Addressing Our Toughest Challenges:

A Social Justice Discussion Guide for Community Foundations

NOVEMBER 2006
In 2001, CFC began to explore the role community foundations could play in advancing social justice issues in Canada. Since then, with support from the Ford Foundation and the Atkinson Charitable Foundation, we have been deepening our understanding of how community foundations might help to “level the playing field” for all Canadians by tackling the root causes of social problems.

Community foundations in Canada and around the world are working to meet urgent community needs, respond to longer-term local priorities, encourage philanthropy, introduce donors to approaches that make a difference to the community, and improve the community’s quality of life. We are working toward communities where all citizens have economic opportunity, equal access to high quality education and health care, vibrant cultural voices, safety, and the respect of their fellow citizens. We are working toward communities that treat their citizens fairly and equitably. We are working toward communities that are just.

But achieving that ideal community is a challenge. Too often, immediate needs in the community are so pressing we have no time or resources left to consider the root causes of those problems or – consequently – their long-term solutions.

By adopting a social justice lens on some of their ongoing work in grantmaking, asset development, and community leadership, many community foundations are aiming at solving basic problems rather than treating their symptoms over and over again.¹


This guide was developed by Nancy F. Johnson and Betsy Martin, with valuable input from members of CFC’s Social Justice Learning Group and other staff and volunteers of community foundations across Canada.

About this Guide

This guide presents a way to begin the discussion of social justice with your community foundation board, committee volunteers, and staff. It starts by grounding the social justice discussion in facts about Canada’s social and economic reality. It moves on to a series of questions that will help your foundation’s volunteers, board and staff articulate their vision of a “level playing field” for all Canadians. The guide then helps your group look at the foundation’s three roles – grantmaking, donor engagement/asset development, and community leadership – through a social justice lens. Equally important, it will help you think about your governance and internal operations with a social justice perspective in mind. Throughout, there are brief examples of what community foundations and other organizations are doing in each of these areas. References to more detailed case studies are also provided.

To deepen our understanding of the current reality, CFC commissioned a paper on the social justice landscape in Canada. That overview by Judith Maxwell of the Canadian Policy Research Networks, “Strategies for Social Justice: Place, People and Policy,” lays out some of the facts and myths about equity, opportunity, and inclusion in Canada. It reviews Canadian statistics on poverty and highlights areas where our ideals of equity and fairness are not reflected in reality.

This discussion guide uses that report as a jumping off point. Through a series of leading questions, it will help the Board and staff of your community foundation discuss the findings in that report, explore how they may be reflected in your particular community, and begin to think about ways your community foundation can take action on those tough, persistent problems.

All community foundations fund organizations which meet the needs of disadvantaged people. Providing help to people who need it today is an essential, much-valued kind of support with a long and distinguished history in the community foundation movement. This guide focuses on exploring longer-term solutions to the root causes of those persistent needs, with a view to making lasting impact on those toughest of issues.
How to Use this Guide

This guide will help your board, committees, and staff open a conversation about root causes of persistent problems, social justice and the role community foundations can play in those difficult issues. It is not designed as a strategic planning exercise, but rather as a means of airing views and opening a dialogue about the topic. Some suggestions about using the guide:

- Schedule a special board meeting/retreat (or a series of shorter meetings) to discuss the questions in the guide, perhaps in a more relaxed setting than your regular meetings. Try to ensure that both potential supporters and possible skeptics attend.

- Ask participants to read this guide in advance, along with “Strategies for Social Justice: Place, People and Policy” by Judith Maxwell. CFC’s “The Social Justice Spectrum” and “Explorations: Principles for Community Foundations” are also useful background documents.

- Have the meeting led by an experienced facilitator (perhaps a senior staff member, CFC Regional Coordinator or a skilled volunteer)

- Make sure someone records notes of the conversation (there is a possible format in the guide), including a list of next steps and who is responsible for them

Once you have initiated this dialogue about root causes, social change and inclusion, it will be important to continue that conversation with the Board, staff, other volunteers, grant reviewers, etc. to ensure that everyone involved in the foundation has the opportunity to explore social justice concepts and your foundation’s potential role in tackling those tough issues.

For more ideas on how to use this guide, contact the CFC Regional Coordinator for your area.

This guide focuses on social and economic components of social justice, and stresses the key role poverty and exclusion play in creating barriers to full participation in Canadian life. But there are many other social justice issues that community foundations are concerned with, including the environment, human rights and discrimination, education and health, etc. Your foundation will identify the issues that most concern you at the local level.
SECTION ONE:
Exploring Social Justice and Our Vision

For community foundations, social justice work is directed at social change – seeking solutions to social, economic, and political injustice by addressing root causes of those problems, not just their symptoms.¹

A. The Reality of Social Justice in Canada

Until we have a good grasp of social conditions in Canada, it’s hard to put flesh on the concepts of social justice and inclusion. Judith Maxwell’s paper, “Strategies for Social Justice: Place, People and Policy,” lays out some of the global and national factors that are changing the economic and social risks for Canadians. The new reality that she and others describe presents some disturbing facts and figures about Canada. This is a compilation from various sources:

- More than 1.2 million Canadian children (one out of every six) live in poverty. Nearly 320,000 of them rely on food banks for their daily needs
- 52% of Aboriginal children are living in poverty
- Work is no longer a guaranteed escape from poverty. About 2 million adults are working for less than $10 an hour
- The gap between rich and poor continues to grow and the asset gap is huge. The poorest 50% of Canadian households own only 6% of all personal financial assets
- Access to opportunities is only one aspect of levelling the playing field. Canadian-born Blacks, for example, are as likely as other Canadians to have attended university (21%), but they have higher rates of unemployment and lower average incomes
- Poverty in foreign-born racialized minorities is increasing dramatically, despite the fact that immigrants are arriving with higher credentials. 52% of recent immigrants (1991-1996) are living in poverty here – more than double the rate (21%) of other Canadians.
- 22% of working women earn low wages, compared to 12% of working men

¹ The Social Justice Spectrum, Community Foundations of Canada, 2003. See Appendix A for more definitions of social justice, social justice philanthropy, and terms like social inclusion, racialized poverty, etc.
Discussion questions:

- Were you surprised by the facts in “Strategies for Social Justice: Place, People and Policy” and those above?
- How do you feel about the Canada described in that report?
- What does poverty mean to you?
- What does “leveling the playing field” mean to you?
- Looking ahead, what are the social issues that concern you most for Canada?

B. The Playing Field Here at Home

Most community foundations, by definition, work at the local level. The issues raised in Judith Maxwell’s paper are broad, national ones, but they no doubt have an effect in your community. Completing the Community Scan that follows may help you get a better picture of what the “playing field” looks like in your community, and what challenges exist for people locally.

The template below covers some basic information about your community, with comparisons at the national level in some cases. (Some categories vary so significantly across the country that national figures are not useful.) Other groups may already have gathered the info you need to complete this overview for your community – the social planning council, the United Way, Chamber of Commerce, the municipal government, local colleges or university etc. In some communities, the national Vital Signs initiative of CFC may provide a useful framework of data. As well, the Statistics Canada website contains community profiles for approximately 6,000 Canadian communities, along with comparative provincial figures (see www12.statcan.ca/english/). The same site has information on aboriginal demographics and on people with disabilities. Some community foundations might also choose to make a research grant to have a profile on local social justice issues developed for the community.

In preparation for your discussion, complete the information below, or the portions of it that are most relevant to your situation. You might assign the task of gathering the information to staff, or divide it up as “homework” between a number of participants in advance of the meeting. If you have access to the internet during the meeting, you could search the StatsCan website for additional detail.
### Information About Our Community

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Our Community</th>
<th>Canada (2001 Census)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total population</td>
<td></td>
<td>29.6 million</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lone-parent families</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.3 million families (16%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>People with disabilities</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.6 million (12.4%)</td>
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<td>Foreign-born</td>
<td></td>
<td>5.4 million (18.4%)</td>
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<td>Aboriginal population</td>
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<td>976,305 (3.3%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Poverty rate</td>
<td></td>
<td>Has stayed virtually the same for 30 years – between 15% and 17%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unemployment rate</td>
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<td>In July 2006: 6.4%</td>
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<td>Minimum wage</td>
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<td>- annualized</td>
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<tr>
<td>Poverty line (Low Income Cut Off – LICO)</td>
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<td>(See Appendix A for comparisons)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Household income</td>
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<td>Housing: rent/own ratio</td>
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<td>Housing: vacancy rate</td>
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<td>Housing: social housing waiting list</td>
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<td>Food bank usage</td>
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<td>Literacy rate</td>
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<td>Crime rate/major policing issues</td>
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### Discussion questions:

- What are the most surprising things in the figures about your community (above)?

- Is there evidence of national trends here at home? (What is your child poverty rate, for example? Do you have racialized poverty? Is your community appropriately using the skills of foreign-trained professionals?)

- What are the two or three national issues in Judith Maxwell’s report that resonate most strongly for you at the local level?

- Is there a local issue in your community that the scan above has missed?
C. A Different Vision for Our Community

Take some time as a group to discuss your vision of a just community and how that relates to the work of the foundation. Given what you now know about poverty and other social challenges, both nationally and in your local community, what would you like to see change?

Discussion questions:

- If you could create a truly “level playing field” for everyone in your community, what would that look like?
- What is your vision of a just community at the local level?
- How do these ideas and dreams relate to the mission statement of your foundation?
- How do the Principles for Community Foundations outlined in CFC’s publication Explorations connect to these issues?
- What work is your foundation already doing to address root causes of social and economic problems in your community?
- Do you need to gather more information about these issues at the local level? If so, what information and who could help you do that?

Social Justice Success Stories

- For several years, St. Christopher House in Toronto has run an income tax clinic for about 800 seniors, as well as helping them fill out other government forms. Through these programs, staff noticed that many low-income seniors did not know they were eligible for the federal Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS) and were therefore living on even less money than they were entitled to. Grants from the Atkinson Foundation, and later a Tides Canada donor, allowed St. Christopher House to support a visiting social policy “fellow” from Ottawa who discovered that the GIS problem affected more than 380,000 seniors across Canada – not just those served by St. Christopher House. With this information, the agency advocated for the two federal departments involved to reach out to eligible seniors (identified by their filed tax returns) and notify them of their eligibility for GIS. This has begun to put approximately a half-billion more dollars into the hands of Canada’s low-income seniors.
Across Canada, accreditation, training and upgrading are real barriers facing immigrants with foreign credentials in accessing jobs in their field. Yet there is a critical shortage of skilled labour amid rising demand for workers. To address the situation, a small group of women in Calgary, including a board and a committee member from The Calgary Foundation (TCF), brought together the Alberta Network of Immigrant Women and other community groups to establish the Immigrant Access Fund (IAF) at TCF. Administered by the Mennonite Central Committee Employment Development, the IAF is a micro loan program to assist new Canadians with loans for a period of study, examination and license fees, or tuition, books and supplies – whatever short term assistance immigrants need to work in their field. Operating support from The United Way and the Alberta Lottery Fund as well as loan pool contributions from Suncor, PetroCanada, and immigrant-owned businesses have allowed $100,000 in small loans to be distributed. As the loans are paid back (at preferred rates), they go into an endowment fund at TCF, ensuring the long-term future of the program. With strong community partnerships, the IAF aims to build a $2 million loan capital pool.

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Your Community Foundation, Diversity and Inclusion

One of the core social justice concepts is inclusion – the notion that all members of a society should be able to participate and contribute fully, regardless of differences such as age, ethnicity, socio-economic status, disability, sexual orientation etc. An exploration of the root causes of problems in your community may lead your foundation to confront the nature and effects of exclusion. You may also realize that your community foundation is not fully reflective of your community’s diversity – in its Board, committees, staff, donors and others who guide and shape your work. Without diverse input, without practicing inclusion in your own organization, your foundation’s social justice work will be more difficult and have less credibility in the community.

Section Five addresses those internal concerns. Some community foundations may choose to begin there, before looking at the grantmaking, donor engagement, and community leadership opportunities of a social justice focus. In addition, CFC has developed a series of tools to help community foundations understand and address diversity issues in their communities. See “Diversity Scanning Tool for Community Foundations” and “Building Bridges: A Tool for Engaging Diverse Communities.”
NOTES ON OUR DISCUSSION OF SECTION ONE:
Exploring Social Justice and Our Vision

1. What we’re currently doing:

2. What we could do:

3. Addressing the gap – next steps:

TIP: It’s easy to get bogged down in defining terms. Remember that what you choose to do will be more important than the words you use to describe it. Also, your understanding of social justice will change as you learn more about it and become familiar with the issues.
SECTION TWO:

Turning Concern into Action – Grantmaking through a Social Justice Lens

Social justice grantmaking tries to get at the root causes of social problems like those outlined in Judith Maxwell’s report. It aims to make an impact on persistent problems. If you made a commitment to examining your undesignated fund grantmaking – or a portion of it – with a social justice perspective, what would that mean?

A Built-In Grantmaking Balance

Community foundations will always have a range of grantmaking priorities because of their very nature and because of the diverse philanthropic goals and interests of individual donors. A social justice focus will likely begin with undesignated funds. It may spread to other funds over time as you gain experience and begin to engage donors in discussion of social justice issues.

There are a number of ways a community foundation can support social justice organizations and movements with their grants, including:

- make grants to social justice organizations to help strengthen their internal capacity
- fund economic opportunity initiatives and social innovation
- fund advocacy on social justice issues
- fund leadership development programs for marginalized people and grassroots leaders
- support infrastructure costs of networks and coalitions working on social justice issues
- fund research into root causes of social issues and evaluation and dissemination of social justice work
- design a pro-active funding program to address a social/economic issue
- examine your granting guidelines and reporting requirements: do they present access barriers for grassroots organizations or social justice coalitions?

See The Social Justice Spectrum for more ideas
Social Justice Success Stories

- Toronto Community Foundation’s Vital Ideas program uses the Vital Signs framework as a foundation for action to improve Toronto’s quality of life. Vital Ideas provides grants, technical assistance and, most importantly, opportunities to build networks and support for high-impact programs that need help to become sustainable. The range of supports provided by Vital Ideas, including public recognition, media attention and profile in a publication for TCF donors, all help to connect philanthropy to emerging community needs and opportunities.

- In March 2003, the BC Ministry of Children and Family Development established a $20 million Community Living Restructuring fund with the Victoria Foundation. The purpose of the fund was to increase options for people living with developmental disabilities. The Foundation worked with an advisory committee to create innovative guidelines for grants that often made it possible for a family member to continue living at home. Grants improved accessibility at home, and increased individual safety and access to the community through specialized transport such as wheelchair accessible vans. Quality of life for individuals has improved and many BC families have been able to stay together and avoid the long-term cost of care. Through evidence-based quality of life improvements and cost savings documented and presented to the BC Government by the Foundation and its advisory committee, the Province has changed its approach, and committed a further $10 million per year for the next three years towards family independence for people living with developmental disabilities.

- The Community Foundation of Ottawa made a small grant to a job training program for recently-emigrated Somali men. Knowing that equal qualifications do not always ensure equal outcome, the program also included a guaranteed job for each graduate.

- Medicine Hat Community Foundation’s relationships with area agencies were crucial to the success of a local housing initiative. A new agency came to town hoping to create assisted housing for people facing homelessness and coping with mental health issues. But the agency didn’t have a local track record and was having a hard time securing a mortgage. The community foundation consulted its partners, researched the agency’s
work elsewhere in the province, and risked a start-up grant. Hearing about the foundation’s grant, another local housing society came forward with a larger contribution. The building was purchased, renovations completed, and 12 people have escaped homelessness.

- Hamilton Community Foundation made a bold commitment to social justice in 2003 by committing its entire Community Fund granting for four years to poverty alleviation and prevention. See the Hamilton case study in the social justice section of CFC’s website: www.cfc-fcc.ca

Discussion questions:

- To what extent is our grantmaking addressing social justice issues now? Are we addressing root causes of persistent problems?
- Do our guidelines allow or invite social change initiatives?
- Is our granting process accessible to grassroots groups?
- Do we ask applicants how their work gets at the root cause of the problem they are addressing?
- Who do we invite to sit on committees to review and recommend grants? Do they have community expertise and advocacy backgrounds? Are they from diverse backgrounds?
- Are we strategic? Could we have more impact by focusing our grants program more precisely? Are there effective grants programs elsewhere that we could adapt to our local needs?
- If our grants are generally small, do we work to leverage other financial and non-financial support for grantees?
- Are we making any long-term or multi-year grants?
- Do we know who the social justice advocates are in our community? Are they aware of the foundation as a source of support?
- Are we talking to, or working with, other funders about persistent community problems and their solutions?
Tip: It’s tempting to be generous with your categorization of social justice grantmaking. But think about root causes rather than symptoms. Does making that particular grant get at the root cause of the problem? (Does your annual grant to the local food bank, for example, address the issues of income security or food security? Have you invited the food bank to tell you about their policy initiatives and other work on root causes of hunger? Are they supporting local, regional or national action coalitions around food security? Could you discuss how to help them in that effort? Could you designate your annual grant to that aspect of their work?)

NOTES ON OUR DISCUSSION OF SECTION TWO:
Grantmaking

1. What we’re currently doing:

2. What we could do:

3. Addressing the gap – next steps:
SECTION THREE:

Turning Concern into Action – Donor Engagement and Asset Development through a Social Justice Lens

If you made a commitment to examining your donor engagement and asset development program with a social justice perspective, what would that mean?

There are many ways to increase your donors’ interest and participation in social justice issues. You could:

- invite donors to meet innovative grantees and social advocates
- use donor newsletters and personal meetings to discuss root causes of social issues
- tell social action success stories in newsletters and annual reports
- engage donors in social issues by sending them research reports and community demographic information
- talk about the value of long-term funding and community-wide approaches to social issues
- sit down with donors and help them evaluate their annual grants to see if they are in alignment with their values and issues
- offer innovative fund opportunities like a micro-loan fund for grassroots businesses, or a social research field of interest fund
- offer brown-bag lunches for donors on a priority issues in your community

It’s important to note that in some cases donors are “ahead of the curve” on pressing community issues, and help the foundation move into social issues. There are lots of examples of donors sparking innovative and ground-breaking work within community foundations. Leaders of the community foundation (staff and volunteers) need to be open to hearing those ideas and facilitating community connections for their most visionary donors.

* See The Social Justice Spectrum for more ideas
Social Justice Success Stories

- A donor couple in Hamilton were so concerned about poverty and exclusion of Aboriginal children in their community that they made a gift to research ways to address it. Aboriginal leaders identified school retention and academic achievement as keys to future success. The community foundation brought together a roundtable of Aboriginal leaders to design an effective, multi-year approach to helping Aboriginal students stay in school.

- In December 2001, The Winnipeg Foundation received an unprecedented gift of $100 million from the Moffat Family. The donors specified that 40% of the grants made from the fund should be used for innovation. The gift (and its direction) was a real catalyst for the Foundation to examine new ways of making positive change in the community. One of several initiatives is the Centennial Neighbourhood Project, a resident-driven community-building partnership with schools, agencies, parents and other leaders in one disadvantaged neighbourhood. The intensive, multi-faceted five-year project aims to tackle one root cause of the area’s deficits: under-investment in children and families.

Discussion questions:

- Do our donors know the facts about social and economic inequality in Canada, or in our community?
- Do we make information about social justice issues available to our donors?
- Are we listening to donors who bring us their concerns and innovative ideas – even if they seem unusual or controversial?
- Do we think about social justice issues as part of our donor education and engagement goals, plans and process?
- Are we afraid our donors might not be comfortable with an emphasis on social justice? What is our evidence for that fear?
- If the foundation announced an emphasis on reducing racialized poverty, for example, would donors think that was radical?
Many community foundations have discovered that as they become more visible and proactive on community-wide issues, new donors come forward with a wide range of interests.

NOTES ON OUR DISCUSSION OF SECTION THREE:
Donor Engagement and Asset Development

1. What we’re currently doing:

2. What we could do:

3. Addressing the gap – next steps:
SECTION FOUR:
Turning Concern into Action – Community Leadership through a Social Justice Lens

There are many ways that community foundations can address social justice issues through community leadership. This may, in fact, be the role with the most potential to create lasting change in your community, by working with others. You can:

- contribute financially to community forums and think tanks on social justice issues
- share information, commission research, and bring experts together to explore a social problem
- convene community funders to discuss coordinating approaches to a social problem
- provide leadership to existing networks addressing community issues
- convene stakeholders, including people living the experience, to understand the community problem and its root causes, and to brainstorm solutions that you can fund
- learn about social policy and how policy change occurs; share this information with stakeholders
- facilitate exchange of views between grassroots groups and policy makers
- facilitate exchange of views, information and solutions among leaders from different sectors who have vested interest in a particular issue
- promote and fund advocacy opportunities that support social change

*See The Social Justice Spectrum for more ideas*
It’s important to anticipate that, given the nature of some social justice issues, you may begin to work with partners you don’t typically work with now. Expect some challenges and make sure you have people involved who have the skills required: convening, coalition building, negotiating etc.

Social Justice Success Stories

- As a relatively new community foundation with limited resources, the Shuswap Foundation in British Columbia tries to use its limited resources strategically. Recently they turned their attention to the town of Sicamous (population 2000), a community in transition from forest-based industry to tourism. With tourism jobs paying less than former mill employment, and the cyclical nature of the new jobs, many in Sicamous are struggling. Government services have also been centralized to larger communities. These trends were reflected in applications to the Shuswap Foundation, so when the largest not-for-profit agency – the Eagle Valley Community Support Society – asked the foundation for leadership, the foundation was pleased to help. Convening 30 people representing 10 groups, the foundation hosted two 3-hour meetings in Sicamous that helped to define the issues and start people thinking about partnerships and information-sharing to strategize solutions. The Shuswap Foundation then funded a community asset-mapping project, through Vancouver Foundation’s LEAD grants, which identified critical priorities and projects such as a parent co-op daycare, a mechanism for keeping in touch with remote seniors who may be at risk, service coordination and transportation challenges. Shuswap Foundation’s Clyde Tucker says the foundation’s role is to be a catalyst: “We’re privileged to be in a position where we can provide some leadership and some seed money.”

- Working with private landlords, the City and the Province, Toronto Community Foundation created a unique partnership to help address Toronto’s lack of low income housing. The initiative resulted in changes to federal and provincial policies, making existing housing stock eligible for low income housing allowances. As a result, 5,400 additional rental units were made available to low-income people across Ontario. (See the social justice section of CFC’s website for a complete case study.)
“In the mid-1990s, the South West Organizing Project (SWOP) in Albuquerque, New Mexico, a [Jessie Smith] Noyes [Foundation] grantee, raised serious questions concerning Intel’s expansion there. Intel refused to meet with them. The Noyes Foundation offered to play a role in supporting SWOP’s community organizing by using the foundation’s role as an Intel shareholder. Working closely together, with SWOP always in the lead, Noyes pressed Intel to be accountable to the community; and SWOP pressed them for changes in their practices relating to pollution, jobs, and other issues. Noyes filed a shareholder resolution asking Intel to commit to sharing information with the community. It received over 8 percent of the shareholder vote, which is a good showing. Discussions continued for a year. Finally, Intel agreed to change its environmental, health, and safety policy. The world did not change, Intel’s behavior changed somewhat. And SWOP gained greater credibility within the power structure of the state. Noyes provided a grant to SWOP to buy Intel stock, so that they became shareholders as well as stakeholders. A foundation does not have to have large holdings in a company to make a difference. Noyes held only 100 share of Intel stock at the time.”

The root cause of a problem is not usually people. It is often a system. Tackling root causes often uncovers the need for systemic change.

**Discussion questions:**

- Do we have high quality, timely sources of information about community needs and trends?
- Do we have a funding “pot” to support our convening and other community leadership activities?
- Are we generally reactive or proactive on community issues?
- Do we use our voice to promote awareness of social justice issues?

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Addressing Our Toughest Challenges

- Do we use our contacts across sectors to facilitate exchange of ideas, information and solutions on pressing social issues?
- Do we use our networks to advocate for legislative or social change? Do we fund advocacy or support advocacy efforts in other ways?
- Partnering with other agencies is challenging. Do we support staff and volunteers to develop collaboration skills?
- When we begin community initiatives, do we plan for passing leadership over to the community?

Advocacy and the Community Foundation

Community foundations must operate within the Canada Revenue Agency rules on advocacy, but there is more room for action than might be imagined. For clarification of CRA regulations, see Richard Bridge’s paper, “Innovation and Problem Solving – a Bolder, More Active Role for Community Foundations,” available from CFC or online at www.cfc-fcc.ca

“By helping nonprofits expand their advocacy efforts, foundations can put a variety of issues—racism, allocation of resources for the poor, environmental policies, community development—at the center of public policy debates. Nonprofit advocacy is a critical tool for leveraging foundation dollars on behalf of resource-thin populations, in turn benefiting disenfranchised communities and the public at large.”

NAN ARON, “Funding Nonprofit Advocacy: The Increasing Role of Foundations” in NFG Reports, Fall 2002, Issue Three-Volume Nine
NOTES ON OUR DISCUSSION OF SECTION FOUR: Community Leadership

1. What we’re currently doing:

2. What we could do:

3. Addressing the gap – next steps:
SECTION FIVE:
Walking the Talk – Governance and Administration through a Social Justice Lens

If you made a commitment to examining your internal governance and administrative practices with a social justice perspective, what would that mean?

One of the key notions of social justice is equality of opportunity and access to goods and services. Another is inclusion: the valuing of people for all their differences and making sure they do not face structural or attitudinal barriers because of those differences. Community foundations, to fulfil their mission of representing broad community interests, should reflect the full diversity of their communities and practice inclusion. To help community foundations with that goal, CFC is creating a set of tools. The “Diversity Scanning Tool for Community Foundations” provides a template for your foundation to identify the particular diversity in your community and assess how well it is reflected in your foundation. A second tool, “Building Bridges: A Tool for Engaging Diverse Communities” will help you reach out.

In addition to considering diversity, community foundations can examine their practices through a social justice lens. You can look at your policies and procedures to determine whether unintended barriers prevent full access to employment, volunteer opportunities, grants and other aspects of community foundation life. You can also assess your purchasing and investment policies and vehicles to see whether they support or promote social justice. Some examples:

- reflect community diversity throughout your foundation – and ensure that that diversity is integral to decision making
- establish board and committee recruitment policies and practices that ensure inclusion of underrepresented groups (minorities, low-income people, youth, etc.)
- ensure that staff hiring policies and practices are truly inclusive
- use board and staff meetings to learn about social justice issues, take board members and staff on site visits, gather research on local issues
- train yourself and your staff to work collaboratively with community leaders and learn how to help develop local leaders
- consider including ethical investing strategies in your investment policies
- seek out suppliers from diverse communities for some of the foundation’s purchasing
- simplify your grant application process and reporting burden for grantees, to reduce barriers for grassroots groups
- devise grant and program evaluation criteria that capture the long-term nature of social change.

Social Justice Success Stories

- Prompted in part by an increased focus on environmental grantmaking and community leadership arising from their participation in the J.W. McConnell Family Foundation’s environmental grantmaking initiative, the Community Foundation of Whistler launched a Socially Responsible Investment option in 2004 for donors creating new funds. The community foundation’s Investment Committee notes that “the option fits well within our investment policy statement and allows us to meet our donors’ needs. The investments in the new fund are formally assessed by an external expert, for socially responsible performance and business practices.” Some of the areas investigated by the SRI expert include: aboriginal and community issues, corporate governance, diversity in the workplace, employee relations, environmental performance, ethical business practices, human rights issues, product safety, and involvement in alcohol, gambling, nuclear energy, tobacco, and weapons-related production.

Discussion questions:

- Is striving for social justice reflected in our vision and mission? If so, how? If not, should it be?
- How broadly do we represent our community in our board, staff, committees? Have we used CFC’s Diversity Scanning Tool?
- Do we have a policy on diversity? If so, is it effective in practice?
- Are there elements of our strategic plan that address inclusion or social justice issues?
• Is our relationship with grantees and grant applicants a collegial one or a hierarchical/paternalistic one?
• Do our investment practices take socially responsible investing into consideration?
• How transparent are we? Are minutes of our meetings public? Are our investment policies public?
• Do we use any diverse vendors or consultants in the community (for example minority-owned, Aboriginal, women-run) for our services and supplies?

NOTES ON OUR DISCUSSION OF SECTION FIVE:
Governance and Administration

1. What we’re currently doing:

2. What we could do:

3. Addressing the gap – next steps:

“Ultimately, social justice is an idea that is central to the politics of contemporary democracies. It has always been, and must always be, a critical idea – one that challenges us to reform our institutions and practices in the name of greater fairness.”

Appendix A - Some Definitions

SOCIAL JUSTICE

Social justice: “Distribution of the social and economic resources of society for the benefit of all people.”

Social justice: “The process through which society attains a more equitable distribution of power in the political, economic and social realms.”

Social justice: “A concept based upon the belief that each individual and group within a given society has a right to civil liberties, equal opportunity, fairness, and participation in the educational, economic, institutional, social and moral freedoms and responsibilities valued by the community.”
– Cultural Competency Handbook, R. Degan and Dr. M. Disman, Department of Public Health Sciences, University of Toronto

SOCIAL JUSTICE PHILANTHROPY

“Social justice philanthropy is the practice of making contributions to nonprofit organizations that work for structural change and increase the opportunity of those who are less well off politically, economically and socially.”

POVERTY

Poverty line: There are many measures used in Canada to define poverty, and considerable controversy about how each is calculated. There is no one standard measure. Many are referred to as LICOs (low income cut-offs) and they are often based on the amount of household income required for housing, food and other necessities in a particular city or region.
The National Council of Welfare, Statistics Canada LICOs are one example:

<table>
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<th>Family Size</th>
<th>Cities of 500,000+</th>
<th>100,000-499,999</th>
<th>30,000-99,999</th>
<th>Less than 30,000</th>
<th>Rural Areas</th>
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</table>

Racialized poverty: the relationship between poverty and one’s ethno-racial status

Brain waste: the under-utilization of immigrants’ skills and credentials. By paying immigrants less than native-born Canadians, their experience, education and training is undervalued.

SOCIAL EXCLUSION/SOCIAL INCLUSION

Social exclusion: “... a comprehensive formulation, which refers to the dynamic process of being shut out, fully or partially, from any of the social, economic, political or cultural systems which determine the social integration of a person in a society. Social exclusion may therefore be seen as the denial (non-realization) of the civil, political and social rights of citizenship.”


Social inclusion: “is the capacity and willingness of our society to keep all groups within reach of what we expect as a society - the social commitment and investments necessary to ensure that socially and economically vulnerable people are within reach of our common aspirations, common life and its common wealth.”

For more information and resources on social justice, see CFC’s website pages on social justice philanthropy at www.cfc-fcc.ca