



Action for Neighbourhood Change

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Action for Neighbourhood Change is a unique learning initiative that will assess how locally-driven neighbourhood revitalization strategies can enhance the capacity of individuals and families to build and sustain strong, healthy communities.

Working with local residents, not-for-profit agencies, and public and private sector partners, *Action for Neighbourhood Change* combines local resources in new ways to develop creative, locally-based solutions for sustainable community development and neighbourhood renewal.

Action for Neighbourhood Change is about participation. It's about learning. And it's about sharing knowledge with other communities to build a safer and more supportive local living environment.

The initiative will also examine what government can do to encourage and support neighbourhood development. While local actors have a critical role to play in revitalizing their neighbourhoods, they must have help. Good public policy and programs are also required. An ongoing policy dialogue, informed by thoughtful research, will help identify how government can support neighbourhood initiatives more effectively.

Action for Neighbourhood Change will begin in five cities across Canada: Surrey, Regina, Thunder Bay, Toronto and Halifax. Neighbourhood sites were selected by the local United Way in consultation with residents, community leaders, government and key community organizations. Based on what is learned, *Action for Neighbourhood Change* may be expanded to other communities.

Communities in Transition

Strong, healthy neighbourhoods improve the quality of life for all of us. Not long ago, our communities were small and homogenous with strongly integrated social and civic networks. Today, the fabric of our community networks is fraying as people struggle to make ends meet in our cities, where the cost of living is soaring and where services and community facilities have not kept pace with the demands of changing neighbourhood populations.

As families seek out neighbourhoods where housing costs are lower, poverty tends to concentrate in particular communities, and with it, the likelihood of unemployment, substance abuse, poorly maintained buildings and elevated crime rates. Left unchecked, neighbourhood stress can cause property values to fall further, creating a self-perpetuating cycle of decline and decay. Dilapidated neighbourhoods highlight the growing gap between rich and poor and reinforce the sense of exclusion and stigmatization felt by residents of low income areas. The need for neighbourhood renewal is deeply felt by the people living in these communities but many feel cut off from the political process – unheard and overlooked.

Local Solutions for Local Problems

The fact is, every neighbourhood is unique, and the vital knowledge and strategies for addressing local problems are rooted in local experience.

By bringing all sectors of the community together and offering resources that strengthen its capacity to work collectively *Action for Neighbourhood Change* provides a common space in which to

identify local assets, develop cooperative solutions to complex common problems and forge a neighbourhood vision.

Learning how individuals, governments, business and the not-for-profit sector can work together in a coordinated and productive way is an important first step towards sustainable neighbourhood change. Over the long term, the lessons learned through *Action for Neighbourhood Change* will inform the way governments design policies and programs to support ongoing community well-being across Canada.

Partners in Progress

Action for Neighbourhood Change is an initiative funded by the Government of Canada and coordinated by United Way Canada - Centraide Canada in partnership with the Caledon Institute of Social Policy, Tamarack: An Institute for Community Engagement and the National Film Board of Canada, as well as United Ways of the Lower Mainland (Surrey), Regina, Thunder Bay, Greater Toronto and Halifax.

Using their broad range of community building skills and knowledge, these key partners will work closely with local coordinators to involve residents, governments, business and not-for-profit organizations in creating a vision and action plan for renewing their neighbourhood. Throughout the project we will capture what we are learning and share those lessons widely with others working on neighbourhood renewal.

The policy dialogue and research process will create opportunities for government and community partners to work together in new and better ways.

The Film Board will train and work with local filmmakers to use video as a tool to help people talk with one another about their neighbourhood and the change they hope to produce.

Additional partnerships are welcome, nationally and within each community, for funding support and project participation.

Renewal in Action



We Can All Make a Difference

Action for Neighbourhood Change involves everyone, including you. Building a stable community is a responsibility we all share. And we all have something to contribute and something to gain. Even the simplest act of participation in community planning helps to reduce isolation and ensure opportunities for engagement and empowerment.

If you would like to participate or find out more about our neighbourhood revitalization activities in your community, contact:

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