS is working with other systems, this may mean being open to different definitions of community involvement, and adapting to different styles of doing business.

E. "WORKING TOGETHER" CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

This section reflects the observations and opinions of the consulting team, based on all the sources of information gathered during this project. The opinions are not necessarily those of the FCSS Association of Alberta, nor of any person who participated in the project.

Based on information gathered during this project, the consulting team believes that three emerging challenges and opportunities for FCSS working together in the future are:

1. Working with regional authorities;
2. Working with others to develop community strategies for "determinants of health," "risk and protective factors" and "resilience;"
3. Working with others to "measure prevention."

The ability to benefit from working with others on opportunities #2 and #3 may be dependent on the ability to work with regional authorities – the very organizations with whom FCSS representatives describe as having the most difficulty working together.

1. Working with regional authorities

The comments in this section will be easier to understand if read in the context of Paper #5 *Working together with Child and Family Services Authorities* and Paper #6 *Working together with Health Authorities*. The consulting team appreciates the courage and integrity of FCSS people who read earlier drafts of this material and agreed it would be included.

The most intense and heated comments from FCSS representatives during the "Working Together" project came when they discussed working relationships with regional authorities in health, education and children's services. Since regionalization of human services appears to be a trend in Alberta for the foreseeable future, learning to work effectively with regional bodies is both a challenge and an opportunity for FCSS. (That is one reason why two of the papers in this series are focused on working relationships with specific regional authorities.)

On one hand, regional systems provide major opportunities for cooperation that benefits the community and FCSS. On the other hand, FCSS representatives described more frustrations and cautions about working with regional bodies, in comparison to many successful FCSS working relationships with community organizations.

In interviews with representatives of Health Authorities and Child and Family Services Authorities, the consulting team heard mostly positive comments about working together. Representatives of regional systems tended to speak highly of FCSS. Some gave examples of past or current collaborations, and most talked of possible ways to work together in the future.

In interviews and focus groups, FCSS people were more likely than representatives of regional systems to describe "difficulties in working with regional systems." On the other hand, some FCSS people also told upbeat stories of successful collaborations, and were enthusiastic about opportunities and possibilities of working with regional organizations.

Information gathered during this project suggests three areas of understanding that may assist FCSS when developing working relationships with regional systems:

- a. Recognizing organizational "cross cultural" issues;
- b. Frequent patterns of community-region working relationships;
- c. The "regional" part of working with regional authorities;

a. Recognizing organizational "cross cultural" issues

The previous section of this paper describes how working across organizations and systems has similarities to cross-cultural relationships. The consulting team was particularly struck by the similarities between the comments and experiences of FCSS people describing their experiences with regional organizations and systems, and comments and experiences of people who experience another culture.

Recognizing that regional organizations do indeed have a different and distinct organizational culture, and applying the "cross-cultural" understanding and strategies may be useful to FCSS programs who wish to work more closely with regional authorities. Perceiving differences as arising from different organizational cultures and pressures may take the sting out of some interactions between representatives of local and regional systems.

b. Patterns of relationships with regional authorities

Based on interviews for this project, if an FCSS program wishes to work with a regional authority, FCSS may find it useful to prepare for the likelihood that the regional authority will not operate like FCSS, and may be genuinely oblivious of things FCSS considers important.

- Regional authorities may not consult or communicate in the same way FCSS does, and regional authorities may have a different perception of what "being accountable to the community" and "community involvement" mean. For example:
 - Representatives of regional authorities may feel keenly accountable to the community and believe they are working for the best interest of the community. FCSS may believe it is difficult for regional authority representatives who were not chosen by the community to be accountable to the community.
 - Regional authorities may have vehicles for community input (for example, community health councils, parent advisory committees, local working groups, consultation processes) which FCSS may not believe have much influence on regional decisions.

However, as one of the reviewers of this paper said, "Just because we may do things differently, doesn't mean one is better than the other."

- Assume as a given that representatives of the regional authority have different pressures than FCSS, think differently than FCSS about many community issues, and have different norms or ways of doing business. For example:
 - A regional authority may want consistency across the region as a way to demonstrate equitable access to all citizens in the region. An FCSS or community group may want services and programs to be adapted to their community's unique circumstances.
 - In working with several partners in a planning process, a regional authority may perceive a project as being their mandate, with community partners offering advice and guidance. FCSS may perceive the project as being a community project, with the regional authority as one of several equal partners.
 - FCSS may perceive that a regional authority is ignoring feedback from the community. A regional authority may say the community feedback was understood, but other factors meant the authority could not do what the community wanted.

FCSS can deal with differences such as these by not expecting a regional authority to operate as if it were a local organization (because it is not). A particular challenge for FCSS is to have patience and forgiveness when a regional authority's way of operating may appear to be contrary to FCSS values and philosophy.

c. The "regional" challenge of working with regional authorities

During interviews for this project, both regional and community representatives pointed out that boundary differences can create difficulties in working together.

- From a regional perspective, an authority needs to ensure citizens across the region have equitable access to core services, and that no community is seen to be treated more favorably than another. From a regional perspective it may be difficult to work with FCSS because each FCSS program is independent and may have different priorities, different operating styles and different programs and services.
- From a community or FCSS perspective, each community is primarily interested in what happens in its own community or FCSS program, and less interested in the well-being of the region as a whole. (Multi-municipality FCSS programs will understand this dynamic!) As well, regional boundaries may not coincide with natural groupings and travel patterns. The same community may have joint working relationships with regional and provincial agencies whose boundaries are different from one another.

While keeping the strength of being firmly rooted in the community, FCSS programs may benefit from cooperating with one another to make it easier for regional authorities to work with FCSS.

- FCSS programs in a region might agree informally on how they will cooperate to work with the regional authority.

- Invite regional authority representatives to participate in regional FCSS gatherings.
- FCSS programs as a group could ask, "How can we work with you?"
- In some Child and Family Services Authority regions, "leadership circles" are being formed at the regional level. FCSS representatives are among the participants in these circles. Early experiences are creating opportunities to be comfortable with the flow of leadership back and forth between region-wide and community perspectives.

A community-based person can have a region-wide perspective while still being accountable to the community, and a region-based person can have a community perspective while still being accountable to the region.
- FCSS and regional authority representatives can work together to resolve the paradox of ensuring equitable access across a region, and responsiveness to unique community conditions. As systems move more to focusing on outcomes, local and regional people may find it easier to work out unique strategies.

d. Successful collaborations with regional authorities are more likely when...

Interview comments from both FCSS and regional authority representatives suggest that there are actions which can foster successful working relationships.

- Build personal relationships and respect between key individuals.
- Start with forms of cooperation that don't push mandates or usual ways of operating.
- In early stages of a shared project or process, talk about intended results and how they will be measured. Then keep re-visiting these as the project unfolds. What made sense at the beginning may not make sense six months or a year later.
- Establish regular formal and informal communication checkpoints. Make "How is this working for all the partners?" a regular topic of discussion.
- Make each other look good – which requires knowing what "looking good" means to different partners.

2. Working together on "determinants of health," "risk and protective factors," and "resilience"

Since part of the FCSS mandate is to "Be of a preventive nature that enhances the social well-being of individuals and families through promotion or intervention strategies provided at the earliest opportunity," FCSS has always had an interest in working to strengthen the conditions and characteristics that foster well-being.

Two questions that reflect this way of approaching human services are:

- "What went right? What conditions or characteristics help people be healthy and strong?" (in addition to, "What went wrong? What conditions or characteristics harm people? What are the problems?").
- "What strengths can we build on?" (in addition to "What weaknesses do we need to support?").

Other programs and systems are also interested in the "positive" side of individual and community development. Health, social services, education and other systems show increasing interest in "determinants of health," "risk and protective factors" and an expanding body of knowledge on "resilience." Interest in these areas is creating new opportunities for FCSS to work with others.

a. Determinants of health

"Determinants of health" is the collective label given to multiple factors which contribute to the health of populations. Paper #6 of this series, *Working together with health authorities*, lists nine determinants of health, and six challenges for ensuring healthy child development identified by the Federal/Provincial/Territorial Advisory Committee on Population Health. Virtually all of the determinants of health and the challenges for ensuring healthy child development fit within the mandate and objectives of FCSS.

Both federal and provincial government initiatives provide support for community projects which work to influence determinants of health. Some FCSS programs have several years' experience in working on such projects.

b. Risk factors, protective factors and resilience

Another expanding area of research and preventive program development is **resilience** – the ability to readily recover or rebound from adversity. Resilience is of particular relevance to the FCSS service objectives to "help people develop independence, strengthen coping skills and become more resistant to crisis," "help people to develop interpersonal and group skills which enhance constructive relationships among people," and "help people and communities to assume responsibility for decisions and actions which affect them."

Resilience research provides a strong base of support for preventive programming. As well, research suggests directions for program development. In Alberta, Alberta Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission (AADAC) and the Early Intervention Program of Child and Family Services are two organizations which have done a great deal of work related to resilience.

Resiliency-based prevention programs pay close attention to both risk and protective factors in their design and delivery. They focus on a specific population group instead of relying on broad spectrum interventions. This "targeting" is an important part of applying knowledge of resiliency to programs and services.

As well, resiliency-based programs often focus on fostering **developmental assets** (for example, positive values, support, boundaries and expectations, social competencies) that help young people grow up healthy, caring and responsible.

c. **Challenges and opportunities for FCSS**

As one person interviewed for this project said, "For years, FCSS has been talking about this stuff. Maybe the rest of the world is catching up."

The increasing interest and research in these prevention areas increases the **opportunities** for FCSS to work with others to influence determinants of health and build resilience among individuals, families and communities. Emerging research provides new guidance (or perhaps validation) to FCSS and other community partners as they think through the underlying logic and intentions of preventive programs. As well, new federal and provincial initiatives may provide the possibility of funding sources.

A particular gift FCSS can bring to continued development of preventive programming is a perspective and understanding of how the community environment can support health and resilience. More than many other organizations, FCSS may have relationships and skills to help bring the community into health and resilience initiatives.

The challenge is that each other system will focus on different aspects of health and resilience, and each other system will have different processes and requirements. FCSS will benefit from learning to talk the language of these different systems. FCSS may also need to guard against feeling that "We're already the experts." Other systems and sectors have expertise which can benefit FCSS. As well, FCSS may benefit from learning even more how to incorporate research findings into the design, operation and evaluation of preventive programs.

3. Working together to "measure prevention"

For years, FCSS programs have talked about the question of, "How do you measure prevention?" Examples of comments are:

- "How do you count the number of accidents that did not happen because you put up a stop sign?"
- "We are about people, not numbers. We know community involvement is a good thing in and of itself, but sometimes it is hard to describe or measure the benefits."

Continuing government emphasis on "accountability for results," as well as emerging interest in influencing determinants of health and resilience factors are creating more interest and more necessity for learning how to document and report the impact of what a program does. This is especially likely to be important in projects undertaken jointly by several community partners. In other words, "how to evaluate the results" is likely to be a "working together" issue.

Because of the flexibility of the FCSS mandate, a perception by some people outside the program is that "FCSS does whatever it wants and doesn't have to account for its results." In a climate of demand for accountability, this perception does not serve FCSS well. So – it is in the best interest of FCSS to develop even more skills and methods to demonstrate the difference it makes in a community.

The *FCSS Handbook* produced by Alberta Family and Social Services includes a section that begins to suggest indicators and methods through which FCSS programs could evaluate the extent to which they are achieving the service objectives included in the *FCSS Regulation*.

The challenge for FCSS is to be able to document and evaluate the results it accomplishes. The challenge is compounded because sometimes, especially in the early stages of a community process or project, it is difficult to articulate clearly the intended results against which a program will be measured. And yet, most evaluation models are dependent on having defined objectives or results as the basis for developing appropriate measures.

As well, the theoretical and practical research skills of "evaluating results" are still evolving in the human services field. Some qualitative methods used to demonstrate results (e.g., compiling stories and anecdotes) are not always held in high regard outside of human services.

A challenge for FCSS (and for others involved in preventive community programs) is to develop methods to demonstrate the impact of preventive programs – in ways that "speak" to audiences who may not understand FCSS or share its preventive community-based philosophy.

The opportunity – More people are intrigued with the challenge of measuring prevention than was the case in previous decades. In particular, people in a number of different fields are interested in how to create evaluation frameworks based on resilience factors. That means more partners may be willing to work with FCSS in developing additional methods to do this.

Because "measuring results of preventive programs" cuts across several disciplines and sectors, the area lends itself to province-wide multi-sector research projects. The FCSS community can probably find ways to build on work done by others, and to collaborate with others who are willing to put resources into learning more about how to "measure prevention." Best of all, increased interest in learning how to "measure prevention" may give FCSS even more ways to demonstrate the positive impact it has on Alberta individuals, families and communities.

F. AND IN CONCLUSION . . . WORKING TOGETHER MACRO AND MICRO

A recurring theme of the "Working Together" project was the parallel between "working together" at project, community, regional and provincial levels. At all levels, participants in interviews talked about:

- The importance of building and nurturing relationships;
- The importance of clarifying intentions – and continuing to revisit them;
- The importance of regular formal and informal communication;
- The importance of being willing to understand and adapt to other people's values, priorities and ways of operating;
- The importance of system support for the time and energy it takes to work together.

At every level, individual people make cooperation work, even when their respective systems do not always make it easy. And at every level, there are policies and processes that can enhance the possibility of working together, even if some individuals would rather not participate.

FCSS has at least two advantages in working together across sectors – its mandate to work with others, and its broad service objectives which do not limit or define specific services. As one participant said, "Individuals in many other organizations cooperate with people outside their organization. The difference is that in FCSS it is an expectation, and our FCSS system supports us working with others. In some other organizations, an individual may be willing to work with others, but that person's system doesn't necessarily make it easy for them."

And yet, FCSS cannot be complacent or think it is the community. There are people who perceive FCSS to be "just another agency" or "just another special interest group."

At every level, the challenges are also the gifts. The current challenges and opportunities facing FCSS provide the opportunity to build on the strengths *and* push past the limits of being strongly grounded in the community, of having a broadly-defined service mandate, and of focusing on prevention and community development.

"Working Together" Series – Paper #1

**Working together in FCSS –
GIFTS AND CHALLENGES**

ATTACHMENT

- 1. People who participated in the "Working Together" project**

People who participated in the "Working Together" project

Information sources

During the "Working Together" project, the consulting team gathered information from:

- Interviews with representatives of Family and Community Support Services, municipalities, Health Authorities and Child and Family Services; focus group discussions with FCSS directors.
- Review of documents related to FCSS, Child and Family Services, Health Authorities, and review of literature related to the theme of "working together across sectors."

Data from all sources was analyzed to identify patterns, and summarized in draft papers. The draft papers were circulated to internal and external reviewers and revised based on feedback.

People who participated in the project

The following people participated in the "Working Together" project in one or more of the following ways:

- Participating in a telephone or in-person interview
- Providing "stories" via phone, fax or mail
- Providing documents or literature related to "working together"
- Participating in FCSS Directors' Network focus group
- Reviewing and providing feedback on draft versions of "Working Together" papers.

Some people who participated in FCSS Director focus groups may not be listed below.

FCSS provincial and municipal representatives

Alberta Family and Social Services

- Veronica Facundo
- Mic Farrell
- Debbie Trachimowich

Airdie Social Planning

- Debora Duncan, Director

Athabasca FCSS

- Diana Johnston, Town Accountant

Athabasca FCSS

- Alan Taylor, Executive Director

Barons-Eureka-Warner FCSS

- Greg Pratt, Director

Town of Bashaw

(Camrose and District Support Services)

- Karen Cox, Councillor
- Arlene Wigglesworth, Administrator

Beaverlodge FCSS

- Betty Miller, Director

Big Lakes FCSS

- Vivian Torrens, Director

Bonnyville and District FCSS

- David Beale, Director

Town of Bowden

(Red Deer and District FCSS)

- Kevin Moore, Administrator

Breton and M.D. of Brazeau FCSS

- Deanne Young, Director

Buffalo Lake Métis Settlement FCSS

- Terry Burke, Director, Community Services

Calgary Community and Social Development

- Frank Hoebarth, Manager

Camrose and District Support Services (CDSS)

- Wendy Gregorwich, Director

Claresholm Community Services

- Randy Ell, Director

Cochrane Community Services

- Susan Flowers, Director (FCSS)

Coronation and District FCSS

- Linda Bunbury, Community Liaison

Didsbury FCSS

- Evan Parliament, Administrator

Edmonton FCSS

- Kathy Barnhart, Director (FCSS),
Community and Family Services

Elk Point FCSS

- Deanna Easthope, Director

Flagstaff FCS

- Gail Watt, Director

Fort Saskatchewan Community Services

- John de Bruijn, Director

Gibbons Community Services

- Marg Clark, Director

Grande Cache FCSS

- Kelly Smith, Office Administrator

City of Grande Prairie FCSS

- Lana Wells, Social Planner

County of Grande Prairie FCSS

- Mary Ann Eckstrom, Councillor

Hanna Community Services

- Kim Neil, Director

Hinton Parks, Recreation and FCSS

- Betty Osmond, Director

Innisfail FCSS

- Valaine Vienneau, Director

Jasper FCSS

- Kathleen Waxer

Kneehill County FCSS

- Shelley Jackson, Director

Lac Ste. Anne Regional Community Services
Council

- Donna Geiger, Coordinator (FCSS)

Lacombe and District FCSS

- Trish Mayner, Executive Director

Lakeland (Cold Lake) Community Services

- Claire Crawford, Director

City of Leduc FCSS

- Ted Tymchuk, Manager

County of Leduc FCSS

- Betty Ann Nemish, Director

Lethbridge Family and Human Services

- Rosalind Annis, Coordinator

Morinville FCSS

- Cathy Clarke, Director

Village of Morrin

(Starland Resource Program)

- Annette Plachner, Secretary Treasurer

Prairieland Regional Division #25

(Starland Resource Program: Morrin FCSS,
Delia FCSS and Starland County FCSS)

- Art Aitkin, Superintendent of Schools

Okotoks Community Development

- Linda Blasetti, Coordinator

Paddle Prairie Métis Settlement

- Joanne Ducharme, Coordinator, Community
Services

Provost and District FCSS

- Cindy Morrow, Program Coordinator

Red Deer and District FCSS

- Colleen Jensen, Manager, Social Planning

County of St. Paul FCSS

- Linnette Newby, Director

Town of St. Paul FCSS

- Cheryl Snider, Director

Stettler and District FCSS

- Faye Blakely, Administrator

County of Strathcona FCSS

- Sheryl Fricke, Coordinator, Community Development
- Catriona Gunn-Graham, Counsellor
- Jackie Winter, Manager

Sylvan Lake FCSS

- Carman McKee, Director

Tofield-Ryley-Beaver FCSS

- Yvonne Allan, Director

Village of Trochu

(Kneehill County FCSS)

- Maureen Makala, CAO

Viking-Beaver FCSS

- Joanne Stewart, Director

Wainwright FCSS

- Joanne Keller, Director

Wheatland County FCSS

- Sharon Thibeau, Program Coordinator

Village of Standard

(Wheatland County FCSS)

- Ken Larson, Reeve

Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo FCSS

(Fort McMurray and district)

- Joe Bath, Superintendent

Yellowhead Community Services

- Debbie Charest, Supervisor

Child and Family Services representatives

The following people participated in interviews, arranged contact with regional representatives, provided background information, and/or provided feedback on draft documents. As well, representatives of the FCSS Association "Working Together" project met with Co-Chairs of Child and Family Services Authorities. Some participants at that meeting are not listed below.

Alberta Family and Social Services

- Paula Tyler, Assistant Deputy Minister

Child and Family Services Secretariat

- Dianne Dalley
- Tom Fetter
- Ellen Hambrook
- Irene Milton
- David Steeves

Region 1

- Sharon Holtman, Co-Chair

Region 2

- Gitta Hashizuma, Co-Chair

Region 3

- Janet Pistawka, Administrative Assistant

Region 4

- Bill Meade, CEO
- Stan Skoropad, Contract Manager

Region 5

- Wil Porat, Co-Chair

Region 6

- Roger Clark, Co-Chair

Region 7

- Cathy Charlton, Co-Chair
- Paul Bujold, CEO

Region 8

- Marie Anstey, Co-Chair

Region 9

- Gerry Donahue, Co-Chair

Region 10

- Morley Handford, Co-Chair
- Doris Badir, Board Member
- Shashi Kalia, Board Member

Region 11

- Micky Ross Carleton, Co-Chair
- Sandra Craswell, former Working Group Chair

Region 12

- Larry Langager, Co-Chair
- David Beale, Board Member

Region 13

- Claudia Buck, Co-Chair

Region 14

- Duane Stuart, Board Member

Region 15

- Dexter Dombro, Co-Chair

Region 16

- Mike Noon, Co-Chair

Region 17

- Heather Braun, Board Member

Region 18

- Lillian Parenteau, Regional Director, Region 18, Métis Settlements

Central Region

- Joan Langille, Director of Regional Planning, Office of the Commissioner of Services for Children and Families (Regions 5, 6, 7 and 9)

Health Authority representatives

The following people participated in interviews about health authorities working with FCSS. In addition, representatives of the FCSS "Working Together" project met with the health authorities' Council of Chief Executive Officers. This listing does not include names of all those who were at that meeting.

Palliser #2

- Linda Bandura
- Barb Cameron

Headwaters #3

- Lori Anderson

Health Authority #5

- Trish Hutchinson
- Bonnie Porat

David Thompson #6

- Sheryl Froelich,
- Anna May Jasonson
- Denise McBain
- Anne Sims

East Central #7

- Steve Petz

West View #8

- Barb Rocchio

Crossroads #9

- Gladys Procyshen
- Linda Whalley

Capital # 10

- Marianne Stewart

Aspen #11

- Linda Killick

Lakeland #12

- Betty Gray
- Phyllis Melsness
- Rosemary Seaman
- Doris Werstiuk

Mistahia #13

- Jane Manning
- Donna Radbourne
- Lindsay Stark

Peace #14

- Joyce Holliday
- Donna Hardacre
- Barb Mulcahy
- Sandi Primeau

Keeweenok #15

- Daria Wallsten

Northwestern #17

- Sherri Ross

Alberta Cancer Board

- Wendy Mackenzie
- Patti Kindrat

Provincial Mental Health Advisory Board

- Don Schurman