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THE ROLE OF THE STATE AND THE COMMUNITY IN COMMUNITY  
PARTICIPATION: A CASE STUDY

By

JEAN-MARC BÉLANGER

M. A. (Sociology) University of Waterloo, 1987

M. S. W. Dalhousie University, 1980

THESIS

Submitted to the Faculty of Social Work

In partial fulfilment of the requirements

for the Doctor of Social Work degree

Wilfrid Laurier University

1995

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## ABSTRACT

This study analyzes the principles and the practice of the concept of community participation. The purpose of the research is to address the degree and manner of autonomy that can be exercised at the local community level and also what kind of participation should come from the state when communities are engaged with the state in a community participation process. The methodology of qualitative nature, is a case study of the Sudbury Better Beginnings, Better Futures Association. An analysis of the public documents comparing the state and the Sudbury Association's position on community participation principles is portrayed before performing an analysis on the implementation strategies used by the Sudbury Better Beginnings, Better Futures Association. The conceptual framework provides an argument for more direct democracy and addresses six concepts: community, community development, community organization, social development, adult education, and community economic development; which are used to delimit the concept of community participation. Two models of citizen participation (Arnstein, 1969; Bregha, 1973) are then used to gauge the level of true participation achieved by the Sudbury Better Beginnings, Better Futures model. In the discussion, the concept of "social relations" (Ng *et al.*, 1990) is introduced to further complement the findings achieved with the conceptual framework of the study. The concept of social relations accentuates the importance of everyday work and life activities of community members as contributing factors important to the larger social, political and economic context of our society. Finally, arguments are presented in favour of the concept of communitarianism as a means to achieve more direct democracy in a partnership with the state.

## RÉSUMÉ

Ce travail de recherche analyse les principes et la pratique du concept de la participation communautaire. L'objectif de cette recherche se concentre sur le degré d'autonomie qui peut être exercé par un groupe communautaire au niveau local et sur le genre de participation qui peut provenir de l'État dans un processus de participation communautaire. La méthodologie, à nature qualitative, est une étude de cas de l'Association "Partir d'un bon pas pour un avenir meilleur de Sudbury". Une analyse est effectuée sur des documents publics où sont comparé la prise de position de l'État versus celle de l'Association de Sudbury. Cette comparaison vise les principes de la participation communautaire et est suivie d'une deuxième analyse sur les stratégies d'intervention de l'Association "Partir d'un bon pas pour un avenir meilleur de Sudbury". Le cadre conceptuel présente une position en faveur de la démocratie directe et fait référence aux six concepts suivants: la communauté, le développement communautaire, l'organisation communautaire, le développement social, l'éducation des adultes et le développement communautaire économique. Ces six entités servent à délimiter le concept de la participation communautaire. Deux modèles de la participation des citoyens (Arnstein, 1969; Bregha, 1973) sont utilisés afin d'évaluer le véritable niveau du modèle de participation atteint par l'Association "Partir d'un bon pas pour un avenir meilleur". Dans la discussion, le concept des "relations sociales" (Ng *et al.*, 1990) est présenté afin de compléter les résultats obtenus dans le cadre conceptuel. Le concept des relations quotidiennes de la vie des membres de la communauté, sont des facteurs importants contribuant aux secteurs plus large de notre société, soit les secteurs du social, du politique et de l'économie. Finalement, des arguments sont présentés en faveur du concept du communautarisme comme moyen d'atteindre la démocratie directe dans un partenariat avec l'État.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS/REMERCIEMENTS

Many people need to be thanked for their contribution and support with this project.

I would like to express my gratitude to the community participants of the Sudbury Better Beginnings, Better Futures project. You gave me the opportunity to learn and share in an unforgettable community experience. Thank you for your thoughts and support throughout the project.

To my wife Linda and my children Jenna, Kayla, Eric and Daniel. You always loved me and supported me whether things were going well or not. I give you all my love.

A Jacqueline. J'ai profité de ta générosité et j'apprécie grandement toutes les longues heures que tu as passé devant l'ordinateur à refaire les nombreuses ébauches du projet. Merci pour ton excellent travail et ton support moral dans cette entreprise.

Aux autres membres de ma famille: maman, Francine, Jim, Jocelyne, Georges, Marc André et Jean Michel, merci de votre support et de vos encouragements.

To Jean, Fred, Donna, Brian, Michelle and Jamie, thank you for your support and encouragement and believing in me.

A mes collègues de l'École de service social de l'Université Laurentienne, merci d'avoir été présent dans les temps difficiles et de m'avoir épaulé à travers ce long cheminement.

To my advisor, Dr. Hubert Campfens and the members of my committee: Dr. Marge Reitsma-Street, Dr. Mark Pancer, Dr. John Redekop, and Dr. Frank Turner, thank you for your guidance along the way.

## DEDICATION/DÉDICACE

*To my partner in life and my best friend Linda.  
Now our life together can open up on a new horizon*

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## **CHAPTER 1**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.0 FOCUS OF THE STUDY**

This thesis centres on both the concept and the practice of community participation. As a concept, community participation advances the ideal of community involvement in the decision-making process on matters that affect the community. In practice, community participation is frequently marred in its efforts to involve community members in the participatory process. Nevertheless, even though many aspects of community participation initiatives have not been successful in the past (Moynihan, 1969; Bachrach, 1976), the principles behind the concept of community participation have endured and evolved. A contemporary example attesting to this fact is the Better Beginnings, Better Futures initiative developed and implemented by the Ontario

government. The Better Beginnings, Better Futures project becomes the focus of my analysis of the concept and practice of community participation.

Community participation has gained popularity in Canadian and other Western societies in recent years. Much of this popularity is due to participation being considered not only as a fundamental right of citizens in a democracy (Albert, 1992), but also as a potential "new way" of achieving greater effectiveness and efficiency in policy and program planning (Midgley, 1986). Governments have increasingly become involved in people's lives, health, social and economic matters and our social safety net can no longer continue in the same vein (Lalonde, 1976; Epp, 1986; Vaillancourt, 1988; Doucet et Favreau, 1991). Governments are struggling with the administration of these large and costly welfare state programmes and are looking for ways of cutting costs (Midgley, 1986). Decentralization, community development and community participation as strategic options open to governments, have become quite attractive in this search.

Although cost-effectiveness is the most frequently cited reason in favour of community participation, it is by no means the only one. Advocates of community participation assert that more will be accomplished if participants are involved at the decision-making level and in the implementation of projects (White, 1982). When people actively participate in the identification of their needs and come up with creative solutions to meet these needs, they can become more self-reliant (White, 1982; Albert, 1992).

The Better Beginnings, Better Futures model emphasizes the need for the state and local communities to enter into a collaborative partnership which is based on a community development approach. I seek to investigate the process by which this partnership was established in order to determine if it is true community participation. This will be done by analyzing key documents prepared by the state, which reflect its ideological position on community participation, and by analyzing the various strategies employed by the Sudbury Better Beginnings Association in implementing community participation principles.

The state has an interest in assessing the benefits of community participation projects. The Ontario New Democratic Party (NDP) government had promised a pragmatic progressive alternative in its electoral campaign. Perhaps this predisposed its cabinet to try out a prevention model with a community development approach. Nevertheless, in terms of investment costs, the Better Beginnings initiative comes at low cost for what it could potentially reap. Twenty-seven million dollars spread over five years is not excessive for a province which had a budget of 6.3 billion dollars in 1990-91 for its Ministry of Community and Social Services (MCSS). What is commendable is that it approved this project in a time of recession and at a time when it estimated that the MCSS budget for 1991-92 would be 8.1 billion dollars (Dyck, 1991). The NDP government must have had faith that investment in this type of project would exceed the expenditure.

Advocates of community development initiatives believe the Better Beginnings model to be a model through which true participation might be achieved. By understanding the state's conception of participation and comparing it to the community's conception, I hope to draw conclusions on the "applicability" of the concept. There are often gaps between the perspectives held about a concept and problems found during its implementation.

Few studies have sought to link theory and practice as they pertain to community participation. This study analyzes the principles of community participation by first making a comparison between the state's position and the Sudbury community's position in their understanding of the concept. Second, I analyze how the local Sudbury community group has applied the concept of community participation asking the question, "Did the Sudbury community do what it intended to do according to its principles?". As a third objective, I address the degree and manner of autonomy that can be exercised at the local community level and also what kind of participation should be coming from the state when communities are engaged with the state in a community participation process.

## **1.1 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY**

The basic principles of community participation and the implementation of these principles are not new (Draper, 1971). What is new is a re-emergence of participation in neighbourhood and community organization activities as a tool perceived to be the



solution to many social problems (Langton, 1978; Perlman, 1978; Wandersman, 1979, 1981, 1986; Midgley, 1986). Community participation was a popular movement in the 1960's and 1970's in both the United States and Canada. The United States developed strategies for its "War on poverty" and the community mental health field. In Canada community participation initiatives revolved mainly around welfare issues, but also on poverty issues and on the community mental health field. There has been a variety of projects and programs involving participation, some of which have been successful, others not. Many of these community projects were promoted and funded by the state and managed by community groups.

The relationship between the state and local communities has not always been smooth. In the past, many communities found themselves in situations of increased responsibility and decreased resources. They felt "dumped upon" by state authorities who took advantage of the principles behind community development initiatives to withdraw from their social responsibilities (Lamb, 1981). Communities became dissatisfied and disillusioned with inadequate resources and no decision-making power in affairs that concerned them. This situation raised doubts for many as to the benefits of community participation.

Nonetheless, there has been a resurgence of interest in community participation initiatives in the province of Ontario. Under the leadership of the Liberal government of David Peterson (1985-1990), the Children's Services Branch of the Ministry of

Community and Social Services and the Technical Advisory Group to the Coordinated Primary Prevention Initiative, collaborated on a project that culminated in the production of an integrated model of primary prevention. This model is presented in a publication called Better Beginnings, Better Futures: An Integrated Model of Primary Prevention of Emotional and Behavioral Problems, which was made public in the Fall of 1989, by the Ministry of Community and Social Services (MCSS). This same Ministry worked jointly with the Ministries of Health and Education in developing the model. The Liberals intended to implement this model in the Fall of 1990, but in September of that year the electorate voted the New Democratic Party (NDP) into power in Ontario. The NDP government approved continuation and funding of this project in selected sites across the province. Sudbury is a selected site and is the site upon which the case study component for this research is based.

The Better Beginnings, Better Futures model is a provincial research demonstration project of prevention that has eleven sites across the province. Each site is funded by three Ministries within the Provincial Government and supervised by the Ministry of Community and Social Services (MCSS). The objective of the primary prevention demonstration program is to prevent social and emotional problems among high risk children. The target groups include pre-natal, pre-school and primary school age groups. The eleven sites across the province are funded for five years and longitudinal research is conducted over the following twenty-five years. In each sites of the prevention project, attempts are made to develop programs for children and their

communities that provide "better beginnings" so that they can have "better futures". Eight of the sites have targeted children of the age group of 0-4, while the other three, including Sudbury, have targeted the age group of 4-8.

The Better Beginnings, Better Futures model involves the community in the design and delivery of services. The model is based on community development principles that call for the participation of community people. Wandersman (1986) argues that putting into practice, in a fashion that allows community members to share in the decision-making process, is necessary for the concept of community participation to work. The major selection criteria of eligibility for the project were:

- a) the commitment to an integrated approach to building on existing comprehensive prevention initiatives;
- b) experience in community development processes;
- c) maintenance of high quality in programs and services delivered; and
- d) interest in participating in the research process (Logbook,<sup>1</sup> 1991).

The Sudbury community having met these criteria, was now facing implementing the principles of community participation.

---

<sup>1</sup> The Logbook contains recorded information from participants in the Sudbury Better Beginnings, Better Futures project. More detailed explanations about the logbook are given in the methodology chapter.

## 1.2 THE SETTING FOR THE CASE STUDY

This study focuses specifically on the Sudbury Better Beginnings, Better Futures site. The precise geographical locations selected by the Sudbury Better Beginnings, Better Futures Association are the Donovan and Flour Mill/ Le Moulin à Fleur neighbourhoods.

In 1989-1990, 1,473 children were registered in the seven elementary schools of the Donovan and Flour Mill area. These Children lived in a neighbourhood in which 48% of parents reported English as their mother tongue, 38% as French and 14% as other. It was also estimated that one child in ten was of Native origin (The Ontario Prevention Clearing House, Newsletter, 1991). Thus, the Sudbury Better Beginnings, Better Futures project was conceived with these linguistic and cultural characteristics in mind.

In addition to the ethnic mix, this particular geographical area was considered to be at "high risk" and "disadvantaged".<sup>2</sup> The following quote captures quite well what is meant by being a high risk community.

---

<sup>2</sup> The reader is referred to Appendix C for an overview of the high risk indicators as outlined by the Provincial model of Better Beginnings, Better Futures. Chapter 5 presents a more thorough discussion on high risk indicators.

From one-fifth to one-third of the nearly 2,000 children under age 10 years old, who live in a northwest central (the Flour Mill/Le Moulin à Fleur and Donovan neighbourhoods) of the city of Sudbury are cared for by families and others who struggle with the stresses of low income, lonely parenthood and minimal child care help, dense and noisy housing, the highest crime rates in the region, and a paucity of well-paid jobs. For example, over 1,000 children lived in families receiving social assistance (Duff, 1990; Novosedlik, 1990). Although many of these children are well cared for at home and at one of the seven elementary schools in the area, as a group the children live in an area that on numerous indicators is "high risk" or "disadvantaged". According to the Better Beginnings, Better Futures 1989 review of the literature, these children then are more vulnerable to future problems and unhappiness. Already, in several of the elementary schools nearly one-third of the students fall below accepted standards of basic reading and writing achievement by Grade 4, and nearly one-fourth of the students have failed once by Grade 8. In addition, the rate of teenage pregnancy is the highest in the region. (Proposal for Research Site, 1990, No page numbers).

The purpose of the Sudbury Better Beginnings, Better Futures project is to make their primary prevention programs available to all the children of the Donovan and Flour Mill/Le Moulin à Fleur neighbourhoods.

### **1.3 THE RELATIONSHIP TO SOCIAL WORK**

A study on community participation is quite appropriate to social work as a profession. For instance, many social service agencies have called upon their social workers to do community work in local communities. Taylor and Roberts (1985) remind us of the fact that there was, and still is, a historic question about whether the social work profession's primary mission is to help individuals in need, or to reform society. Traditionally, the debate between clinical work and community work has tended to polarize social workers. To address this question is not the primary purpose of this

study. Rather, the object is to seek out whether or not social workers, by the nature of their profession, are more apt to implement sound community participation principles in a community work project.

This question is important for this case study since many participants involved in the Sudbury Better Beginnings, Better Futures project were full time employees of local social service agencies. These social workers already had a relationship with various segments of the community. They brought with them various values and competencies stemming from their profession. This included a knowledge base founded in clinical and community practice. Because of the knowledge and expertise that these social workers brought to the Sudbury Better Beginnings, Better Futures setting, it becomes important to draw out the elements from the social work profession that have been conducive to the application of community participation principles.

The linkages between the social work profession and community participation practice will be re-addressed in the conclusion part of this study.

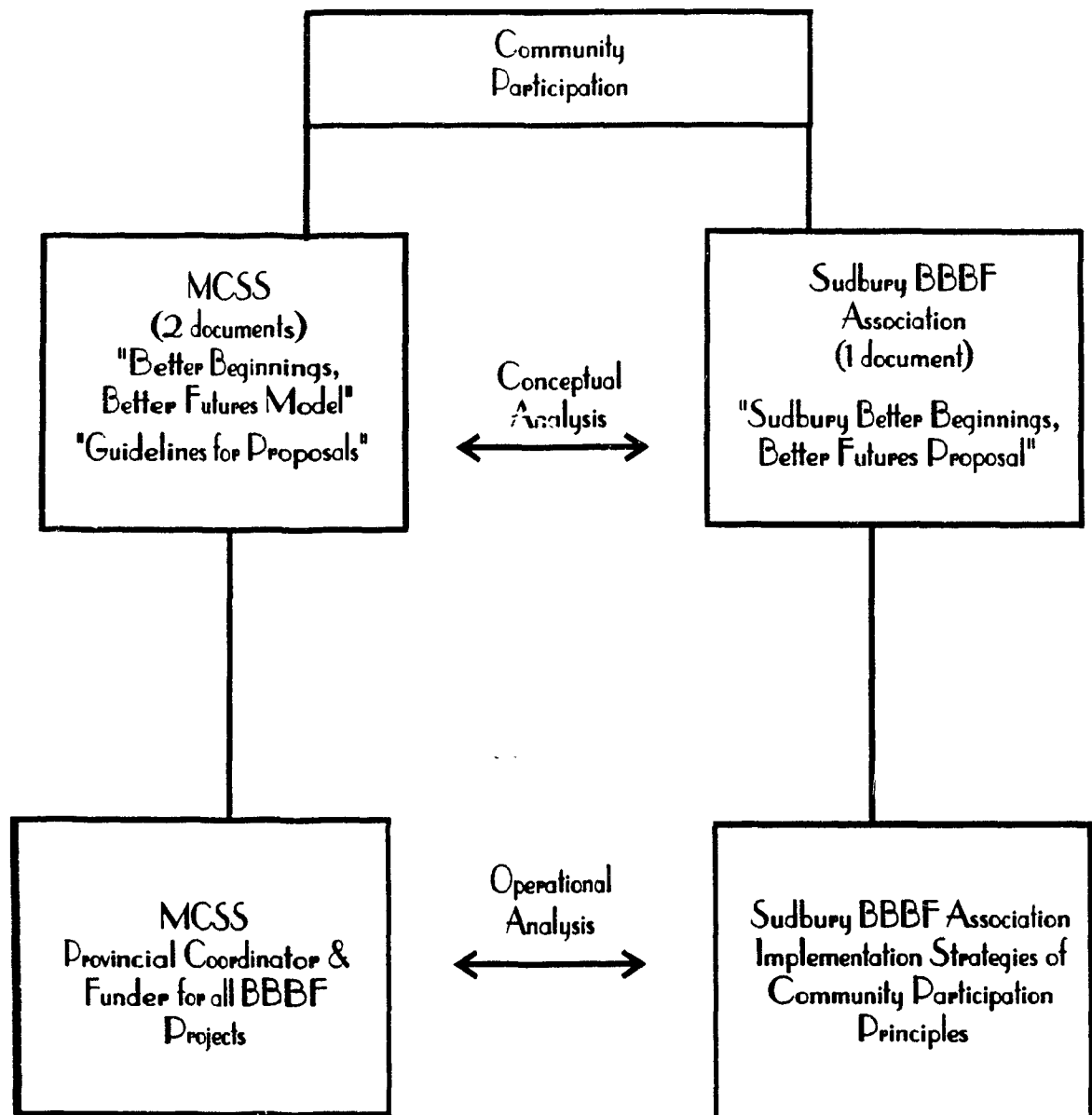
#### **1.4 TERMINOLOGY**

Before presenting the conceptual framework and analysis components for this thesis, some clarification needs to be made on the usage of the word state.

The word state is used in three different ways. First it is used in a generic sense when it refers to a body of people politically organized under one government. Second, in the conceptual framework it generally refers to the Province of Ontario. The third way in which it is used is to specifically denote the Ministry of Community and Social Services which is the official body responsible for the Better Beginnings project. This third usage applies principally to the analysis portion of this thesis.

## **1.5 GENERAL FORMAT FOR THIS THESIS**

The general format for this thesis is illustrated in Figure 1. The central theme of the thesis is on community participation. By means of a case study, I analyze community participation at the conceptual level and at the operational level. At the conceptual level, the analysis involves comparing two documents prepared by the Ministry of Community and Social Services with one document prepared by a community group called the Sudbury Better Beginnings, Better Futures Association. At the operational level, I analyze whether the principles of community participation were implemented as intended, using the Sudbury Association as a case study. The main objective is to unravel what are the necessary components that make community participation successful and what are the major obstacles that community participation has to face. In addition, I seek to clarify the degree of autonomy that can be exercised at the local level when a project is funded by the state by looking at what kind of

GENERAL FORMAT OF THESIS



community participation is possible and what are the implications for the state and the local community group.

In chapters two and three, the conceptual framework deals with issues pertinent to the evolution and definition of community participation. In the first part, some basic concepts are identified and discussed as to their relevance to community participation.

In the second part of the conceptual framework, an historical account of a community participation venture that did not work, *i.e.* the community mental health movement, is presented, as well as two models of citizen participation which increase our understanding of community participation. Chapter four provides an account of the qualitative methodology upon which this research is founded. Chapter five presents a comparative analysis of the public documents used for this research. Chapter six deals with strategies used by the Sudbury Better Beginnings Association to implement the concept of community participation. In chapter seven I discuss the degree of autonomy that can be exercised at the local community level and what kind of participation should come from the state when communities are engaged with the state in a community participation process. Chapter eight is the conclusion of this research project.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK: BASIC TERMS**

#### **2.0 INTRODUCTION**

This study addresses the extent to which principles of community participation can be applied within a community project. I am also investigating the degree of autonomy that can be exercised by a local community group when engaged with the state in a community participation process.

In this chapter, I present the first part of the conceptual framework which will be used to analyze the principles of community participation. I begin by providing some background and history of the concept of community participation in order to better grasp the core elements that are at the roots of this concept. The purpose is to provide an argument which highlights the advantages of community participation for both the state and local community groups. Then I introduce and discuss six concepts of importance to community participation. The discussion helps to untangle the complexities in

understanding the many aspects of community participation and the various ways in which it is used. The chapter concludes with a reflection on the concepts highlighting the common denominators to be found in the participation of community people, and what should be the role of the state in fostering participation.

## **2.1 BACKGROUND TO THE CONCEPT OF COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION**

The concept of community participation is a multifaceted one. There has been confusion about whether participation has the same meaning in community development, community organizing, social development, adult education and community economic development. Later in the chapter some distinctions and commonalities will be drawn in making the concept of community participation clearer. In the meantime, it is essential to pay attention to where the focus of participation has generally been and to determine whether some other considerations should enter the discussion.

Much of the focus on community participation has been centered on the community. Most advocates of community participation have ignored the active participation of the state in community projects. The state has usually been seen as interfering with community affairs and traditional "top-down" policies have been perceived negatively. The lack of attention to the role of the state in community participation had a great deal to do with the negative attitudes toward the state as well as the ideologies of many advocates of community participation. These proponents perceived the state as authoritarian and controlling and both of these characteristics were

seen as inimical to "real" community participation. Midgley (1986) makes the observation that for many authors, any talk of community participation coming from the state was seen either as manipulative or as meaningless token gesture.

Nevertheless, few of us could deny the fact that the state has become more involved in the lives of its citizens, as evidenced primarily by an increase in the institutionalization of the Welfare State. From that perspective, Midgley (1986) argues that there are two facts that cannot be overlooked. The first is that our society has evolved to such a point that an absence of state intervention in matters of health and social services is almost unthinkable since many of the social programs that we now have are universal and institutionalized. Given that there is more state intervention in society, I will spend time on the question of what kind of state intervention is most appropriate.

The second fact that Midgley (1986) notes is that local initiatives (community participation) cannot solve on their own the very serious problems of poverty, deprivation, and crime. They are societal problems not unique to particular communities. This implies that the strategies employed by the state in community participation projects would be different depending on whether the needs to be fulfilled are defined locally or nationally.

Whatever the focus, Midgley (1986) thinks that both of these facts provide an argument for the state to be involved in social development issues where social development

... is said to result in the fulfilment of people's aspirations of personal achievement and happiness, to promote a proper adjustment between individuals and their communities, to foster freedom and security and to engender a sense of belonging and social purpose (Midgley, 1986, p. 2).

This definition is directed at individuals and their relationship to their community. In that sense, it is directly linked to community participation. Community participation is not only a goal of social development but an integral part of its process. Midgley pursues his thoughts further by saying:

It is argued that social development is facilitated if people participate fully in making decisions that affect their welfare and in implementing the decisions. The mobilization of citizens in this way not only fosters improvements in social conditions but strengthens human and community bonds. Participation creates a sense of community which gives meaning to human existence and fosters social integration (1986, p. 3).

The benefits of participation are profitable to both community residents and to the state. Presumably, people who participate in community projects will make decisions that benefit their own community. With an improved community the state also benefits because many social problems are being taken care of at the local level. But one problem remains. However much community groups become active, it is the state which retains control. It has the legitimate political power plus the economic power to make decisions that affect people. The state is a central imperative of people's lives, whether they like it or not.

The state - or apparatus of "government" - appears to be everywhere, regulating the conditions of our lives from birth registration to death certification. Yet, the nature of the state is hard to grasp. This may seem peculiar for something so pervasive in public and private life, but it is precisely this pervasiveness which makes it difficult to understand. There is nothing more central to political and social theory than the nature of the state, and nothing more contested (Held, 1983, p. 1).

The fact that the state is pervasive throughout people's lives is not at issue here. We live in a society which recognizes and accepts that an authority represented by a body of people politically organized and democratically elected is there to govern us. What I am addressing in this study is the degree and manner of autonomy that can be exercised at the local community level and also what kind of participation should be coming from the state when communities are engaged with the state in a community participation process.

The participation of citizens is a desirable feature of a democratic society. The roots of participation are found in democracy where it is the right of citizens to participate, at least in the electoral process. This is why the questions raised in this study are complex since they touch on the complicated variations in the understanding and enactment of democracy itself.

To say that democracy is "government in which the people hold the ruling power either directly or through elected representatives" (Webster's Dictionary, 1976, p. 375) raises a number of questions. The definition does not specify the basis for participation in state affairs, nor does it tell us who should have what power, how it might be deployed, and so on. The democratic process promotes the equality of rights,

opportunity and treatment for citizens. It is based on the ideal that everyone should be treated equally, regardless of social class.

In Western societies such as ours, participation is entrenched in the concept of democracy. There is a general distinction made between direct democracy and representative democracy. Direct democracy refers to a process in which citizens take part personally in deliberations and vote on issues. Representative democracy refers to the process in which officials have been elected by other citizens to debate issues and formulate laws and policies for them. The basic assumption behind arguments favouring the participation of citizens is that citizens at large should have some say regarding public and social policies, either personally or through their representatives. The word democracy in this sense has a positive meaning because it carries the connotation of people's involvement.

Defenders of democracy believe that being included in decision-making (even if this means only casting a vote at election time) will expand the horizons of voters making them more aware of the various questions of the day. By being involved, people can gain a feeling of responsibility, a sense of belonging to a community, and knowledge. They can become more well-rounded, complete individuals (Sargent, 1993, p. 43).

Thus the democratic process can be oriented toward the:

... development of a kind of society that allows its members to enhance their capacity for self-determination and self-realization through participation in, and influence on, the decision-making process (Sekhon, 1987, p. 53).

Arguments to support that position find their answers in the questions that they raise, *i.e.* "who better knows the interest of the average citizen than the average citizen?". The community participation model raises the analogical question "who better knows the community than its community members?". It is an inherent value of democracy that participation can go beyond representative democracy, at least in some domain such as community development projects.

Democracy ... must include control over total existence including one's economic activities and practices. A broader definition of democracy takes the question of what "politics" involves beyond the mere selection of government representatives and into the realm of the problems and issues of everyday life (Knutilla, 1987, p. 11).

The issues that are of primary concern for ordinary people are those that affect their daily lives such as jobs, health and concerns they have about their children. Frequently, the population relies on its representatives to ensure that there are policies that will provide health services, create jobs and provide education for their children. However, there are frequently some voids in communities that can be filled by community projects and the participation of community residents. Those projects usually provide the conditions under which people can participate. The Better Beginnings, Better Futures project falls within this category and, as we will see in the analysis, the way that the relationship between the state and a local community group defines itself dictates what kind of participation is possible.



Proponents of direct democracy argue that power should be shifted away from elected officials to citizens. Greater participation from citizens will facilitate the fulfilment of other principles of democracy, *i.e.*, it will make people more politically equal and really free. Generally, proponents of direct democracy are not opponents of representative democracy. They simply advocate that the system should move away from total representative democracy and move closer to direct democracy (Pateman, 1970). In other words, by moving closer to direct democracy, the system would make its representatives more accountable.

Proponents of representative democracy generally find that direct democracy is impractical in our complex world. To them, political decisions require both an expertise and an amount of time that is not yet available to the average citizen. They also criticize the low level of citizen involvement in issues, the lack of citizen accountability, and the fact that sometimes only an elitist group has control over a community project, while elected officials have a mandate to represent the interest of the whole society.

If we take the concerns of each proponents, we can reframe the issue as one of how to give representative democracy some of the attributes of direct democracy. One way to address the issue is by examining community participation. Direct democracy advocates feel that, on the question of low citizen involvement, too much energy has been spent on rationalizing why people don't participate, instead of on finding ways to increase participation. We already have stated in chapter one that the state needs the involvement of communities in service delivery to become more cost-effective. The

groundwork is therefore laid for a relationship to be established somewhere along the middle between direct and representative democracy in community participation projects.

The question remains as to what kind of participation needs to be established between the state and the community. Historically, our society has been influenced by many competing ideologies within democracy. For our purposes, I will briefly review four such value systems which have been predominant in our culture. These are individualism, collectivism, voluntarism and communitarianism. My purpose here is to illustrate both the influences of these various ideologies and how their co-mingling in practical terms complicates the concept of participation.

At the core of our capitalist society, the free market philosophy and individualism still prevail as dominant values. These have repercussions at the health and social services delivery system level, where the dominant form of practice is clinical. Clinical intervention methods put their efforts into "individual" problem resolutions and consequently bypass larger social problems, such as homelessness, family violence and single motherhood, which call for intervention at the community and social policy levels (Campfens, 1992; Panet-Raymond, 1993). The "therapeutic community" does not promote public education to deal with those types of issues at the societal level (Walker, 1990). An individualistic approach also discourages people from organizing themselves into social support and social action groups. For Larochelle (1992) such deterrence is a failure of the system to encourage and support clients in pursuing direct democracy. The failure is that there is no building of community support systems, for abused women

for instance, whose only choice is to go back to an abusive situation. Individualism promotes not community participation but self-sufficiency. The state adopts a reduced role in the market place with a laissez-faire attitude and promotes "society and community care" as opposed to "state care" with human needs and problems (Campfens, 1992). There is definitely more emphasis put on self-help, the voluntary sector and community initiatives and involvement.

A second ideology is collectivism or statism. In this instance, the state is the ultimate decision-maker and ruler for the collectivity and plays a role of prime importance in the affairs of individuals. Equality is a concept of prime importance in this approach. This model has been tried in many Eastern countries and some Third World ones. However, putting equality into practice has not proven effective.

For instance, while emphasizing the economic equality rights of people, most former Soviet countries resorted to state terrorism in suppressing individual freedom and the liberty of its citizens. Vio Grossi (1992) attributes the failure of this model to a lack of citizen participation and input.

The original idea of organizing and guiding society by an enlightened bureaucracy which, even though it became in most instances intolerant and authoritarian, had been viewed for a long time as a desirable paradigm of change by many honest progressives, particularly in the third world. The appeal of the East to third world progressive people was that those countries made a real attempt in favour of equality. Their particular interest focused on the advances in social policies, largely ignoring that the initiatives were taken by the top, without any real and active participation from the grass roots, and that those policies were enforced

without considering any differences and particularities. This model has proven to be insufficient (p. 29).

The contrast between individualism and collectivism is that the former stresses the idea of individual liberty and the maximization of individual gain, while the latter stresses social justice for all. Campfens (1992) remarks that instead of taking the law of mutual aid as their point of departure, both find their rationale in the law of "mutual struggle and contest and survival of the fittest".

Whereas for one side the struggle takes place at the individual level each for him or herself, for the other it was the proletariat as a "social class" that would emerge as the fittest group and therefore destined to survive and govern society through the state (p. 5).

Both are competitive in nature. While one emphasizes individual gains and the other social justice, they each keep the concept of community participation at a distance.

A third ideology strongly entrenched in our North American value system is voluntarism. It has become more widespread recently in the United States with the Reagan and Bush administrations. The Reagan years, in particular, were marked by propaganda emphasizing the spirit of good neighbourliness and the tradition of voluntarism as a means of solving both personal and larger social problems.

Part of the argument for returning to traditional voluntary associations was based on the excessive costs that the welfare state would have to assume in expanding programs. Reagan's call for increased voluntarism coincided with substantial reductions in federal budgets for human services programs. In Canada, the Mulroney government followed similar policies. Some of these policies and budget restrictions have directly affected voluntary agencies.

Voluntary agencies have always been central to the delivery of social services and programmes. But there is uncertainty and much confusion today about the nature and role of voluntary agencies. Traditionally, a "voluntary agency" had an executive secretary and a "staff" of volunteers. This is now outdated (Tropman and Tropman, 1987). Although today we find many volunteers still active in the voluntary sector, it is nevertheless a sector which has become more heavily bureaucratized and professionalised (Gronberg, 1982). A better and more precise term that should be used to describe the voluntary sector is "nonprofit nongovernmental human service agency", according to Tropman and Tropman (1987). They give it the following definition:

... an organization that aims to help others achieve a higher quality of life and to provide resources and services for meeting crises of daily living (p. 825).

Most recently the voluntary sector has expanded into the sectors of self-help and mutual-aid. In other words, voluntarism has changed since its origin, and evoking propaganda which calls for a return to it in its traditional form is:

... based on a romantic notion of the past that is misplaced for a modern urban, waged-based society that is also highly competitive and individualistic (Campfens, 1992, p. 6).

A major difficulty with this view is that it relieves the state from its responsibilities in addressing serious social problems such as the poverty and high unemployment that afflict most communities. Campfens advocates that a more effective solution to social problems:

... calls for a distinct combination of partnership involving the state as well as the voluntary sector and local community (p. 6).

For true partnership, participation must be fostered and nurtured.

A more practical way to promote community participation for our times is by making more modern use of communitarianism. This tradition exists since the colonization of North America by the Europeans, with individuals and small groups helping one another (Boorstin, 1965). Communitarianism has been based on informal rather than formal structures of various modes of helping. The responsibility was local, but frequently involved the partnership of the state and the voluntary sector. In its more primitive stage, communitarianism was characterized by mutual aid support and human solidarity among tribal societies. Campfens (1992) argues that it is the communitarian tradition that has sustained societies through the ages rather than individualism, collectivism or voluntarism. Further, he feels that the rise in self-help groups, informal

social support groups, mutual aid groups, and community economic development organizations are a re-emergence of communitarianism as a fundamental value of our society. Perceived as such:

... communitarianism advocates a communal and associative system of human organization based on the principles of cooperation, mutual aid and support, and direct democracy (Campfens, 1992, p. 4).

But a re-emergence of communitarianism cannot be sustained without the belief that positive change and sound decision-making can come about through participation.

One of the defining elements of communitarian thinking is a belief "...in self-government by an engaged citizenry" (Douglass, 1994, p.55). This means that community residents engage in shared responsibilities for each other and for a way of life they hold in common.

Sociologist Amatai Etzioni, founder and a major proponent of communitarianism, perceives the communitarian movement as an attempt to respond to the unrestricted pursuit of self-interest found in the tradition of individualism. In his latest book, The Spirit of Community, (1993), he perceives communitarianism as capable of preventing the breakdown of community, and the proliferation of individual rights over community rights. He also believes that communitarianism can re-establish a balance between individual rights and communal responsibilities.

What communitarianism involves for people is that they have to be devoted to active involvement in the affairs of not only their community, but of wider society as well. The communitarian ideology emphasizes that people have a real say on issues that matter to them and that they need to engage in real dialogue and better understanding of those issues. Communitarian thinking seeks to promote community participation. People can discover through participation that they can work together by finding the things they share in common and hence end up trusting, respecting and learning from each other.

I argued earlier for more direct democracy in applying the concept of community participation. Communitarianism offers such a possibility but for it to happen, state representatives as well as community participants have to believe and participate in the process. Conviction and action need to trickle down from the top, and should involve bureaucrats, policy makers and agency directors and workers. State representatives need to join the efforts of community members in a non-hierarchical way to formulate social policy and to design and implement service delivery. I believe that this type of modern communitarianism builds on associative relationships between the state and the community and is conducive to community participation in the form of direct democracy.

A good example of modern communitarianism is reported in a case study in Nicaragua by Albert (1992). In reporting the actions of two popular movements (the Movimiento Communal, and the Movimiento de la Mujen), Albert retraces the main elements of the relationship between these grass roots community movements and the Sandinista government - the latter having declared a commitment to popular participation.



Albert (1992) uses the term "popular participation" rather than "community participation" or any other term because to him participation is about empowerment of the people. As well, popular participation "... challenges the view that people have no inherent capacity to know their own needs and act on this knowledge" (p. 232). He argues that it is not an inherent inability to act which is problematic, but rather "... a lack of room to move, to take action" (p. 232). Frequently traditional community practices have not allowed for sufficient room for people to act and pursue "indigenous ideas of progress."

Albert criticizes Midgley's (1986) review of community participation in the context of social development, because of his statist (or collectivist) approach to participation. Midgley's is a form of participation rooted in the assumptions of modernization theory.

Inherent in this [modernization theory] is a colonial practice of knowing what is best for someone else on the assumption that they need to be drawn into the drive towards progress (Albert, 1992, p. 232).

These powerful modernization forces are based on Western notions and focus on material abundance. Consequently, people pay the price of political disempowerment and cultural impoverishment (Marglin, 1991).

Albert (1992) identifies these forces, inherent in some forms of community practice, as ones to be confronted by popular participation. Too frequently there is little faith in people's ability to participate. The fact that people are already participating is

never acknowledged and there is an inherent assumption that people require an outside community worker to organize them. Midgley (1986) refers to this as paternalism.

To me, the brand of popular participation defined by Albert is the kind of community participation that I see as being part of modern communitarianism. He defines it as such:

... popular participation means people sharing power at an individual and collective level in making decisions over matters that affect their lives. Inherent in this meaning is respect for the capacity of people to develop their own awareness of their needs and to act in their own interest. As a contemporary ideology and practice, popular participation therefore must involve empowerment of the masses and have as one of its goals the reduction of inequality of power (Mulder, 1971, : 32) and also the growth of personal power. People are not seen as objects to be acted upon but as subjects who act on their own behalf, and what changes in this transformation is not just the system but also the people (Albert, 1992, p. 231).

It is a very ideological and ambitious definition but that is part of trying to define participation as a concept. There is an ideological intent behind definitions and Albert's contains theory as much as it is a tool of practice.

Most important and more crucial than any definition or understanding is "who initiates and who maintains control over the process" (Albert, 1992, p. 231). Whether the action is initiated by the people or by the state, the dynamics of the process can be very different. If the people organize themselves first to influence the state, they will feel more ownership of a community development process. If the state initiates a

community development process, first, there could be resistance by the people, because of fear of being manipulated. But regardless of who initiates a change process, in a relationship between the state and a local community, it is the state which maintains control because it usually controls the funding - and it could pull the plug at any time because of other external pressures.

This is why it is important for the two sides (state and local community groups) to have a compatible agenda. The relationship between the groups must be perceived by each as an independent partnership. It is a model of direct democracy and as participation increases, it allows for the coercive nature of the state to decrease. Consequently, a more collaborative relationship can be established. Collaborative relationships do not imply that there are no tensions or conflicts. The issue of the power of the state and the power of the people needs to be recognized and dealt with. This is a constant struggle in a relationship which is in constant movement. It is the kind of flexibility, I believe, that allows for community participation practice to develop gradually and surely as a new form of communitarianism.

Our conceptual framework, however, would not be complete without some other dimensions which are of prime importance to the concept of community participation. Participation is not a distinct entity that can be defined only one way. As I said earlier through Albert's words, what is important is who initiates and controls the process of participation.

In order to gain greater appreciation of the concept of participation and to identify more distinctly what is meant by community participation in this research, I will review the following related concepts: community, community development, community organization, social development, adult education, and community economic development. The intent in this section is to see how community participation relates to these other concepts of community work, in order to draw out the distinctions and commonalities in uses of the concept of participation.

#### **A) COMMUNITY**

The word "community" is more a lay term than a technical one. For that reason it has always been difficult to define. Generally speaking, four common attributes can be given to community as a concept: geography; common interests that people share; the "quest for community"; and the relationships that people have among themselves.

As a geographical concept, community is emphasized as a locality, a place where people live (Poplin, 1973; Warren 1978; Burke 1983). For some people, that can extend to the place where they work, which may be different than where they live. The place where people live and work frequently influences where they will perform other functional activities important to their lives such as banking and shopping, and where they invest their leisure time. Depending on the particular circumstances around them, people will refer to their community as their town or neighbourhood. Location is the prime emphasis and it becomes very important in community development projects which

are frequently targeted by certain geographical delimitations of one of more neighbourhoods. Such is the case for the Sudbury Better Beginnings, Better Futures project which has identified the specific neighbourhoods of the Donovan and Flour Mills.

A second way in which community is frequently defined is as a group of people sharing common interests (Warren, 1978; Burke 1983). Community in this sense may be found in various groups or organizations such as professions, religious sects or even cultural or minority groups. Participation involves the associations that individuals make with a group. It could be a political or social issue that brings people together because they have a common interest in dealing with that particular problem. It could be temporary (a demonstration) or more permanent (cooperative housing). The common interests that people share are what brings them together. What they will do about it is the community development process, which we will discuss as our next concept.

A third way of defining community is in reference to a moral or spiritual phenomenon where some people are in search or quest for community (Poplin, 1973; Peck, 1987). In this type of community, people are in quest of unity, involvement and a sense of belonging with other human beings.

Nisbet (1966) referred to it as "quality of relationship" which refers to the closeness of personal intimacy, showing emotions, a range of moral commitment and the achievement of social cohesion over time.

Shaffer (1994) explains it by making a distinction between "functional" and "conscious" community. The experience of a functional community is similar to what happens in the extended family where people take care of one another in practical ways such as housing, feeding and educating their members. In other words, all of the basic social needs are met by the community. The conscious community, on the other hand, includes a concern for the individual growth of the members. This means that in addition to attending to the basic social needs of the members, it also attends to their spiritual and emotional needs.

Shaffer (1994) adds that a conscious community "reflects" on itself. "It asks, 'How are we doing? What's working? What's not working?' " (p. 35). This aspect of community is not something that is easily attainable by all community groups, nor is it always a conscious goal of its members. However, as we will see in our analysis chapter, it has become an important dimension of the Sudbury Association of Better Beginnings, Better Futures.

The fourth way of defining community involves the various types of relationships that people have with each other. Community is interaction among people (Checkki, 1979; Poplin 1979) and this includes all major aspects of community life. These relationships fall into various categories such as economic relationships (how people make a living together and distribute the resources among themselves), political relationships (how people make decisions for themselves in their community and how they relate as a group to the outside world), and social and cultural relationships (how

people understand the world and act upon it) (Four Worlds Development Project (FWDP), 1984).

The notion of social interaction among people is nothing new to the concept of community. In 1955, Georg A. Hillery Jr. was commissioned by the United Nations to do a study on definitions of community. He reported that 69 out of 99 definitions included the theme of social interaction. The term "social interaction" was interpreted as meaning the area in which a person lives and where some common bonds are normally found in community life. These common bonds are found in the relationships that are established among people because, as Warren (1978) has already put it:

... by community we mean the organization of social activities to afford people daily local access to those broad areas of activity that are necessary in day-to-day living (p. 9).

The bottom line is that people participate in "their community" in a variety of ways and as circumstances lead them. By participating, people attain various degrees of satisfaction with the quality of the relationships they have with other people or, in some instances, with organizations. There are a variety of ways in which people choose to participate in their communities. It could be by attending an event, participating in an activity, writing a letter to the mayor, being a volunteer in a fund-raising event, belonging to a group seeking social justice, and so on. The reasons why people choose to participate in these various ways are usually related to one or more of the four definitions discussed - geography, quest for community, common interests, and/or

relationships of importance. In order to be part of a community, one must contribute at some level.

## **B) COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

The words "community development" are frequently used by various persons, organizations or disciplines to refer to a number of types of community work. Examples of other terminologies in vogue are: community organization, social development, community economic development, grass-roots and neighbourhood organizing, community action, and so on. It becomes very difficult to make distinctions between these terms. Chekki (1979) recognizes these terms for community work as tools that have been useful to the process of community development, as is illustrated in the following quote:

A primary objective of community development is to initiate, give direction to and sustain community action. There is a close affinity with community organization with respect to a focus on the same target population. Community development is concerned with developing towards defined goals; this coincides with the pioneered advances of economic development. Community action is initiated in response to real problems - as perceived by the community ... members - about which there is genuine concern (Chekki, 1979, p. 9).

In fact, Chekki's refers to community development as being both a process and as achieving specific goals.



Although there is no clear consensus in the literature about the meaning of the concept of community development, there is much agreement on the fact that it is a process (Cawley, 1979). A process has a sense of movement or direction that occurs over time or through a sequence of directed events and provides a sense that social conditions after this movement are different than what they were before (Beal and Powers, 1972). Community development is definitely a process of change at the community level. Chekki (1979) refers to it as a process of planned change.

The characteristic of process has deep roots in attempts to define community development. In 1955, the United Nations defined it this way:

Community Development can be tentatively defined as a process designed to create conditions of economic and social progress for the whole community with its active participation and the fullest possible reliance on the community initiative (p. 6).

This definition stresses the aspect of locality development and puts emphasis on democratic procedures, voluntary cooperation, self-help, development of indigenous leadership and educational objectives (Dunham, 1960). All of these things have to do with process, that is, how things get accomplished.

Community development is also concerned with goals, that is with what gets accomplished. Usually these are more easily measurable. For instance, in a native community where there was no running water we might ask: "Was the well built?". In

an inner city, where a park was reclaimed by parents for their children, a community project of supervised activities is the attainment of a goal that can be measured. Sometimes goals may change during the process, as different solutions emerge. So rather than having a well or a field of activities, relocation might be considered, or a community centre built. What needs to be emphasized is the fact that community development is concerned with planned change at the community level and is concerned with both process and goals.

To be effective, the process of community development must involve the participation of the persons affected by the issue or the problem at hand (Draper, 1971). Who participates, why they participate, and under what conditions they participate, are all important questions related to the process of community development. The type of participation involved is an indicator of the potential success of community development. Is it a type of participation where community residents attend a meeting at which state representatives inform them of the decisions they made for them, or is it a kind of participation conducive to empowering community residents? The results are drastically different. The first form is conducive to apathy and dependence on the expertise and resources of the state. The second form is conducive to community capacity building in which participants build trust and mutual understanding among themselves and thus have more credibility to deal with state representatives.

The participation of people in the process of community development is rooted at two value levels. The first level is directed towards people as individuals, where the

value of the dignity of human beings does not go unnoticed. The second level deals with the value of fostering community solidarity. The following brings out these values quite well.

The values of community development are firmly rooted in the concept of the worth of the human being and respect for the individual. It is a fundamental expression of faith in the imagination, initiative, and capacity of people to enrich their lives through use of democratic processes and voluntary effort. It fosters a participant society and democratic dialogue which results in social action. It promotes conditions which make it possible for each person to develop his potentialities as an individual and as a responsible citizen (p. 57).

Even though some of these benefits to citizens are hard to measure, they are nevertheless the intangible benefits that the process of community development brings. Examples of such benefits are stronger affinities between people, a clearer sense of the direction that they desire for their community, and a realistic assessment of what it is possible to change and how. The personal acquisitions that individuals may gain also contribute to their social and political awareness of themselves as a group.

Community development tends to be a "bottom-up" approach to social problems, unlike social planning, which derives from outside experts and tends to be a "top-down" approach. The bottom-up type of approach tends to foster community solidarity, emphasizing self-help and voluntary cooperation among community residents. But at the same time, community development extends to the larger political sphere.

... community development strives to further the acquisition or redistribution of resources. It is also an educational process whose purpose is to increase social and political awareness of the causes of problems and to develop the capacities of community leaders to address those problems. Community development is important to the larger processes of social and economic change in a democratic society (Spergel, 1987, p. 301).

The trends of community development through history have emphasized the fact that the social and the economic form integral parts of community development. As well, community development places heavy emphasis on the principles of community participation and democracy. Community development practice has also traditionally been committed to social reform and a sense of social justice.

Basically, a community development approach seeks the consensus of its members in determining goals and strategies for action. It is through participation that the process of the community development intervention is established. This is also why the idea of community is central to the concept of community development. It is based on relationships, the family, kinship and friendship (Nisbet, 1953; 1966). It emphasizes the qualities of social bonding. To entrust the fostering of social bonding to people is to give them control over their own resources. A community which possesses powerful established interests, with clear and articulate goals, can dominate economically and politically to its own benefit.

### C) COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION

Like community development, community organization is first of all a process, evolving primarily on strategies directed at community planning and action (Ross, 1967). Before community members can carry out these functions of planning and action, they need to develop an overall consciousness of the community. Specifically, the focus and boundaries of the community need to be determined (Roberts, 1979). After this is done, community participants engage in the intervention phase of the process.

Community organization is that intervention which through the facilitation of collective action on the part of its clientele, seeks to maximize the ability of disadvantaged people to affect their environment so that they are able to meet their psychological, social and material needs. This intervention involves the creation of representative organizations which can develop the power and resources to change inadequate institutions and laws or build new ones that will be more responsive to their needs and those of all human beings (Lee, 1986, p. 3).

The basic purpose of intervention, then, is to change the power relationships so that there is a more equitable distribution of the power base in society.

There are different kinds of community organization strategies. Rothman (1979; 1987) offers three classical models of community organization: social action, social planning, and locality development. Even though these three models will often overlap in their application, Rothman asserts that a single model will predominate in any one community-organization practice. Rothman's three models have been very influential to

the whole area of community work, mainly in North-America, and for that reason it is important to briefly review them.

In the social action model, the targeted group is usually a disadvantaged segment of the population that needs to be organized. Sometimes the organization is made in alliance with other groups in order to apply pressure and make demands on the larger community for increased resources. The aim is geared toward more social justice for these groups. Frequently, the objective is to achieve basic changes in major institutional practices.

Social action often seeks redistribution of power, resources, or decision making in the community and/or changing basic policies of formal organizations (Rothman, 1987, p. 6).

The social action model usually requires an organizer who can effectively use the "appropriate tools" for the situation at hand. Alinsky (1971) became famous for effectively using radical strategies of social action in the 1970's. He would organize people in two major ways. First they would identify who their oppressors were and second they would develop specific strategies which would confront directly the targeted person, group, or organization/institution. In the social action model, the power structure is perceived as being an external target of the action. People need to organize in order to "beat" the oppressor.

The social planning model is in marked contrast to the social action approach.

It is a model that:

... presupposes that change in a complex industrial environment requires expert planners who, through the exercise of technical abilities, including the ability to manipulate large bureaucratic organizations, can skilfully guide complex change processes (Rothman, 1987, p. 6).

The major objective of this approach is to deliver services to the target groups in a cost effective way. The use of this model is usually centered around substantive problems such as housing, physical and mental health or delinquency. It relies on the analysis and technical knowledge of experts, based on a centralized planning context. Power and control is thus retained by experts by using this method of central planning and professional expertise and this, in turn, is reflected in the relationship with the clients being served. The net effect is that organizers and clients are kept apart from each other, partly because the targeted social problems involve complex change processes with the social planning model. A consequence of this distanced and bureaucratic perspective is that social planners are less likely to be informed and influenced by their clients (community residents). This lack of input and influence is perceived by social planners as positive, since their assessment of the situation is seen to be an objective one, detached from the biases of the community. From the community's perspective, social planners are not objective, since they are more directly influenced by colleagues who are from the same bureaucracy. In short, social planning is more apt to serve the interests

of the authorities, even if the intentions are claimed to be in the "best interests" of the community.

In sharp contrast to the social planning model, locality development specifies that community change can be pursued through the participation of people in a geographical proximity. Through the process of participation, community residents come to see that their various backgrounds, knowledge and experiences at the local community level are a source of strength. This is referred to as capacity building where, through a decision-making process, people start to feel that they have a greater understanding of, and more control over, their environment. It is imperative that people "... come to see the world not as a static reality, but as reality in process, in transformation" (Freire, 1970, p. 71). People seek out new information, develop strategies, plan and carry out activities aimed at controlling and re-allocating resources. Once their goals are identified and pursued, these people can effect social change through the participatory process.

But this process cannot occur in isolation. The locality development model perceives that the authorities, usually the funder or the state, are collaborators in a common venture (Rothman, 1987). The basic strategy is to involve a broad cross section of the population in the process of determining and solving their own problems.

This latter model, locality development, is the one upon which the Sudbury Better Beginnings, Better Futures Project based its community development process. It is a model which combines the assets that communities can bring with the resources of the



state. Community members participate in the process of organization by identifying the issues, finding solutions to the problems, and in implementing a plan of action they have selected. This specific type of community organizing makes a community pro-active rather than reactive (Epp, 1988). The emphasis is on self-determination and autonomy of the community as opposed to being passive recipients dependent on services provided by outsiders, (*i.e.* the agencies and organizations of the state, or structures funded by the state). The community is the client, but a client which participates in an interactional problem solving process in collaboration with the state (Rothman, 1987).

Community organization seldom occurs spontaneously. Generally, one or more community organizers are an instigating part of the organizing process. In the models of social action and locality development, unlike the social planning model, an intimate relationship must be established between the organizers and community people. Trust needs to be established. Even though community organizers play several roles such as enablers, facilitators, consultants, planners, educators and coordinators, they must maintain faith in the ability of community members to solve their own problems. Belief in the competence of community members is an essential tool for the success of a community organization strategy. This is an important element for organizers to recognize since frequently, from the public's perspective, community organizing has been identified as something done by some anonymous other. Consequently, people give their power away to the organizer. Suffice it to say that some community organizers have fallen into the trap of "enabling" in the name of the community, acting from their own beliefs. It can be difficult for community workers to maintain faith in the community,

especially when trained as professionals. Traditionally, professionals have controlled knowledge and this has given them authority over the layperson (Reiff, 1974). They may be tempted to let their professional training take over and wrongly assume that they know best.

This is why community organizers need to build confidence between themselves and community members by working with the people and being among them. By doing so, they eventually start defining the problems in light of the people's perspective. This is not to say that community organizers cannot share their personal opinions and convictions with community members. As Ross and Lappin (1967) have said:

... every professional worker will have his own conception of the community's need and problems. He will have inevitable biases. Some feel he should be completely objective (which is impossible) or that he should not reveal his own conception of the problem (which is hardly honest). Our own conviction here is that the professional worker has a right, if not a responsibility, to reveal his own appraisal of the community and its needs (p. 46).

What is important for organizers to do is to redefine the problem based on people's perspectives in order to allow a change in the point of reference upon which the organizer's objectivity is based (Lee, 1986). In other words, we can reaffirm a conviction of Freire (1970) who refers to the fact that the disadvantaged have a particular view of their reality and that this view is the starting point in initiating a process of community organization. Trusting the abilities of people may also allow organizers to see various options that are potentially available (Lee, 1986). I would add that what

applies to community organizers as their credo, also applies to state representatives in the way that locality development has been described; that is, in a collaborative process between the state and community, state representatives must also have faith in community people's abilities. Thus, in this type of organizing, state representatives are not simply an outside body of experts, but form an integral part of the process. Community organizing along the locality development model offers an opportunity for participation in a collaborative way between the state and communities.

#### **D) SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT**

The major objective of social development is institutional change in order to improve human welfare. Three primary values accompany this objective. They are: (1) equality rather than inequality; (2) cooperation rather than competition; and (3) collectivity rather than self-orientation (Gil, 1976). Equality, cooperation and collectivity form the vision through which most organizations have attempted to put social development into practice, particularly in Third World countries.

Paiva (1977) has conceptualized social development in the following way:

The goal and substance of social development is the welfare of the people, as determined by the people themselves, and the consequent creation or alteration of institutions so as to create a capacity for meeting human needs at all levels and for improving the quality of human relationships and relationships between people and societal institutions. In this process we have to deal with the fact that human and natural forces are constantly intervening between the expressions of needs and the means to attain them (p. 329).

There is an element of community participation that is now an important and popular component of social development issues. As Midgley (1986) points out:

Drawing inspiration from a variety of philosophical and ideological antecedents, contemporary community participation concepts combine elements of western community work and Third World community development practice to articulate a set of propositions for the active involvement of ordinary people in the development process (p. 145).

The values of equality, cooperation and collectivity are part of community participation in social development issues. This process is one in which the state and communities enter into a relationship in the promotion of social development.

Two major points need to be emphasized in what Midgley, refers to as "contemporary community participation between the state and the communities". The first is that the state is a major provider of social development services in all areas of people's lives, *i.e.* housing, health, education, social services, and so on. As a policy maker, the state largely determines how these social development programs will evolve. Because of this power the state can also determine and shape the general nature of community participation activities. State and community relations become important in the social development process, raising the issue of the extent of state participation.

The second and related issue is the extent of community participation that the community can achieve. Arguments presented by opponents of state participation in the

process of community participation present the "top-down" approach of the state as one in which the state imposes programs and services on a passive population. For these opponents,

State sponsorship of community participation stifles initiatives and weakens local self-reliance. State involvement also undermines community solidarity and subverts local authority (Midgley, 1986, p. 146).

Therefore, at the core of the debate is the determination of the kind of relationship that can be established between the state and the community, so that the values enunciated earlier (equality, cooperation and collectivity) can be part of the community participation process in dealing with social development issues.

A partnership based on trust between the two entities of state and a local community is essential for contemporary community participation to operate positively. Efforts in social development strategies aim at improving economic, social and cultural conditions of communities. Therefore, emphasis on participants is necessary. Following Paiva's (1977) earlier conceptualization, what is necessary is a kind of participation that seeks to mobilize the whole community for social development, encouraging maximum involvement of community members in the decision-making process. Naturally, the difficulty is that "maximum involvement" in a partnership with the state is restricted to the definition that the state deems reasonable.

The term participation is frequently used by the state and by community groups. In social development issues such as unemployment and poverty, state intervention is necessary since it goes beyond the capacity that a community has to eradicate such problems, and because the whole infrastructure of the country is affected by such huge social issues. In a more locality-based community process, participation on specific projects may be more conducive to a partnership between the state and communities. However, there is nevertheless a relationship that exists between people and their social institutions. To achieve a more complete social development, a community oriented approach emphasizing participation in the development of social policies and in developing grassroots community institutions for the people is necessary.

For this to occur there must jointly be a focus on enhancing human resource development simultaneously with achieving institutional change. This could mean creating new institutions, or changing existing ones. As transformation occurs in institutions, it disrupts certain traditional life patterns. Consequently, new community resources and programs are needed to replace them. This cannot be done in isolation from those who control the resources, mainly the state authorities. Neither can it be done solely by state intervention, if it is to be effective. Participation of community residents in collaboration with the state is essential for institutional change which will benefit both parties.

## **E) ADULT EDUCATION**

Adult education also promotes the concept of participation, using the community as its setting. The primary concern of adult education is not social action, but learning. The connection is a bilateral one. To learn, one needs to be involved. Knowledge in turn leads to reflective action. Kidd (1971) is a proponent of combining education and action.

Education without action can be sterile and, in the deepest sense, irresponsible. But so can action without education. I sympathize with those who find progress agonizingly slow, and want to act quickly. But whose need are they responding to: their own frustrations, or the people whom they claim to be serving? Action without education can be destructive and tyrannical (p. 145).

The context of adult education is not restricted to the traditional classroom. It occurs all over the community and involves people from all walks of life.

Adult education is usually a long process, since it takes time for people to reach agreement about goals, to learn about each other and to develop trust among themselves. A large component of adult education involves building people's confidence in themselves. They must believe not only in their cause, but as well in their abilities to achieve their objectives. The major difficulty encountered in the process of adult education toward effective action is that it is not sufficient to simply advocate for change. People affected by the potential change need to willingly embark on it, through a process that will lead them there. Too frequently they have been falsely accused of being

apathetic, because the process leading to a consciousness to choose that change has been denied to them. Advocates push too fast, too soon, ignoring basic notions such as collective consciousness, "la conscience collective" as advocated by Durkheim (1858-1912), and empowerment for the learners.

Adult education has been popularized more recently by Freire (1970; 1985), and has also come to be called popular education. This Brazilian educator developed his theory by criticizing traditional teaching methods. He found that traditional methods worked against the real objectives of education. The educated teacher was the active giver of knowledge and consequently the student became the passive receiver. It formed a relationship of the teacher being the superior holder of knowledge and the student being the inferior learner. Freire (1970) called this transfer of knowledge the "banking concept of education".

Popular education is defined by CUSO (1988) as being:

... based on the principle that the learners should be empowered to take control of their own learning. Popular education seeks to involve the learners to enable them to seek out and to be aware of alternatives in their lives in order to make choices for themselves. Thus, the learners can actively become involved in bettering their lives (p. 2).

In addition CUSO (1988) offers the following description of who participates in the popular education process:



In Canada the popular base encompasses not only those we classify as poor (such as native groups, the unemployed, the rural and urban poor) but also most of the so-called middle class who may not be economically "poor", but who have little influence over the policies and directions of the country or of their lives. Popular education, then, is more than a method, or a number of exercises or techniques; it is a philosophy of education (p. 2).

Canada has known its share of adult education movements. In the 1930's and 1940's, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) and the Canadian Association for Adult Education (CAAE) reached a large number of farmers through the National Farm Forum. In the 1960's, classes for fisherman, farmers and miners were organized through St.-Francis-Xavier University in Nova Scotia. In the 1970's the Company of Young Canadians (CYC), operating with federal grants, mobilized thousands of young people to work in community development projects. Most of these projects involved organizing people around issues of local concern. The 1970's also saw many Learning Centres arising across the country. In many regions, these centres formed the basis for networking between various social change movements (CUSO, 1988). As more groups coalesced around issues, education for change has contributed to broaden the spectrum to include solidarity groups to work around issues of Native Land Claims, unemployment, housing, health, and internal and international trade issues, to name a few.

The contribution of adult education is found in its principles and their enactment.

First it focuses on education for empowerment.

It supports the efforts of human beings to form relationships between themselves and the world in order that they may be better equipped to change the world. This involves constant creation of new ideas, new knowledge. It promotes invention and re-invention. Learners should be able to make decisions about what they are learning and how important it is to their lives (CUSO, 1988, p. 3).

Adult education is a process not only of learning, but of reflection. People reflect upon what is most real to them, that is, their experience. They reflect upon what they know and upon what they have done in order to improve what else they will do. It is thus a continuous and lifelong activity.

The process itself is not limited to individual and local experiences. Popular education is also a tool that can be used to link local experiences with historical and global processes. Through the awareness that people develop for themselves, they can also see how history tends to repeat itself or how a global economy can affect them. The learning that people gain brings about some type of change for them. It could be observable or non-observable change, but learning does bring about change whether in influencing the attitudes and feelings of people, or in giving them new skills in the realms of analysis and organization. Such a process creates change at the larger community level and this is referred to as "collective learning". The assumption behind collective learning is:

... that everyone is learning together, that new knowledge is created and old knowledge is re-created into new understandings, and that the knowledge and learning is a collective effort (CUSO, 1988, p. 3).

In fact, collective learning presumes that we can only assist each other as we learn together. We facilitate each other's learning and we cannot teach another person's learning. The learning reflection process in popular education encourages the learners to define what they need to learn and what is relevant for them. This process provides concrete learning experiences for people, which allow them to reflect, analyze and act. In other words, popular education strengthens people's ability to organize themselves. In order to do this, people need to participate in each other's knowledge.

#### **F) COMMUNITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

The concept of community economic development (CED) as a social intervention strategy differs from traditional welfare policies and traditional economic development policies. The distinction lies in the fact that community economic development does not seek to make existing conditions in the community more bearable. Rather, "community economic development seeks to change the structure of the community and build permanent institutions within a community" (Swack and Mason, 1987, p. 327). As a result, the community becomes a more active participant with an active role to play towards the institutions outside itself. It also allows residents to become more active in controlling their own resources. The premise of community economic development is that communities that are poor and underdeveloped remain in that condition because they lack control over their own resources (Swack and Mason, 1987). Thus a community's control, or lack of control, over its resources, can have a profound effect on its life as a distinct community.

Locally based economic projects aim at benefiting the whole community. Increasingly, people in Canada have been embarking on community economic development projects of various kinds in the hope of creating a greater degree of local control over their communities and economies by reducing local unemployment, raising capital to finance community-based social services and decreasing external dependency (Wismer and Pell, 1981). Members of a community who organize and run their own project become active participants in local development.

While the private sector is focused on maximizing profit and the public sector on redistributing resources, what distinguishes community economic development is that projects establish themselves around social, economic and cultural problems. Community economic development projects are what has been termed the "third sector" of economic activity because:

The "third sector" is neither private enterprise, nor government-sponsored: it includes elements of both. It is also based on an interdependent mixture of social, economic and cultural goals (Hanratty, 1979 as cited in Wismer and Pell, 1981, p. 2).

Rather than relying on external grants from the government or from local businesses for certain types of social services, various communities now look at their own means of production and resources. This means, however, that because community economic development is a kind of business that exists within the market economy, it

must compete with other businesses for its own survival. As Kuyek (1990) soundly remarks:

It is under many of the same pressures to pay low wages, to cut back on quality and to ignore environmental concerns as any other business. Building a climate of strong community support for the CED project is essential so that people will be willing to pay a little higher price for quality or ecological soundness or justice (p. 119).

Strong community support for community economic development is essential to sustain it. People need to be convinced that such projects are in the interest of the whole community. By entering into a community economic development process which is locally controlled, community members can achieve a feeling of self-reliance, which is one of the main goals. The means to attain that goal involves undergoing a process in which community members can identify, on their own, the needs of their community and determine what types of solutions are preferred for resolving them. This approach upholds the view that people have the intelligence, the ability and the potential to control their lives. Such a view is open to criticism and is not shared by everyone. Wismer and Pell (1981) present it in the following context:

This does not mean that people at the local level always have the necessary skills and knowledge to make good decisions. It does mean, however, that given the opportunity, there are very few people who cannot make good decisions about what is best for them - including decisions about when expert advice is needed (p. 4).

Part of any community work process is to be able to identify what the resources are, where they are, and how to tap into them when they are needed. The final objective of community economic development is to make local communities more self-reliant (McRobie, 1986). This is also an objective shared by the state.

Community economic development calls for a compromise between the economic, the social and the cultural dimensions that are important to community life. The conventional approach to community development has focused primarily on social and educational goals. Economic development has invariably been left to businesses and public planners. By placing economics at the centre of community development, community economic development has broken with that tradition. However, it is important to emphasize that community economic development does not diminish the importance of social and cultural development by accentuating the economic outlook. On the contrary, by giving equal priority to the economic, the social and the cultural, the end result is that the perception that economics are predominant in peoples' lives begins to diminish. A healthy balance must be achieved between the perpetual conflict that exists in attempting to match social and economic needs. Such balancing is an ongoing responsibility with which community members must continually struggle.

It is important for organizers to recognize the special characteristics attributed to community economic development if they want to use it well. Kuyek (1990) lists and describes these characteristics in the following way:

- It values the informal economy: the work and production that goes on that does not show up in the gross national product: child care, gardening, volunteer work, doing our own repairs, driving each other around; looking after the sick, the aged, the young, and so on.
- It is concerned about retaining wealth in a community: CED asks "where does the economy go" as much as "where does it come from".
- CED is as concerned about creating viable communities for our grandchildren as it is for ourselves. Because we and they will have to live with environmental effects and social spinoffs, we want to do things right now.
- CED is concerned about getting local control over business, not trying to get another branch plant or franchise established.
- CED is about producing socially-useful products, like housing and food, not just more consumer junk, or harmful products (like military equipment).
- CED is about development that does not displace the poor or depopulate rural communities.
- CED is about redistributing the wealth and services in a community so that they may be more equally shared by all.
- CED is about creating good work: work that is healthy, satisfying and secure. It is about improving and diversifying the skills of community members (p. 118-119).

Community members need to become aware of these benefits and then endorse these values for true community economic development to take place.

Community residents participating in a community economic development project need to be aware that the objective of "self-reliance", which means primarily to decrease dependence on outside sources both financially and from other sorts of services, is a long-term process. It is a process that requires considerable time and energy. It must

allow for "... 'new' people to join, 'old' people to leave, and 'leaders' to be changed" (Wismer and Pell, 1981, p. 7). Participating in a community economic development project is a long term commitment. As one participant once said: "This is a process - five years is nothing".

### **G) REFLECTION ON THE CONCEPTS**

After reviewing the six concepts of community, community development, community organization, social development, adult education and community economic development, the evidence shows that the participation of community people is a strong and necessary component for all of these. On the other hand, social development as well as social planning make explicit the participation of the state. However, each concept allows for "room to move", to reiterate Albert's (1992) words, so that both local communities and the state can participate in a development process.

The idea of process is an essential element necessary to all concepts in the relationship between state and communities. People participate in their community in a variety of ways whether by location, sharing common interests or relationships. By doing so they engage in a process of continuing development that involves change. In community development, the process follows more a sequence of planned change for the purpose of improving social conditions. Such a process brings benefits to individuals as well as being conducive to building community solidarity. Community organization focuses on strategies that allow for planning and action instrumental to changes to the



power structure. Locality development in particular allows for combining the assets of the community with the resources of the state. There is room to engage in a partnership where both community members and state representative participate in the process. Social development is a process geared towards institutional change. The imbalance in the power structure is more easily recognizable, since major social problems require state intervention which is frequently initiated through social policies. The process of participation is subjected to how much influence one party can exercise over the other. Mutual interests and a clean agenda need to be negotiated as part of the process. Adult education is a process that combines learning and action. It aims first at providing knowledge and reflection for empowering individuals but in the process it serves to develop a collective consciousness for the community toward change. Finally, the community economic development process aims at making communities more self-reliant by better controlling their own resources and consequently decreasing their dependence on the resources of the state. The process of community economic development tries to balance the economic and social needs of the community.

The common denominators to be found in the participation of community people in all forms of community work are that community people themselves:

1. Identify the issues of importance to them;
2. Find practical solutions to the problems they have identified;
3. Implement their own plan of action.

As far as the state is concerned, there needs to be a recognition that people need to define and solve their problems in light of their own situation and reality. The state can be a strong partner by providing guidelines and a framework to community residents by which they can operate. Participation can thus be based on equality, cooperation and the good of the collectivity. These values go beyond the usual rhetoric, and for them to be effective, a compatible agenda between the state and the community needs to be clearly negotiated. This agenda will dictate who maintains control over the process of development through participation.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK: HISTORY AND MODELS**

#### **3.0 INTRODUCTION**

The review of the preceding six concepts has allowed us to identify the main components related to participation in community work. Each concept presents principles that need to be applied in the implementation of community participation practise. There have been attempts in the past at implementing community participation principles. One such example is the Community Mental Health Movement that occurred in the 1960's through to the 1980's. It is an example of applied community participation that did not produce the results that had been anticipated.

In this chapter I present the second part of the conceptual framework which is used to analyze the concept and implementation of community participation. I start by presenting a brief history of the Community Mental Health Movement's failed attempt

to apply the concept of participation. My objective is to illustrate the sorts of difficulties encountered in the application of the principles of community participation. It is important to understand whether the failure of the movement is attributable to the weakness of participation as a concept or, as I show in my analysis, to some other factors.

After reviewing the experience of the Community Mental Health Movement, I present two models of citizen participation which help us understand the concept of community participation from a theoretical perspective. These models will also help with our analysis of the Better Beginnings, Better Futures model.

The connection between the example of the Community Mental Health Movement and the two models lies in the fact that the models contain fundamental principles pertaining to the concept of community participation that were not fully implemented in the Community Mental Health Movement. Consequently, the experience of the Community Mental Health Movement serves as a parallel in our understanding of the fundamental elements to pay attention to in analyzing community participation as elaborated and implemented by the Sudbury Better Beginnings, Better Futures Association. By reviewing briefly the reasons for the project's failures, I hope to apply my observations, in a positive way, to determine what is more likely to increase the success of state participation in the community, and more specifically, to be able to focus on what kinds of participation work and what kinds do not work.

### **3.1 THE COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH MOVEMENT**

The Community Mental Health Movement played a crucial role in the application and evolution of community participation principles. It was primarily a response to dissatisfaction with some aspects of the traditional mental-health care given to people in institutions. A distinction was thus made between traditional and community approaches to mental health.

Advocates of the Community Mental Health Movement held the view that traditional psychiatric institutionalization had erred by being dissociated from the communities in which clients lived. Too much attention had been focused on individuals and "treatment" of the mentally-ill person, instead of promoting the mental health of the population as a whole. Proponents of the Community Mental Health Movement believed that mental health services should be available when and where needed, that such services would be more effective if they were integrated with other human services, and that it would be helpful to allocate resources to enhance the positive as well as to reduce the negative effects of life experiences (Bloom, 1984). Importance was placed on the concepts of prevention and on the rights of the mentally ill, including receiving appropriate services within their communities. Mental health meant emphasizing community rehabilitation rather than institutional treatment.

In 1966, Smith and Hobbs presented the new idea of community mental health this way:

The core of the plan is this: to move the care and treatment of the mentally ill back into the community so as to avoid the needless disruption of normal patterns of living, and the estrangement from these patterns, that often come from distant and prolonged hospitalization; to make the full range of help that the community has to offer readily available to the person in trouble; to increase the likelihood that trouble can be spotted and help provided early when it can do the most good; and to strengthen the resources of the community for the prevention of mental disorder (p. 499).

In their article, Smith and Hobbs (1966) provide some guidelines or principles to help the responsible citizen "... assess the adequacy of the planning that may be underway in his [sic] own community, and in which he may perhaps participate" (p. 499). They advocate the following:

... community involvement and community control; innovation and creativity with respect to what former President John F. Kennedy called a 'bold new approach'; professional responsibility; training; program evaluation and research; and variety, flexibility and realism tailored to the unique situation of the particular community. In short, the community is held responsible '... for the quality and adequacy of the mental health services that it gets (p. 509).

The cornerstone of the Community Mental Health Movement was the passing of the Community Mental Health Centers Act in 1963 in the United States. Prior to the passing of this Act, the experts who engineered the Act arranged public forums and the presentation of briefs so that mental health advocates, and various groups of concerned citizens (including ex-mental patients) could contribute their knowledge. The Act put

strong emphasis on two major principles: active consumer participation and professional accountability.

In fact, these two principles of consumer participation and professional accountability were given some life by the Community Mental Health Movement. It is a movement that has had some momentum. However, because proper "community-based structures" and resources were not adequately put into place, the whole application of the deinstitutionalization process was never successful (Bachrach, 1976; Barnes and Toews, 1983; Bloom, 1984; Lamb, 1984). I will briefly present some of the reasons why the project failed, particularly as it relates to those two principles.

With respect to the first principle, active consumer participation, the consumer is not only the recipient of a direct service, but so are family members, friends, and community people at large. Historically, in traditional psychiatric treatment, other people who presumably knew what was best for the mentally ill (that is, "experts") made decisions for them. As a result, inappropriate services were put in place which provided the target clientele with a limited range of opportunities. Even though the services were now community-based the "expert attitude" of the mental health professionals carried over because these people administering the services were still working in institutions. They did not have any solid notion of what community-based services were about. There was a gap between the knowledge and expertise of these professionals and what community-based decision-making was about. Unfortunately, ex-mentally ill patients were

being discharged into their communities without adequate community supports. Even though these people had undergone proper discharge planning and training, they were only able to cope within a community that could offer them support and proper resources when they needed it. In most cases, communities were ill-prepared to fulfil their needs and deinstitutionalization became a "dumping" process on communities from institutions.

Another major lack was that the participation of the consumers of mental-health services was restricted. Frequently, decisions were made for the mentally ill patients about their future. By being denied the opportunity to participate fully in decisions of concerns to them (and their families) they were not given the opportunity to take charge of themselves. In other words, they never had a chance to ask questions related to their needs, such as "where do I go if I'm in trouble". The opportunity to be set free from hospital walls and to be back in the community was too seductive for many mentally ill patients, who stopped only at that thought and took advantage of their new found freedom.

By not being included in the participation process, the consumers were not given the feeling that they were valued members of the community. Participation in decision-making makes one feel valued as contributing to society (Bloom, 1984).

The concept of participation is a process which aims at



... involving people who have directly experienced a mental-health problem in all aspects of planning and decision-making, both at the individual and community levels (CMHA, 1986, p. 4).

This process must go beyond tokenism. It must be a real collaboration which will enable the consumer to become a fully recognized citizen.

The second principle that came out of the Community Mental Health Movement is professional accountability. It was believed that by being accountable to the consumer, the mental health worker would be more in touch with the "real" needs of the mentally ill. But were mental health professionals accountable to the consumers of mental health services or to the institutions which they served? This is not an unusual dichotomy in the sphere of human service delivery. Divided loyalty is a source of potential conflict between the client and service provider. Service providers remained attached to institutions and were not "community-based" in offering their services. In most cases, ex-patients needed to be readmitted to the institution to be eligible for treatment - treatment that was not available in the community.

Another aspect of the accountability concept is the principle of collaboration. Professionals need to be open to a collaborative approach. Their specialized area is essential to the mental health delivery system, but mental health is a multidimensional field. Therefore, sound collaboration among these specialists is required in order to bring more strength and wider options to the mental-health delivery system. This

multidisciplinary collaboration needs to be fostered. One way to enhance this collaboration is by not limiting it to clinical activities alone, but by extending it to research. This enhances the range for collaboration beyond each discipline's area of expertise and contributes to fulfil the overall needs of the ex-mentally ill.

The Community Mental Health Movement had the "right" idea by promoting these two principles of active consumer participation and professional accountability. The failure was not in the principles but in what was omitted as they were implemented.

An adherence to the principle of consumer participation must lead to the empowerment of the people. People need to achieve greater control over factors and conditions that affect their mental health. For this to happen, the focal point for participation needs to be the community.

Involvement in planning and decision-making may begin in the service sphere, but should not be contained there. As people become less dependent upon services, a larger portion of their lives is spent in work, leisure, volunteer activity, and the use of local resources. When people feel like valued citizens in relation to these structures, they can also contribute in a substantive manner to the services which surround them (CMHA, 1986, p. 4).

There is at present more recognition in Canada that consumer participation has "... to do with self-determination rather than paternalism, autonomy support rather than passivity or dependence, and 'working with' rather than 'doing for' (Epp, 1988, p. 20). For this to happen the consumer needs to be part of the collaborative process through

active citizen participation. (We must remember that the consumer involves more than the recipient of direct services). Professionals also need to give recognition and respect to consumers and recognize the competence of community participants.

Put very practically, accountability refers to the question of who has the right and power to ask questions, to demand answers and evoke sanctions regarding the quality, effectiveness and relevance of your service or practice and the method of delivery (Lee, 1986, p. 52).

Consumers and professionals alike can improve community service delivery by working together. But this can only come if professionals of mental health and experts of the state recognize that consumers are competent enough to participate in the design and delivery of the mental health services and the promotion of mental health and prevention programs required for their own community.

The Community Mental Health Movement lacked the tools to implement its principles. Many mental health professionals had good intentions when they encouraged ex-mental patients to live in the community. The problem was that the professionals themselves wrongly assumed that communities were capable of handling the influx of people that came into their midst (Bachrach, 1976). Ex-mentally ill persons tended to locate in areas where the rent was cheaper, and this created a ghetto in the community to the benefit of slum landlords, as well as creating many social problems for the ex-mentally ill that they did not have before (Lamb, 1984). In institutions they never had to worry about their meals and a place to sleep. Now for many, their independence was

confined to a welfare cheque and a rooming house. Many became isolated and depressed and had to be rehospitalized (Barnes and Toews, 1983; Dear and Taylor, 1982 ). The emphasis was not put on working with the ex-mentally ill, but on doing things for them. This was frequently taken to mean that simply being in the community was therapeutic.

These examples show that the Community Mental Health Movement has produced a series of largely unanticipated consequences which were of a dysfunctional nature (Bachrach, 1976). The experience of the Community Mental Health Movement illustrates that it is time for issues around consumer participation and professional accountability to be addressed squarely, so that community participation can achieve its promise.

### **3.2 CITIZEN PARTICIPATION**

The topic of the deinstitutionalization of the mentally ill is too vast to cover fully here. My intent is to provide the reader with the knowledge that participation cannot succeed unless certain conditions are met. The concept of participation has evolved over time and therefore some background in understanding the "participation of citizens" is in order.

After covering the major aspects of citizen participation I will present two models that have contributed greatly to our understanding of community participation. Arnstein's

(1969) "Ladder of Citizen Participation" helps us understand why such things as the Community Mental Health Movement and the War on Poverty in the United States did not work as intended. Bregha's (1973) model is of particular interest to us because it refers specifically to the relationship that the government (state) needs to establish with local citizens in a participation venture. Furthermore, Bregha's model was designed specifically for the province of Ontario. However, in order to grasp more succinctly the concept of citizen participation, let's briefly review some of the background that preceded it.

The concept that carries the appellation "citizen participation" is the forerunner of community participation and is important in our understanding of participation.

Burke (1983) identifies the mid 1950's as the focal period during which "... the participation of citizens in planning has emerged as a matter of right whether acknowledged or not" (p. 105). Citizen participation was being entrenched in the urban renewal movement occurring in the United States in the mid 1950's. Grass roots participation was practically non-existent at that period.

For most renewal agencies, citizen participation meant the creation or continuation of anywhere from a seven - to a fifteen - member advisory board composed principally of "citizens leaders". For clearance objectives this made practical sense. So-called citizen leaders had access to those who could make development work *i.e.* contractors, bankers, developers, legislators (Burke, 1983, p. 106).

In the 1960's, the concept of citizen participation started to take on a new meaning with the poverty program. Participation of the poor was sought in the planning, implementation and administration of programs to alleviate poverty.

The intention was less pragmatic than urban renewal. Where urban renewal described participation as a means of gaining citizen cooperation, the poverty program announced that citizens should have a voice in programs and plans affecting their destiny. Citizens should contribute substantively to the planning process by pointing out solutions and devising the means to solve problems (Burke, 1983, p. 107-108).

What is essential to glean from this is that the poverty program in the United States had a great impact on the concept of citizen participation. It was the first federal program that clearly stated that citizens should have a voice in planning for themselves. That in itself, however, did not ensure the feasibility of participation. Nevertheless, it did assert that the poverty program had spawned three legacies for citizen participation. The first legacy is that the base of participation had been legislatively widened. It served to define citizens "as those who share an interest in a particular planning organization as well as those who would be affected by a plan or program of service" (Burke, 1983, p. 108). In other words, it reached the consumers.

The second legacy ensured the participation of citizens for two major purposes. One is organizational support, whereby citizens are involved in planning activities. The other purpose is that citizen participants are seen as "a source of information and collective wisdom" (Burke, 1983, p. 109).

The third legacy, according to Burke, is that citizen participation became institutionalized. It served to create a chain reaction that extended to other legislation and regulations, which, in turn, made participation a requirement. In other words, participation became a normal part of the planning process (Burke, 1983).

Citizen participation is based on ideals that have roots in the liberal-democratic theory of politics. According to Head (1971) the term "citizen participation" seems almost superfluous in a democratic society because democracy is in principle "participatory." However, even if one can argue that citizens are the source of political power, political theorists have recognized that there are various interest groups in society, each promoting its own interests (Sargent, 1993). In a pluralist society such as ours, with various interest groups competing for power, the state frequently functions in the role of a referee whose task it is to distribute resources, rather than engage in negotiations. However, this role diminishes the intent behind participation, because it is restricted to interest groups in their exchanges with the state.<sup>1</sup> These interest groups sometimes join in order to achieve some common objectives. Head (1971) views citizen participation in the context of counteracted power issues.

Modern citizens' participation and involvement, ... may be viewed as a form of countervailing power, possessing, at least to some extent, the possibility of

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<sup>1</sup> This narrow view of pluralism neglects the fact that, in our society, there are universal programs (although heavily scrutinized at the present time) which are benefiting all segments of the population.

checking the influence of other powerful groups exerting pressure upon government on behalf of their own interest (p. 14).

The main rationale for the use of the citizen participation principle is that ordinary citizens possess the right to participate in the decisions that affect their lives (Head, 1971). Participation usually occurs in a change process and usually the degree of participation varies along a continuum which has complete participation at one end and centralized decision-making at the other.

The relationship between the state and local communities needs to be somewhere along this continuum. In order to gain a better appreciation of what can be found on this continuum, we will review Arnstein's (1969) model which looks at different degrees of participation. The second is Bregha's (1973) model of public participation in planning policy and programmes. This latter model offers a way of working between the state and local community groups.



### 3.3 ARNSTEIN'S MODEL

Arnstein (1969) presents a typology of citizen participation which is organized as rungs in a ladder. Each rung corresponds to the extent of the power of citizens in determining the plan or the program. The eight rungs of the ladder range from manipulation by the state at the bottom rung to citizen control at the top. These eight rungs are divided into three categories: non-participation (manipulation and therapy); degree of tokenism (informing, consultation, placation); and degree of citizen power (partnership, delegated power and citizen control).

The point that Arnstein stresses through her imagery of the ladder is that there are significant gradations of citizen participation (see Figure 2).

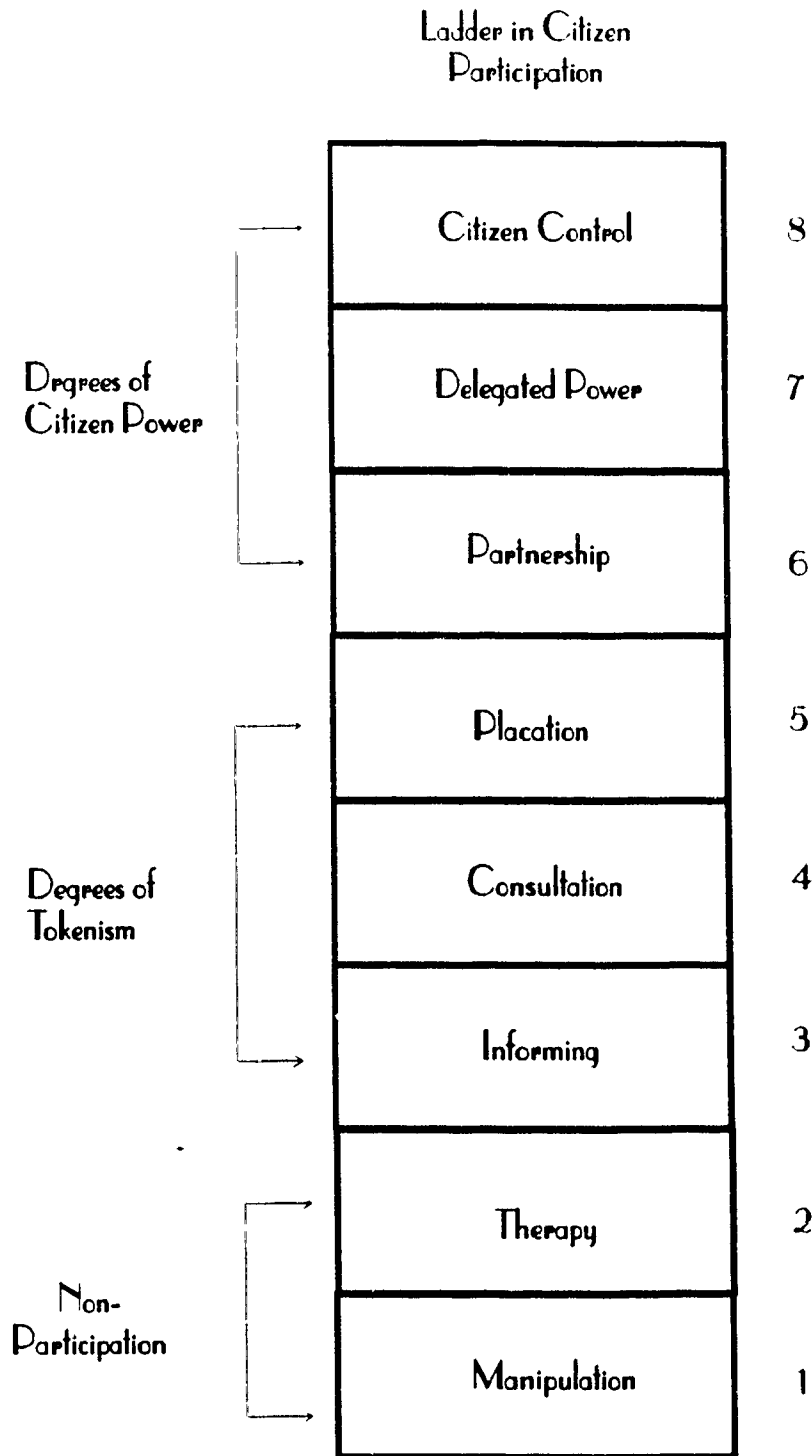
Knowing these gradations makes it possible to cut through the hyperbole to understand the increasingly strident demands for participation from the have-nots as well as the gamut of confusing responses from the power holders.

... neither the have-nots nor the power holders are homogeneous blocs. Each group encompasses a host of divergent points of view, significant cleavages, competing vested interests, and splintered subgroups. The justification for using such simplistic abstractions is that in most cases the have-nots really do perceive the powerful as a monolithic "system", and power holders actually do view the have-nots as a sea of "those people" with little comprehension of the class and caste differences among them.

In the real world of people and programs, there might be 150 rungs with less sharp and "pure" distinctions among them (Arnstein, 1969, p. 217).

Arnstein presents the characteristics of the eight rungs within the context of power and powerlessness. At the manipulation level, she deplores the fact that participation gets distorted and becomes a public relations vehicle used by power holders. It has frequently been used by authorities to demonstrate that grass-roots people are involved in the project, when the actual case is that these people have been accorded no legitimate function or power.

ARNSTEIN'S MODEL



Group therapy masked as citizen participation has been invidious, in her words, because the focus has been to cure people of their "pathology" rather than to change the structures of oppression that created their "pathologies." Such framing diverts the problem to the individual rather than to the roots of the problem found in the social structures.

Both manipulation and therapy are forms of non-participation. Informing citizens, however, is different, because the notion of knowledge is introduced. Knowledge is the first step toward power.

Informing citizens of their rights, responsibilities and options can be the most important first step toward legitimate citizen participation (Arnstein, 1969, p. 219).

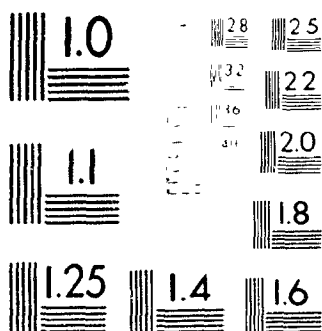
But information can have its limits. Arnstein deplores the frequency with which the information flows in one direction only; that is, from officials to citizens. Citizens, then, have no means of providing feedback and no room for negotiation, and citizens cannot influence the programs designed for their benefit. This brings us to the consultation process which frequently remains limited to neighbourhood surveys and meetings controlled by power holders where people are primarily perceived as "statistical abstractions." Participation is measured by the number of people at the meeting and the frequency of attendance. She deplores the fact that other measures of participation are not included. For example, a bone of contention from poor people is that they are

surveyed frequently about their problems and hopes but nothing concrete ever gets done with those surveys. As far as these people are concerned they have participated, yet they see no results from that consultation process. A reason for this is that many citizens do not really know what their options are, or sometimes what to ask for. They feel they should ask for something small, e.g. a playground for toddlers. Another example is that well-intentioned experts may perceive that an injustice is being done by the local merchant who overcharges, not realizing that community residents perceive that this merchant performs a valuable function by providing credit and cashing welfare checks, and that this far outweighs any injustices. This type of information is important for the planning process. The basic problem is that residents do not have any control over the consultation process or sometimes over the program that might be put in place.

Placation has possibilities for real participation but is vulnerable to tokenism. Frequently, even though citizens can plan and advise fully, the right to judge the legitimacy or feasibility of the advice remains with the power holders. When citizens are an integral part of the decision-making process, participation can move beyond tokenism. Unfortunately, efforts are not made by various organizations to include citizens as participants. Most organizations do not negotiate citizen participation requirements with citizens; the suspicious attitudes that the residents have developed toward authorities due to negative past experiences are not dealt with. Most citizens, for example, are unaware of their right to be reimbursed for babysitting and transportation costs - or if they are informed, the process is frequently too complex and not worth the

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effort. Another frequent problem is that citizens are not provided with adequate training to understand the internal structures with which they have to deal. In other words, there is no shared decision-making process that would allow citizens to view themselves as partners in the process. These three forms of participation (informing, consultation and placation), although they have potential, are often used more as degrees of tokenism than as degrees of participation.

The real degrees of citizen power are found in partnership, delegated power and citizen control. Partnership includes an improved redistribution of power manifested in the process of negotiation between the citizens and the powerholders, where agreement is made to share planning and decision-making responsibilities.

After the groundrules have been established through some form of give-and-take, they are not subject to unilateral change. Partnership can work most effectively when there is an organized power-base in the community to which the citizen leaders are accountable; when the citizens group has the financial resources to pay its leaders reasonable honoraria for their time-consuming efforts; and when the group has the resources to hire (and fire) its own technicians; lawyers, and community organizers. With these ingredients, citizens have some genuine bargaining influence over the outcome of the plan. (Arnstein, 1969, p. 221-222).

Delegated power can be achieved through negotiations that take place between citizens and public officials, the result of which is that citizens achieve dominant decision-making authority over a particular plan or program. Arnstein (1969) emphasizes that this level of the ladder gives sufficient power to the citizens "to assure accountability of the program to them" (p. 222). However, in most cases, final veto power still

remains with the funding body, even if citizens may hold the majority of seats on a board or association. Usually, delegated powers are identified in specific areas such as hiring and firing; buying or leasing; etc., and are limited in other decision control mechanisms such as total "blank cheque" in decision-making spending dollars. In other words, restrictions apply and usually these items are non-negotiable.

Citizen control is quite efficient and Arnstein (1969) defines it in the following way:

People are simply demanding that degree of power (or control), which guarantees that participants or residents can govern a program or an institution, be in full charge of policy and managerial aspects, and be able to negotiate the conditions under which 'outsiders' may change them (p. 223).

She then goes on to state that:

A neighbourhood corporation with no intermediaries between it and the source of funds is the model most frequently advocated (p. 223).

This definition and the suggested model remain in vogue today. Who exercises control through the representative process is of crucial importance.

The true difficulty with the concept of participation as identified by Arnstein's model is with the notion of power. It is difficult for the funder and/or the state to



recognize this and to let go of power. Frequently, even though there can be agreements on sharing certain decision-making responsibilities, it is the state which has the final say in the most important decisions.

The fact that the state has the final say has implications for the concept of community participation at two levels, which were identified in the Community Mental Health Movement. A relationship in which the state has too much control will impede upon the participation of people. It decreases their sense of ownership and independence. If community people are not an integral part of the decision-making and implementation processes, the future of community participation becomes grim. The second implication is with accountability. In situations of true participation, when people are in control, they are also accountable. This accountability is certainly to the funder but also to the community at large. For the state, an identified body such as a corporation is an essential element in fulfilling the criterion of accountability. In other words, the mechanisms for participation and for accountability are set within a structure which has legitimate authority.

Arnstein's model has served to illustrate the various gradations of citizen participation. It is a useful model to emphasize what real participation involves, describing power and control in a partnership between a local community group and the state. The next model (Bregha's, 1973) talks more about how citizen involvement can be achieved in the decision-making process.

### 3.4 BREGHA'S MODEL

Bregha's (1973) model is of particular interest because it seeks to involve citizens in the decision-making process of the daily business of the Ontario government. Bregha stipulates that participation takes a variety of forms.

For some, participation means a whole new life-style leading, they hope, into a better world; for others, it is an expression of very specific interests that they intend to promote; for yet others, participation suggests the broadening of existing elites so that power and decisions could be shared in a more equitable way (Bregha, 1973, Forward).

However, in order to make decisions, people must rely on some type of model.

Every person approaches a problem with the help of some model in mind. ... a decision-maker of any level will, even if unconsciously, fall back upon a mental model of reality as he [sic] sees it to help him to choose among the options that he considers available (Bregha, 1973, Forward).

Because there is no agreed upon conceptual model of participation, participation has different meanings for different people.

Bregha (1973) admits that he offers an incomplete model of participation but one which, nevertheless, provides us with sufficient elements for analysis and discussion, primarily because it presents a continuum of progressively increasing involvement in the steps of information-feedback, consultation, joint planning and delegated authority.

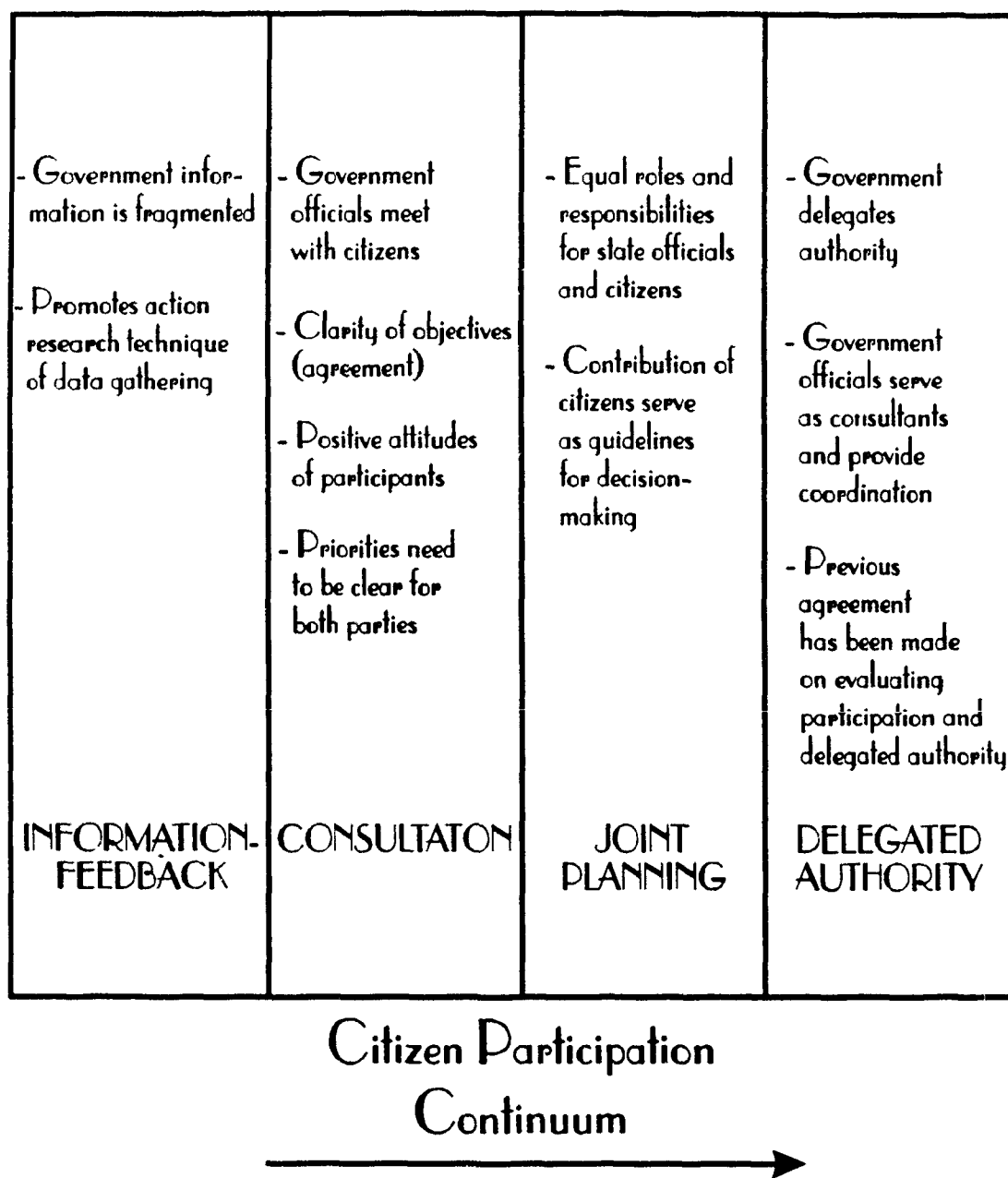
The four broad categories of Bregha's model should be seen as a continuum where one phase builds upon the other (see Figure 3). Proper channels and structures must be in place to ensure their proper functioning. This implies, within the provincial government for instance, that state-shared objectives must be established and well coordinated, so that there is consistency in the way in which internal governmental structures communicate with community groups.

Bregha's first level on the continuum has to do with information and feedback. Although he recognizes that the government directly distributes a substantial amount of information about legislation and programmes, he criticizes the fact that much of this information is fragmented and consequently frequently inaccessible to those who need it most. Bregha feels that, rather than obtaining data on a community through surveys, more meaningful feedback could come from communities using the action research technique of data-gathering. The rationale for this is that:

... it involves the people concerned more deeply in defining a problem and in discussing the feasibility of different options for its solutions (Bregha, 1973, p. 19).

An important factor related to the action research approach is that there is a time lag between information-gathering and feedback.

FIGURE 3  
BREGHA'S MODEL



In short, people require time and resources to state their opinion coherently and constructively. Therefore, as feedback receives higher priority, the government should become ready to invest some of its resources in new equipment and new methods that would encourage citizens to take a look at their situation and more specifically then, at how government's policies and programmes are affecting them (Bregha, 1973, p. 19).

In the long run, such a process might be conducive to the government's becoming more knowledgeable about communities. This knowledge would be used to formulate clearer and better policies.

However, Bregha cautions that even though information may increase the motivation for involvement, it does not offer an opportunity to be involved. Receiving information is a passive act and feedback is only reactive. Citizens can be only a part of a fully participative process and remain the responsibility of our political institutions. It is the first step upon which we can build, and that will lead us towards utilizing other forms of citizen involvement.

Consultation is the second general category identified in Bregha's model. He places consultation in a context in which government representatives meet with citizens "... in a planned, structured way for the purpose of increasing the scope of popular participation in decision-making" (p. 20).

There are two sets of crucial variables in the consultation process. The first set is to achieve agreement on the process itself; that is, to achieve clarity of objectives in

order to accept them as mutually beneficial. The second set of variables relates to the attitudes of the participants. The outcome of preliminary negotiations will predispose people's attitudes about wanting to enter into partnership or not. An "either-or" type of consultation process offers no possibility for discussion and serves to polarize people into the "for" and "against" groups.

Consultation makes sense only when improvement in the suggested policy, programme, or legislation is truly open for discussion. Hence, by assuming, even tacitly, the attitude of "take it or leave it" authorities deprive themselves of the possible benefits of consultation (Bregha, 1973, p. 21).

Sometimes there is a suspicion that consultation is used as a smoke-screen to legitimize a *fait accompli*. To avoid this, participants need to be able to recognize the influence of their contributions to the process of consultation, even when one's opinion has been rejected.

Bregha also warns that differing priorities between state officials and citizens are a frequent impediment to the consultation process. Priorities should be brought forward during the negotiations to establish the frame of reference and procedures for the consultation process. Furthermore, the negotiation process prior to the consultation phase should take into account the diverse elements/constituents of a population.

In a multi-ethnic society such as we have in Ontario, cultural differences - and preferences - have to be acknowledged by public authorities so that every group may develop the conviction that its opinions are requested and respected. This

acknowledgement can best be reflected by the arrangements the officials make for entering the process of consultation, which will ensure accommodation of the deep feelings of their interlocutors. The more accommodating, the better the process (p. 22).

The costs of consultation require assessment as well. Cost is not only a matter of the expenses of commissions, task-forces or public hearings, but also a matter of the time and energy exerted by the bureaucracy, especially by higher officials who need to become more involved.

Joint planning is the third general level on the continuum in Bregha's model. In its development, state officials and citizens assume essentially equal roles and responsibilities in the problem solving process. Bregha stipulates clearly that such a joint planning body does not have decision-making powers. On the continuum, however, it goes further than information feedback and consultation, because it is part of a more structured procedural context which seeks to promote equality. It is applicable

... in those areas and situations where citizens involved do not require specific technical expertise but possess the ability to articulate clearly the needs, aspirations and potential reactions of their constituencies (Bregha, 1973, p. 23).

The idea behind joint planning is that the contribution of citizens will provide guidance of higher quality for decision-makers.

In so doing, it also creates more opportunities for deeper and personally more meaningful citizen involvement. In more than one sense it elevates people to the status of partners, in an important part of government's business. Consequently, it can make governmental decision-making both more acceptable and effective (Bregha, 1973, p. 23).

An added element is to include as many groups of citizens as possible so that several options, with their advantages, and anticipated costs and benefits, can be considered by decision-makers.

The merit of the joint planning participatory technique is that it increases the validity of data gathering and enables the decision-makers to select the better solutions. In other words, they can evaluate the merits of each proposed solution and consider the political alternatives with more relevant information. All this needs to be done in a spirit of cooperation and compromise.

Delegated authority is the final level on the continuum in participatory techniques presented by Bregha. In this situation, the government transfers some of its authority and responsibility to a group of citizens. This participatory technique is built upon the first three levels and Bregha (1973) views it this way:

In general terms, delegated authority can be conceived as applicable to those services, programmes and facilities where (a) there is an element of self-help or mutual aid (community development, environmental improvements, certain forms of co-operatives); (b) the level of expertise is widely available because of education or experience (services in home-making, home improvements, consumer affairs, day-care, information and referral) (c) the administration of



facilities can be entrusted to groups of users (recreation, culture, sports, youth and leisure activities); and (d) the service, programme or activity can be offered in relatively small quantities (usually serving a neighbourhood or small territory) so that the participants are effectively able to partake both in their use and in their control (p. 25-26).

Generally, such community services and programmes are set up on a more informal structure and funded by governments who also serve as consultants and provide coordination.

There are two major problems cited by those who oppose delegated authority. Unhealthy dependency and too rigid accountability would negate the principle of participation, since the control (authority) would belong entirely to the government. The government should therefore refrain from imposing models or formulas. Instead it should facilitate experimentation and innovation, and for sufficiently long periods of time. The most important element to retain in delegated authority is that both government officials and citizen groups must agree from the outset on how they will evaluate the effectiveness of participation and delegated authority. Three aspects of accountability need to be included: financial resources, programme outcome and social outcome. The financial accountability can easily be set within a legal framework. Programme outcomes, however, are more problematic, but can be achieved if the joint planning process has produced a set of clearly stated objectives. The programme outcomes can be measured against the achievement, or lack of achievement, of these objectives. Social outcomes usually refer to intangibles and are not quantitatively

measurable. These are found in such things as the level of satisfaction of participants, the leadership skills they may develop, their perspective on their quality of life and self-fulfilment. Bregha emphasizes that accountability must be viewed in the context of all three aspects, rather than the narrower method of financial accountability.

Bregha (1973) sees the benefits of delegated authority as follows:

The assumption behind the use of delegated authority is that it would deliver services, create and run programmes, maintain and improve facilities in a multiplicity of ways that would be more effective and frequently cheaper than if done otherwise (p. 28).

The effect behind this assumption is that it would change the quality of relationship between the people and the government. Citizen involvement would take place, not because it is centrally decreed, but because "people can live it as a necessary and constructive way of achieving their own aspirations" (p. 28). It would also serve to:

... re-direct the use of governments' powers and authority in such a manner, that our mutual relations, our life styles, our initiative and creative opportunities are facilitated and continually strengthened (p. 28).

Delegated authority is more conducive to creating an atmosphere in which both the state and the local community can enter into a partnership based on equality and mutual respect. Through this recognition the daily workings of participatory democracy, as they manifest themselves in the relation between the government and citizen groups,

would be enhanced and hopefully more conducive to achieving mutual satisfaction for both partners.

The two models of citizen participation elaborated by Arnstein (1969) and Bregba (1973) are appropriate to our analysis because the former serves to envision the various forms that participation can take, while the latter provides guidelines for establishing a positive relationship between the government and a local community group. The Community Mental Health Movement, combined with the six concepts that have been reviewed in the first part of the conceptual framework in chapter one, will also form the basis of discussion for the analysis. Through this process I will draw conclusions concerning what form community participation should take in a relationship between the state and a local community.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **4.0 INTRODUCTION**

In this chapter I present the methodology used for this research project. I first introduce the general guidelines of the qualitative methodology which is being used, and then state the main research question for the project. Following this I present my role as a participant observer and discuss more specifically the strategies employed to conduct the content analysis for this case study of the Sudbury Better Beginnings, Better Futures project.

#### 4.1 GENERAL METHODOLOGY

The major focus of this research is to analyze how the concept of community participation has been applied in a particular case, using the methodology of a case study. A case study is a research strategy that allows the researcher to focus on the dynamics present within a single setting in order for these dynamics to be better understood (Eisenhardt, 1989). Case studies, like experiments, can be generalized only to theoretical propositions and not to populations or universes (Yin, 1990). Case studies can involve either single or multiple cases, as well as several different types of analysis. For instance, case studies can employ a single-embedded design; that is, multiple levels of analysis within a single study (Yin, 1990). A single-embedded approach is used in this research project.

Yin (1989) provides the following explanation about a single-embedded design. He points out that the rationale for using a single-case study is analogous to a single experiment. Like the single experiment, use of a single case is made when it represents the critical test of a significant theory. He expresses it in the following way.

The theory has specified a clear set of propositions as well as the circumstances within which the propositions are believed to be true. To confirm, challenge, or extend the theory, there may exist a single case, meeting all of the conditions for testing the theory. The single case can then be used to determine whether a theory's propositions are correct, or whether some alternative set of explanations might be more relevant (Yin, 1989, p. 47).

The conceptual framework for this study provides the theoretical elements which will be tested in this research. Used as such, the single case study can represent a significant contribution to knowledge and theory building around the concept of community participation. The case study is also said to be embedded because it involves multiple units of analysis. Even though the study is about a single public program, the Sudbury Better Beginnings, Better Futures program, the analysis includes subunits such as the strategies used in applying community development principles, the consensual approach to decision-making and ways to enhance the participation of community people. In addition, the single-embedded design draws upon multiple sources of data, which for this study include archival material (logs), interviews with key informants and my observations as a participant observer.

The general methodology for this research project is also inspired in part by Schatzman and Strauss' (1973) generic approach to qualitative methods. Their model stresses that any suitable technique that will help the researcher gain the desired information may be used. For Schatzman and Strauss, ways of thinking about the collected information are developed based on the data itself. Using this field method, researchers, while guided by well-focused research questions, need not begin their inquiry by articulating a specific problem. The problem may surface later. The generic approach provides researchers with flexibility in determining their research strategies throughout the process of conducting the research. Therefore, a "refashioning of design must go on through most of the work" (p. 7). In this way, field research becomes a

discovery process.<sup>1</sup> The questions raised by researchers need not be related to any prior theory, unless they choose to test and explore a theory's limits. The researcher needs some theoretical perspective or framework for gaining conceptual entry to the problem and for raising questions quickly (Schatzman and Strauss, 1973).

Therefore, the process of this study will involve a continual interaction between the theoretical issues being studied and the data being collected. This is a necessary component of case study research because, although researchers need to be thorough and have a firm grasp of the issues being studied, they must also be flexible in determining what strategies and techniques should be employed throughout the research process. Schatzman and Strauss (1973) make this point quite clearly:

The field researcher is a methodological pragmatist. He sees any method of inquiry as a system of strategies and operations designed - at any time for getting answers to certain questions about events which interest him. He understands that every method has built-in capabilities and limitations that are revealed in practice (through the techniques used, for given purposes and with various results), evaluated in part against what could have been gained or learned by any other method or set of techniques. Also, he understands that a method of inquiry is adequate when its operations are logically consistent with the questions being asked; when it adapts to the special characteristics of the thing or event being

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<sup>1</sup> The design for this research was refashioned in two major ways. First, there was the identification of concepts related to community participation found in the literature. Second there were discussions with key informants on the various applications they made of the concepts surrounding community work. The literature provided useful theoretical learning while community organizers contributed valuable practical information. This discovery process provided useful theoretical and practical insights that helped to build the conceptual framework.

examined; and when its operations provide information, evidence, and even simply perspective that bear upon the questions being posed (p. 7 & 8).

In short, these are Schatzman and Strauss' methodological considerations for doing field research and ones that I take as a guideline for my own methodology in the Sudbury Better Beginnings, Better Futures case study.

One of the purposes of this study is to increase understanding about the concept of community participation from the analysis of the data collected. Without a well-focused research question, however, facing the huge amount of data available would be overwhelming, especially since part of this research involves content analysis of the documents. Therefore, the research question must be clearly formulated before the researcher begins to collect the data. For this study two research questions were formulated. The first one is "What is the degree and manner of autonomy that can be exercised at the local community level when communities are engaged with the state in a community participation process?". The second question is "What kind of participation can come from the state when it is engaged in a community participation process with a local community"?

#### **4.1.1 RESEARCHER'S OBSERVATIONS AS A PARTICIPANT**

An important component of the research methodology is my role as a participant and researcher in the project. It has allowed first-hand observations of how the whole



process of participation has evolved and allowed me to record this process. My notes have also become a useful memory aid to help retain the mood and flavour of the moment in the data analysis. In this sense, my own participation has provided me with a keener sense of reality, true to the moment. In addition, by being a researcher and participant I gained access to information that was not otherwise available.

The participant observer strategy is described by Schatzman and Strauss (1973) in the following way: "... the researcher is a full participant in on going activities while simultaneously his identity as a researcher is fully known" (p. 61). My involvement with Sudbury Better Beginnings, Better Futures was at first more as an observer than as a participant. However, due to the nature of the project which highlights and encourages participation, all were invited to contribute to project activities and to set limits in terms of their own time commitments. I made a decision to be active and part of that process and became a member of the Sudbury Better Beginnings, Better Futures Association. I was simultaneously a participant and an observer for approximately one and a half year, covering the period from February 20, 1991 to July 3, 1992.

Beyond observing, participating in the process was beneficial in providing me direct experience in a community participation project. I have attended local Better Beginnings Association meetings since February 20, 1991, which was right after the official announcement made on January 29, that Sudbury had been chosen as one of the sites for a Better Beginnings, Better Futures project. For a full year prior to this period,

logs and minutes had been compiled and these data are part of the research under examination here. The time period for the material used starts September 1989, and ends on July 03, 1992 with the approval of the contract between MCSS and the Sudbury Better Beginnings group. This data contains information about the work and activities of the people involved in discussing and designing the project.

In order to be able to conduct this research, I sought formal approval from the Sudbury Better Beginnings, Better Futures Association. I made an official presentation of my research proposal to Association members on December 11, 1991, and was granted permission to make use of the logs and minutes of the Association. This presentation was made during a regular scheduled meeting of the Sudbury Association. Members had the opportunity to ask questions about the research and how the data would be used.<sup>2</sup> Such a process serves to fulfill an important criteria for rigour in a qualitative study. By accepting the request for this research project, community Association members gave their approbation to the project, which attests to internal validity.

Association members became aware of the exploratory stages of my research, when on March 09, 1993 I submitted a document entitled: "The History of the Sudbury Better Beginnings, Better Futures Project" to the Research Caucus (Appendix A). This document served Association members in two ways. First they were kept abreast of my

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<sup>2</sup> Appendix E contains the original document that was submitted to the Sudbury Better Beginnings, Better Futures Association on December 11, 1991.

research activities and second they now had a background document that could serve as a useful reference. In addition, this document served to validate the research because Association members read the history of the local Better Beginnings, Better Futures project with a chance to correct inaccuracies and to express their thoughts on the document. This validation process was a confirmation of the research results (up to that point) where people could agree with the findings or dissociate themselves from the interpretations of these findings. In this case they agreed with the results.

Association members also commented on the aspect of confidentiality pertaining to the data. The data was handled in such a way that no names would appear in the reports. Earlier in the design of the research, Association members had agreed that this should be done even though it was felt that Sudbury readers, familiar with Better Beginnings, Better Futures, would probably be able to identify who a person or an agency would be. However, much to everyone's surprise, no one could identify with certainty who was who, not even themselves. This brought reassurance to the group about the confidential aspect of the research.

#### **4.1.2 STRATEGIES FOR CONTENT ANALYSIS**

A large part of the analysis employed in this research is based on content analysis of documents. Different models may be used in doing content analysis (Kaplan, 1964; Berelson, 1968; Giorgi, 1970; Mucchielli, 1979; Bardin, 1986; L'Ecuyer, 1988). For instance the researcher can start with no predetermined categories for examination and

simply let the categories emerge from the analyzed material. Or, the researcher can decide on the categories to be examined prior to analyzing the data. A third option is to make use of a mixed model. This model contains certain "known" categories and allows the "unknown" categories to emerge as the data is being analyzed.

I used the third mixed model for this study. To understand the site and context, I completed an initial review of the 1,867 pages of logs notes and minutes, and wrote the document "The History of the Sudbury Better Beginnings, Better Futures Project" (Appendix A). Upon reflection on the history and the logs, I discovered that rather than categories, what I was looking at were more strategies used to put into application the concept of community participation. I then undertook to develop my conceptual framework with the following known concepts of community, community development, community organization, social development, adult education and community economic development. The criteria for selecting these six concepts was that they were all recurrent in the literature on community participation. My objective then became to use them in order to see how these concepts are articulated in the documents produced both by the state and the Sudbury Better Beginnings, Better Futures Association. I examined how these concepts evolved and changed over time through the interaction between the state agency and the Sudbury Association as it pertains to their implementation.

The main objective of this analysis is to look at some of the methods used by the Better Beginnings group to accommodate the guidelines set out by the state in order to

get funding for their project. In other words, I want to examine the specific acts and behaviours of the group; significant events; the strategies employed to reach certain goals; and how these people construed events and attached meanings to them. With respect to the process, I examine the ongoing strategies to promote participation and the strategies that change over time. Although an almost infinite set of variables could be used, I am interested primarily in the how of participation; that is, the practice of participation, negotiation and their effects.

#### **4.1.3 DOCUMENTS REVIEWED**

Content analysis was done on a number of key documents. Three major documents were analyzed. The first was entitled Better Beginnings, Better Futures: An Integrated Model of Primary Prevention of Emotional and Behavioral Problems, published by the Ministry of Community and Social Services in 1989. This study, commissioned by the MCSS in 1988, brought together twenty-five Ontario researchers and program directors to review primary prevention literature and serve as an advisory body to MCSS. After conducting a key informant survey of 45 selected Ontario programs, this advisory group produced what they called an Integrated Model of Primary

Prevention. A key feature of the model is that it involves elements of community development which put community participation at the forefront.

The second document is entitled: "Better Beginnings, Better Futures" Project: Policy Research Demonstration Project: Primary Prevention, Request for Proposals: Research Sites (March 01, 1990). This document is jointly published by the Ministry of Community and Social Services, the Ministry of Education, and the Ministry of Health, and lays out the actual guidelines to be followed in applying to become a Better Beginnings, Better Futures project site.

The third document is entitled Sudbury Better Beginnings, Better Futures Association: Proposal for Research Site: A Collaborative Effort. This document is the actual proposal submitted by the Sudbury Better Beginnings, Better Futures Association on July 13, 1990, which was subsequently accepted on January 29, 1991 by MCSS.

Following an analysis of these documents, a content analysis of the log notes and minutes of meetings from the Association is performed. The "logs," as they are referred to, contain information that is either directly or indirectly pertinent to the way in which the Sudbury Better Beginnings Association implemented this project. This material is confidential in nature and available only to Association members. These notes, which consist of 1,867 pages of data, are of crucial importance since they report on the process by which project developers and community people participated directly in the process

of participation at the local level. The logs consist primarily of "note taking" during the Sudbury Association weekly meetings. For the most part the logs are detailed notes of what went on during the meeting and of the exchanges that occurred among Association members. A lot of the "details" contained in the logs vary greatly, according to the ability of the note taker. The note taker was an Association member, and following a rotation format, someone would volunteer to take notes from the meeting. From the detailed log notes, minutes from the meeting were also produced in a much shorter version. Any Association member who wanted to consult the logbooks could do so. The logs were kept at a central location, originally at the N'Swakamok Native Friendship Centre and eventually, after the hiring of staff, with the secretary of the Association.

In addition, to minutes and notes, the logbooks contain other information from other sources. For instance, if any one of the working groups (francophone, anglophone, native, research or agency), or individual member wished to send a copy of their minutes or other correspondence to the Association, they would automatically be put into the logbooks of the Association. Any literature whether it be an article from a journal, a newspaper clip, an add for a local activity, or any type of correspondence - all of these and more were included in the logs. The logs contain anything that the group considered relevant. In other words, these minutes and logs also contain all written and verbal interactions with representatives of MCSS. They therefore reflect the involvement of the state in the community group. Following approval of the project, MCSS was responsible for providing the coordination necessary to support and fund the project.

The major purpose of this content analysis is to define the process whereby the Association established its relationship with representatives of the state by means of community participation. Making use of the mixed model in the beginning allowed tools or strategies used by the Sudbury Better Beginnings, Better Futures Association to emerge. Some of these are as follows: team building, circling-in and circling-out, consensus decision-making, workshops, defining integration, brainstorming exercises, sensitivity to multicultural and multiethnic issues, research (viewing learning as a skill for members), developing principles and goals as a team, recording minutes and creating logs, defining terminology (*e.g.* community, participation, consensus, etc.), and addressing the concerns and expectations of members. These tools or strategies used by the Better Beginning, Better Futures group help us to understand how the concept of community participation was actually implemented. These strategies all had the theme of participation as a common denominator. Returning to the literature I sought to identify the major concepts relevant to the concept of community participation as exemplified by these strategies. These concepts are: community, community development, community organization, social development, adult education and community economic development.



#### 4.1.4 INTERVIEWS WITH KEY INFORMANTS

In addition to content analysis of documents and logs, I make use of "fogged data"<sup>3</sup> consisting of twelve interviews of Association members, done by Association members in June of 1991, on the general theme of community development and community participation. These key informants are people who have either been involved with Better Beginnings since its emergence or got involved during the course of the project. Some of these people are still active members of the Association, others have gone on to other projects, while some are still partially involved and participate in certain functions. These key informants represent a mix of people living and working in the community. Most of them, however, are front line workers in agencies serving the community. (This point is discussed in the analysis portion of the thesis.) The interviews were conducted in pairs and using an open-ended format, Association members asked each other questions on the general theme of community involvement (Appendix B contains the general guidelines used for these interviews.) As a participant and observer, I assisted in formulating some of the questions used in these guidelines, mainly those pertaining to issues of community development and community participation. I was then able to use the transcripts of these fogged interviews to pursue my analysis.

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<sup>3</sup> The term "Fogged data" was used within the Sudbury Better Beginnings project to mean that the interview transcripts had names and identifying information removed.

Subsequent interviews were also conducted with some of the same key informants plus other people who joined the Sudbury Association after June 1991. These interviews were made at random and carried in the context of casual conversations, sometimes in person, sometimes by telephone. The purpose was to gather data on how community participants made sense of their experiences and the knowledge they gained through the participatory process. It is important to understand the effects of this new knowledge on key informants, *i.e.* what they have learned in the process of participation, how they have internalized it, and how they have put this new knowledge into practice. Using this method of investigation helps to ascertain how participants made sense of the concepts contained in the Better Beginnings, Better Futures model and of their relationship with MCSS representatives in a community participation project.

In summary, the research process selected for this project is grounded in the experiences of the participants in a community development process, rather than testing prior hypotheses. It is a process that originates in the field rather than originating purely in theory (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). Experiences from the field can then be related to the conceptual framework used for this study.

A generic qualitative approach based in grounded theory, emphasizes thinking and discovery through induction by understanding the point of view of community members (Rennie *et al.*, 1988). Understanding the community's perspective is essential to our knowledge of community participation. This will give practical value to this research

project in that it might serve to directly link the reality of community members of a locality with the concepts used by them and the state in a community participation project.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **DATA ANALYSIS OF THE DOCUMENTS**

#### **5.0 INTRODUCTION**

In this chapter I analyze the three basic theoretical documents of significance to the research. Two of the documents have been produced by the state. They are: Better Beginnings, Better Futures: An Integrated Model of Primary Prevention of Emotional and Behavioral Problems (1989); and Request for Proposals: Research Sites (1990). Both documents were prepared by the Ministry of Community and Social Services (MCSS). The second document also benefited from collaboration with the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Health. These two documents are very significant in that they articulate the state's position on the concept of community participation within a community development approach. The third document is authored by the Sudbury Better Beginnings, Better Futures Association and is titled Proposal for Research Site

(1990). The two documents prepared by MCSS served as the framework and guidelines for the Sudbury document. The three documents are analyzed separately.

The first document presents the ideology of Better Beginnings, Better Futures. The second serves as a guideline for individual community groups who are interested in applying for a project. The third document is the community project of the Sudbury Better Beginnings, Better Futures Association. I first present a description of each document, and then an analysis of the uses of the concepts of community, community development, community organization, social development, adult education and community economic development. Following this, I discuss these documents in relation to the two models of citizen participation presented earlier: Arnstein's and Bregha's models.

This will allow us to group community participation measures in the models developed by Arnstein and Bregha in relation to the concepts that were developed in the conceptual framework. It is important to assess whether the principles and goals about community participation are similar, or different, between the Provincial model and the Sudbury model of Better Beginnings, Better Futures.

## Major documents used for this thesis

- Better Beginnings, Better Futures: An Integrated Model of Primary Prevention of Emotional and Behavioural Problems, published by the Ministry of Community and Social Services, 1989.
- Better Beginnings, Better Futures Project: Policy Research Demonstration Project: Primary Prevention. Requests for Proposals: Research Sites, March 01, 1990, published by the Ministry of Community and Social Services, Ministry of Education and Ministry of Health.
- Sudbury Better Beginnings, Better Futures Association: Proposal for Research Site: A Collaborative Effort.

## **5.1 DOCUMENT ONE:**

### **BETTER BEGINNINGS, BETTER FUTURES: AN INTEGRATED MODEL OF PRIMARY PREVENTION OF EMOTIONAL AND BEHAVIORAL PROBLEMS (1989).**

#### **A) DESCRIPTION**

This document articulates the model of community involvement that the state has adopted in relation to primary prevention. It is important to note that this model of prevention, which I will refer to in this section as "Better Beginnings, Better Futures" (for the sake of convenience), marks the first time that a technical advisory group of twenty-five researchers and program directors were able to achieve consensus on a model of primary prevention. In the preface of the text, MCSS states that the strength of this multi-disciplinary team was its diversity.

The breadth and depth of experience was a powerful force in determining the direction and outcome of the review. No one profession or theoretical approach was able to dominate the focus; there was a constant challenge to document and justify conclusions (1989, p. x).

This process has produced positive results in the sense that in order to reduce the risk for children living in economically disadvantaged communities, MCSS established three goals in support of primary prevention projects:

- o Reduce the incidence of serious, long-term emotional and behavioral problems in children;
- o Promote the optimal social, emotional, behavioral and cognitive development in those children at highest risk for such problems; and
- o Strengthen the ability of communities to respond effectively to the social and economic needs of children and their families (MCSS, 1989, p.1).

There is thus ample reason for the state to be proud of this accomplishment.

To do the research necessary for the Better Beginnings, Better Futures model, the Technical Advisory Team sub-divided into five working groups focusing on infants, preschoolers, primary schoolers, community involvement, and research issues. It marks the first time where those five areas are consolidated into a common framework. The model is founded on developing prevention programs for children in order to provide "better beginnings" for them, with a strong focus on community involvement and research.

## **B) ANALYSIS**

Not all of the objectives of Better Beginnings, Better Futures will be examined here. For the purpose of this study, I centre on the aspects that are relevant to community participation, those that correspond to the third goal presented above, to "strengthen the ability of communities to respond effectively to the social and economic needs of children and their families". There is strong emphasis put by MCSS that Better



Beginnings, Better Futures be a community project that seeks the involvement of community people. It is therefore important to look at what the state understands by community and by involvement.

Defining the term community is generally problematic for the state. Although state officials are quite capable of targeting communities according to specific characteristics, they acknowledge that their choice of characteristics may be arbitrary and may not coincide with a community's description or definition of itself. In the case of the Better Beginnings, Better Futures Project, the government document suggests that communities "should also be encouraged to present their own definitions of the characteristics which represent their sense of community" (MCSS, 1989, p. 70).

In other words, state officials are willing to accept what residents select as their reference point for defining their own community. Community residents are encouraged to define their perception of the community's needs and goals as well as to establish their own priorities. Therefore, the Better Beginnings, Better Futures model suggests a willingness on the part of state officials to refrain from targeting a community; instead they are prepared to let community "happen". This approach suggests that state officials are prepared to acknowledge that the process of community participation will lead people to define their community as they perceive it and that their self-definition will be accepted by the state.

This approach deviates from the more traditional forms of trying to define community by preconceived theoretical notions. I have identified four general aspects of community in chapter 2: geography, common interests, quest for community, and relationships among people. The position of the state to let community happen, falls more in the category of quest for community and I would like to reiterate Shaffer's (1994) assertion that a conscious community reflects on itself. Rather than being defined in terms of location, common interests, or specific types of relationships, the Better Beginnings, Better Futures model places importance on people's self-definition, in terms of their needs, and according to their ideas of what is important to them. The Better Beginnings, Better Futures model also encourages people from the outset to participate in a project by touching something of interest to them: themselves within their community. The definition of community is not predetermined. Community residents are not told who they are, but given a chance to tell others, namely the state, who they are. This attitude coming from the state creates an atmosphere in which community people can become involved in the process of definition and problem-solving. It encourages participation.

Involvement is reflected in this third major goal of the Better Beginnings, Better Futures model, which is to strengthen communities' abilities to respond effectively to their social and economic needs. Communities, according to the state, should have ownership and control over the decisions and programs that affect them. The MCSS

document stipulates that residents need to acquire problem-solving skills through the process of community involvement. This process should favour strategies and activities

... that empower and enable the community to assess its needs and abilities, analyze the options for change, and mobilize resources both from inside and outside the community (MCSS, 1989, p.71).

What MCSS describes as community involvement is what was identified in the conceptual framework as community development. The state's document puts emphasis on the fact that community involvement (development) is a process of change at the community level which seeks to achieve specific goals.

The description given by MCSS about community involvement follows the trends exemplified in the literature and echoes the United Nations' (1955) definition of community development.

[It is] a process of social action in which the people of a community organize themselves for planning and action; define their common and individual needs and solve their problems; execute their plans with a maximum reliance upon community resources; and supplement these resources when necessary with services and materials from governmental and non-governmental agencies outside the community (p.2).

MCSS's view of community development is also rooted in earlier Canadian definitions of community development. An example is that in 1970 the Canadian Welfare Council (now the Canadian Council on Social Development) defined community development as:

A process aimed at promoting citizen participation in social affairs, developing people's awareness of problems enabling them to define their needs in relation to the total environment, making possible their enlightened choice among various options and channelling the results into effective action for social change (p. 17).

The Better Beginnings, Better Futures document re-emphasizes the basic principles of community development in reiterating that the involvement of community residents is important. The authors of the document deplore the fact that community involvement is generally not emphasized in the design and implementation of programs. Involvement means going beyond attending meetings or participating in programs. It means that communities have a high degree of ownership and control over all decisions that affect them. That is what community development is about.

The Better Beginnings, Better Futures model also acknowledges that community residents have the ability to recognize and articulate their own needs and interests. The state supports the ideology of a bottom-up approach: one in which people should be supported and encouraged to nurture their children in their own style and community setting. For the state, community involvement in all stages of program development is critical to the successful implementation of the Better Beginnings, Better Futures model.

This is why the state's model emphasizes participation, making it a prerequisite for successful community involvement. This means that potential users of programs and services should be consulted about their views, preferences and priorities. Planning with, rather than for the community, becomes a way for the state to capitalize on the strengths

of the community instead of compensating for weaknesses. This, in turn, strengthens the participants and the community as a whole. Furthermore, once a healthy attitude develops, the community no longer sees itself as disadvantaged.

Putting value on people's abilities to organize themselves is what is referred to as capacity building in the concept of community organization. More specifically, the type of organization promoted by the Better Beginnings, Better Futures model is based on one of Rothman's (1979; 1987) three models of community organization: locality development. Locality development promotes community change through participation of community people. It is also a model which provides room to combine community assets with the state resources. For this to happen, two general rules need to be followed. The first is that community residents should be able both to identify their needs and define their goals. The second is that planners for the state should not make assumptions about the kinds of services that best suit the community but, instead, their expertise should be informed by a bottom-up approach to planning. These are key factors for successful participation and they are reiterated in the document *Better Beginnings, Better Futures*.

Another aspect of locality development is also present in the *Better Beginnings, Better Futures* model since it also emphasizes universal accessibility for the whole community, going beyond the traditional method of focusing on the poor and high-risk groups. In fact, state officials point out that "If one has to qualify for a program by being

seen as disadvantaged, then many people will refuse to participate, rather than submit to such a labelling process" (MCSS, 1989, p.76). MCSS favours an ecological approach which means that disadvantaged groups do not see themselves as competing for limited resources. It is a holistic approach. The document clearly states that "Universal access to a prevention program is important to encourage broad community participation and ownership" (MCSS, 1989, p.76).

Emphasis on locality development is also found in the fact that the model described in the Better Beginnings, Better Futures document emphasizes flexibility and diversity in programming that is tailored to the needs of a particular community. It states that programs already in place and designed by the community should receive state support and provisions should be made for the future development of these existing programs. This is an important point for the state to consider in order not to change the texture of a community. Programs need to be planned with sensitivity to cultural differences. They need to be made easily accessible for anyone who wants to participate. Finally, it states that all programs should show evidence of community ownership. This means that community residents need to be part of both the planning and evaluation of processes. This would, in turn, ensure the ongoing success of these programs. There is thus much emphasis in the model on community organization as a process for community planning and action with the full participation of community residents.

At this point one might wonder why the state would be interested in promoting such a model. What benefits might government expect to gain from it? According to the state and as evidenced in the *Better Beginnings, Better Futures* document, benefits for the community would include a reduction in crime rates and incidents of property damage as well as an increase in neighbourhood pride. As well, the document cites benefits to the state such as a reduction in the number of people on social assistance and a reduction in the number of low birth-weight infants who require high-technology hospital intervention. On a wider scale, benefits for the state would include increased employment and a stronger economy. But benefits can go beyond these more tangible things to include positive social values such as social justice and citizen effectiveness as well as increased participation in wider government and social planning (MCSS, 1989, p. 103). Although these less tangible benefits are harder to measure, they are nevertheless being acknowledged in the *Better Beginnings, Better Futures* document as benefits to the state. These benefits are part of the state's social development objectives of which the main one is to improve human welfare.

To improve human welfare the *Better Beginnings, Better Futures* model puts emphasis on- fostering a healthier relationship between the people and their social institutions, which is a core element of the social development approach. Importance is placed on the notion of integration which accentuates the importance that better coordination of services can lead to better services being developed with the common goals of the community in mind.

Within a given community, services to children and families must blend and unite. Integration at minimum means that service providers will develop common goals, objectives and collaborative plans for meeting these intents. Conceptually, the integrated model moves beyond "coordination of service" to a full integration of service planning and delivery (MCSS, 1989, p. 111).

Integration, however, is not clearly defined. By remaining ambiguous and highly abstract it might be intended to allow individual communities to work out their own solutions. It would then be up to agencies in the community to develop a common vision of what is meant by integrated services at a practical level. For instance, there are no precise mechanisms to determine how to resolve power issues between agencies or people. A reality of many communities is that some agencies carry more clout than others, while some are simply more willing to integrate in order to share power. A foreseeable danger is that administrators of agencies could easily get involved in such a process of integration, yet neglect to truly consult with their staff, clientele and community people. Such a process would deviate from the community participation process espoused in the Better Beginnings, Better Futures document. In short, this social development objective is not articulated very clearly in the model and this could lead to major difficulties in trying to operationalize the notion of integration of services.

In the Better Beginnings, Better Futures model, we can also detect elements that relate to the importance of adult education. For instance, the document attempts to promote empowerment "... by creating community processes that foster competence, control and involvement" (MCSS, 1989, p.79), which are made an integral part of the



model. Empowering people allows them to take charge of their lives through responding to their own problems and achieving their own goals.

The heart of this process (empowerment) is community ownership and control of its endeavour and destiny (Health and Welfare Canada in MCSS, 1989, p. 79).

Empowerment is promoted when people are allowed, encouraged and assisted in finding ways to enhance their lives, by using their personal and collective talents and energies (Fried, 1980; McKnight, 1985; MCSS, 1989). We are in fact talking about the concept of adult education which is a process of learning that leads to reflective action. Adult education leads to empowerment for the learners since they are encouraged to define what they need to learn and what is relevant to them. This, in turn, leads to collective learning. By participating in their learning, community people become more empowered and this empowerment in turn leads to more participation. People become clearer on what their needs are and on how to achieve their goals. They become more confident in taking charge of the changes that are necessary for their community. The Better Beginnings, Better Futures model seeks to promote empowerment because it can also reap benefits for the state. As one of the findings reveals:

Key informants reported many examples of parents participants who gained the self-confidence necessary to upgrade their education, find and retain employment, receive vocational training, and move out of the cycle of poverty (MCSS, 1989, p.79).

What is important to retain is that the Better Beginnings, Better Futures model has a comprehensive vision of citizen involvement by also including what it can do at the personal level for participants, and not only at the broader societal level.

A notable omission of the Better Beginnings model is that there is no mention of community economic development as discussed in chapter two. Although we can find evidence that the state encourages self-reliance, there is no specific reference to foster community economic development initiatives as a way of enhancing or developing local economies. Financing, as per the model of the document, is to fund the activities of the prevention program. The major research objective of a primary prevention research demonstration project is to demonstrate "how large an effect can be obtained" (MCSS, 1989, p. 87), and this objective is to be met within the state's ability and/or willingness to finance the project.

The notion of cost-effectiveness is entrenched more strongly than community economic development in the Better Beginnings document. The principle behind benefit-cost analysis states that "... the benefits derived by an undertaking should exceed the costs incurred in its implementation" (Morris and Ozawa, 1978, p. 272). For example, we can estimate how much money can be saved for the social assistance system due to retraining programs. But how can a dollar value be put on programs put in place to improve the quality of life of community residents? To try and quantify elements that cannot be quantified is problematic. A "cost-efficiency" program would look at the most

economical way of accomplishing something. A "cost-effectiveness" approach, such as promoted by the Better Beginnings, Better Futures model, seeks to find the "best" way to accomplish something with limited resources (Morris and Ozawa, 1978). The research component of the model mentions that cost analysis needs to be incorporated into any evaluation of program effectiveness and be subjected to certain limitations.

The cost of the program must be reasonable and within the budget constraints of the demonstration project (1989, p. 91).

Such a statement limits the project to whatever resources are made available, and finding the "best" way to accomplish something becomes the responsibility of the community.

Another major objective for the ministry is that this project can be replicated in other low income communities in Ontario. Two components are attached to this:

- o **Prevalence.** The program must address a problem that is experienced in communities throughout the province.
- o **Resource availability.** The program can be implemented in a variety of communities, therefore relying on resources readily available on a province-wide basis (MCSS, 1989, p. 92).

However, if the project is ill-financed from the start, the potential for positive effects is tremendously reduced. Later, in the analysis of the project's implementation I come back to this point.

In summary, the Better Beginnings, Better Futures research demonstration project contains the essential elements pertinent to successful community participation. It is a model which aims at building strong communities through the processes of community development and community participation. Through these processes, the project aims at reducing social isolation for communities, at enlarging their support networks, at developing confidence among participants by providing them with information and promoting exchanges between networks in the community (MCSS, 1989). The reader may note once again that the elements pertaining to community economic development are not included. Nevertheless, with a solid model in hand, the state was prepared to test this new approach. We will now turn to the guidelines and principles which guided this project.

## **5.2 DOCUMENT TWO:**

### **REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS: RESEARCH SITES (1990)**

#### **A) DESCRIPTION**

The document Request for Proposals: Research Sites, published in March of 1990, is the document that lays out the ground rules for establishing Better Beginnings, Better Futures projects. Under the Peterson Liberal government (1985-1990), three ministries took part in developing the guidelines: the Ministry of Community and Social Services (Charles Beer, Minister), the Ministry of Education (Sean Conway, Minister) and the Ministry of Health (Elinor Caplan, Minister).

Because primary prevention would have implications not only for children's services and policies at MCSS, but also for health and education, the three ministries coalesced on this project.

The guidelines emphasize that the Better Beginnings, Better Futures document is the document which must be considered in order to mount a successful project proposal:

This document reviews the literature, describes the characteristics of successful programs, outlines the limits of knowledge and presents the Integrated Model of Primary Prevention in more detail than could be included in the Request for Proposals. It is unlikely that a neighbourhood or community could be selected to be a Research Site without the rough knowledge of this publication (Request for Proposals, 1990, p. 11).

These three ministries had adopted the philosophy and principles that supported the Better Beginnings, Better Futures model and urged interested applicants to adhere to the model. This point is made very clearly in the guidelines provided for potential applicants. These state that the purpose of the project is a

Tri-Ministry 25 year longitudinal research demonstration project to provide information on the effectiveness of primary prevention as a policy for children, as demonstrated by the Integrated Model of Primary Prevention (Request for Proposals, 1990, p.1).

In addition to reiterating and endorsing the goals and principles of the Better Beginnings, Better Futures model, the guidelines also present the state's proposed commitment in terms of budget and timeliness. The tri-ministry alliance will contribute up to \$3.2 M per year for five years to the program. MCSS will continue to contribute \$1.8 M per year to conduct longitudinal research until the children reach their mid-twenties. The research questions for the project are:

- o Is the prevention model effective?
- o Is the research model affordable?
- o What is the structure and processes [sic] of the prevention model?  
(Request for Proposals, 1990, p. 2).

The three ministries also included policy questions:

Can the prevention model reduce need for child welfare, children's mental health services, youth services, welfare correctional services and school services?

Can the prevention model break the cycle of poverty? (Request for Proposals, 1990, p.2)

These policy questions relate to the social development objectives of the three ministries.

As well, the Request for Proposals guidelines provide a timeline for potential applicants: seven months. Within these timeliness, there were four Proposer's Conferences across the province: London, Toronto, Kingston and Sault Ste. Marie. The object of these conferences was to provide an information forum for proposing groups to meet with the provincial Better Beginnings, Better Futures project personnel in order to discuss the model. However, it was not made mandatory to attend one of these conferences to submit a proposal.

Every group interested in a Better Beginnings, Better Futures project was required to send an initial application by April 6, 1990, to verify that it met the initial qualifications. The criteria to be met were that:

- o the community/neighbourhood is very economically disadvantaged;
- o the children in that community/neighbourhood are at high risk of developing emotional, behavioral, social, physical and cognitive problems;
- o there are inter-sectoral programs/institutions prepared to integrate their services; and

- o the proposed integrated services model includes representatives of a preschool program which has been in operation for more than 12 months.

**These are minimum requirements. Only those communities with at least this minimum level of commitment to integration, located in very high risk communities should develop<sup>1</sup> a proposal for the "Better Beginnings, Better Futures" Projects. Groups or associations that fulfil these minimum requirements will be eligible for a Proposal Development Grant (Request for Proposals, 1990, p.22).**

The Proposal Development Grant in the amount of \$5000 was awarded to each group selected through the initial process of application. The final proposal for a project was due by July 13, 1990. During the period of August 1-10, 1990, provincial project staff members were to make site visits in order to discuss the proposals. The research sites were to be announced in September, 1990.

The Request for Proposals (1990) document also provides a series of appendices serving as guidelines for applicants on the various components required for the proposal.

These are:

- o Initial application
- o Application guidelines
- o Proposal evaluation form
- o Risk indicators
- o Budget guidelines
- o Workplan guidelines (pp. 21-62).

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1. The high-risk indicators for communities are in Appendix C.



These were useful tools for project applicants. These guidelines also served to explain to interested parties how the three ministries intended to work in relation to communities.

## **B) ANALYSIS**

The Request for Proposals (1990) document states that proposals must specify clearly identifiable geographic boundaries for potential project sites. In addition, it stipulates that projects must be located in communities, or neighbourhoods, which are economically disadvantaged and at high risk in terms of healthy child development, emphasizing that the "high-risk" designation applies to geographic determinants rather than to individual or familial determinants. This opens the door to the principle of universality, as enunciated in the Better Beginnings, Better Futures model, whereby everyone in the geographic community is eligible to participate in programs, whether the individuals are high-risk themselves or not.

The notion of identifying geographic boundaries appears to go contrary to the Better Beginnings, Better Futures document which emphasizes the importance of encouraging community residents to present their own definition of their community. In fact, the state targets economically disadvantaged communities and provides a set of high-risk indicators as an eligibility criterion (see Appendix C).

Once eligible, a community defines itself according to what it perceives the high risks to be for itself. These high-risk indicators provide community members with a view of their community which is based on a set of predefined criteria. This avoids defining community in terms of personal notions and develops a clear picture based on high-risk indicators. For the province, this procedure has the advantage of providing a level of consistency in the process of site selection. Even though a community defines itself by a set of criteria, there is nonetheless flexibility in the selection of the high-risk indicators that community members will consider of importance for their community. This would be the first step. A second step is that with the use of this information, community members can define their community by the priorities, needs, interests and the shared-goals that they have identified. Community values are reflected through the involvement of community members who define their community from their perspective of what is more important.

When community members engage in the process of defining their own community, they are in fact immersed in the workings of community development. The guidelines of the proposal recognize the importance of the involvement of community members.

The Better Beginnings, Better Futures Projects must initially, and throughout the duration of the program involve families and community leaders to determine local needs and desires for healthy child development (Request for Proposals, 1990, p. 9).

From the outset this recognition favours the participation of community members and is ideologically supported in the literature. Wandersman and Giamartino (1980) for instance, suggest that significant improvement in the social conditions and quality of life of residents is found when community members organize to both identify and seek solutions to their own problems. Having shared goals that are defined by community participants has led to greater success in achieving solutions. The guidelines for proposals are in line with the community development process as described in the Better Beginnings, Better Futures model.

It takes time for citizens to develop abilities in the area of participatory decision-making and the state recognizes that time needs to be allotted for this kind of community development to take place. People need first to organize themselves and determine their needs, objectives and means to attain these. The guidelines show a certain amount of flexibility, encouraging individual communities to "do it their way". The flexibility allowed in the data collection is conducive to drawing out what makes one community distinct from another.

But the guidelines also bring pressures, such as the expectation that some work had to be initiated in the community prior to its being selected as a site. This has benefits for the state in the sense that the process of community development would already be in progress and would increase the likelihood of success for a project. The drawback is that perhaps some less resourceful communities which were at high risk were not able to secure a project. Future considerations should be given to this possibility in other

community development projects. We will come back to this point in our final discussion.

Any community interested in being a project site was required to make a concomitant commitment to research. Applicants were asked to describe their commitment to research in this way:

Research is fundamental to the Better Beginnings, Better Futures Project. Only organizations and communities that are thoroughly supportive of research will be selected as Research Sites. One way to demonstrate this commitment is for each group of stakeholders to identify the advantages of the research for them (Request for Proposals, 1990, p. 39).

Not only were the stakeholders required to commit to research, but they had to be precisely identified: the program director of Better Beginnings, the program staff, the program participants and community leaders. The main stakeholders were required to engage in collaborative relationships among themselves and with the researchers. The document goes on to state:

There have been too many instances where otherwise good research failed because it was rejected by one group of stakeholders. For the research of the demonstration project to be effective, all stakeholders must be committed to implementing a good program and a good evaluation (Request for Proposals, 1990, p. 13).

Stakeholders need to integrate their energy in such a way that they will build community together, as opposed to competing for a piece of the pie. The state oversees the research project across the many sites and comparison communities, concerning itself with the various methodological issues to be considered. A collaborative model of research is based upon the ideal that members of the community understand and accept research as an essential component of the project. This allows the state to reach its social development objective of improving human welfare. The way to achieve this objective is by emphasising the three values identified in the conceptual framework: equality, cooperation, and collectivity. The state makes policies which will determine how social development will evolve. These policies demonstrate the kinds of participation activities that will be possible. The state seeks to establish a relationship of collaboration with the community for the good of the collectivity by attempting to create an atmosphere based on equality and collaboration. The guidelines are a mean to achieve this social development objective. The guidelines also have the advantage of being clear. As has been pointed out in the conceptual framework, the state and the community need to agree on a common agenda (Albert, 1992). Such demands from the guidelines forced community residents to try and find ways to solve their differences before being granted approval for a project.

The Request for Proposals document also specifies that MCSS is responsible for coordinating the funding on behalf of the three ministries, with local project sites reporting directly to the designated personnel from that ministry.

The terms and conditions of approved projects will be based on a written agreement, between the Ministry of Community and Social Services and the organization selected by the local Better Beginnings Association to establish legal responsibility for use of public funds" (Request for Proposals, 1990, p. 16).

As Ng points out, the state wants to have the public funds accounted for:

The major concern of the state, in making funds available to community groups, is that the funds are administered properly (*i.e.*, in ways which accord with the project proposal and guidelines of the particular funding program) and that there is no mismanagement of funds by the project (Ng, 1990, p. 170).

According to the MCSS document, each site needs a corporate sponsor in the community who would be prepared to assume accountability for the budget and the project. The guidelines stipulate that legal recognition would only be given to an incorporated body, *i.e.*, an agency with an administrative board. In this sense, the state imposed its bureaucratic conditions of functioning on those communities wishing to participate and secure funding. To date, the province of Ontario has not been willing to recognize a non-incorporated group of community people as a legitimate body accountable for the spending of public funds. Instead, legitimacy is found in legal and bureaucratic procedures, which include standardized bookkeeping procedures, administrative and annual reporting, and auditing. These are "inflexible procedures" found in the guidelines which are non-negotiable. MCSS states that:

The information assures the ministry that funds provided have been appropriately expended and properly recorded in the project's books of account. Certification

of the report's correctness and validity is made by the project and verified by the project's auditors (Request for Proposals, 1990, p. 17).

Is there a contradiction in the state making the significant involvement of families and community leaders so central and yet insisting that the groups have a corporate sponsor to lend them credibility? The guidelines are there to set the terms of reference, one of which is who is accountable to whom. A corporate sponsor is a body which is mandated to carry specific functions and is accountable for carrying them out. Accountability becomes important because the state is accountable to the public in the allocation of public funds. What could be the alternative for this situation? Perhaps that community groups could become incorporated themselves. But in the meantime, to be recognized as credible, all potential project sites needed to be endorsed by an incorporated body. I will address this question in more detail in the discussion chapter.

In summary, the Better Beginnings, Better Futures model is supported by the Request for Proposals (1990) guidelines. The major focus of the model remains geared toward community involvement which means the participation of community members. Communities will define themselves by identifying their needs and interests but must demonstrate high risk. The state makes a commitment to the selected sites to finance the project for five years. In the first year, funding will be provided to every site so that programs and activities can be developed. Then the activities for each site will be funded for four continuous years, which will allow the state to test the model. There is no

commitment on the part of the funder, that if the projects are successful, there would be potential funding beyond the five year obligation. The proposal guidelines clearly state that:

There is no assurance that program funding will continue after the initial five years (Request for Proposals, 1990, p.14).

The only assured funding committed is the \$1.8 M for the research longitudinal follow-up. This leaves the responsibility of securing longer term funding with community activists and community members.

In addition to funding limits, there are also restrictions on how the funds allocated to a Better Beginnings project can be used and they have repercussions for community economic development. For instance, the funds cannot be used to fund a new preschool, a new Junior Kindergarten, or a day care, but funds can be used to add needed program components such as breakfast and recreational programs or mothers' support groups. Specifically, funds must focus on activities and programs directly related to the Better Beginnings, Better Futures project and not be used for activities of organizations outside Better Beginnings, Better Futures, even if these organizations are involved with Better Beginnings, Better Futures. These restrictions limit the possibilities for community economic growth to take place through the direct use of Better Beginnings, Better Futures funding.



Nevertheless, the guidelines remain faithful to the generic model of Better Beginnings, Better Futures. By being very specific, the guidelines should be helpful for communities interested in being selected as a project site.

### 5.3 DOCUMENT THREE:

#### PROPOSAL FOR RESEARCH SITE (1990)

##### A) DESCRIPTION

We will now turn to the document prepared by the Sudbury Better Beginnings, Better Futures Association, Proposal for Research Site, July 13, 1990. This proposal, inspired by the Better Beginnings, Better Futures model, was prepared by the Sudbury Better Beginnings, Better Futures Association members in collaboration with community people and agency members of Sudbury. The proposal followed the guidelines as stipulated in the Request for Proposal (1990) document and has benefited from the \$5000 Proposal Development Grant.

The Proposal for Research Site manuscript is a hefty document written collaboratively by Sudbury Association members and reviewed by several associated agencies and organizations from the community. The twelve chapters of the document detail the philosophy, objectives, needs and desires, the proposed structure, parent and community involvement, coordination, personnel and research issues and provide a budget and workplan for the project. In addition, appendices include letters of support from community organizations, letters of integration from ten local agencies and organizations, samples of community consultation questionnaires that were used for

conducting a needs assessment and other relevant information used in developing the Sudbury Proposal for Research Site.

In its opening statement, the Sudbury Better Beginnings, Better Futures Association expresses the idea that its work is aimed not only at benefiting children of pre-school and primary ages but extends beyond that:

The work also aims to benefit the next growth of children who grow up in these neighbourhoods because of the community development interaction approach to expanding integrated prevention services (Sudbury Better Beginnings, Better Futures, Proposal for Research Site, 1990, no page number).

The Sudbury Association emphasizes the community development aspect of the Better Beginnings, Better Futures model, which is what makes the project attractive to Association members. They adhere to the philosophy that a community development approach will provide longer term generational benefits for the whole community.

The Sudbury Association made clear from the beginning that it was promoting a community development process that was compatible with the goals of the Better Beginnings, Better Futures model of prevention and that it had experience in community development.

Our collective community development experience in Sudbury adds up to over 75 years. The Sudbury Association is thus made up of experienced partners from

educational, native, low income, children's mental health, housing and criminal justice constituencies (Proposal for Research Site, 1990, no page number).

The proposal goes on to state:

Our project from its beginning has used the most recent Ministry's philosophy of service delivery. We have adopted the generic service model of integration which looks horizontally rather than vertically at services given to consumers. Consumer based service delivery in the neighbourhood is an integral part of our Association and we continue to base our program design on the WELL side of the WELL - ILL continuum. In assisting consumers, especially children, to stay in the no risk - low risk side of the spectrum, delivering services horizontally and truly integrating service providers with Better Beginnings, Better Futures, we envision our proposal as most capable of meeting the goals of Better Beginnings, Better Futures (Proposal for Research Site, 1990, no page number).

The Association also stated that it would focus on the expansion of integrated prevention services that will continue after 1995 by providing social and emotional support to children and their parents. To this end, the Association established the following nine principles of Social and Emotional Support:

1. Wish for collective concern to meet the needs of all children in a community.
2. Recognizing the health of children depends on the health of families, schools, the physical environment and community services.
3. Starting and staying with strengths and concerns of those who live, work and play in the neighbourhoods.
4. Building strong partnerships among those who live, play, work, and serve in the neighbourhoods.

5. Designing partnerships to include "holding out our hands, learning from each other and walking together"; or in other words, sharing decisions, tasks and accountability as well as joys and sorrows.
6. Caring for ourselves and our partners, especially during times of change and stress.
7. Learning and sharing that the process of expanding integrated prevention services through community development is the primary source of change, not the services themselves.
8. Expanding the services and ideas that are known to better prepare children for their futures.
9. Committing to active participation in research to understand processes of change and impact of services. (Proposal for Research Site, 1990, no page numbers).

These nine principles carry the theme of a community development strategy which promotes a bottom-up approach to the process of change in order to achieve goals. Not only do these principles seem to identify clearly to MCSS what the goals of the Sudbury Association are, but they also serve as guidelines to Sudbury Association members in working together in a community development process. Community development has consistently been at the forefront of the Sudbury Better Beginnings project.

When discussing its approach to service provision, the Sudbury Association emphasizes its use of the "... processes of community locality development which builds on the desires and the strengths of those persons who live and work in the neighbourhood" (Proposal for Research Site, 1990, no page numbers). It also

emphasizes the process of community development already elaborated and tested in Sudbury. The integrated prevention model will:

... build on proven experience and research, that prevention efforts must go beyond fragmented services for specific needs of individual children to comprehensive, integrated services of the basic and complex needs of all Community and Social Services (Proposal for Research Site, 1990, no page numbers).

The Sudbury Association endorsed the three goals set by the provincial ministries (refer to document one), but added a fourth goal appropriate to the community in Sudbury. This fourth goal was stated as follows:

To ensure that the program reflects the culture and language of french, native and english participants and respects the multicultural diversity of the community. (Proposal for Research Site, 1990, no page numbers).

This goal implies that programs and services would need to be culturally and linguistically appropriate to francophone and native communities in order to increase the representation and participation of these groups in the community development project. In addition, the Sudbury Association stated that, "We are also committed to an ecological model which would give to the community members (especially parents and community organizations) a key role in achieving a mutual understanding defining common actions in the decision making process. Therefore, objectives will reflect the needs and desires that the individuals see, as important in a specific context" (Proposal

for Research Site, 1990, no page numbers). Not only were the Sudbury Association's project proposal goals and objectives clearly defined and quite compatible with the Ministry's philosophy of program and service delivery, but adding a fourth objective appropriate to their community allowed the Association to define itself in a way which is compatible with the objective of the state. Furthermore, the Sudbury community was putting emphasis on the notions of collaboration and harmony by first applying these principles to themselves to assert that objectives of the project would be achieved only if they were to serve all people of the community.

## **B) ANALYSIS**

Sudbury Association members selected the specific neighbourhoods of the Donovan and Flour Mills area as the geographic location for the project. Association members had reviewed the census tracts data from various areas in the region of Sudbury before deciding on this location. They report the following:

From one-fifth to one-third of the nearly 2,000 children under age 10 years old, who live in a northwest central (the Flour Mill/Le Moulin à Fleur and Donovan neighbourhoods) of the City of Sudbury are cared for by families and others who struggle with the stresses of low income, lonely parenthood and minimal child care help, dense and noisy housing, the highest crime rates in the region, and a paucity of well-paid jobs. For example, over 1,000 children lived in families receiving social assistance (Duff, 1990; Novosedlik, 1990). Although many of these children are well cared for at home and at one of the seven elementary schools in the area, as a group the children live in an area that on numerous indicators is "high risk" or "disadvantaged". According to the Better Beginnings, Better Futures 1989 review of the literature, these children then are more vulnerable to future problems and unhappiness. Already, in several of the

elementary schools nearly one-third of the students fall below accepted standards of basic reading and writing achievement by Grade 4, and nearly one-fourth of the students have failed once by grade 8. In addition, the rate of teenage pregnancy is the highest in the region (Proposal for Research Site, 1990, no page numbers).

Census data allowed the Sudbury Association to identify the "high risk" area in which to concentrate, meeting the requirements stipulated in the guidelines from the state.

Census information also made the Association aware of the following facts about its community:

In 1989-1990, 1,473 children went to the seven elementary schools located in the neighbourhood. Thirty-eight percent (38%) of parents report French as their mother tongue, forty-eight percent (48%) as English, and the remaining fourteen percent (14%) as other. Hence, our integrated prevention program must be designed with this range in culture and language (Proposal for Research Site, 1990, no page numbers).

Census information was very useful to the Sudbury Association because it had identified, through a vigorous process, the true demographic composition of the geographical area of its community, the problems it faced, and its social and cultural ethos. But this information would only provide an incomplete picture of the Sudbury community.

The Better Beginnings, Better Futures model and proposal guidelines allowed communities to define themselves as per their perceived needs and desires. For this to occur, the Sudbury Association engaged in an extensive process of community



consultation and collaboration with all members living and working in the neighbourhood. This consultation process included a range of participants - children, adults, service providers and key community leaders right up to researchers, managers of agencies, and civil leaders living in the neighbourhood.

In order to encourage participation, Association members used the "snowball" technique of interviewing. Through this technique Association members would speak with people that they knew in the neighbourhood, asking how life could be better for them in their neighbourhood. Members would ask these people for names of other people in the neighbourhood who could be interviewed. The main objective of this interviewing technique was to create a vision of community. People were therefore made to participate in the project by contributing ideas. In all, 364 community consultations with individuals were completed (155 children; 147 parents; and 62 professionals and community leaders). The process of change at the community level was underway with this bottom-up approach to community development. The Sudbury Association Proposal states that interviews were conducted with the following objectives in mind:

To discover the specific strengths, supports, names of existing and neighbourhood leaders, desires, needs and dreams of people who live and worked in the community. We also explored what the current programs were, what was missing and what was needed for the future. One area of particular interest was identification of cultural strengths of the native and francophone communities, their services, gaps and desires (Proposal for Research Site, 1990, no page numbers).

As a result, four strong themes emerged from this community consultation process:

1. Parents want good education for the children now and in the future. In particular, they identified a need to fund post-secondary education.
2. Parents, children, and community leaders all wanted both safer and supervised places for play.
3. They also want a neighbourhood community centre which would include space to meet, talk, learn, and play for both children and adults.
4. The native and francophone communities also identified the need for cultural activities to ensure identity and safety of personhood. (Proposal for Research Site, 1990, no page numbers).

These were the four major needs and desires expressed by community members, through the community consultation process.

As can be seen, the process of community development was well underway in the Sudbury community as Association members were writing the proposal. The Association used a bottom-up approach which allowed direct representation from each cultural group in the community. This notion, based on the locality development approach of community organization, would allow for community change to be sustained and pursued through the participation of people (Rothman, 1987).

However, participation alone is not sufficient. A strong community development project needs sufficient funding and resources. Proper staffing and a proper budget are necessary. The Association suggested the following operating parameters:

The full-time paid staff will include the Program Director, four Community Animators (one for the native community, one for the francophone, one for the low-income/public housing and one for the anglophone/allophone communities), one Support Staff and an Early Childhood Educator. It is hoped and desired that staff will live in or move into the neighbourhood, accept the principles and goals of the Association, and have qualifications congruent with job expectations. Honorariums and paid expenses will be used to ensure persons of low income can participate regularly in the Association. Included in our budget and plans are the necessary resources to ensure proper compensation for the representatives from:

- a) Low income, neighbourhood representatives ... (and) ...
- b) Community grass roots organizations, ...

In addition, persons (students, volunteers, professionals, parents) who are able and willing to work on specific tasks with staff and representatives will be welcomed and supported... Finally, many of the personnel working with the projects will be persons living in the community who give of their time voluntarily or for an honorarium to assist them with child care and travel expenses, etc. As well, students from the two post-secondary institutions in the community will be available for long term placements. A mentorship process is already available. In this process persons who have been active in the Association will personally assist persons new to the Better Beginnings, Better Future project in learning the goals, ideals and objectives of the project. We envision the mentoring process to be ongoing for the first six month period of a person's association with Better Beginnings, Better Futures (Proposal for Research Site, 1990, no page numbers).

These parameters are reflective of a locality development approach which combines community assets with the resources of the state. The funding from MCSS would allow the hiring of staff which would provide some stability to the project. The locality

development approach ensured the hiring of staff living in the area and committed to the principles of the Better Beginnings model.

A community project also needs the participation of volunteers. Allowances need to be made to meet the needs of low income people so as to encourage their participation. Too frequently the lack of child care facilities and services or insufficient funds for travel expenses become detrimental to participation. Participation was facilitated through the use of honorariums which provide funds for transportation and child care so that people can attend meetings and events. Adequate support and funding are always a key factor when trying to assess any project's ability to meet its goals.

In addition to being committed to a community development process, the Sudbury Better Beginnings Association was also committed to research. The Association asked Laurentian University for assistance and continued its process of involving community members in actively participating in learning through conducting various research activities. For example, the recording of observations, ideas, and decisions in a logbook had already been undertaken before the project proposal was submitted. Data had been accumulated and some of it would be presented to Association members in the form of reports, providing them with the opportunity for feedback and input into the interpretation of these results. This whole process both demystified the research process and gave community participants opportunities to participate in research. Furthermore, as peoples' skills developed in research, the level of participation rose in that area.

Therefore, the input of participants became a valuable tool and contributed to the Association. Learning together, discussing options and reflecting upon them provided community participants with collective learning that led them to make choices. Through this process, participants became empowered because they learned together, realized that their knowledge could be recreated into new understanding and that learning is a collective effort. This learning reflective process encourages the learners to define what they need to learn and what is relevant to them. It is the process of adult education.

The Proposal for Research Site, (1990), is the model that has been developed by the Sudbury Association of Better Beginnings, Better Futures. It is inspired from the provincial model of Better Beginnings, Better Futures and by the proposal guidelines developed by MCSS. Once accepted by MCSS, it became the model applied in Sudbury.

#### **5.4 REFLECTION ON THE THREE DOCUMENTS**

The three major theoretical documents pertinent to this research have been reviewed in light of the basic six concepts that have been developed in the conceptual framework: community, community development, community organization, social development, adult education and community economic development. The focal point of the analysis has been the principles that apply to the concept of community participation. Following the analysis of these three documents, there are some important

issues that need to be discussed, since they have an impact on both the MCSS and the Sudbury Association models of Better Beginnings.

The first issue revolves around defining community. Although the provincial model calls for the involvement of community members in defining their community, this involvement is restricted to the criteria identifying a high-risk community or neighbourhood, which is economically disadvantaged. This raises an important question as to whether these high risk criteria undermine the community development process. This concern can be looked at in two ways. First, it helps the state in its capacity as a funder to focus on economically disadvantaged communities, which it clearly established as a priority. This focus serves to weed out those communities from others which are better organized and more resourceful. Second, the high risk criteria do in fact help communities discuss various characteristics which are specific to them and consequently communities such as Sudbury are better able to identify which geographical areas would benefit more from a Better Beginnings project. What needs to be stressed is that within the process of identifying the community's needs and desires, community residents are still faced with having to make choices of which high risk indicators are considered more important to work on. Thus, community members develop their own perception of their community and assess what the priorities will be before engaging in community work.

Focusing on high-risk indicators to target communities eligible to apply for a Better Beginnings project is not a perfect approach. The disadvantage of such an

approach is that communities which are economically disadvantaged and poor in resources, including the ability to organize themselves, are simply eliminated because of an ineptitude to participate. The use of high-risk indicators has a selective effect which is positive in that it targets economically disadvantaged communities but also negative in that it might just pass over the poorest of the economically disadvantaged communities. Nevertheless, the positive aspect should be considered meaningful for the following reasons. High-risk indicators can serve to enhance the community development process by helping communities to focus more accurately on their real needs. As well, a community development process needs to be sustained by community members. A community which does not have the ability to organize itself may benefit from a different type of intervention until it becomes ready and willing to engage in a community development process.

This brings up another important point that relates to the selection criteria for a Better Beginnings project. MCSS expected community development work to be done in communities prior to getting a Better Beginnings project. That way, MCSS could better assess the potential of success for a Better Beginnings project. Even though this again favours more resourceful economically advantaged communities, it nevertheless increases the chances of success for community development work.

The MCSS model puts heavy emphasis on the participation of community people. The involvement of community members in the design and implementation of programs

plus their participation in these, is frequently highlighted. By comparison, the Sudbury Association model stresses participation in the community development process, rather than programs. An objective of the Sudbury Association was to make MCSS cognizant of the fact that people already participate in their communities in a variety of ways. This is why their definition of community would include the locality aspect of "... where people live, work and play" and the process of community development also includes the various relationships which people already have: relationships between people and between people and organizations. These relationships are of economic, political, social and cultural nature and make up the "process" of community development. The idea of process is important since, as we will see later, the Sudbury Association wanted to include that element in their contract negotiations with MCSS.

The Sudbury Association put the process of community development at the forefront of their model, while MCSS puts heavier emphasis on the development of prevention programs. But both models promote a horizontal approach to community development in which the participation of community members is necessary.



## **5.5 A DESCRIPTION OF HOW THE PROVINCIAL AND SUDBURY BETTER BEGINNINGS, BETTER FUTURES MODELS FIT ARNSTEIN'S AND BREGHA'S MODELS OF CITIZEN PARTICIPATION**

In order to gain a better appreciation of the similarities between the MCSS and the Sudbury Association models of Better Beginnings, Better Futures, I will now present a description of how both Better Beginnings models fit Arnstein's (1969) and Bregha's (1973) models of citizen participation. Arnstein's model serves to illustrate the degree of true participation that the Better Beginnings models can achieve and Bregha's model gives us an appreciation and an understanding of the relationship between MCSS and the Sudbury group.

### **A) ARNSTEIN'S MODEL**

Arnstein (1969) introduced three general categories in her "Ladder of participation" which is based on the degrees of power (or powerlessness) that participants have. She asserts that participation without legitimate function or power is not true participation. A scrutiny of the Better Beginnings, Better Futures model reveals that it goes beyond the categories of non-participation and degrees of tokenism. The model is within the realm of true participation, what Arnstein refers to as degrees of citizen power.

By centering on community prevention, the Better Beginnings, Better Futures model avoids the non-participation category because it distances itself from an individual clinical approach. What is targeted are the social factors contributing to people's problems such as poverty and what constitutes a "high risk" community. Prevention strategies investigate the roots of what constitutes people's misfortunes and frequently these are found in social structures rather than individual shortcomings. Focusing on children is desirable because it is an aspect that parents can easily relate to.

Informing citizens is the first step towards power because it introduces knowledge. MCSS representatives provided information to various communities through a series of forums across the province. The information provided through these forums on the Better Beginnings model was not unidirectional, as MCSS personnel sought the participation of citizens. Creating opportunities for a consultation process allowed for feedback from citizens across the province on the feasibility of the proposed model. This was a means for the state to gauge how the Better Beginnings model was perceived by various communities.

Informing and consulting citizens are considered degrees of tokenism in Arnstein's model but, if sustained and if citizens feel that their contribution is worth something to their benefit, it can lead to true participation. In other words, it can lead to a partnership.

The notion of partnership contains real degrees of citizen power and is a strong theme found in the Better Beginnings, Better Futures model. Partnership includes a more equitable redistribution of power in the process of negotiation, where ground rules are clearly established. The process of negotiation that took place between citizens and MCSS representatives centered around the kinds of programs and activities that were possible for the project. Faithful to the spirit of the model, rather than having surveys done for them and controlled by power holders, communities were engaged in doing their own assessment of their community.

In addition to partnership Arnstein's model identifies two more degrees of citizen power: delegated power and citizen control. The Sudbury Association reached a certain level of delegated powers but mainly in the form of decision-making authority over hiring staff and deciding on program activities. Because of the way in which the provincial bureaucracy is organized, the Sudbury Association was not directly accountable to the funding body. MCSS, as a department of government, could only recognize an incorporated organization with respect to accountability. The Sudbury Association sought the support of the N'Swakamok Friendship Centre which became the sponsor for the project.

Because of its status as a sponsor, the Friendship Centre had to assume responsibilities such as supervising the coordinator for the Better Beginnings project and having Board members sitting on hiring committees. On one occasion N'Swakamok

Board officials needed to be involved in the dismissal of one staff member of Better Beginnings. This was an awkward situation since N'Swakamok Board members were not involved in the day to day operations of Better Beginnings. But because an official line of authority had been established through the medium of a sponsor, they had to assume that responsibility. This incident had repercussions on the community, which wondered why someone from another organization needed to be involved in something that really concerned people directly associated with Better Beginnings' activities.

But the imposition of an intermediary structure acting as sponsor can have considerable advantages for a project such as Better Beginnings. An organization such as N'Swakamok already had the infrastructure to deal with accountability procedures such as financial reports and other administrative concerns. Selecting N'Swakamok as a sponsor was also beneficial to the Sudbury Association because the Board members and its administrative staff were well grounded in community development. However, from the point of view of Arnstein's model, any go-between structure negates delegated powers and citizen control as forms of true participation. Although the N'Swakamok Native Friendship Centre never interfered with the Better Beginnings, Better Futures project in a negative way, the fact that an intermediary structure was put in place could have been a factor for potential problems. It could be problematic in certain communities, strongly oriented towards a curative approach, where community development advocates would not be able to get the endorsement of an incorporated organization. Without delegated authority and citizen control, the local community group

would have more difficulty to make its own managerial and policy decisions and independently negotiate these with the funder. One solution would be for an Association such as the Sudbury Better Beginnings, Better Futures to become an incorporated organization. This might be a long term objective of the Association but was not feasible at the beginning stages.

Arnstein's model serves to illustrate that the Sudbury Association and the Ministry of Community and Social Services succeeded in entering into a partnership which contains elements of true participation. There is congruence between the state and local community document. Once the proposal for the project had been accepted, it was not subjected to unilateral change from the funder. Both parties could negotiate the terms of the contractual agreement in an atmosphere in which the state had not retained too much control, where dialogue was possible, and where Association members could take more ownership in decision-making and in implementing the program and activities of the project.

## **B) BREGHA'S MODEL**

Bregha asserts that decisions are made with the help of a model. His model of citizen participation presents a continuum of progressively increasing involvement in the steps of information-feedback, consultation, joint planning and delegated authority. Bregha's model is not a model that the provincial nor the Sudbury models of Better

Beginnings have consciously used. Although his model has been prepared for the Community Development Branch: Community Services Division of the Ministry of Community and Social Services of Ontario in 1973, there is absolutely no mention of this model in all the documentation I have come across in the literature relevant to Better Beginnings, Better Futures. Nevertheless, the use of this model is practical since it specifically discusses the relationship between the government of Ontario and the citizens of the province who engage in a citizen participation process.

The information provided by state officials to community residents about prevention was based on a solid model, the Better Beginnings, Better Futures model. It was not fragmented information that people received but a complete model containing elements of how the state perceived community involvement. A serious effort had been made by the state to gather previous knowledge from the literature on prevention, including other elements on community development, community participation and on how to involve communities in research. This provided, to interested communities, a solid foundation on which to build.

Through the action research technique, community residents provided feedback to MCSS representatives by doing their own needs assessment. Bregha argues that the action research method is conducive to more meaningful feedback from community people because they are involved more deeply in defining a problem and discussing the feasibility of different options for its solutions.

However, Bregha cautions that there is a time lag between information gathering and feedback. People need time to establish their priorities through their data gathering (needs assessment) and need time to determine what is most important. Too rigid and hasty deadlines imposed by the bureaucracy can sometimes be detrimental to community projects, especially in a context of consensus decision-making as used by the Sudbury Association. It is crucial that state authorities understand the benefits that the consensus approach has for a community.

In the consultation phase, government representatives met with citizens in a planned and structured way. This was done by means of community forums and site visits by MCSS personnel. Bregha identifies two steps in a consultation process. The first is that both parties should achieve agreement on the process itself. Objectives should be clarified and mutually beneficial to both. In part, this is what Albert (1992) refers to as reaching a common agenda. The second step is to develop a healthy attitude towards each other. The outcome of the preliminary negotiations (information-feedback) disposes people's attitudes about wanting to enter into a partnership. The state did not adopt an attitude of "take it or leave it" and so could benefit from the process of consultation. Receiving proposals from many communities across the province that had defined themselves and identified problems from their own perspectives provided a wealth of information.

The consultation process was conducive to creating an atmosphere of openness for discussion. Sudbury participants could recognize some of the influences of their contributions and their contributions were recognized by MCSS representatives. They were told in simple terms that they were ahead of many other sites in many areas of programs and community development. The local Better Beginnings Association and MCSS engaged in joint planning which is the third step of Bregha's model. The idea behind joint planning is that state officials and community participants assume essentially equal roles and responsibilities in the problem solving process. The input of citizens is sought in the belief that they have the ability to articulate clearly the needs, aspirations and potential reactions of their community. Combined with the resources of the state, the contributions of the community participants could enhance the quality of the project for the Sudbury community. Each group could identify its resources and its limitations. Such identification allowed each party to identify the elements it possessed upon entering into a partnership. This process needed to be done in a spirit of compromise and collaboration. The fact that the project was developed around the guidelines of Better Beginnings, Better Futures contributed greatly to a spirit of collaboration because both the state and community participants believed strongly in the model.

Delegated authority is the final step of Bregha's model on his continuum of participatory techniques and it is identified as the point at which the government transfers some of its authority and responsibilities to a group of citizens. Some points pertaining to delegated powers have been addressed earlier with the use of Arnstein's model. What



Bregha addresses with his model are concerns of those who oppose delegated authority, such as unhealthy dependency and too-rigid accountability.

There is a fear that communities can become too dependent on state funding and resources. On the other hand, evidence shows (primarily through the example of the Community Mental Health Movement), that adequate means need to be available to communities to do effective community work. The provincial Better Beginnings, Better Futures project has guaranteed five years of funding to each site, plus a commitment towards the longitudinal research component of the project. This seems to be a sensible approach by the state for two reasons. I believe this may allow sufficient time for communities to establish the project and it allows communities to pursue other avenues such as community economic development alternatives in order to sustain some of their projects in the future. The second reason is that it gives sufficient time to the government to assess the benefits of these community projects and to evaluate if viable community alternatives can be used in the health and social services area. Unfortunately, the deficiency in the whole structure is that the state retains sole decision-making power on these matters, even if certain communities can convincingly demonstrate that a community development approach is most viable.

The issues surrounding too rigid accountability can partially be resolved at the outset when the state and the local community group can agree on how they will evaluate the project. Usually there is accountability in measuring financial and program outcomes.

Both of these can be determined by guidelines stipulated in the contract. Social outcomes are harder to measure because they deal with less tangible effects. What individuals gain through participation and what benefits the community are harder to appraise. In order to validate the importance of social outcomes, the Sudbury Better Beginnings Association made the process of community development an essential element to be included in the contract.

Nevertheless, there is another side to government which can be appalling to community groups and that is the expectations of its bureaucracy. Bureaucracies insist on the compilation of vast quantities of data in the form of reports, financial accounts and statistical compilations, in specific formats. Participants need to have a chance to discuss the need for such "red tape" and most of all to understand how significant and relevant it is to them and to the project. We should not forget that most people in community development projects volunteer their time to their community and not to the bureaucracy. Staff members are there to do community work and not to compile data for the funder. There have been many occasions where members of the Sudbury Better Beginnings project have voiced complaints about the amount of paper work required by MCSS. Understanding the logic behind certain functions can perhaps minimize the feeling of being under rigid accountability. The bureaucracy should also be prepared to be flexible and simplify things when possible, especially when community groups come up with sensible and practical suggestions. An important finding that comes out of comparing the Better Beginnings, Better Futures model with Arnstein's, is that participation regarding

Better Beginnings is high on Arnstein's ladder and contains elements of true participation. With Bregha's model, the congruence of accountability and responsibility between MCSS and the Sudbury Association are quite substantial.

I believe that the process of community participation should be evaluated jointly by the state and the local community so as to reaffirm the spirit of partnership that both have agreed to enter based on equality and mutual respect. As both parties learn more about the benefits and the limitations of development issues, an occasional exchange building towards what could be feasible after the Better Beginnings, Better Futures project, might have been something to include in the contract negotiations.

## **CHAPTER 6**

### **STRATEGIES USED BY THE SUDBURY BETTER BEGINNINGS, BETTER FUTURES ASSOCIATION TO IMPLEMENT COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION PRINCIPLES**

#### **6.0 INTRODUCTION**

Sudbury was selected as a site for a Better Beginnings, Better Futures project on January 29, 1991. On April 10, 1991, the Sudbury Association hired a Program Coordinator for the project. In July 1991, community workers and support staff were introduced to all Association members and began their work with the project.

In this chapter I present the major strategies that were developed and used by the Sudbury Association in implementing its Better Beginnings, Better Futures model. The objective is to make connections between theory and practice on the theme of community participation by investigating how effectively the Sudbury community has met the objectives enunciated in its nine principles (see Appendix D). The previous chapter has

identified the ideology that the Sudbury community holds about community participation. In this chapter, I look at the implementation strategies used by the Sudbury community to fulfil this ideology.

The major strategies reviewed are: The Four Worlds Development model of community development, the circle, the consensus decision-making model, action research and the writing of the project proposal. Each strategy is presented separately with some examples of how the Sudbury community has made use of them. After reviewing these strategies, I provide an analysis of whether or not the Sudbury Association of Better Beginnings, Better Futures was able to meet the objectives of its nine principles.

## **6.1 THE FOUR WORLDS DEVELOPMENT MODEL**

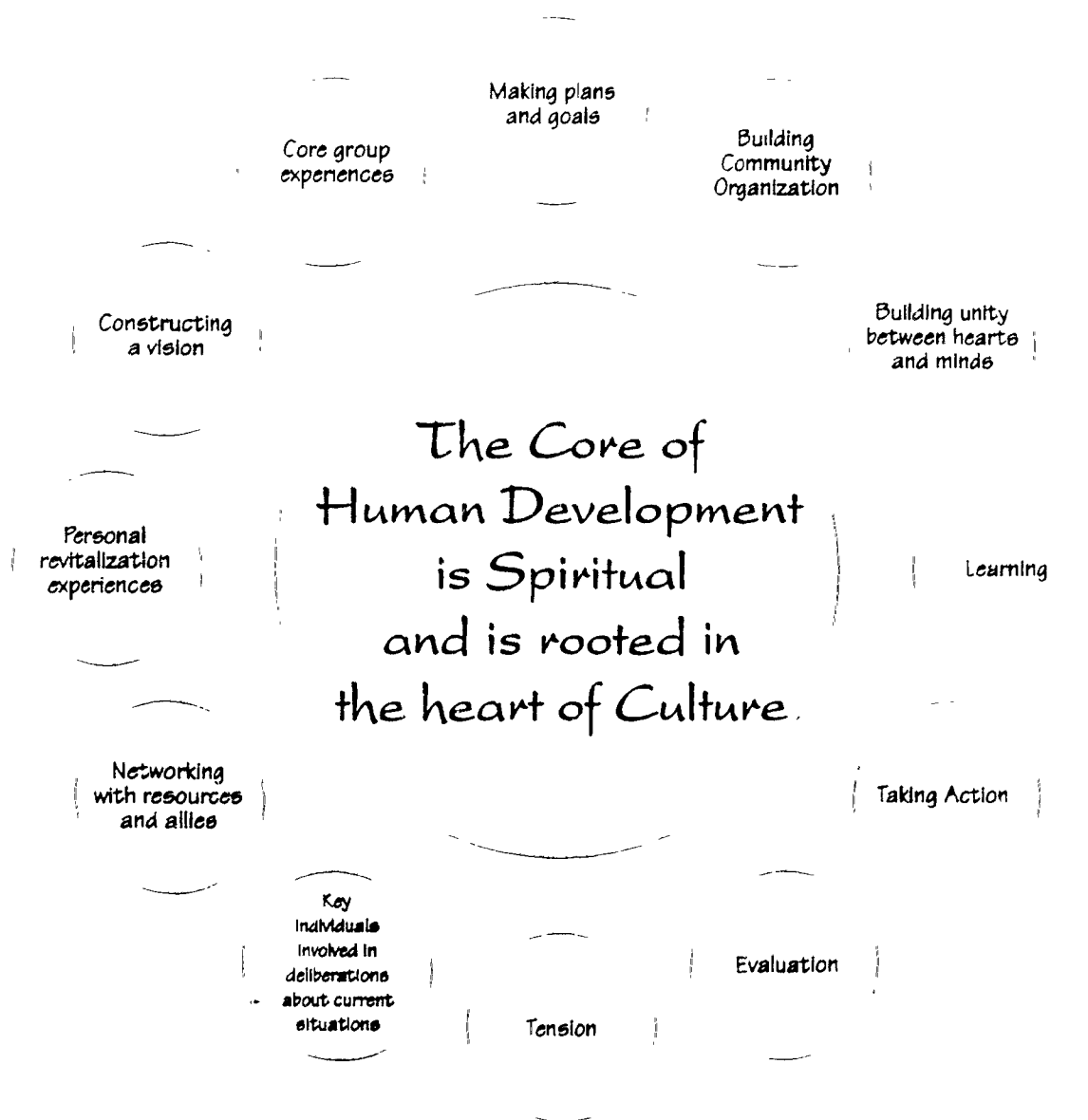
The Four Worlds Development model was used by the Sudbury Association of Better Beginnings in early Fall of 1991 to do a summary of its activities covering the period of January 20, 1991 to September 30, 1991. This summary was sent to Community Advisory Committee (CAC) of provincial MCSS as part of a six month report. At various times, Association members made use of different components of the model in order to better understand their community development process. I will now present the model and simultaneously indicate how the Sudbury Association made use of it.

The Four Worlds Development Project has developed a community development model inspired by native traditions, which is promoted through community participation and designed for small community groups. The aim of the model (see also Figure 4) is:

... that as people learn more about themselves and their community, they will want to get involved in creating new options, new patterns of personal and community dynamics, and in short, in promoting the on going process of human development in themselves and their community (Four Worlds Development Project (FWDP), 1984, p. iii).

The core of the model is represented by a large circle in the centre because "... the core of human development is spiritual, and is rooted in the heart of culture" (FWDP, 1984, p. 8). Around the core are twelve components that comprise the process of community development. They, too, are displayed in a circle. There is no particular ranking or order for any of these "... because it is possible to enter the process through any one of these doorways" (p. 8). I will now give a brief description of these twelve components.

## FOUR WORLDS DEVELOPMENT MODEL



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Discussion Paper Eight: Community Development  
The University of Lethbridge, 1984

We begin with tension. Although the point of entry for a new member can be at any stage, usually the first time people meet around an issue there is tension. Tension frequently serves as a catalyst to start a community project. When people become aware that there are deficiencies in the way things are and that things could be different, notion of change comes to mind. Change can only occur if a certain tension exists. If change is desired by a few individuals, but most of the community feels very little or no tension around a particular issue, chances are that the community will not bond together. Tension is what brings people together. Usually, the greater the tension the more people get involved.

The tension in the earlier days of the Sudbury Association centred on the lack of prevention programs for young children in the Sudbury area (Logbook, 1989). Community residents expressed their concerns by saying that children had no safe place to play. This tension provided an opportunity for small groups from local social services agencies and Laurentian University researchers to start meeting around the issue of prevention. Later, when the provincial document on prevention *Better Beginnings, Better Futures* was made public, the Sudbury Association of *Better Beginnings, Better Futures* was formed. Various consultation meetings took place between the Sudbury Association and key community members from different cultural groups, agencies and organizations in order to define the tension around "at risk" children and to gather perceived solutions to the problems identified.



The second component has to do with the involvement of key individuals in deliberations about current situations. The support of these key individuals, whether high profile or not, is very important in community organizing because they are leaders of thought and action. In order to organize effectively, a community group needs to identify these key people and find a way to engage them in the community development process.

Sudbury Association members were quite aware of the importance of engaging the community from the beginning. In the form of "Open Community Forums", community residents were invited to come and discuss ideas on child poverty and the provincial Better Beginnings, Better Futures Model of prevention. A Community Advisory Committee was also formed to inform and to gain input from key community members and support for the future proposal for a Better Beginnings project in Sudbury. The CAC included the mayor, chief of police, various managers of health and social services agencies and key leaders from diverse cultural groups. This process clarified for the state that key community leaders were involved in this community project.

Networking with resources and allies in order to get the kinds of outside support and help needed to do community development work in an on-going way is the third component of the model. The Sudbury Association did some networking with MCSS as potential funder and with various groups and organization within the community. MCSS had initiated some information sessions at various locations across the province to which

interested parties were invited with travel funds provided. MCSS representatives made site visits and kept the Sudbury group apprized as to the development of the project across the province. These contracts between MCSS representatives and Association members were cultivated within the spirit of the Better Beginnings model and an exchange of information was flowing regularly between the provincial body and the Sudbury Association.

Usually, a community development process is initiated by a small group of people and there is need for outside funding and support. Although there are many advantages to outside support such as funding, access to information and to human resources, there can also be a disadvantage in that outsiders can take over the process. It is crucial for insiders to control the use of these outside resources. What needs to be respected and remain intact is the community's own process. This means that "... ownership and control of the development process should never be given over in exchange for needed inputs" (FWDP, 1984, p. 13). A process of communication between the local group and outside resources is of crucial importance so that both parties can understand each other. The Sudbury Association worked hard at maintaining relations with the participating organizations supporting the project, with the CAC and with key leaders, including politicians, members of the clergy, and cultural group members. The Sudbury Association also sought allies in other Better Beginnings projects. Networking with outside groups in order to elicit their support has been a consistent strategy of the Sudbury Better Beginnings Association.

Nowhere is the need for participation more critically felt than in the delicate task of establishing a partnership with some agency or resource outside the community to aid the development process (FWDP, 1984, p. 14).

Learning what resources are accessible and how to use them is part of the community development process.

The fourth component of the model is the personal revitalization experiences of the participants. In other words, a successful community development process is also a personal development process for its participants. Roberts (1979) expresses it this way:

... to equate community development with the knowledge, control, and development of one's environment, without taking into account the need for self-knowledge, self-control, and self-development, is to deprive community development of an important element. The development of the community involves the development of the individuals, of their personal insights, and of their understanding of what they are (p. 37).

Through this development, participants discover new possibilities for themselves. Workshops are an effective way of enhancing various skills such as self-development, communication, coping and decision-making skills. These activities need to be planned as part of the community development process, as they could easily be overlooked.

The Sudbury Association conducted workshops. The themes of the workshops varied and were usually initiated when a particular need was identified as being important enough for participants to spend time understanding or resolving an issue. Examples of

workshop themes are: mapping out the community for the purpose of better assessing its resources; focusing on certain aspects of the Better Beginnings model; identifying the essential components for a healthy child; discussing community development; and looking at various models of decision-making (Logbook, 1990; 1991). Association members needed these types of workshops, which also focused on enhancing personal skills, so that they could better understand the objectives of Better Beginnings and reassess their commitment to the project.

Constructing a vision is the fifth component of the model. People need to form a vision of what they could become. The process of constructing and articulating a vision must include those people who will be the subject of the development process; that is, those whose well-being will be improved by it. However, visions must be in the realm of possibility. Sometimes outside resources or examples can be useful in guiding and nurturing the process of vision construction. It is a process which is always in movement because a vision is always changing, "... like an horizon renews itself and changes as one approaches it" (FWDP, 1984, p. 16).

The initial vision of Sudbury Association members was to have a Better Beginnings project which would provide programs and activities for children in their community. Periodically, at Association meetings and with other work done in the community with parent or cultural groups, participants were asked to talk about their vision. In a particular workshop dealing with vision, participants were asked what they

would like their children to look like at different stages of their lives (4, 6, 12 and 20 years of age). These moments taken for reflection kept the vision alive.

The sixth component of the model is core group experiences.

The core of a human development process is the people who by their unity of vision, their personal commitment to growth, and their leadership (often by example) form the pattern around which people cluster as positive changes take place in the community (FWDP, 1984, p. 17).

Changes usually take place in increments and are pursued by groups of people who have a special interest in the issue. These people become the core group of a community development process. In human development, everything is connected to everything else and, consequently, group members must be able to see that there is a connection between their personal concerns and the well-being of the whole community. Core groups need to educate themselves, to get inspired and to learn to dialogue with each other. This process brings about clarity of direction and serves to cluster others around the entire community development process. The core group "... dreams, decides, plans, acts, evaluates and builds an organization to formalize and sustain its efforts" (FWDP, 1984, p. 19).

The core group has been the Sudbury Association. It included people from within and outside the community. Through the working group structure of the Sudbury Association, which included weekly three hour meetings since December 1989, real involvement of key community leaders from a variety of cultural and social economic

groups, was made possible. These people were committed to the vision of the Association and believed that better beginnings would provide better futures for the children of the community.

Making plans and goals is the seventh component. Who makes the plans and who carries them out is central to the community development process. The best plans are usually developed in a collaborative process, where collaboration includes the intended beneficiaries of the programs.

Sudbury Association members worked in a collaborative process with various community groups. In formulating goals and principles it became important for Association members to make sure that cultural groups, parent groups, and representatives from school boards and local agencies be represented.

Building community organization, the eighth component of the model, refers to establishing a formal organization. Its aim is "... to sustain and continue to develop the ideals, the vision, and the objectives of the core group(s)" (FWDP, 1984, p. 19). To transfer commitment, vision, and enthusiasm from a few dedicated volunteers to an organization has definite advantages. It can prevent burnout and discouragement, and facilitate attracting support and funds for a project. This can lead to having full-time professional community organizers working on the project. It can also "... be a tangible

symbol of the process to change and a rallying point to focus human energy for change in the community" (FWDP, 1984, p. 21).

A formal organization brings stability to a process and gives it more credibility. The Sudbury Association was the formal organization responsible to carry on the objectives of the Better Beginnings, Better Futures project. It was accountable to the N'Swakamok Friendship Centre, which was the official sponsor of the project, but the Sudbury Association assumed responsibility and provided stability for the project. The Sudbury Association needed to set up the administration for the project; develop job descriptions; hire staff; provide orientation; and develop policies and procedures for operations of the organization (Logbook, 1991).

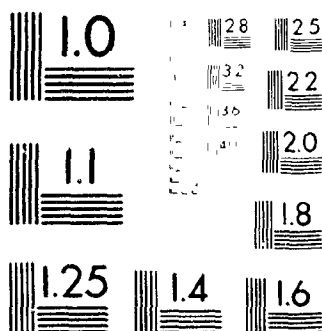
The ninth component is building unity between hearts and minds. The following quote captures the essence of the human development process.

The foundation of any successful human development process is the unity of the hearts and minds of the participants in that process. There is no community or organization that is not burdened to some degree with jealousies, and petty strife. These symptoms of disunity can be like a killing cancer to a human development process. In some communities certain families have been antagonistic toward each other for years. Sometimes there are big egos and conflicting interests to contend with.

The transcending of these differences in pursuit of a common vision is a vital aspect of community development. Facilitating this healing process is an often difficult and sensitive aspect of community development work. It is almost always helpful to look to the spiritual core of the culture for assistance in healing these hurts and removing the personal obstacles to development (FWDP, 1984, p. 21-22).

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It is not sufficient to have a project to administer. What needs to be done is to build unity among participants. In order for this to be done, issues need to be dealt with honestly. Discussing and sharing a common vision is a useful way of transcending many difficulties in this very sensitive stage of the community development process. The goal of the Sudbury Association was to become a community owned association. To do this the Sudbury Association needed to provide interesting and exciting opportunities for parents to become involved. Workshops, with leadership from different cultural groups, provided opportunities for community members to value and respect different cultures and group contributions (Logbook, 1991). Recognizing the need for separate groups to define their own agenda so they can meet together in equality has been a means by which the Sudbury Association has attempted to build unity between hearts and minds. Understanding other cultures was a medium through which participants came to transcend some of their particular issues and understand them through a broader perspective which was inclusive of others.

The community development process serves as a learning experience for participants. This is the tenth component of the model, that is, through learning people gain more knowledge about themselves and their reality. This knowledge helps them understand how their community functions in relation to the larger society. The Sudbury Association has provided on-going learning and training opportunities through group process. The aspect of learning has been a predominant one for the Sudbury Association

through sharing information, learning from others, being involved in the writing of the project proposal, and engaging in an action research strategy.

Taking action is the eleventh component. Taking action can mean sharing concerns with others or putting a full-fledged plan into operation. However, the authors of the Four World Development Model want to emphasize the following point:

Development-oriented action is intentional, purposeful action arising out of careful reflection on the circumstance of one's life or community and a commitment to transform it (1984, p. 23).

It is up to community people to decide what action to take. Depending on their starting point and degree of preparedness they may opt for small changes at intervals, or a major change.

Various strategies for action were undertaken by Sudbury Association members, but I want to emphasize that the main avenue by which they decided on a course of action was by bringing the issue back to the community for consultation and approval. This process of consultation and discussion reinforced community participation components of the Better Beginnings model.

Evaluation is the twelfth component of the model.

Evaluation is the process of finding out what the actual circumstances or conditions are that are central to the focus of a development process. Have the actions we have taken in fact met our objectives? Are our objectives still adequate in light of what we have learned through our action? (FWDP, 1984, p. 23).

The evaluation stage is a good point of entry into a community development process. It provides an opportunity for new members to become aware of the objectives of the project and to get a sense of the development process. For many members, it serves as a refresher and helps them identify which strategies worked, which did not, and why.

At various stages, Sudbury Association members conducted evaluations, some brief and some more thorough, often occurring when new members joined the Association. On-going evaluations, regular reporting and discussion of programs and objectives of the Sudbury Association were built into the community development process.

The Four Worlds Development model was introduced to Sudbury Association members by the newly hired program coordinator in the Spring of 1991. The general model, and some specific segments, were used at different intervals as strategies that helped Association members move forward on achieving their principles (see Appendix D). The Four Worlds Development model provided a framework that Sudbury

Association members could identify with. It is a model that emphasizes an equilibrium between personal development and community development and a strategy that has been useful for Sudbury Association members because it helped them focus on thoughts and action for development.

## **6.2 THE CIRCLE**

Another strategy very useful to the Sudbury Association, and inserted in its way of functioning from the start, is the use of the circle. The circle technique provides a great means of bonding for a group and its usage is borrowed from the Native traditions's Medicine Wheel.

The Medicine Wheel teaches us that the four symbolic races are all part of the same human family. All are brothers and sisters living on the same Mother Earth. (The Sacred Tree in White, 1992, p. 6).

The circle symbolizes harmony with all of creation which includes fellow human beings.

We take hold of the present, and make the future what we want it to be. Our work is to empower the people where they live, not to create another bureaucracy. We are and must always be helpers to the People. In healing ourselves, we heal our communities and our Nations. The people are the experts, they will always know what to do provided they have the context in which to do it (Elder Dr. Art Solomon, L. 1. B., D. D., in White, 1992, p. 3).

A circle allows people to sit in an equal fashion in a group. Social workers have also used the circle extensively, principally in contexts of group work and family therapy.

Meetings of the Sudbury Better Beginnings Association would usually start with "circling-in" and end with "circling-out". In circling, everyone takes a turn to speak following along the circle from the first person who chooses to begin. The point is that everyone should be able to voice concerns, opinions and feelings without interruption or response from others. "Circling-in" provided an opportunity for everyone to greet others and to say something personal or something else about the project. "Circling-out" provided similar opportunities, but mainly gave a chance to each person to say what she or he had enjoyed or not enjoyed about the meeting. The circle created a space where concerns could be shared. These concerns varied greatly from individual to individual. Certain persons might introduce themselves and just say "Hi", while some others might share more personal problems with the group. This strategy allowed the group to bond on a personal level since, in addition to doing work on the project, they developed some personal ties. Through the use of the circle, Association members had developed a means of building trust among themselves. The following quote illustrates the importance of the circle:

One of the things we do to help us care for each other is the circling-in and the circling-out. That is so important (because) you have a chance to speak as a human being before the meetings start and after the meetings are over and so, you have a chance to bring in where you're at personally. I think that gets rid of so much tension because if you know somebody is being quiet throughout the whole meeting, and we haven't circled-in, I may think that person is angry with me, or

is angry with the group, unless I understand what this person is going through (P., June, 1991).

Connecting the private world with public concerns is nothing new. That the "personal is political" and that individual services and social actions need to operate together has been emphasized by the feminist movement (Levine, 1982).

Many association members indicated that the circle was a medium that allowed them to express whether or not they were happy with how the meetings were going. It provided them with a sense that other people cared about what they thought. These practices were introduced to all new members as they started to participate in the Association. As indicated by the following quote, the group felt that by using these techniques people came to truly understand the whole process of community participation.

If they (new members) are not well grounded in why we do these kinds of things, they are not going to continue doing them. We are going to lose something that is special about Better Beginnings. We'll just become another organization that runs with minutes and agendas (P., June, 1991).

The circle was used on a regular basis by Association members. Some members were so influenced by its results that they even ventured to use it in other settings.

I've enjoyed the circling-in and circling-out. In fact we are hoping to incorporate circle-in, circle-out with our group meetings... because I think that's a very

healthy, very positive way of dealing with how people feel. You can't separate the emotional part and the cognitive part. I mean, they go together. You may be able to express yourself and base it on having a good rationale, but you also have time to be able to say how you feel, because learning comes not only in the cognitive part, it also comes in the feeling part (G., June, 1991).

For some it created a space that wasn't available elsewhere in their lives.

Yes, this is something that doesn't exist in the traditional system. A place to express what goes on inside you, as a person, not only in a role. That is a characteristic that traditional organizations don't have, - to allow myself to say that it's not going well, that I don't feel right... to allow myself to express that I have a right not to be "good" all the time, ha, ha (C., June, 1991).

The circle was not only a means of bringing people together. It was also a way of sharing closure. It allowed members of the group to express whatever they did not have a chance to say during the meeting. Circling-out allowed individuals to express personal feelings, if they wished to do so, and this served to create more intimacy and bonding among members. The circle created a surrounding in which people could be themselves in situations that can often be intimidating. It gave them space to express their intimidation, feeling of inadequacies, fears, or lack of self-confidence in face of things like government bureaucracy.

The circle was even utilized by Sudbury Association members when representatives from MCSS came to Association meetings. There was never any opposition from MCSS staff in participating in circling-in or circling-out. In fact, it is

my observation that they genuinely enjoyed taking part in this process. They would always let the Association conduct the affairs of the meetings the way it saw appropriate, without interfering and wait for their chance to have their say. Not only did it provide them with the opportunity to observe how the Sudbury Association functioned, it also created a space for them to add their input, an important aspect of the locality development model.

By and large, the circle has been a reassuring process for individual Association members. It gave them a feeling of not being alone, contributed to boost their self-confidence as a group and built trust among participants. It allowed people to feel more comfortable expressing their ideas and made them more eager to volunteer to undertake tasks which once might have intimidated them.

### **6.3 CONSENSUS**

The Sudbury Better Beginnings, Better Futures model operated on a consensus decision-making model. The circle is the medium used to achieve consensus. The chairperson of a given meeting was responsible for making sure that consensus was achieved by going around the circle and asking if anyone had concerns or something to add before a decision was made (Logbook, 1990). Circling could be done more than once, especially if new ideas were introduced which might cause people to reflect further, or even in some instances, change their opinions.



However, achieving consensus was not always easy. This was mainly because sometimes it was difficult to really understand what consensus meant. Frequently, a discussion on consensus would occur as the group was going around the circle trying to get consensus on a particular matter. These discussions were often emotionally charged, because some people wanted to be more efficient, while others felt the need to get the approval of everyone. The following quote provides insight into some of the problems associated with this model of decision-making.

I think that there are times when you have to make sure that you circle for consensus. If people are really impassioned about something and really push something, it's hard to dissent. It's hard to say I don't agree with that unless you're given space to do that. Sometimes on contentious issues ... a lot of things would go by and we would say that we had gotten consensus on it, and I don't think that we really did. I think it was people who spoke the loudest who carried it. We didn't check with everybody. I think it's that checking that we're starting to do more of now. I think that we are now working more towards a real view of consensus by doing checks, which we weren't doing before. (We need to) make a little clearer what we mean by consensus. Do we just mean that the people who can talk the most and be the most passionate about things, carry things? Or do we mean that we really want everybody to agree? On the other hand, ... when should we use consensus? It can get very tedious and it can really bog people down and that's the other side of it. Do you have to circle for every little decision? At what point do we stop discussing things and say, listen this has to go to this committee, because they're the ones who got the final decision on this. At the same time, is it still important to hear everybody's opinion around that? What kinds of decisions get made, where and how? I don't think we've had enough discussion around that. I think we were very idealistic in our views of how decisions actually do get made and I think we're going to get caught with that at some point (P., June, 1991).

It became important for the whole group to understand what consensus really meant for them. Basically, the general rule of thumb for members to gauge themselves

got formulated in the following way: "Is this a group decision that I can live with today?". In this tactic there was also implicit understanding that if members needed to question this decision at some other time, they could do so. If consensus could not be reached, even after circling more than once, the matter was tabled until the next meeting. The matter would continue to be tabled until a compromise could be reached. Sometimes, a sub-committee would be formed to study various alternatives and bring them back to the Association for further discussion. Other times, Association members would divide into sub-groups, discuss various approaches toward resolving the problem, and then discuss it again within the context of the Association membership. If there was a need to come back to a decision made earlier, and if the group felt that it was appropriate to change this decision, the decision would be changed. However, the group never achieved full consensus on a regular basis. These additional statements about consensus reveal part of the dilemma:

I think it's a "can you live with it?" and it doesn't mean it's carved in stone and that it can't be changed... We come back to the group and the group has to decide can we live with it? (R., June 1991).

It's not logical to say that that decision was made and that in the meantime things and people and circumstances haven't changed. Yet some decisions would last for a long time and be fine, but you have to think that sometimes you have to go with what's changing. Just because you decided this or that with consensus, at one point, doesn't mean you can't ever change that decision, and I had a hard time with that (L., June 1991).

I think that consensus is important for very major issues... Not everything should be brought to the whole group for consensus. I think that we can break off into little groups, do particular tasks, and then bring it back to the groups and all the little baby steps don't have to be via consensus (G., June, 1991).

As is evident from these quotes, some people felt that a consensus approach to decision-making should not be used for every little decision, while others felt that it should be used all the time. A definite resolution between these two positions was never reached, although in practice if someone asked for consensus within the group, the chairperson for that meeting would go around the circle for the purpose of achieving consensus.

The issue of how to deal with someone using consensus to block or interfere with the Association's process was also raised. Some people felt that it would be necessary to revert to more traditional ways of decision-making, such as using a voting system. Others did not see this as a major problem:

It is not necessary because if someone systematically opposes everything, we (the group) will exclude that person from the group because he cannot function under the norms of the group (C., June, 1991).

This perception was generally accepted by most members. It didn't appear to pose a real threat since a prerequisite of being an Association member was acceptance of the Association's philosophy and principles. Therefore, if someone continuously, and for no valid reason, tried to block the process of consensus, this person could be asked to leave.

It became very important for Sudbury Association members to understand consensus. To this effect, in November 1991, a workshop on "Decision-Making Model"

was organized for Association members and conducted by an outside expert on adult education techniques. In all, seven methods of decision-making models were evaluated by participants through the technique of group exercises. The result of these group exercises showed that Association members felt that a decision reached through consensus was the most satisfying method of decision-making, even though this process took the most time to achieve (Participant observer's notes, November 13, 1991). Participants at the workshop accepted the following definition of consensus.

Consensus is more commonly defined as a collective opinion arrived at by a group of individuals working together under conditions that permit communication to be sufficiently open - and the group climate to be sufficiently supportive - for everyone in the group to feel that he has had his fair chance to influence the decision. When a decision is made by consensus, all members understand the decision and are prepared to support it. In operation, consensus means that all members can rephrase the decision to show that they understand it, that all members have had a chance to tell the group how they feel about the decision, and that those members who continue to disagree or have doubts will nevertheless say publicly that they are willing to give the decision a try for a period of time. (From material handed out in "Decision-Making Workshop", Logbook, November, 1991, p. 1019).

This process was adopted by Association members and used in the circle. It was the chairperson's responsibility to ensure that all participants had the opportunity to state their views. The process could involve going around the circle more than once.

The method of consensus decision-making was also a means of gathering additional information and clarifying issues. In addition it forced the group, on many occasions, to seek better alternatives than those initially suggested. Association members

also knew that decisions need not be irrevocable. If an issue needed to be discussed later, or if a situation had changed, another discussion would eventually take place to deal with the issue as it dealt with the new situation.

The usual process of decision-making used in state bureaucracy is more oriented toward decision by authority, (the designated leader makes the decision), or decision by expert, (we make use of the most expert member or members to make the decision), or by majority vote. The latter procedure is the most commonly used and is perceived to be the most efficient, as it requires only 51% of the members to decide on a course of action. Therefore, to introduce the consensus decision-making approach to state agencies may not be perceived as efficient or productive. This is why the inclusion of MCSS representatives in Association meetings when they are doing a site visit becomes crucial. By experiencing the consensus approach, they can observe the effects it has on the community group. When engaging in a consensus form of decision-making there is the side effect of bonding that takes place. Bonding, solidarity, partnership, commitment and empowerment are elements that are desirable in community development but not necessarily in bureaucratic functions where time is more perceived as being "better utilized" to make decisions more quickly. However, in order to foster community solidarity, consensus decision-making is perhaps a better strategy for certain community development projects.

#### **6.4 ACTION RESEARCH**

Another important community organization strategy developed by the Sudbury Better Beginnings Association relates to research. Since it is a research demonstration project, research needed to be incorporated into the Better Beginnings, Better Futures model right from the beginning. From the community's perspective research needed to be demystified. A local research working group was established and contributed greatly to demystifying research by describing research as part of us and part of what we do (Logbook, 1990). The action research approach became the preferred strategy for the Sudbury Better Beginnings, Better Futures project.

Sari and Sari (1992) define action research as "a process for gaining knowledge and taking action" (p. 267). It is thought by many authors that active involvement of community members in the management of knowledge generation and action is conducive to producing sustained change in a community (Kaluzny, 1986; Schorr, 1988; Gutierrez, 1990). The more community members are involved in the identification of possible solutions, the more willing they also are to work towards implementing these solutions (Kaluzny, 1986).

Action research involves community members and researchers in a collaborative process. Mutual learning occurs in that new knowledge and new skills are learned by

community members, while researchers start investigating problems from the perception of community people. The research process operates from a premise that says that:

All events take place within a political-cultural context and that the people who directly experience a social problem must be actively involved in this analysis and resolution (Sari and Sari, 1992, p. 277).

These attributes were included right from the beginning in the Sudbury project. Early discussions centered on what the research tasks should be. There were obvious ones such as measuring the effects of the programs and seeking measures of how individual health is related to community health. Another, less obvious research task, but of interest to Association members, was to subject the process of their work to critical analysis (Logbook, 1989).

Participating in the research process contributed to community building since Association members and community residents felt that they had an investment in the project. They were more eager to collaborate with researchers because they felt that their input was valued. For example, in May 1990, community residents and Association members participated in a "Needs and Desires" survey of 364 persons in the community. The local research working group was a medium through which interested community residents and Association members could participate in the research process and provide feedback to researchers on the proposed research methodologies and instruments. This approach served as a means to deal early with potential conflict that could evolve around

the expectations of government representatives, researchers, and community participants. Community residents were enthusiastic in their involvement and wondered if the ideas of people in the community would work from a research point of view.

The fact that the Better Beginnings model incorporated the involvement of community members in the research process meant that involvement needed to be clarified. "Strategies for community involvement may be different for anglophones, francophones and native communities" (Logbook, 1989, p. 40). Community involvement brought about awareness and sensitivity to cultural differences. By sharing in this action research process, community members from all cultures could meet, share ideas and understand each other better. Researchers benefited by becoming more knowledgeable about the community.

## **6.5 WRITING THE PROPOSAL**

Writing the project proposal to be selected as a Better Beginnings, Better Futures site, was another strategy of importance to the Sudbury Association. Appropriately, the Sudbury Better Beginnings, Better Futures Association: Proposal for Research Site (1989), also included the subtitle "A Collaborative Effort" on its front cover. Association members wanted it known that the writing of the proposal was a joint effort stemming from a community development process. One of the authors of the document states:



It was a collaborative effort, and if I was writing I wasn't writing from my perspective, but writing it from the group's perspective (D., June, 1991).

Another Association member recounts:

The big part of writing the proposal was consulting the community about needs and desires (L., June, 1991).

People volunteered to write specific sections of the proposal and formed small groups to undertake the various tasks involved. It was then up to the group as a whole to take the draft proposal and make appropriate changes. Volunteers rewrote sections they had not drafted the first time. Although a cooperative approach had been employed, some tensions occurred around writing the proposal. Some Association members found themselves caught between a set of guidelines and a community development process. At the outset of the project a member said:

On the one hand there is a sense that the document (Request for Proposals) prescribes what we're to do. On the other hand, the community group is using an approach to design something that fits with a community perception of need (Logbook, 1989, p. 41).

The tension around trying to fulfil the requirements of the guidelines of the funder, while simultaneously going through a community development process, made it difficult for participants not to be apprehensive about the benefits of participating. A community development process, as process, is not prescribed; it happens. As we saw from the

twelve steps of the Four Worlds Development Model, the process of development is in constant movement. Because some important goals had not been achieved, some Association members had their doubts about the community development process, mainly because it wasn't as yet community owned. Conforming strictly to guidelines became attractive in order to secure the project. However, because Association members had done a community needs assessment using action-research techniques, they oriented their proposal in line with the perception that the community had of itself. The community needs assessment was a strong tool useful to the development process, because it described the composition of the community.

After the proposal had been submitted, members had an opportunity to reflect on the worst part of writing the proposal. One person said:

The most important, common theme was the tensions about not satisfactorily involving and integrating the three cultures we are committed to, as well as people from low income backgrounds. Despite the strength of this theme, there were hints that members did believe we have tried and will continue to struggle with these very real tensions (Logbook, 1990, p. 206).

Although doubt and disappointment were expressed, there was nevertheless a recognition that objectives are not always easily attainable. Some members were wondering what could have been done from the very beginning to involve natives, francophones, and more grass roots representatives. To them the community development objectives had not

yet been reached. The question of how to recruit community members from all sectors was not answered clearly.

Nevertheless, Association members felt that even if the project was not going to be funded, they had initiated mechanisms that would help generate better services in the Donovan and Flour Mill areas. In other words, there was a community development process that had begun through their initiatives and strategies. They felt that they had made contacts and created better liaisons and relationships with some people of the area as well as with other agencies. They felt that the strategy of giving people time to dream allowed them to assess the strengths of the group and that this process would continue with or without funding. As stated in the logbook:

Without funding, it will be slower, but the collective has focused the dreams and begun to build the network (Logbook, 1990, p. 211).

Association members had learned to know the community better and were learning about community development.

Another area that generated tensions when writing the proposal revolved around the pressure of bureaucratic provisions imposed by the state:

Another common, fairly strong theme was the pressure around deadlines and specific tasks associated with getting the proposal submitted and the annoyance over organizations changing the rules of the game (Logbook, 1990, p. 206).

It was felt that deadlines imposed unnecessary constraints that were detrimental to the quality of the project. Because the Sudbury Association was engaged in a community development process, it was not always prepared to meet deadlines. A community consultation process takes time and energy. The requirement to produce a certain segment of the report, or to provide certain information, by a deadline can be detrimental to a community development process. The people who worked on the proposal were volunteers and most of them had a full time job. They were not employees of the Sudbury Association who could dedicate most of their time to the project. Nevertheless, the project was important enough for them to invest a lot of their personal time, over and above what was given by some agencies of their employees' time to the project. Association members who did the initial work on the proposal estimated that they had put in an average of 6.9 hours per week since December 1989. During the month of April 1990, this increased to 15.3 hours. In the final two weeks before the proposal was due (July, 13), the average was 37.7 hours per week (Logbook, 1990). Asked in October 1990 in an action-research evaluation whether their time was well spent on a personal level, eleven out of twelve respondents said yes, regardless of whether they would get the project funded.

The Association did manage to meet both their own objectives and those of the funder.

We were very aware that our objectives had to be aligned with the project proposal. We did that. We gave them what was expected. We certainly had a

lot of work done on the needs and desires (of the community). We aligned our objectives right along the big proposal (C., June, 1991).

Sudbury Association members felt that they could meet the objectives of the state without compromising their own goals. They were optimistic about securing the project as illustrated in the following quote:

We always planned as if we were going to get it [the project]. Most of us were confident. There was a lot of ego and a number of us had a fair amount of respect for the ideas of the technical document...It wasn't just that we knew there were some really nice fits between what the government was looking for and what we wanted to do. I normally have more distrust of government than I do in this situation. The congruence made it easy for me to work on it. I had been at a few provincial meetings, and I knew part of what we were thinking was in the forefront (L., June, 1991).

The Better Beginnings, Better Futures project was perceived as an opportunity and an attainable goal for something different and exciting in the Sudbury community. Community members had the opportunity to work with the philosophy and principles behind the Better Beginnings, Better Futures project and this was important as illustrated in the following quote:

Seeing principles like consensus, grassroots participating and action research - I've become very cynical how these principles could be really used...The process [community development] gave me faith again that it is possible with determination. Taking and making our work "humane" - "humanizing our contact with each other" (Logbook, 1990, p. 216).

Overall, the Better Beginnings, Better Futures Association members felt that they had submitted a good proposal and that they had built stronger ties with other members of the community, mainly some agency people in social services. One respondent said:

I personally feel that professionals working in agency isolation is not the most productive system. Joining with others and working with common goals and respecting limitations of other agencies is the way of the future (Logbook 1990, p. 212).

Some said that the community development approach was helpful in order to get out of the clinical model. They felt that the best part of their work to date was getting support and developing trust with other members of the group. One respondent stated that the community organizing strategies affirmed "faith in the group process, regardless of individual cultures" (Logbook, 1990, p. 215). Another stated that "I am positively overwhelmed by the power of the model" (Logbook, 1990, p. 215).

The strategies developed by the Sudbury Better Beginnings, Better Futures Association around writing the proposal serve to illustrate the kind of ground work that needed to be done at the community level in order to establish a very solid foundation for the development process. The main method employed by Sudbury Association members was to continually discuss issues about the project with various community members, of various cultural and interest groups in long weekly meetings. Through this process, capacity building occurred within the community. Community people were

encouraged to participate in order to effect desired change in their community. This is an important component of the Sudbury Better Beginnings, Better Futures project.

## 6.6 ANALYSIS

The Sudbury Better Beginnings, Better Futures Association has used the five preceding strategies (Four Worlds Development model, circle, consensus decision-making, action research and the collaborative writing of the proposal), in order to put its model into practice. I now turn to analyzing whether the Sudbury Association, through the use of these strategies, was able to reach the goals it set for itself, that is, to meet the objectives of its nine principles (see Appendix D) as per the ideology of community participation it adopted as presented in chapter 5.

The nine principles of the Sudbury Association carry the central theme of a community development process with, at its core, the participation of all segments of the population. This raises certain questions about the concept of community participation such as: who speaks for the community; who has ownership of the project; and what are the impediments to participation in a partnership between a local group and the state? I will now address these questions.

### **6.6.1 WHO SPEAKS FOR THE COMMUNITY**

The question of who speaks for the community has been a contentious one among Association members. At one extreme members say that the community speaks for itself and at the other extreme they say that an elected politician speaks for the community. This brings back the question of direct democracy versus representative democracy.

Most Association members favoured an approach leaning toward direct democracy:

I really believe that the community speaks for itself and can only speak for itself, and that is the best way in which it can be represented (B., June, 1991).

I'm only an individual. I'm not the community and I would never consider myself the community speaking for the community because everybody is different. It's the people themselves who are the community and speak for themselves. I can't even visualize an agency speaking for the community (R., June, 1991).

There are others, however, who are very conscious of cultural sensitivities and who feel that only certain people should speak for certain segments of the population. For example, in the Native tradition, elders traditionally speak for their community.

Respected people are usually the one's who speak, sometimes elders. I find many elders are very resourceful and offer their wisdom as such. A community can be best represented by a mix of elders, and others, who are knowledgeable about our culture and traditions. I don't think a non-native should speak for native people (M., June, 1991).



This quote seems to illustrate that for certain cultures, the notion of representative democracy is not as strong as the notion of cultural identity. Proper cultural representation emanates from the people legitimized by the cultural group to do so.

Strong sentiments emerge when discussing cultural issues. The Sudbury Better Beginnings Association model included representation from the various cultural and linguistic groups of the community, natives, francophones, anglophones and other multicultural groups. By being exposed to the various cultural groups, Association members became more sensitized to other cultures and their ways of doing things. However, that by itself did not guarantee a proportionate level of involvement from each group, even though attempts were made to obtain representation from all segments of the community. Nevertheless, Sudbury Association members pursued their effort in involving community members. One participant presents it in the following way:

The thing that we have to make sure of is that it is the community who decides. You can always say that the people on a committee do not represent the community and you can never have full representation of a community...[unless]... everybody in the community is sitting there at the same time. I think that ...we have to make sure that as many people as possible in the community are involved. Maybe they don't want to be at the decision-making level, but at least they know what's going on. It's a process that has to be worked at all the time with the community (P., June, 1991).

The process of going back to the different segments of the community in order to get their feedback was important in order that the Association would not get out of touch with the people, their needs, goals, and aspirations. It was especially important to

consult with those groups which could be affected more directly by certain decisions in order to get their reactions and suggestions. Sometimes it was more beneficial to consult with a cultural group separately than at a big Association meeting. Once the group had reached its decision on an issue it could send delegates to Association meetings. Sometimes, the process took a long time and Association members needed to respond in order to meet deadlines. The Association never claimed that it was speaking for the community in its entirety, but it sought the input from all segments of the community and invited comments and participation from individuals.

#### **6.6.2 OWNERSHIP**

In the interviews done in June of 1991, Association members felt that the Sudbury Better Beginnings, Better Futures project was owned by the Association and specifically by agency members of the Association.

The original members of the Sudbury Better Beginnings Association and most people who joined shortly afterwards were front line workers from various social service agencies in Sudbury. Their knowledge and expertise served as background for the evolution of the Better Beginnings model. Some resided and worked in the community, some only worked in the community and others had been raised or still had family living in the neighbourhood. It is not surprising that no one felt at that time that the community owned the project, but all expressed the wish that the community would own it.

Obviously, right now it's the social services and the agencies that own the project, and even that, it's not the social services and agencies very much, it's those front line workers who are on the Association who own it. So, in a year from now, I hope that the community will own Better Beginnings, Better Futures completely. That they will own it, that they will be the ones running it, that they will be the ones who want to keep this thing going. But at the same time, I want the agencies, and that means from upper management down, to take more ownership of the responding towards Better Beginnings. Taking Better Beginnings, Better Futures seriously as a way that they can start changing the way they deliver services in the community (P., June, 1991).

There is a necessity to let people in the community take over the project and at the same time for local agencies to get involved by responding to the needs identified by the community.

This raises the question whether agency workers can be effective community workers. Where is their allegiance? Is it to the community or to their agency? It has been a source of tension within the Association. One member puts it in the following way:

If I'm working with a community and they have a lot of problems with the agency I'm working with - who do I represent at that point? I've felt that as a tension" (P., June, 1991).

This tension creates a dilemma for the agency workers who must choose between allegiance to their agencies, or to the community development process they have committed to. Part of this predicament was resolved in the fact that seven integrated agencies had committed one day per week of an employee's time to the Sudbury Better Beginnings project. These agencies supported the community work done by their

workers. Nevertheless, there were moments for many agency workers, particularly those living in the community, when they were not sure if they represented themselves as community members or if they represented their agencies. The problem was amplified as more community members started to join the Association. Some felt intimidated by the overwhelming presence of agency workers. As an attempt to minimize the level of intimidation it was felt that during the circling-in at Association meetings it would benefit community members if agency workers would introduce themselves by identifying their agency. At least the line could be drawn at meetings between community members and agency representatives.

However, this did not mean that agency workers who also lived in the community did not give additional time to Better Beginnings; they did. Many people committed more than the one day per week and when they committed extra time, it was as a community member not as an agency representative. The following quote states this quite clearly:

It was always clear in my mind when I was giving time to Better Beginnings as an agency worker or as a resident of the community. I gave a lot of extra hours to Better Beginnings as a parent who lives there because I felt it was important for me and my kids (Interview with H., June 25, 1993).

This sentiment has been echoed by others as well and illustrates that community work, to some, went beyond the requirements of a job.

Agency workers who participated in the Sudbury Better Beginnings project had either experience or an interest in community development. Together they built a strong personal commitment towards the project. They kept focusing on its goals, its vision, and made continuous efforts to try to establish a trusting relationship with the community people.

If we're going to do anything at all as a group, we have to have a single vision and that is to assist those for whom Better Beginnings, Better Futures was initially instituted for - the kids. I really believe if we all do work with that goal in mind and without any sense of remuneration, that the cohesiveness and understanding and love between the group will take care of itself (B., June, 1991).

We focused on where we were going. That's one thing that kept us strong. We focused on our goals and we always put the community ahead of the bureaucrats. They wanted to define what our program was going to be. We kept saying "We have to talk to the community". At the (round table) we'd say "We don't know, the community will tell us". We told them that we have to be in the community before we design a program. The group stuck to that. Everybody (else) was telling us what they were doing. We didn't want that. We were going to let our community design it for us (R., June, 1991).

It was this deep level of commitment to the project on the part of many individuals combined with the strength found in solidarity that contributed to team building within the Association. In the section on "who speaks for the community", some of the strategies that the Sudbury Association used to recruit community members from various cultural groups are discussed. Within their process of community development, the group also paid attention to recruiting people from other agencies to help. The following quote illustrates quite well how this process was done.

We started searching out for people who did prevention work and who were non-elitist in their approach to clients. These were people who would not be victim blaming, and did not have a presentation that would turn low income people off, who were not patronizing, and who believed in prevention. We were not looking at shared power then. We were looking more at empowerment. We wanted to look at some of the questions around social justice and equality. Then we were also looking at the technical document and what would sell. Each time we thought of an agency, we kind of customized an approach. If we knew someone could be interested, we would work with their administration and see what they would need to allow the worker to join. Also when we were bringing new members in we wanted them to accept a decision-making model, and its goals (P., June, 1991).

There was constant effort made to entice people into a commitment that was true to a community development process promoting community participation.

In retrospect, it doesn't seem like the involvement of agency front line workers in the Better Beginnings project has been a negative experience. If anything, these front line workers put their knowledge and experiences in the community to positive use. They did not compromise the principles of community development simply to obtain funding for the project. They stuck with the process as well as by their goals to the end, always engaging in a community consultation process. As one community member has put it:

They have spent volunteer time on things that don't show up like reading, coming and going to meetings that were all over the place, often outside regular working hours (F., June, 1991).

These agency workers were aware of their commitment to the principles of the project. Even though they realized that they owned the project in the present, their objective was to let the community take over.

In June of 1991, it was also felt that because the Association had hired a coordinator for the program and because community workers were in the process of being hired, that mainly staff would contribute to recruiting community people from various cultural backgrounds to participate actively in the project. However, after staff were hired, they eventually became more dominant in the group than agency workers. The question about how to have proper representation from the community remained.

When the data collection for this research ended (July 3, 1992), the Sudbury Association had not yet reached its objective that the Better Beginnings, Better Futures project would be community owned. Nevertheless, the Association, conscious of that fact, sought to develop strategies that would be conducive to have community residents participate. It was noted that workshops in particular were an appropriate tool since community residents tended to participate in them more actively. The agency workers formed an agency caucus through which their role became more focused on visioning integration of services and reporting their ideas back to the larger Association group. Basically, some of the core strategies being tried out focused on the process of developing a common vision of what the community of the Flower Mill Donovan

neighbourhoods should be like. But even though the level of participation would increase in some of these activities, the question of community ownership was not settled.

## **6.7 IMPEDIMENTS TO THE PROCESS OF PARTICIPATION**

In any relationship there can be situations where one partner impedes the other's effort to achieve its goals. In the relationship between the state and the Sudbury Association there have been such instances. I present two situations in which the state's structural organization was an obstacle to the spirit of participation, and how the Sudbury Better Beginnings Association dealt with these circumstances. The first situation involves the official announcement of the selected project sites and the second example involves the contract negotiations.

### **6.7.1 THE ANNOUNCEMENT**

The official announcement of the sites selected for Better Beginnings, Better Futures project was made in Toronto on January 29, 1991. Sudbury Association members were informed that they could only bring six people to the event. The reply from the Association was that this was not their method of functioning, that it operated on a consensus model of decision-making and that those who wanted to go had that right.



When the state insisted that it could only provide plane tickets for six persons to come to the announcement, the Association replied that it would only use the amount of money needed for six persons, but that as many persons as were interested to go would do so. State representatives insisted that space was restricted and Sudbury Association members developed a strategy by which only six of their members would be in the room at a time and that they would simply rotate.

This simple illustration serves to point out how rules imposed by the funder can destabilize the process of decision-making used by a community group. Although the Association membership came up with an alternative solution, the point is that the funder, because of its own structure, was hampering the community decision-making process. For instance in light of the situation, state authorities could have stipulated that only so much money was available for this event and that it would be up to the Association to decide how they wanted to be represented. Although this solution might not be applicable to all situations, the message conveyed would have been one supporting community participation. The community has good reasons to do things the way that it does them, provided it is congruent with the terms of the project, and state authorities should develop enough flexibility to be able to recognize this and accommodate the community. Bureaucracy should not stand in the way of community participation.

### **6.7.2 THE CONTRACT**

Negotiating the contract agreement between MCSS and the Sudbury Association was a long and arduous process. After many drafts, the final version of the contract was forwarded to the MCSS on June 11, 1992, by the Sudbury Association. MCSS gave its final confirmation of the approval of the contract on July 3, 1992.

Prior to the approval of the contract, the negotiating process between the two parties was not without frustration. The frustration encountered by Association members is best exemplified by the events that took place on January 8, 1992. This meeting is referred to as the "contract negotiation meeting". Two MCSS representatives were in Sudbury for that meeting for a site visit. The site visit included a pot luck supper, the evening before, with approximately 70 parents and children of the community in attendance. At that event, one Ministry representative gave a general presentation to community members on the overall Provincial Better Beginnings project. After the presentation, the Ministry representatives distributed copies of a document to Association members. This document was a set of guidelines by which the contract between MCSS and the Sudbury Association was to be drafted. This came as a surprise to Association members, given that the last contract proposal had been faxed to MCSS on December 20, 1991 so that MCSS representatives would be able to familiarize themselves with the content of the proposed contract before their site visit to Sudbury. These new guidelines had never been seen before by Association members.

The next day the two representatives from MCSS attended the Association meeting to provide information about the new guidelines for the contract. They wanted the Sudbury programs to fit into the new specifications, which resulted in discussion and confusion around what the contract draft and the new specifications might mean.

One MCSS representative told the group that the new contract was only a model and that they did not want to impose it on Sudbury. The other MCSS representative expressed the view that the Sudbury project did not fit the model and that they needed to see the link to the provincial Better Beginnings model. "Fit was discussed with a lot of frustration on all sides" (Logbook, 1992, p. 1161b). There was confusion, contradiction, and the tension was mounting, until finally someone asked for a break. At that point the Sudbury Association people decided to ask the MCSS representatives to leave the room for a few moments. Association members decided that they couldn't discuss this issue at that time. When they reconvened with the MCSS representatives, Association members had taken the position that they couldn't make a decision now and that they needed to go back to the community. They also stated that they would need another letter of agreement from January to March, in order to be able to pay staff and continue with the programs of the project.

MCSS representatives apologized for imposing such pressure. Sudbury was perceived by them to be ahead of the other sites - "You are the leaders of the pack, and because of this you are going through this first" (Logbook, 1992, p. 1169).

We are just talking about the wording but we are not questioning your model. We are expecting that the overall objectives are going to be different for each community. The program people are going to come up with their objectives and the researchers are going to measure them. We want you to say what you want to have happen and what you want research to look at. We have to try everything out with you - you're the oldest and first child (Logbook, 1992, pp. 1170-1171).

Obviously, the proposed contract specifications were being tested for the first time on the Sudbury site. before being sent to other sites. It was fresh off the press. And as one of the MCSS representative said: "We put into draft form what information we need and Sudbury is the first looking over it. And there are still some mistakes in it" (Logbook, 1992, p. 1178).

The experience was not a pleasant one for the Sudbury Association. There were some harsh criticisms expressed by Association members towards MCSS representatives. Some felt that they had not taken the time to read the proposal which had been sent to them on December 20th according to negotiated agreement. People were also upset because MCSS representatives gave them such short notice for the model.

There was a feeling that some items from the new contract model were non-negotiable. The contract model itself was non-negotiable. Certain Association members thought that perhaps these two people were under pressure from their Ministry. Someone felt that the government was probably not prepared to sign any agreement before the new fiscal year which started on April 1st.

There was a general sense that the government's expectations were not clear and that affected the MCSS representatives as much as it did Association members. As a member puts it:

I think that it's not fair for us to deal with this, and maybe it's not fair for them to deal with this either. I think that we are not obliged to deal with something which is unsuitable for us. I believe that the government is not clear in demands and in these conditions it will be difficult for us to do something (Logbook 1991, p. 1215).

However, Association members felt strongly that they needed to work on this contract model. It was decided that they would go back to community members to explain the situation and present them with the new model. Association members agreed to take different parts of the model and work on it. MCSS representatives were asked to try to fit the Association project into their new model. It was felt by Association members that after such an exercise, some modifications might be made to the specifications of the model.

It was announced on January 22, 1992 that a new letter of agreement was approved until the end of March, which allowed the Better Beginnings programs to continue. Association members worked in small groups on sections of the contract, did revisions, and then shared them with the whole Association membership, before sending another draft to MCSS. In May of 1992, the Ministry responded to the draft with a four page memo. A sub-committee of four, from the Government Committee, had reviewed

the contract submissions. The memorandum summarized the strengths of the submission as well as specific issues to be resolved. Among the strengths identified, the cooperation and collaboration among Association members did not go unnoticed. But another characteristic of the Association's community development process was the careful development of partnerships in support of the Better Beginnings project.

The Government Committee is pleased that the Project has obtained and maintained the support and commitment of N'Swakamok Native Friendship Centre, Children's Mental Health Services, the Sudbury Board of Education, John Howard Society, Sudbury Housing Authority, the Sudbury and District Public Health Unit, S.H.A.R.E., and the Sudbury Multi-Cultural Association (Logbook, 1992, p. 1571 - memo from MCSS).

The funder emphasized the fact that the sensitivity demonstrated by Project staff in building new partnerships was a strength of the Sudbury submission.

One of the reasons these partnerships work so well, is because the Association understands the neighbourhood intimately. It is remarkable that so many members of the Association live as well as work in the neighbourhood (Logbook, 1991, p. 1572 - memo from MCSS).

It was clear to the funder that programs developed by the Sudbury Association met local needs and aimed at getting cooperation from the larger community of service providers. This met with the objectives of the state with respect to an integration of services.

There were, however, issues that were not entirely resolved to the satisfaction of the funder. Among them was the parity of cultural groups.

One of the most attractive and admirable features of the Sudbury project is the strong focus on four distinct cultural groups from the neighbourhood. In this draft we did notice that the francophone and anglophone groups were not emphasized as much as the other cultural groups (Logbook, 1992, p. 1572 - memo from MCSS).

The funder was concerned that there might be inequity in resources across cultural groups.

Appropriate revisions were made, and responses given to address the special concerns of the funder. A final draft was submitted in June 1992. On July 3, 1992, a memo approving the Sudbury project was forwarded by the Ministry of Community and Social Services.

With this memorandum, two points were emphasized by MCSS. One was the multicultural component of the project and the other was the newly formed steering committee. -

The multi-cultural focus of the Sudbury project is one of its major strengths, as well as one of its greatest challenges. The equity in funding and programming among cultural groups is commendable. The Government Committee is fully supportive of the multi-cultural aspect of the project, and wishes you good luck in dealing with the complex and diverse nature of programs and community involvement in the project (Logbook, 1992, p. 1792 - memo from MCSS).

The newly established Steering Committee and Personnel Committee will truly enhance and encourage community ownership and direction of the Sudbury project. Once again, the project clearly demonstrates a good understanding of community development principles and the Better Beginnings neighbourhood (Logbook, 1992, p. 1792 - memo from MCSS).

Sudbury was selected as a site on January 29, 1991. It took eighteen months before it had an official contract with its funder.

The point to be made here is simple. With a decentralized approach such as found in community development projects, the bureaucracy must let go of some of its procedures. These procedures are impediments to encouraging democratic empowerment for the community. Bureaucracy needs to be simplified because it retains the attributes of centralized power and puts barriers in the way of community participation. Rather than putting barriers to community initiatives with a lot of "red tape", the role of experts in these kinds of community development project would be to support initiatives "...democratically decided upon by people who have joined together to get their needs met, their rights respected, or their interests protected" (Lamoureux, *et al.*, 1989, p. 21).

The state clearly wants communities to identify and find solutions to their own problems. For this goal to be achieved the state must also contribute by looking at how it sometimes unknowingly impedes not only the attaining of the objectives of the community but also its own.



These examples might be perceived as being trivial to a bureaucracy whose sense of efficiency is to be more productive and this translates into developing programs that the state feels are appropriate to the needs of a community. But this attitude negates the values of equality, cooperation and collectivity that were expressed in our conceptual framework as being integral to the community participation process in social development issues. If the state and communities are to enter into a relationship which promotes community participation, then these three values must be developed and cultivated, because ultimately it is the quality of that relationship coupled with the end result of state policy, which determine what kind of community participation activities will ensue.

Impediments to participation in a relationship between the state and a local community group are important to recognize and to be dealt with as soon as possible. Both parties have willfully engaged in a relationship to which they have committed themselves. This commitment goes beyond the wording of a contract and extends into facilitating the **process** of community participation.

## **CHAPTER 7**

### **DISCUSSION**

#### **7.0 INTRODUCTION**

In this chapter I discuss the main findings from the data in relation to the central question of the thesis which is: What is the degree and manner of autonomy that can be exercised at the local community level and also what kind of participation could come from the state when communities are engaged with the state in a community participation process?

I do this by reviewing what has been learned by the Sudbury Association using the six concepts of the conceptual framework; community, community development, community organization, social development, adult education and community economic development. I then present the limitations of Arnstein's and Bregha's models of citizen participation by reverting to the literature and introducing the concept of social relations

as defined by Ng *et al.* (1990). Finally, the discussion concludes with an analysis of the merits of the concept of communitarianism as a means of achieving more direct democracy for local communities.

## 7.1 THE CONCEPTS OF COMMUNITY

Sudbury Association members identified the geographical area for the Better Beginnings, Better Futures project within the boundaries of the Flour Mill and Donovan neighbourhoods. But they also shared other conceptions of what community meant beyond location, such as relationship between people and organizations. For example:

[Community may be] ... the people who actually live, work and play in the geographical area, but community is also the people who are involved in our day to day lives (P., June, 1991).

Another respondent favours a broader view of community:

You use the word community for a whole lot of different things. It can be just a bunch of people all together in a geographic area or people with a common vision of purpose or of culture... I think it's a word that has so many meanings that it's not particularly helpful. There is a kind of yearning, a visionary meaning that we attach to it that has to do with harmony, cooperation, common values, and common purpose. I think this is what we are trying to build with Better Beginnings (N., June, 1991).

These quotes indicate that people belong to a variety of communities based on different sets of shared interests, values, locations and relationships which are all part of their

daily lives at different points in time. It is what Warren (1978) refers to as the different types of systemic relationships that people and social organizations enter into by clustering together in the same location.

[The community is] ... that combination of social units and systems that perform the major social functions having locality relevance. In other words, by community we mean the organization of social activities to afford people ... daily local access to those broad areas of activity that are necessary in day-to-day living (Warren, 1983, p. 28).

There is a practical side to community living and functioning, and also a yearning for a closer knit intimate type of community.

By community I mean people that rub shoulders together, that know each other, if not by name at least by face, and are willing to assist each other, without being asked for assistance... People that share their time and expertise... [People] just being friendly, being human with each other (B., June, 1991).

There is a desire for attaining a certain "quality of relationship" within a community which is achieved through social cohesion over time (Nisbet, 1966). This "quest for community" is further explained by Shaffer (1994) who says that a conscious community needs to reflect on itself, asking "how are we doing?". By going through the exercise of reflecting on their experiences together, (that is, doing the interviews among themselves), Sudbury Better Beginnings Association members enhanced the quality of relationships among themselves. Such a process allowed for closer intimacy, the sharing of emotions and served to evaluate the moral commitment that Association members still

had towards the project they submitted. This process also allowed for the "spirit" of community to take place in which unity, involvement and a sense of belonging with others occurs (Poplin, 1972; Peck, 1984). Community is more than location and shared interests. It is what people experience daily in their lives.

### **7.1.1 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

A general sense of what constitutes the concept of community development, as perceived by Sudbury Association members, is captured in the following quote:

Community development is a process that brings people in the community together to find common solutions to common problems (L., June, 1991).

There is also general agreement articulated in the literature that organizing people through a process of community development "... is based primarily on the conviction that people are capable of finding solutions to their problems" (Lamoureux *et al.*, 1989, p. 21). The Sudbury Association put a lot of emphasis on this aspect which implicitly contains the element of participation.

For the process of community development to evolve, community people must participate. What makes community participation unique is its emphasis on self-determination and the autonomy of communities of people rather than their passivity and dependence (Epp, 1988). This means that the community must be pro-active instead

of reactive. Planning must be done collaboratively with others and not be done by outside bodies of experts and then imposed upon the community. Community participation also fosters an ideal of togetherness in achieving certain goals. Bloomberger, Jr. (1969) stresses the importance of collective as opposed to individual actions with regard to participation. Ideally, in participation, we need as widespread a group of people represented as possible. In practice, however, the legitimacy of community spokespersons is not always clear.

For Lee (1986), the notion of participation is based upon three premises:

- a) That decisions made with the serious and meaningful input of the people who are both to be affected by them and who implement them will tend to be better, *i.e.*, more realistic decisions.
- b) That people who feel they have been part of a decision have more at stake in seeing the decisions implemented well.
- c) That participation of people in the decisions that influence their lives is healthy; people will tend to act better, *i.e.*, more logically, more sanely, more humanely, if they have a sense of control over their lives. (Lee, 1986, p. 5).

Overall, Sudbury Better Beginnings Association members shared these objectives. One member provides the following interpretation of community participation:

Community participation is members of the community participating in a community development process and participating in shared-power, as well as in service planning and developing. Participation covers a broad range of things from attending an event which Better Beginnings puts on to volunteering, or

planning in that event... For me participation to be really meaningful is not just consuming events or services, but sharing in the decision of what those things are to be and how they are delivered (L., June, 1991).

It is crucial to foster collective action and get people involved in community affairs. But a troublesome question has always been how to get community people to participate.

Rothman, Erlich and Teresa (1979) stress that:

The amount of voluntary participation in an organization depends on the benefits gained from participation, and the degree to which the benefits are shown to result directly from participation (p.385).

The Sudbury Better Beginnings Association has attempted to focus on releasing people's energy into specific tasks as a strategy to increase participation. Many people may be interested in the project but may not feel they have much energy to give. Nevertheless, sometimes they can add little pieces of energy together. One Association member expresses it in the following way:

There is a concept called social energy that I like. If you feel you're getting something back from it and you get charged up, and it's worth it, then there is time to do it. But part of the problem with community organizing activities is to sit people in boring meetings for hours and expect them to do stuff they don't really want to do. The other way is to make sure that nobody has to spend hours and hours in anything. You get a whole lot of people putting little bits of time in it. It's one of the joys of having animators to build the group. With it you can go around finding the people with little bits of time and putting it together so that nobody has to do it all themselves (N., June, 1991).

From this quote we can deduce that successful community participation requires the following elements. First, people need to be interested and motivated in order to participate. Second, tasks undertaken by community people need to be identified and chosen by them in order for them to sustain their interest and motivation. Third, animators or community workers could undertake the tasks of dealing with the more time consuming activities (frequently perceived as the least interesting jobs); that is, they could take care of the daily essentials and coordinating activities and functions. To this we may add a fourth element, flexibility. People will do as much as they want to do. This means that today someone may have a lot of time and energy to invest, but this same person may not have the same time to invest three months down the road. Animators and regular members of the group need to be flexible enough to accept the fact that an individual's commitment and availability will vary. Therefore, the notion of community takes on a new meaning: individuals change, but not the community involvement level within the group. Continuity in participation is not assured by individuals but by the community consciousness expressed by an entity called the Association. Nonetheless, there are constants. Some individuals will choose to go regularly to meetings. Another constant is staff and paid volunteers who perform activities on a regular basis. The principles of the Association also remain constant.

This notion of community consciousness gives us some clues as to why and under what conditions people can be encouraged to participate in a community development process. Changes at the community level continue to occur with various degrees of



participation from individuals who commit themselves in relation to what their own personal resources allow them to do.

### **7.1.2 COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION**

The Sudbury Better Beginnings Association used certain community organization strategies in order to foster community development. In our conceptualization of community organization, the point was made that it was a process which aimed at community planning and action. Emphasis has been placed on the locality development model which is based on the premise that community change can be pursued through the participation of people. It was also stated that the locality development model perceives the state to be a collaborator engaged in a common venture with a community.

The strategies developed by the Sudbury Association needed to be developed at two levels. First there was a set of structures that were internal to the functioning of the Association, serving to bond the group. Such structures were regular weekly meetings, the use of the circle, a decision-making model based on consensus, the use of workshops as a learning tool that created a space to discuss the philosophy of the model, and participating in the research process for the project. These were explained in chapter six and presented as strategies used by the Sudbury Association. A second set of structures or strategies, also developed by Sudbury Association members, can be referred to as external structures. These structures were directed at establishing linkages with the

funder and with local community agencies and organizations. I have also presented some of these strategies in chapter six. Some examples are the Writing of the Proposal, The Contract Negotiations and meetings with the Community Advisory Committee (CAC).

The point that needs to be made is that there was a constant interchange at those two levels of internal and external structures. Sudbury Association members, in their dealings with MCSS representatives and with the larger community of Sudbury (CAC), would always use the phrase: "We need to go back to the community", before committing themselves in the name of the community. This way of functioning is more than a strategy of community organization, because it is also inclusive of all the principles attached to the concept of community participation. The message is clear, both at the community and state levels, that the community needs to be consulted before it will engage fully in a community participation process.

### **7.1.3 SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT**

Social development has as its objective institutional change and coalesces around the values of equality, cooperation and collectivity. The state makes social policies which determine how social development programs will evolve. In this case the Better Beginnings, Better Futures model of prevention guides the social development objectives of the community. The kinds of policies that can be developed determine the kinds of community programs and activities that can occur in the community.

A crucial question concerning the process of community participation is the extent to which the state participates in program activities. The two major means by which the state participated are by the model it has provided and by funding the Sudbury Better Beginnings, Better Futures project. The commitment of the state can be measured by the extent to which it upholds the true values of community development and community participation as defined in the prevention model and by the pledge it makes toward funding.

The MCSS guidelines, as presented earlier, are faithful to the spirit of the Better Beginnings model. In fact, the involvement of community people is considered a necessary element for the success of such a community project. A long term promise of funding reinforces the state's commitment. It also provides community residents with some assurance that they will have adequate resources for a certain period of time.

Within the Sudbury community, work also needed to be done to sensitize community leaders and agency workers to the benefits of the social development objectives found in the model. Among them, the call for a better integration of services to serve the community was a strong theme. The Sudbury Association did not remain idle and sought to engage community leaders in the first phase of integration by creating the Community Advisory Committee. The CAC recruited community leaders; the mayor, the chief of police, agency directors and other prominent people from various cultural groups, to seek their advice on the Better Beginnings model. Meetings of the CAC also

included representatives from MCSS. The net effect of these meetings is that it showed the funder what kind of cooperation was possible in Sudbury for a prevention project.

Although these are desirable objectives, they must not give the impression that a community entity like Better Beginnings is capable of handling all the problems of the community. This kind of expectation can come from both community residents and the state. The mandate given to a project such as Better Beginnings, Better Futures needs to be clearly defined, but not inflexible. For example, the Better Beginnings project used another source of funds to meet the needs of teenagers who wanted to have a program adapted to their needs. A local agency provided funds to start such a project in the community and means were found to maintain the program.

This instance shows how the community has expectations that Better Beginnings will take charge of some other community problems. It can be disappointing to community residents if Better Beginnings, which promotes community development, cannot respond to their demands. To be realistic the social development process needs to help the community group identify what is possible and what is dependent on other sources for solution, and to assess the consequences of these activities.

The demarcation between the local community project and the responsibilities of the state needs to be clearly identified. "Passing the buck" is not a viable alternative. Expectations of the state have to be reasonable. Policies need to be aligned with the day

to day lives of people. A community project is not the solution to all social problems, but whatever has been committed to the project must be available. A healthy partnership and dialogue between both parties is conducive to each taking its share of responsibilities. The state is responsible for its commitments toward the project. If Better Beginnings in Sudbury engages in activities that are beyond the scope of the project, its accountability lies with community residents.

#### **7.1.4 ADULT EDUCATION**

One of the best means of learning in a participatory process is through evaluation. Association members periodically evaluated their work. They understood that creating a space to discuss and reflect on both the process and results of their actions was conducive to personal and professional growth, especially in the areas of learning to work together and in increasing their knowledge of specific strategies such as the consensus approach in decision-making (Logbook, 1990). Evaluation is part of an important process of group dynamics with respect to problem-solving and knowledge-building (Lewin 1946). Participants continue to define what is relevant for them to learn in order to achieve their objectives.

Working and learning together also served to decrease isolation. Members felt they were in a supportive community. Some of the skills and ideas that people learned trickled down to other areas of the community and to other agencies. Some Association

members became more confident and engaged in activities such as the development of a parents' association in their schools. Others used their newly acquired skills to nurture relationships between their agency and other agencies because of the contacts that they had established. Tools such as circling-in and circling-out became useful for some who introduced them in other settings. Some individuals became more aware of differences between cultures and were able to teach others to be more sensitive to these differences (Logbook, 1991).

It would be difficult to measure the impact of all these links, yet for those involved in the Sudbury Better Beginnings, Better Futures Association experience, there seemed little doubt about the positive effects it had on them and other participants. These people took their experiences with them into other areas of their personal, professional and community lives. The ability to voice their concerns was another aspect of participants' learning. A clear example of this is reported by Diallo (1993a). It occurred in March, 1992, when parents with children at two schools came in conflict with a School Board wanting to transfer grade 7 and 8 students to a high school because of lack of space. Parents feeling the power imbalance in this conflict turned to the Sudbury Better Beginnings Association to gain support and to help them develop a strategy to oppose the transfers. This request placed the Sudbury Association in a difficult and awkward situation because it was active in programs with the schools and the community and felt over extended. It nevertheless provided informal support to the parents. Subsequently the School Board modified its decision. Parents were pleased with

this reversal. As a result of this experience, and some others, community residents learned that a community structure such as the Association can be used as an effective political tool. The preceding example provides evidence for the need to have a people's organization like the Sudbury Association at the local community level to serve as a mediating force between the community residents and the power structures within the community.

#### **7.1.5 COMMUNITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

Community Economic Development (CED) seeks to effect change in the community by building permanent institutions which give more control to residents over their own resources. As exemplified earlier in the analysis of the documents, CED is not an aspect promoted by the Provincial Better Beginnings, Better Futures model.

Within the model, though, there is recognition of the need to acquire the skills to solve problems on a community level. The Sudbury Association recognized this by endorsing the community organization strategies conceptualized by Rothman (1968; 1987), in particular the locality development model which builds community capacity. Because the MCSS made it very clear in its guidelines for the proposal that the funds for the Better Beginnings project were not to be used towards creating jobs, or toward building a day-care centre, the Sudbury Association had to build its CED strategies around these constraints. The policy towards CED which Sudbury Association members

developed was to use as much money as possible from its budget towards hiring people and to minimize as much as possible the costs of renting space and buying equipment.

Another strategy used towards that objective was in determining the salary scale for staff. Since the N'Swakamok Native Friendship Centre was the official sponsor for the Better Beginnings project, it made sense to base the Better Beginnings salary scale on the N'Swakamok Centre's. The Friendship Centre has a modest salary scale with minimal discrepancy of only \$10 between the highest and the lowest paid workers and this scheme allowed the Sudbury Association to be able to hire more people either full-time or part-time.

Another policy was to hire people who lived or had lived in the neighbourhood, or who had family members attending school or still living in the neighbourhoods of Donovan and Flour Mill. The rationale behind this approach was to provide community people with financial resources so they could participate more fully in taking charge of their lives. A spinoff of this tactic is that they would spend the money in the community. Another advantage is that these people already had knowledge of the community.

These strategies have been important for the community. Diallo (1993b) reports that this economic investment in community people has prompted other activities such as soliciting other grants to hire more people for other jobs needed in the community.



Nine grants for a total of \$66,000 were obtained in 1992 and used to hire people from the neighbourhood to work on aspects of the project, such as the summer camping, the art activities during the summer, a human rights study, and the community kitchen. Also, Better Beginnings, Better Futures was one of the key players in a successful bid to obtain \$770,000 over three years from "Jobs Ontario" for developing jobs in Sudbury (Diallo, 1993b, Reaction to the Report, p.2).

Because of a community development process, Sudbury Association members and community residents could get involved in other activities that benefited the community, in addition to the programs that were specifically designed for prevention. The Sudbury Better Beginnings, Better Futures project was expanding.

An important point that needs to be highlighted in promoting CED is that people can sometimes be enticed to participate through some economic assistance, such as childcare, training and transportation. For example, a community resident had her expenses paid to attend a conference on community kitchens. When she returned, she volunteered her time to help set up a community kitchen. The Better Beginnings, Better Futures Association then solicited another grant to hire someone to run the kitchen full-time. This kind of investment in people can reap very positive benefits for the community.

Another crucial point to be made about Community Economic Development is that it has to be a means that provides residents with adequate family income. The Sudbury Better Beginnings Association believes that adequate family income increases

people's ability and willingness to participate in community life. Hiring people part-time for programs is not creating jobs but it does contribute to the economy of the individual, the family and the community. People are interested in participating in activities that are healthy for their children and the other children of the community. Providing them with an additional incentive such as paid work is conducive to a steadier type of participation. In addition, the Sudbury Association has noted that community people will frequently give some of their time freely in other project activities (Participant observer's notes, July, 1992).

These CED activities are not without problems. Jealousy can occur with hiring choices. The Sudbury Better Beginnings project has had some difficulties in that area but managed them. The strategy employed in hiring has been to have community members sit on hiring committees. Hiring was done fairly by posting the job descriptions and by going through a hiring process. These kinds of activities need to be formalized so that everyone who has the ability to do the work has an equal chance at getting the jobs.

Community economic development and community development are not mutually exclusive. Community economic development is a particular form of community development. The Provincial Better Beginnings, Better Futures model does not emphasize economic development. Instead the state puts more emphasis on the terms "community involvement". The approach of the state does make community development and

community economic development distinct entities. A community can engage in CED activities but on its own and without using the funds allocated for Better Beginnings programs. Under these conditions a community could not decide on its own, that creating jobs is a way of building community. But a community can use the structure of Better Beginnings to engage in other activities conducive to CED activities.

This process of community development advocated by the state is nevertheless useful to bring people together to find solutions to common problems. It is also conducive to create various networks of communication among community residents and between the local group and the state. These communication networks are conducive to community building but are restricted in their ability to give people control over resources of an economic nature.

## **7.2 CONCLUSION**

The review of our six concepts serves to illustrate that the Sudbury Association of Better Beginnings, Better Futures has been able to remain faithful to the true spirit of a community development process by emphasizing the participation of community members. To achieve this goal, the Sudbury Association developed strategies that actively involved community members in not only taking part in activities of the project, but also being part of the decision-making process on issues that affect their day to day

activities. In the next section, I discuss some limitations associated with the concept of community participation as experienced by the Sudbury Association.

### 7.2.1 LIMITS TO THE CONCEPT OF PARTICIPATION

In this section I want to discuss to some of the limitations of community participation in a partnership between the state and a local community. The discussion is inspired by some of the work done by Ng *et al.* (1990) on the concept of social relations. "Social relations ... have to do with how people relate to each other through productive and reproductive activities" (Ng *et al.*, 1990, p. 311). This concept is influenced by Marx and Engel's (1970) work in which they remind us that in analyzing the social world we must keep in mind that it is comprised of " ... real individuals, their activity and the material conditions under which they live" (p. 42). Ng *et al.* (1990) examined how gender, race and class relations operate to form "... a relation of necessary interconnection; it does not fragment or isolate them in social analysis" (p. 312).

The argument is that gender, ethnicity and race, and class relations are intertwined with the construction of the state and the community. Rather than viewing the state as a set of apparatuses which stand above communities, the state is viewed "... as the central constituent in the developing relations of capitalism in Canada" (Ng *et al.*, 1990, p. 312). Similarly, communities have evolved from the extensive struggles of

people that grouped together, for or against domination, depending of what were the necessities for their lives.

Thus, people don't enter into relationships and interactions with either "the state" or "the community". The state and the community are themselves products of people's activities and creations as people group together to struggle for or against dominations (Ng *et al.*, 1990, p. 312).

There are two levels of understanding that are useful for this kind of analysis. The micro level analyzes the everyday work activities and the macro level analyzes the larger apparatus of the state (the mode of production). In this research project, the focus has been on the analysis of the everyday work and life activities of community members in Sudbury. We have already alluded to the constant interchange that occurs between the internal and the external structures into which the Sudbury Association has developed its strategies. To further apply the principles of community participation there needs to be constant interchange between the community's every day activities and the larger social development activities of the state. The use of the concept of social relations helps to further explore the realities of people's lives in a community. Through the understanding of people's reality, the state (in this case MCSS), can better focus its policies and make them adaptable to the set of social relations that applies to that community in particular.

There is an added benefit that stems from the concept of social relations. Rather than having a vertical line of communication, that is, a top-down approach between the state and the local community group, the concept of social relations promotes an

horizontal line of communication in which the principles of equality and cooperation can evolve. Thus, the struggle for or against domination, as Ng points out in the above quotation, can be reduced because the constant interchange that occurs between the state and the local community allows for better understanding of the everyday realities common to both. In this sense, the concept of social relations as developed by Ng *et al.* (1990) contributes greatly to the community development and community participation literature, because it goes beyond the models developed by Arnstein's and Bregha, which are purely descriptive. The concept of social relations goes beyond describing the principles of participation between the state and the local community by providing concrete ways in which productive relations can develop between these two entities.

This does not mean, however, that it completely eliminates struggles for or against domination. For example, the Sudbury Association developed its strength through specific strategies in order to become as strong a partner as possible. These strategies involved using the Community Advisory Committee (CAC) which allowed the Sudbury Association to gain legitimation *vis-à-vis* the funder. Another strategy was to continually go back to the larger community for legitimation as well as for direction. The Sudbury Association also developed strategies that promoted community development principles within its core. By understanding the implications of community development, Sudbury association members were better prepared to overcome obstacles and become true partners in their relationship with MCSS. By being able to rely on the strengths found within its core group, the Sudbury Association was better equipped to face the

items that were non-negotiable with the state. Such items were: the funding limitations for the project; no monies allocated for day-care; very little room to re-allocate funds for the programs into other activities of Sudbury Better Beginnings and; the obligation to report progress of the project in certain pre-established ways. Even though these items were non-negotiable, the Sudbury Association was able to centre on its strengths (consensus decision-making, circle, action research) and to focus on the nine principles it developed. By promoting community development and community participation within its core, the Sudbury Association was in fact making the state aware that these items were non-negotiable and thus making itself a strong partner in the relationship.

The concept of social relations can also be applied within the community participation process at the local community group. In the case of the Sudbury Better Beginnings project, particular attention needed to be devoted to the process of decision-making. The Sudbury participants themselves needed to learn this process and to adapt it to a setting of ethnic pluralism. Such conditions slow down the process of participation in that many groups (natives, francophones, anglophones, and multicultural) had in fact various views to exchange among themselves through the medium of the Sudbury Association.

There were some "class divisions" within the Sudbury Association. Clearly, the agency front line workers, who were dominant in the group, had control over the community development process. Their involvement did not exclude the participation

of community members but it did exclude possible "other ways" of doing community development. These agency workers did the ground work, developed the ideas to get the project, and guided it with traditional visions of community development and community participation work from the perspective of community organization workers. The fact that they had theoretical and experiential knowledge of community development put them in a position of control, even if they did not want to be in such a position. Many efforts were made to involve various segments of the community with successes and failures but ultimately the agency workers were a "ruling class".<sup>1</sup>

This does not mean that various segments of the population did not make gains. The community development efforts of agency workers heightened community residents' awareness of the issues involved and provided them with the possibility of controlling some elements of their lives over which they did not have control before. Examples are that they were now deciding on programs and activities for their children and the fact that through the Sudbury Association community members became a political voice on certain issues.

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<sup>1</sup> "Ruling class" is used in the sense that this group of agency workers possessed technical knowledge about community development principles which is also shared by civil servants. Geographically, there is no doubt that these agency workers were members of the Sudbury community, but professionally speaking were they closer to the civil servants and their technical knowledge? Both civil servants and agency workers made use of their technical knowledge in their negotiation process. For front-line agency workers it is frequently difficult to recognize the boundaries between the institutional and the community perspectives and this was a constant struggle in wanting to make this community development project community owned.



I would like to re-emphasize that the concept of social relations is very useful in the analysis of community participation because it pushes the analysis further than Arnstein's and Bregha's models do. Arnstein's model is strictly descriptive. It does not ask who is participating, or for what reason. Bregha's model is also descriptive and even though it focuses on establishing a relationship between the state and the community, it does not offer a complete picture of community people's daily life activities. For example, Bregha's model does not identify who takes care of certain programs and activities of the Sudbury Better Beginnings project. Not all activities are the responsibility of staff. Many volunteers dedicated their time on a regular basis to various activities of the project. Many are women who volunteer their time because their children are involved or because they want to see "their" community children be provided with better beginnings.<sup>2</sup> The notion of social relations would allow some possibilities for future research in assessing not only who participates and for what reasons but also to assess how these people contribute to the larger social, political and economic well-being of our society.

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<sup>2</sup> A limitation to community participation and of this study is that it does not address the fact that most of the volunteer hours given to this community project were given by women. A feminist critique on the volunteer hours given by women and on who really profits from participation could be the focus of a future study. Is community participation primarily benefiting the State, the community, or women?

### **7.2.2 TOWARD DIRECT DEMOCRACY**

It is clear that the traditional power structure in community participation has not changed in the Better Beginnings, Better Futures model. Political and economic powers are still with the state which has decision-making authority over what projects get funded and which communities get them. It is not that the theory has changed about community participation, it is more that the attitude towards community participation principles has become more open. The funder, inspired by the findings of research, has engaged in a proposal with a community that was given some power to make decisions in its own interest.

The dynamic relationship that evolves between the state and the local community group establishes what kind of community participation is feasible or, more precisely, the conditions under which people can participate. I presented arguments in my conceptual framework that in order to participate, community residents needed to adopt a more direct democracy approach in their involvement. Four models were introduced: individualism, collectivism, voluntarism and communitarianism.

Individualism bypasses larger social problems as they relate to structural deficiencies and does not promote public education or community involvement. In this context, community support systems cannot be established. Collectivism encourages the concepts of equality and social justice for all but rarely with citizen input. Power and

control are vertically decreed by the state and bureaucracy alone does not make community participation possible. Voluntarism is made into an ideology that can solve personal and social problems but remains highly unrealistic because it is expected to relieve the state from its responsibilities in addressing social problems. Voluntary organizations can help some people achieve a better quality of life in certain areas of their lives by providing services and resources that help them meet the crisis of their daily lives but is not usually conducive to community capacity building.

I believe that a likely solution can be found in community projects similar to Better Beginnings, Better Futures. Such projects meet the requirements of modern communitarianism by engaging the state and the local community in a partnership and by including the voluntary sector in order to complete the process. The voluntary sector participated in the Sudbury Better Beginnings project by means of the Community Advisory Committee and the Sudbury Association had the support of seven integrated agencies when its project proposal was submitted. The process of integration, an essential component of the Better Beginnings model, was well engaged.

Communitarianism favours a direct democracy approach. Participants engage in a horizontal relationship with each other, creating a partnership based on equality, cooperation and the good of the collectivity. The notion of partnership is strongly emphasized by the state in the Better Beginnings model but it can only work if all parties believe that positive change and sound decision-making can come through participation.

This belief has to be sustained by concrete actions. Albert (1992) defines community participation as empowering people. He makes the case for allowing people "... room to move, to take action" (p. 232), so that indigenous ideas of progress can emerge. A Sudbury Association member shares this view of empowerment.

Empowerment to me means taking control, or taking charge of your own life. Community participation simply means that people work together to achieve whatever goal that might be. Community ownership means that the community takes responsibility. Participation and taking responsibility are good and wholesome, but taking charge is what causes communities to get things done (B., June, 1991).

The Better Beginnings model allowed for community-suited solutions to be determined by the participation of community people. This is an important tool that the state can now use. What has been learned at all eleven sites can be shared among the various Better Beginnings projects and eventually be made public and accessible to all persons and organizations interested in community participation.

An important aspect of successful community participation has to do with who initiates and controls the process (Albert, 1992). The lack of prevention programs had been identified by a handful of people in the Sudbury community in the Fall of 1989 and initiatives towards resolving this problem were at the discussion stage. The timing of the release of the Better Beginnings, Better Futures model to the public came at an opportune time for the Sudbury community. This document created the opportunity for this group to take action and was well suited to their methods and needs. To some extent, both

parties initiated the part of the process which focused primarily on prevention and this allowed people in Sudbury to feel some ownership of the project. But real ownership comes out of the process of negotiation, in which community residents and state representatives agree on a compatible agenda. It is important for a community group to maintain control over its objectives when engaged in a venture with the state in a community project. In order to determine what is likely to increase the success of community participation, I make some parallels with the experience of the Community Mental Health Movement.

Briefly summarized, the Community Mental Health Movement sought to put in place mental health services, where and when needed, in the community of the patient. It was felt that these mental health services would be more effective if integrated with other human services such as social services, housing, financial help and job search counselling. It promoted positive mental health, prevention, and the rights of the mentally ill. Mental health here was about community rehabilitation as opposed to institutional treatment. The Community Mental Health Movement also promoted community involvement and community control; professional accountability, training, program evaluation and research; and variety, flexibility and "... realism tailored to the unique situation of the particular community" (Smith and Hobbs, 1966, p. 509). These principles were legislated by the United States Mental Health Act in 1963.

These principles are also part of the Better Beginnings, Better Futures model. Theoretically, little has changed. It is the application of the principles behind community participation that needed to change, and the partnership between the state and the Sudbury Association has paid particular attention to applying the model. The following example is useful in clarifying how the application of community participation has evolved with the experience of the Sudbury Better Beginnings model. In 1984, the Canadian Council on Social Development hosted a symposium entitled: "Deinstitutionalization: Costs and Effects". In the concluding remarks of the symposium, Judith Snow, in attempting to assess with the people in attendance "where we are and where we would like to be" (p. 120), came up with the following two questions:

- How can we make our communities more competent to receive the participation of all of their citizens?
- How much does it cost to re-create competence in the community? (p. 120)

Snow (1985) also adds the following:

We have to re-create competence or perhaps create it for the first time; I don't know for sure. But I do know that we have had big institutions, and big institutional thinking, for at least the last 150 years, and that has happened at tremendous cost to all of us. It has cost us our own competence in knowing how to deal with making everybody a participator. So, now we have to either create or re-create full competence in our communities (p. 120).

Part of the answer to the questions raised above are found in the experiences of the Sudbury Better Beginnings, Better Futures project. Much of the community development and community participation activities for the Sudbury Association have revolved around developing competence in the community. Sudbury Association members had considerable experience as a group in community development. Their conception of what community development and community participation should be was clear enough to minimize manipulation by the state. Their collective experience was in both failed and successful community projects. This expertise helped in diminishing the feeling of wanting a project so badly, that too much compromise is made. The solidarity and cohesiveness that the group was able to foster was conducive to wanting something good for the community.

One of the strengths of the Sudbury Association came from the provincial Better Beginnings model. The model was strong in community principles, allowing the Sudbury Association to design its projects and follow the guidelines of those principles. The motivation for obtaining a project was not in wanting the project and the monies at all costs, but because it had the potential to be a real community project controlled by the community. This attitude served to bring participants beyond degrees of tokenism. The Association and various segments of the community needed to engage in a collaborative process. As people became more knowledgeable about their community and its needs, they developed more pride and focused on trying to meet the needs of the community as a whole and not of a selected few.

The process of agency integration contributed to the community at large. Being invited to belong to the CAC gave greater visibility to these people within their community. It served the purpose of identifying the key players who made decisions for people in the community. The CAC was conducive to building positive attitudes among people from various agencies and organizations and created an opportunity for these community leaders to coalesce on a community project. They could contribute their knowledge of their community in a project they had all publicly endorsed.

The effects of the Sudbury Better Beginnings project on the community have manifested themselves on individuals who acquired more skills and on the collectivity. The integration process opened the doors for professionals to engage in a collaborative approach and to avoid duplication of services in the community. The Better Beginnings project contributed prevention programs which were a welcome supplement to the clinical services available in the community. By extending the project to research, application of what works in community projects can be applied elsewhere. Research activities have been a common denominator that served to enhance the project not only for community residents but also for CAC members. It is a lot easier to collaborate in research than to compete in service delivery.

There is continuity in the planning and decision-making activities of the Sudbury Better Beginnings project. Participants continually seek to improve their quality of life through work, leisure and volunteering activities. It becomes part of the informal



structure of helping found in the spirit of communitarianism, where citizens start assuming local responsibility in the use of local resources. The state remains in partnership "working with" the community rather than "doing for" (Epp, 1986).

The Sudbury Better Beginnings project is an example of a community that worked in harmony with all segments of its population. The strength of this community project is to be found in the modalities of its functioning, such as its consensus decision-making approach, the use of the circle and consultation with the community. These ways of operating were respected by the state and helped to set the tone in negotiating their partnership in a healthy and beneficial way.

The process of community development in which the Sudbury Association engaged with the state is a form of direct democracy. It is a model of shared power that promotes associative relationships within various segments of the community, which are then transmitted to the entity called the Association which, in turn, enters into a partnership with the state. It is a form of communitarianism that does not put the state in the position of being the referee for competing interest groups. These interest groups have already focused their energy through the medium of the Association which represents the community through a participative process in the Better Beginnings project.

When an organization is conscious of including members who represent various segments of the population, the principle of participatory democracy is preserved (Lamoureux *et al.*, 1984). This representation must be at all levels of the decision-making process if it is to be valid. It is a partnership of shared power.

## **CHAPTER 8**

### **CONCLUSION**

In this thesis, I analyzed the concept of community participation and its application using a case study approach. The main focus of the study was the degree of autonomy that can be achieved at the local level and the kind of participation that can come from the state when the state and communities are engaged in a community participation process.

The dynamic interaction within the community and between the community and the state contributed to the actual process of establishing a partnership as a means of true community participation. In the end, when both the state and the local community formed a partnership, the traditional elements contained in community development projects were retained. The state was still the major funder with the power to decide who gets a project and local communities were still dependent on such an award. The major difference lies in the positive dynamic relationship that has occurred in the implementation of

community development and community participation principles in selected communities.

Implementation of these principles is possible when adequate resources are put into place. The state has contributed a model which was not purely based on its own view of community involvement but also supported by research. It then provided the means to interested communities to apply for a project by giving information, financial support and expert knowledge. It also created the opportunity for feedback from interested community groups.

The Sudbury Association espoused the general guidelines around prevention and community involvement developed by the Better Beginnings, Better Futures model. To achieve its objective of being selected as a project site, much of the energy of Sudbury Association members went to developing strategies for community development and community participation, both within the community and between the funder and themselves.

A key objective of the Sudbury Association was to have the participation of the whole community. Although this objective sounds unrealistic in that not all the people will be there all the time, Association members sought representation from all segments of the population. Community projects for the 1990's need to include cultural representation and representation from groups that constitute the community. This approach recognizes that the community is everybody, but also that it is made up of

different segments, each of which is important. Segments may differ in interests but they nevertheless have certain things in common within the community, such as where their children go to school and play.

In addition to engaging various cultural and parent groups, the Sudbury Association sought the support of key community leaders by creating a Community Advisory Committee. This strategy contributed to funnel community interests towards a major research demonstration project and served to initiate discussion on the integration of community services. The support of the Community Advisory Committee illustrated to MCSS that the Sudbury proposal was endorsed by the community at large.

But the most effective strategies were those that Association members developed for themselves. The regular weekly meetings, the circle and the consensus decision-making model are major strategies that helped to solidify and sustain the group. It allowed bonding among participants, kept up their energy level and, most of all, allowed them to keep focusing on their objectives. The group's allegiance and commitment to community development and community participation principles contributed to the group's solidarity and unity. As one participant observed: "There was always someone in the group to remind you of basic community development principles like including the community" (Interview with S., June 25, 1993).

Because they were adhering to community development and community

participation principles, the Sudbury group became better at recognizing when directives from the funder were contrary to or could impede their community work. In a partnership, such issues need to be discussed.

As much as Sudbury Association members learned about community work, so did the funder. MCSS staff felt that the Sudbury site was ahead of the others in its knowledge and application of community development and community participation principles and for this reason would tend to use the Sudbury project to test a new method. At certain times this created confusion and frustration for Sudbury participants. But the knowledge gained by MCSS representatives extended beyond the results of what the new methods could give. The reactions from Sudbury participants provided useful insights to the state as to the impediments that can interfere with the process of community development.

## **8.1 CONTRIBUTIONS OF THIS RESEARCH**

This case study contributes knowledge to the social work profession and to the fields of community development and community participation.

Taylor (1985) identified two goals of social work community practice:

1. reliance on, and enhancement of, the community's use of democratic process; and

2. responsibility for enabling the community to develop its own capacity to function and to deal with problems (p. 190).

The Sudbury Association consisted mainly of front-line social workers working in agencies serving the community. These social workers had knowledge and experience in clinical and community work, which predisposed them to fulfil the two goals mentioned above.

The Sudbury Association was able to make proper use of participatory democracy through strategies such as the weekly meetings; circling-in and circling-out; and the consensus decision-making approach. In their dealings with the funder, Association members also used strategies of participatory democracy in developing strategies around writing the proposal; the contract negotiation and; in its use of the Community Advisory Committee.

A goal of social work education and training is to prepare social workers to enable communities to develop their capacities in dealing with problems. Leonard (1975) states that the objective of social workers is to:

... help people to increase their control over economic and political structures (p. 55).

For this to happen, social workers need to become sensitized and made aware of the structures and mind sets which permit oppressing conditions to occur (Wharf, 1979).

Such awareness provides the context in which social workers can develop strategies and become enablers.

Sudbury Association members were able to create democratic links between the funder and themselves, by insisting on the inclusion of community development as a process, in their negotiations with the state. This major strategy compelled MCSS to focus on the processes of community development and community participation and not only on the programs of the Sudbury Better Beginnings, Better Futures project. Focussing on programs usually means assessing their outcomes. Consequently, little attention is given to the hard work that has gone into the community to achieve collaboration, cooperation and harmony. The inclusion of community development as a process enabled the community to continue developing its own capacity to function and deal with its problems.

In addition to understanding better the process of community development, social workers also need to be convinced that the time invested with community people doing community work is time well spent. By spending time in the community, social workers distance themselves from agency attitudes and learn to appreciate the perception that community people have of their problems. All too frequently, social workers fall prey to the pressures placed upon their agencies, which tend to be result oriented. Consequently programs for the community are short-changed because of this type of pressure. For example, a day-care centre gets transformed into a child minding program



with community staff without qualifications, but who get training through workshops facilitated by agency staff. These situations may be presented as efficient propositions but not when they undermine the fact that a real day-care had been identified as a real need for the community.

Social workers can learn to make more effective use of the concept of social relations, which recognizes the importance of everyday activities of people and the contribution that these make to society. Social workers are in a position where they can acquire better knowledge of the context of the community with which they are involved. As enablers, social workers can contribute to facilitate the process of participatory democracy.

This research also contributes knowledge to specific questions raised in the field of community participation. These questions are: What is full participation? What is implied in decision-making? What kind of participation can come from the state? and What is a sense of community?

Understanding what is "full" participation remains a constant struggle. However, some strategies developed by the Sudbury Better Beginnings, Better Futures Association bring us a step closer to full representation. For example, the Sudbury Association sought representation from all segments of the Donovan and Flour Mill neighbourhoods by establishing working groups. The anglophone, francophone and native working

groups, and the multicultural working group which came later, allowed for representation of the ethnic groups of the community. There were other working groups which co-existed at various times such as the research working group, the agency working group and working groups of parents. These ethnic and interest groups had representation at the Association level.

The use of working groups allowed for certain segments of the community to work on their own issues and to report back to the Association. Association members would not make a decision on something that was of concern to a working group without first consulting with the group and asking the members of the group for their suggestions. Such a process is advantageous because it is conducive to faster community bonding and trust, in addition to ensuring representation from all segments of the population, but it does not answer the question of what is full participation. The existence of various working groups does, however, provide opportunities for community people to participate in some areas of the project other than at the Association level. By creating choices through which people can participate, and heightening the level of awareness of what participation is, we come closer to a more accurate definition of what is full participation.

The question of what is implied in decision-making is also partly answered in this case study. The members of the Sudbury Association underwent a process in which the use of the circle and of a consensus decision-making approach sensitized participants

about how their decisions affected their community. Community participants learned how to use their own expertise in the decision-making process, challenging the myth that communities need to solely rely on outside experts. Community members become involve in active and meaningful manners as valued members of their community. Not all decisions about all issues of concern to a community are made by community members, but a project such as Better Beginnings, Better Futures allows community participants to make important decisions around questions of crucial importance to them, namely about their children.

The kind of participation that can come from the state has been answered by the fact that the state has provided a general model, specific guidelines by which to draft a model and funding for five years to the Sudbury Better Beginnings project. MCSS also appointed some of its own staff who act as consultants and who supervise the eleven Better Beginnings, Better Futures sites across the province. Both the State and the Sudbury community have entered a partnership by negotiating a contract. In order for either party to change the nature of this partnership they would need to enter into new negotiations.

The state could nevertheless get involved further with communities by comprehending more fully the notion of how a community decides what is good for itself. This is a difficult transition to make because the power imbalance that exists between the state and local communities is a question that is still unresolved. Frequently,

the state demands of a community that it stretches a dollar more than it can do itself with its overwhelming bureaucracy. But is it realistic for the state to transfer responsibilities to communities to keep quality programs at lower costs without a transfer of power? With the help of Arnstein's model, it was clearly illustrated that the degree of power of the Sudbury Better Beginnings project was not at the citizen control level. Although some powers were delegated to the Sudbury Association in managing the Better Beginnings project, there is no room for the Association to use the funds for other program activities than the ones that are already stipulated in the contract. A suggestion would be to allow more flexibility in contract agreements whereby a local community could assume more responsibility in making decisions for itself. Pilot projects could be conducted so as to put this idea into practice and the concept of social relations used since it favours horizontal communication.

Has a sense of community been achieved in the neighbourhoods of Donovan and Flour Mill? For participants there were individual gains such as developing skills, making new relationships and for some employment was found. In addition, participants learned how to plan and make decisions as a group. They have developed a sense of working with each other as opposed to waiting to receive handouts. All of this leads toward self-determination for a community. Community members also learned about the resources within their community and how to use them to their advantage. Thus, a certain type of networking has occurred in the community.

Developing a sense of community also extended beyond the geographical boundaries of the Donovan and Flour Mill neighbourhoods. Other people from the larger community, including myself, have had an opportunity to live the experience of a community development process and to gain knowledge and develop abilities that are useful to carry on in the field of community participation.

The results from this research do not lend themselves to statistical generalizations but they do contribute to analytical generalizations. Although the purpose of this research was not to build theory, it was nevertheless based upon theoretical elements that served to build the conceptual framework. In this way, this case study has value in that it is rich and authentic and it can appeal to researchers focusing on the "how" of participation because "it speaks to them". In other words, it can provide insight and direction for others who would like to make use of this type of community participation. The value of this research would also be enhanced if other Better Beginnings, Better Futures sites across the province would like to study their own processes of community participation using this conceptual framework.

There are some biases in the research that need to be addressed. For example we can question as to whether the Sudbury Better Beginnings, Better Futures project did fall prey to the Hawthorne effect? Was the outcome of securing a project dependent upon the fact that researchers were involved with the group? Would the results have been the same without their presence? It is fair to say however, that the Sudbury community possessed

a strong community development background and that the experience of its community members did influence the shape that the model took. In fact, the Sudbury community was looked upon as a leader in the field of community development by MCSS representatives. We can question to what extent this reputation and this community experience had an effect on the outcome of the research demonstration project.

## **8.2 AVENUES FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**

This research has contributed a conceptual framework grounded in the experiences of the participants engaged in a community development process. Fenerstein (1988) states that:

A conceptual framework is like a system of values and attitudes which result in a specific view of reality. Conventional evaluation approaches have been based largely on a narrow set of western and elite-dominated conceptual frameworks. For this reason such approaches have given scant recognition to the validity of a wider range of frameworks including those found at community level. Or, to put it another way, are the powerless and poor to continue to be judged by others using sets of assumptions and value judgements constructed very largely without their participation? (p. 24) .

In research projects grounded in the experiences of community people, participants are enabled to analyze their own reality. This type of research increases the analytical capacities of a wider range of people, at different levels within the community concerned, and with society at large. Research conducted with this type of framework challenges a long Western tradition of centralized elitist expert guidance of society. But it is a type

of research that needs to be done to ascertain clearly what degree of autonomy can be exercised at the community level and what kind of participation can be coming from the state when communities are engaged with the state in a community participation process.

Future research could concentrate on community work projects in which communities have defined their own process of community development and study how the state can facilitate this process. This would generate new knowledge on whether an established community development process serves to create a sense of community and to foster community integration. In Sudbury two elements were strongly entrenched in the community development process created by Association members. They assessed their needs and found their own ways of dealing with their problems. Future studies could focus on the benefits of these strategies and contrast them with traditional approaches used to study community development.

Future research could also focus on issues of concerns at the macro level of development. For example there are existing realities such as a state which is quite dominant and a community that needs to be nurtured because it is made of individualized, fragmented and competitive social units. There is also the reality of a minimalist state and an active civic society where social development becomes more the responsibility of non government organizations (NGO). In other words, what is the role of non government organizations as an equal partner in social development issues? This study was limited to the analysis of the relationship between the state and a local community

and paid no attention to the NGO sector.

A critical area for future research centres on generating new knowledge on the concept of community economic development. MCSS made implicit in its Better Beginnings, Better Futures research demonstration project that social services and the economic sector were separate entities. Is such a position reasonable in the context of the lived reality of people in the community whose social and economic needs in the current economic climate have become high priority?

Another theme to consider in future research is the factor of time. More studies are needed on assessing the time that community people contribute to a community project. A community development process demands a huge commitment from community people in terms of time and energy. In a partnership between the state and a local community, there is frequently intense pressure to meet deadlines. What needs to be focused on is how we can make better use of time to benefit the partnership that develops between the state and the local community group.

In summary, two major contributions from this thesis need to be mentioned again and they both could be subjects for further research. The first one was discussed in chapter seven under the concept of community development. It has to do with community consciousness as opposed to isolated individual contributions. Individuals contribute as much as they can, and want to, to a community project. The members of the group



accept that commitment knowing that the availability of individuals will vary. What happens is that the level of community involvement becomes assured, not by individuals, but by a community consciousness that has evolved over time. In this particular case this community consciousness was expressed by an entity called the Sudbury Association. This community consciousness is in constant movement and this is what guarantees the participation process.

The second contribution worthy of mention, is how the Sudbury Association succeeded in becoming a strong partner in its relationship with the state. This item was also discussed in chapter seven under section 7.2.1. Even though this subject has been reviewed under the sub-title "Limits to the concept of participation", it is in fact a strength that came out of the ongoing interchange that occurred between the state and the Sudbury Association. In effect, the outcome has been an ideal form of community participation with a true horizontally functioning type of relationship where the state and the Sudbury group were engaged in negotiating as equals. As programs such as Better Beginnings, Better Futures develop, in partnerships with the state, it will be interesting to assess the roles that communities can take and if they will.

The partnership between the Sudbury Association and MCSS continues until 1995. Since the period covered by the data in this research project there have been many changes in the Sudbury Better Beginnings Association. The number of projects and programs have multiplied. The Sudbury Better Beginnings has entered into various

partnerships with local agencies. The participation of community residents has extended and the Association has become an incorporated body with all the seats being held by community members. Incorporation is the ultimate degree of autonomy that can be exercised by a local community group when engaged with the state in a community participation process. These new developments could be the subject of another study looking at how the Sudbury Better Beginnings project has evolved and its strategies in becoming self-sufficient in the future. As one resident has put it: "You can't depend on the government forever".

However, the Sudbury Better Beginnings, Better Futures project would not be what it is today without the dedication of the people who contributed to develop the proposal for the project. They gave generously of their time for something that they believed in and established the foundation for the Sudbury Better Beginnings project to flourish. The foundation they built is found in community development and community participation principles.

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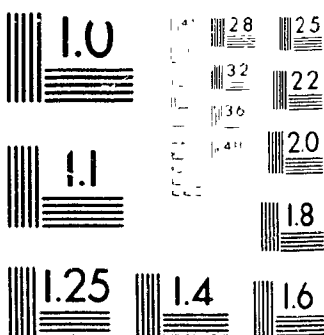
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## **APPENDIX A**

### **THE HISTORY OF THE SUDBURY BETTER BEGINNINGS, BETTER FUTURES PROJECT**

## **THE HISTORY OF THE SUDBURY BETTER BEGINNINGS, BETTER FUTURES PROJECT**

### **A-1.0 INTRODUCTION**

Any project necessarily begins with an idea. Someone, for one reason or another, thinks that the time is ripe for introducing change in an existing condition and starts sharing ideas. With the help of others, the idea begins to develop. The evolution of the Better Beginnings, Better Futures project of Sudbury is such a story.

This appendix presents a brief history of important events that led to the creation of the Sudbury Better Beginnings, Better Futures project. The events are reported in chronological order and cover the period from September 1989 to January 1992. It is important to bear in mind that the chronology of events helps to place the evolution of the Better Beginnings, Better Futures Project in its context. Since the research project

focuses on the process of community participation, the reader should not look for measures of outcomes.

The major source utilized for the descriptive history of Sudbury Better Beginnings comes from a total of 1867 pages of log notes taken by Better Beginnings members themselves. Minutes of meetings and log notes were taken, on a rotative basis, by those who attended.<sup>1</sup> The guideline agreed upon for the content of the logs was "to write anything and everything that seemed relevant and interesting". People were encouraged to use their own language.

#### **A-1.1 THE FIRST YEAR: DESIGNING THE PROJECT**

**September 1989 to January 29, 1991**

In the Fall of 1989, key community organizers of Sudbury began to discuss certain ideas about prevention programs for children based on a community development model. This was independent from the Better Beginnings, Better Futures program. Two key actors emerged: the assistant executive director of the N'Swakamok Native Friendship Centre and the team leader of a unique prevention unit in the Children's Mental Health Centre. At that meeting, they developed a blueprint for target groups for

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1. Because various people, with various skills took minutes, and because often, due to time constraints, many words written in the logs are abbreviated or incomplete, the author has chosen to make appropriate corrections in the various quotes used. However, the researcher is very conscious of not affecting the substance of the quotations and, for that reason, no synonyms have been used or structures of sentences changed.

prevention, identified their major goal, and defined a sequence of objectives. Specifically, the goal was:

To increase the social support systems of the target communities with specific focus towards parents with children under the age of five & pregnant adolescents or teens at high risk of creating teen pregnancies (Logbook, 1989, p.1).

One of their objectives was to emphasize a "democratic community consultation process" (Logbook, 1989, p. 1) in order to identify community needs.

The following November, the Sudbury Children's Mental Health Centre presented a brief to the Behavioral Review Committee of the Sudbury Board of Education. The intended program was aimed at achieving co-operation with the Sudbury Board of Education and seeking:

... to develop a stable, permanent prevention program targeted at schools where there are a high number of low income children.... We believe that the time has come for prevention programming to take its place in the continuum of services for children who have social, emotional and behavioral problems (Logbook, 1989, p.21).

During that same period, another event was taking place independently from Better Beginnings. A group of faculty members from the School of Social Work at Laurentian University were meeting. The group's objective was to focus on long term studies in child poverty with prevention as a key purpose.

It appears as though the theme of prevention with young children was prevalent in the Sudbury community in the Fall of 1989. Diverse groupings of people were discussing its merits in isolation. It is unclear from the log notes when these various groups heard about the prevention model of Better Beginnings, Better Futures.

The project Better Beginnings, Better Futures: An Integrated Model of Primary Prevention of Emotional and Behavioral Problems, was published in the Fall of 1989, by the Ministry of Community and Social Services. This same Ministry, in conjunction with the Ministries of Health and Education, announced its intent to fund approximately six primary prevention demonstration programs across the province of Ontario. The selected programs would be designed to prevent social and emotional problems among high risk children and the target groups would include pre-natal, pre-school and primary school age groups. The program would be funded for five years and longitudinal research conducted over the following twenty-five years.

On December 6, 1989, the first official Sudbury Better Beginnings, Better Futures Association meeting took place in response to the province's initiative. Five people met on that day. The intended program model that was discussed was community oriented and described as "building neighbourhood around the developmental needs of our target populations" (Logbook, 1989, p. 31). The term "at risk" was used to describe various target groups of the population. This term took on considerable significance as the group discussed it in more detail in future meetings. (The section analyzing the data will

elaborate more on this aspect). Also, at that meeting, the group of five individuals conferred on who they thought were the key players in MCSS in relation to health, social services and education. The **Association**, as it came to be known from that day onward, was thus formed.

Dated December 12, 1989, a draft of a letter intended for the "Ministry of Community and Social Services Better Beginnings, Better Futures Publication" was authored by the Sudbury Association to inform the Ministry that the Sudbury group was interested in submitting a proposal to be one of the six demonstration projects.<sup>2</sup> The content of the letter also identified the target group to be those in low income neighbourhoods and stated that the intent of the Sudbury design was to use a "community consultation model and process" for the purpose of implementing prevention programs. Through the Provincial Better Beginnings, Better Futures project, the Sudbury group had decided that this was perhaps their opportunity to achieve their primary prevention objectives. In addition, it was a means of finding a source of funding.

The meeting of December 13, 1989 was a turning point in the process. At that meeting, representatives from the Sudbury Better Beginnings, Better Futures Association and researchers of Laurentian University met to "brainstorm innovative interventions" to child poverty in Sudbury and surroundings. The meeting also became an opportunity

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2. It might be noted here that the original intent of the Ministry of Community and Social Services was to provide funding for only four to six "... very economically disadvantaged communities/neighbourhoods", across the province. (Request for Proposals: Research Sites, 1990, p.1).

for the Sudbury Association to introduce the "Better Beginnings, Better Futures Project" to the academic community.

At the January 31, 1990 meeting of the Better Beginnings Association, a decision was made "to keep minutes and progress under one book, and leave the book at the Native Friendship Centre" (Logbook, 1990, p.64). The group decided to use both languages, French and English, and to translate if need be.

The Association sponsored an Open Community Forum on Friendship Centre's premises on February 14, 1990. This forum was held to enable additional people to hear about and help shape the emerging ideas about child poverty and the Better Beginnings project.

During the month of March, many of the objectives of the Association involved organizing tasks in order to develop a proposal. Much of the philosophy was based on a model developed by James Comer's and described in his book, School Power (1980). Strategies were developed to meet deadlines for submitting material to the Better Beginnings, Better Futures project. Tactics about gathering all the relevant information necessary for the project were also evolving. Many discussions, at this time, were centered around the identification of sites and around the definition of neighbourhoods.



The group, getting larger, needed to keep up its spirit and members felt a need to motivate each other. Both instinctively and consciously at times, they took care of each other. Going around in a circle, people were able to state their feelings about the project. They gave themselves permission to dream a little about what they thought this program could look like in five years. There was always room, for those who wanted, to express more personal aspects of their own lives, recognizing that this was part of the community model. In other words, a deep sense of bonding was being developed among these founding members of the project. Many of those characteristics are still part of the functioning of the Association to this day. (A more thorough explanation of this phenomenon and its impact is discussed in the analysis of the data).

On April 5, 1990, the initial application was made to the Province. Two weeks later, on April 18, 1990, a group of community leaders was asked by the Province to come and discuss the draft of the project proposal and to share their ideas on what form the project should take. Following the meeting, strategies on time-lines for the application were designed, covering the period from May 1 to July 13, 1990.

During the following months, the Association group kept regular contact with the community and provincial representatives regarding the project. Feedback was sought by the Sudbury group from the provincial officials responsible for the requests for proposals. Many community people and leaders reached out during this period to increase community participation and special attention was paid to sending thank you letters to

directors of agencies and other people who contributed by providing data, advice, or suggestions.

The Association did not remain idle while waiting for a response from the Province to the initial application for project funding. Members decided to concentrate a lot of their work on the community. A community consultation interview questionnaire was developed to identify the needs and desires of the community. Using a "snowball approach", a member gave the questionnaire to someone she/he knew in the community. Then she/he could "snowball" to five people known to that individual. The end of May was set as the deadline to finalize the snowballing process. This data became very useful for the Association members in developing the project proposal.

A list of the Sudbury Better Beginnings, Better Futures membership was also drawn up. The original seven integrated agency members were: the N'Swakamok Friendship Centre; the Children's Mental Health Services/Services de santé mentale pour enfants; the John Howard Society; the Social Housing and Residential Equality in Sudbury (S.H.A.R.E.); the Sudbury District Housing Authority; the Sudbury Board of Education; and Laurentian University.

On May 29, 1990, the first Community Advisory Committee meeting, organized by the Sudbury Association, was held. The Community Advisory Committee (C.A.C.) consisted of key leaders of the community, or their designates, including the mayor, the

chief of police, directors of agencies and/or programs in the health, education and social services sectors, as well as other ethnic and cultural leaders.

Because the Sudbury Association was committed to the principle of a community consultation model and process, it felt that a committee such as the C.A.C. could bring a lot to the development of the project. These key players could not only support the project but also participate in it, since a major goal of the Better Beginnings ideology is the integration of services to the community. Their input was necessary to develop a comprehensive and holistic model of prevention.

Two weeks later, on June 15, 1990, a letter together with a copy of the draft of the project proposal was mailed out. It was sent to a total of 75 agency representatives and various community people from whom the Association wanted feedback. They were to look at the project proposal and submit their comments and suggestions by June 29, 1990. The Association asked these people to provide a letter indicating their support in principle of the ideas expressed in the proposal. **ON JULY 13, 1990**, the full Sudbury proposal for a Sudbury Better Beginnings, Better Futures project was submitted to the funding agency.

Again, the Sudbury Association kept active while waiting for a reply to their project proposal. During that summer, many activities took place. On August 7, 1990, a site visit was organized by the Sudbury Association. The people in attendance

represented various social service agencies, the police, the clergy, tenants' associations, the school system, and native and other cultural groups. The purpose of the meeting was to present and discuss the needs assessment that had been done on the community. Other topics of discussion included the ecological model of integration and the research components attached to the project.

The summer of 1990 was also marked with a notable event--a provincial election campaign, which was won by the New Democrats. They took power in September 1990. The question was whether the new government would consider Better Beginnings, Better Futures as a project worth pursuing as part of its mandate.

In the month of September, a party was organized at the N'Swakamok Native Friendship Centre to thank all the people who contributed to the development of the project proposal. In the minutes of September 12, 1990, it is reported that, because of the change in government, there would be a delay in the announcement on which Better Beginnings, Better Futures proposals would be accepted. Nevertheless, the Association continued its work and particularly worked at opening lines of communication with the schools. There were also discussions on expanding the Association. The issue arose as to how to bring other cultural groups into the Association, mainly Natives and Francophones. Conscious of an imbalance in its membership, the Association decided to approach those minority groups which lived in its defined geographical area. A decision

was made, by consensus, to act now and to approach these constituencies, but to let them know clearly that the Association did not yet have the project, nor the money.

During the Fall of 1990, it also became important for Association members to do a little soul searching. They did a self evaluation of their work to date, using the opportunity to talk about the best part of their work, as well as the worst part. This exercise was enhanced by the site researcher who prepared a survey questionnaire which was used as a guide. The logbook (1990, p. 79) commented: "This proved to be rich, as each member brought forth excellent ideas". A "dreaming session" was another activity undertaken by the group to keep spirits high. Beginning with the song "Dreaming", everyone took turns and talked about "their dreams" of Better Beginnings, Better Futures. After all members spoke, they drew their dreams on paper<sup>3</sup>.

That is how the members of the group kept their motivation high, while waiting to hear about their proposal. They needed to talk and continue bonding with each other. These strategies kept the "dream" alive. It was also a mechanism that continuously permitted them to re-create their energy levels.

On October 24, 1990, individual members reported that they had contacts with people responsible for the Provincial Better Beginnings project. These people were told that public announcements about selections of sites were not expected before November

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3. Note: The dream pictures are included in the logbook of 1990, pages 187 to 196.

24, 1990. The good news was that the overall program of Better Beginnings was no longer in limbo. The new government of Bob Rae would go ahead with the project.

On December 12, 1990, a member of the Association informed the group that there would be no announcements made about the project proposal before January 1991. Where this member got her source is unknown from the minutes. Nevertheless, she decided that she would write a "gentle" letter to the Minister, on her own initiative, and not as a representative of the Sudbury Association of Better Beginnings. The Sudbury Association made a decision that an official letter by the Association should be sent also. No further details as to the content are in the logs.

On January 29, 1991, the three Ministers of Community and Social Services, Health and Education announced jointly the nine sites accepted for a Better Beginnings, Better Futures project. The Sudbury project was among the selected sites.

This concludes the first year of the proposal's development. The Sudbury Association was now in a position to start planning and developing the program in more depth.

## **A-1.2 THE SECOND YEAR: PLANNING THE PROJECT**

**January 30, 1991 to July 03, 1992**

This section covers the chronology of the first year of planning the project after Sudbury had been selected as one of the original nine sites across the province, and terminates with the approval of the contract for the project between the Sudbury Association and the MCSS.

After the project was announced, the Association was flooded with inquiries. It was especially important to inform agencies, more specifically those that had committed some of their staff to Better Beginnings for one day a week, to participate in the project.

On January 31, 1991, the **Multicultural Folk Arts Association** expressed its desire to be involved with Better Beginnings. This Association's interest helped build bridges with the ethnic communities within the Flour Mill and Donovan areas. The Multicultural Folk Arts Association offered to provide cross-cultural awareness training for the Better Beginning Association, to sensitize it to the needs of the multicultural society.<sup>4</sup>

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4. When the Better Beginnings Better Futures project was designed, three ethnic working groups were identified: natives, francophones and anglophones working groups (or caucuses). It was originally thought that the multicultural community of Sudbury would be part of the anglophone caucuses. However, the Multicultural Folks Arts Association made the Better Beginnings Better Futures Association aware that the multicultural community was a distinct group in itself. A multicultural community worker was hired eventually in July 1991 to work with the multicultural working group. (anglophones, francophones and natives each obtained their own individual community workers).

On February 12, 1991, three Sudbury Association members, also working at Children's Mental Health Services, met with their agency's management team. The purpose was to brief management on Better Beginnings as well as to receive input. The Children's Mental Health Centre management made it clear to its employees that they were expected to work within the parameters of their agreed-upon commitments to Better Beginnings, Better Futures as indicated in their letter of integration.

We have committed ourselves to 4 days of energy/work to the association. We are one of 7 agencies in partnership so should play 1/7 of the total role (Logbook 1991, p. 258).

This particular management team gave the following advice to Better Beginnings Association members. Among other things, the team emphasized the need to develop a well thought-out plan of how the Association was going to develop its vision and how each part would fit into the whole. It made suggestions as to how Better Beginnings could maintain its shared governance with the community and not allow it to be negotiated away when the contract would be discussed with MCSS. The issue of how to involve the Francophone community to a greater degree was also discussed. A suggestion was made to establish a French caucus as a vehicle to involve the Francophone community. Overall, from the perspective of the Association members, this meeting proved to be quite productive.



February 20, 1991 marks this researcher's first encounter with the Better Beginnings, Better Futures Association. I attended my first Association meeting and was introduced as a university professor interested in doing research on community participation.

Regarding the issue of contract, it was decided that one person should assume the responsibility of representing the Association to the Ministry for purposes of funding. The executive director of the N'Swakamok Native Friendship Centre was identified as being most appropriate for that role, since N'Swakamok was the official sponsor of the project. The assistant executive director of N'Swakamok submitted the first draft of a request for a sum a \$40,000, which was 2/12 of the anticipated total annual budget.

There were also discussions on hiring and on salaries for upcoming positions with the Better Beginnings project. Association members formed sub-groups to draft job descriptions appropriate for each cultural group.

At this time, the Association also had to deal with how it should handle relations with the media. Various people were asked to comment on the project, some of whom were not members of the Association but had "indirect" knowledge of it. That caused some difficulties, since Association members wanted to ensure that no false hopes, or rumours, would be circulated in the community. Many projects in the past had raised hope in the Donovan and Flour Mill areas but too frequently had failed to deliver. After

a long discussion, it was decided that the media should not be contacted directly until there was something more tangible to announce.

The Association also decided to write to two groups of people. The first letter, directed to the Community Advisory Committee (CAC), announced the Association's success in securing the project and to arrange a CAC meeting for March 26, 1991. The second letter was to be sent to all supporters, helpers, cheerleaders, *etc.* of the Better Beginnings project, announcing its success and thanking them all profusely.

In March, a committee was formed to deal with the contract. Some Association members went to the Guelph Round Table, a forum in which representatives all selected groups met with representatives from the Ministry. Upon their return, a community member expressed the view that the language used was simply getting over the heads of ordinary people. In order to deal with that difficulty, a glossary of terms was prepared by the Association.

On March 16, 1991, the Sudbury Star advertised the position for a Program Coordinator for the Better Beginnings project. A hiring committee had been formed to interview the applicants and to recommend to the Association which person it felt would be best able to assume those duties. After hearing the recommendations of the committee, the Association invited the primary candidate to the meeting of April 10 in

order to meet with her. On that date, consensus was reached to appoint this person as program coordinator for the Better Beginnings project.

In April, the decision was made to go ahead and sign another letter of agreement with a budget of \$75,000, with the province. Another committee was struck to draft a job description and newspaper ads for a support staff position. The media issue came up again in April. An article appeared in the April 22 issue of the Sudbury Star. Although there was nothing really unfactual about that article, the press used terminology the Association preferred not to use for reasons of its negative connotation. Examples of such terms include "high risk" and "poor children". The Association developed a media strategy because people supplying information to the media were not Association members and therefore were not properly informed as to the ideology adopted by the Association. A decision was made that the media committee would develop a long-term strategy in order to emphasize the Sudbury site's community strengths.

On another front, during this same month, Association members discussed what they perceived as the role of community agencies. It was decided that agencies did in part have a role to play and a decision was made to establish an Agency Working Group. Its first meeting was held on June 19, 1991 and the topic of discussion was the integration of services. It is also during this month that the Association adopted its "terms of reference". More details about this issue will be discussed in the analysis section of the research.

During the month of July 1991, although many people were on holidays, meetings continued to take place. A flyer was drafted and distributed in the neighbourhoods of Donovan and Flour Mill in order to get the neighbourhood people interested in the Better Beginnings project and also to invite their questions.

In July, the Association was ready to hire the remainder of the community workers who would be involved with the different ethnic groups: the Anglophone, the Francophone, the Native and the Multicultural groups. In August, the new staff members were introduced to the Better Beginnings Association members as they participated in their first meeting of the Association. At this time, the only community worker position that was not filled was that for the Anglophone community.

In July and August, talks were undertaken between the Parks and Recreation Department of the City of Sudbury and the Association about gaining access to O'Connor Park as a possible site from which the Better Beginnings project could operate. Even though the Association had not yet signed a contract with the city, it was allowed to move in and held its first meetings at O'Connor Park in August. A lease between the city of Sudbury and Sudbury Better Beginnings, Better Futures Association was signed in November.

The Association participated actively in the neighbourhood during the summer of 1991. It took part in the Donovan Days in a very active way. The staff of the Association

held consultation meetings with parent groups and tenant associations, seeking their views on how to make better use of O'Connor Park. Staff members were also busy meeting with superintendents and principals from area schools, both separate and public.

A major document worked on by the Association in September 1991 pertained to association and staff roles and responsibilities. It continued into October, when important meetings were held to discuss the principles, vision and goals of the Association. These were eventually adopted and/or implemented.

A series of workshops followed to educate other groups about Better Beginnings. Many themes of these workshops had to do with community matters. These workshops were part of a series of workshops geared towards exploring what the ideas of the Association were about caring for children. A second purpose was to help create ideas and specific questions for the research component of the project as well as for the Research Coordination Unit (RCU).<sup>5</sup> The workshop was to help develop measures to see if important changes would take place within 5 years.

Another workshop, which took place at O'Connor Park in November, focused on various decision making methods. This workshop was important for Association

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5. Better Beginnings, Better Futures is a longitudinal prevention policy research demonstration project. Eleven sites across the province of Ontario have been selected. The Research Coordination Unit (RCU) oversees the overall research process of all sites. Each site has a researcher assigned by the RCU who acts as a consultant to them and reports to the provincial team. In addition there is a site researcher in Sudbury, who coordinates the local research process and is the liaison person with the RCU site researcher.

members, since it provided many members with added insights on the consensus approach to decision making.

Many other activities took place as well since the programs were beginning to expand rapidly. The Better Beginnings project was getting to be quite popular, as was O'Connor Park. The children had been dropping in after school on a regular basis. New staff needed to be hired for latchkey programs and child care activities. In addition, the site researcher received funds to hire a research assistant and a clerical support staff person.

A community potluck was held on November 27, 1991. This was an opportunity for parents to come and visit O'Connor Park. Comments from participants at that potluck were most favourable. Because it was the end of the month, many people were waiting for the next cheque to come before replenishing their refrigerators.

On December 4, 1991, an important meeting between the provincial Research Coordination Unit (RCU) and members of Sudbury Better Beginnings took place. It was a meeting at which MCSS representatives were also present. The RCU unit made a presentation on what had been done to date and what it was intending to do in the future. The MCSS representatives also delivered an update on the form the contract would take. Comments heard about Sudbury were very positive as the presenter told the assembly that the proposal from Sudbury got an A+++.

On December 11, 1991, I presented my research proposal to the Sudbury Association seeking permission to use the logs and minutes of the Association. Consent was granted by consensus. It should be added here that there are other documents that are part of the overall Better Beginnings, which were not drawn upon as sources for my research. Most of the working groups also have logs and other documents and some send their logs to the Association.<sup>6</sup> However, the most important and essential documents for my research belong to the Association.

Better Beginnings has always emphasized the use of a community development process. This process led to the identification of a number of activities that the people who live and work in the Donovan and Flour Mill area wanted to undertake. It is anticipated that these activities will change over time as the vision and expectations of the community grow and develop. For all the activities, local people were hired whenever possible and were trained to do the work that was required. The broad categories of the activities undertaken up to December 1991 were:

- Early Bird/lunch time program at the schools
- After school and holiday programs
- Training to enable play
- Native cultural programming
- Multicultural programming
- Community development program
- Care giver support centres
- Agency integration
- Community economic development

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6. It was always left up to individual working groups as to whether or not they wanted their minutes and logs to be sent to the Better Beginnings Association.

The issue of the contract with MCSS, however, was still not resolved and, on December 20, 1991, a draft of the proposed contract was sent to the site supervisor and provincial coordinator of Better Beginnings, Better Futures Children's services branch in Toronto. The Sudbury-based contract sub-committee and Association members had been working very hard on time-lines and on revising the content of the contract.

On January 8, 1992, Sudbury hosted a site visit by two Ministry representatives. Contract negotiations were part of the site visit. To the surprise of everyone, the Ministry representatives arrived with a new set of guidelines for drafting the contract. It meant that the contract sent December 20, 1991, had to be redone utilizing these new guidelines. People were stunned. Local Association members first decided to hold a brainstorming session on determining the elements that go into a high quality model of prevention. The model that came out of this brainstorming session was then applied to this "new essence of change" brought up by the Ministry representatives with their new set of guidelines.

Unfortunately, Association members were not prepared for this turn of event. After trying several times to apply this new set of guidelines to their model, it became clear to Association members that they were not getting anywhere. The tension was mounting in the room among the participants. Association members realized that they were starting to disagree among themselves. People were obviously upset and still in shock. Association members, after a brief discussion among themselves, informed the



Ministry representatives that they could not make a decision now and that they needed to consult the community. This was in line with all previous strategies utilized by the Association. Every new contract draft in the past had been brought back to the larger Association for discussion and input.

As a result of that meeting, it became clear that this contract, which everyone thought would be signed very soon, was going to be delayed. Instead of signing the contract of December 20, 1991 that the Sudbury Association had prepared through the consensus approach of decision making after many months of hard work, the Association was left in limbo wondering what would happen next.

Obviously the expectations from both sides were very different. The Ministry people wanted to see linkages between Sudbury's proposal and the Ministry's new model. The Sudbury group wanted to see if that new government model corresponded to the notion of a "high quality program" as perceived by the Sudbury Association. For the Sudbury Association, it was back to the drawing board.

Given that the contract was not going to be signed, the concern was whether there would be enough money to cover the programs that were planned and underway for the next three months, that is, until March 31, 1992. The discussion then focused on another letter of agreement extending from January to April 1992--a necessity under the circumstances. A new letter of agreement would permit the Association to function until

the end of March, given that the signing of a contract would take more time than expected. Some members were of the opinion that the provincial people came without ever reading Sudbury's proposal.

After the Association members had recuperated from the shock, they re-grouped and decided that everyone would take a part of the program and examine it in view of the Ministry's new model. Indeed, the Association wanted to go back to the community with that model and see what people thought. In the meantime, all Better Beginnings programs kept going.

Fortunately, it was announced on January 22, 1992, that a new letter of agreement had been approved. The program was to receive funding until the end of March. The Association had also asked the Ministry representatives to try to fit the Association's contract proposal into Sudbury's model and to provide feedback as to whether that could be done.

This did not mean, however, that the Association remained idle concerning this task. On January 29, there was a workshop on what the Sudbury Better Beginnings people would like the children to look like at various stages of their lives, that is, when they would reach the ages of 4, 6, 12, and 20 years. The workshop focused mainly on what "happy, healthy kids" would be like. The format identified five categories: the emotional, behavioral, social, physical, and cognitive aspects of life. Each activity in

each program had to relate to these aspects. This was the core of the new guidelines proposed by the new model from the Ministry people.

On February 19, the community held a very interesting workshop to decide how the Association should spend \$65,000 before the end of the fiscal year. People set priorities with respect to the things on which that money should be spent. Two of the items that were agreed on were: first, permission from the Association to hire an architect for the purpose of evaluating the work that would need to be done in order to renovate the land at St-Gabriel and O'Connor (\$10,000); and second, the decision to pre-pay the lease at St-Gabriel school, for the sum of \$17,000, covering the period from September 1, 1992 to March 31, 1993. These questions were decided by consensus. It proved to be an invaluable experience for the participants. More details on this subject will be presented in the analysis section of the study.

In March 1992, a large research caucus meeting took place. The objective was to discuss the draft of the survey questionnaire that was to be used to interview the parents and children taking part in the research. Input was sought from Association members on the content of the questionnaire. Association members involved in this process made a substantial contribution to enhancing the quality of the research instrument.

Many concerns of community members came to the forefront and were discussed in small groups. These included the terminology used. Some "big" words were intimidating for certain people. Child care and transportation were of primary interest. The Association had money for transportation and child care, which were considered to be an important aspect favourable to community participation. People can only participate if they are released from those types of constraints. An orientation package was also put together to facilitate entry for new members.

On April 1, 1992, a proposal was made to have an "in between committee" that would deal with personnel issues in a more formal manner than what had been the practice so far. This committee could meet between the meetings of the Association if there were a need for it. The administrative people within the Association felt that there should be a process to make the Association part of the decisions involving staff issues. The opinions of Association members differed with respect to whether this was necessary. Little did everyone know that there were some problems emerging. However, for reasons of confidentiality, the specific details of the request were not provided.

However, on April 9, 1992, a Ministry representative sent a letter to the Better Beginnings Coordinator outlining a conversation she had had with a member of the Francophone working group. There were some concerns raised that some members of the Francophone group were dissatisfied with the Association. The Francophone working group had decided to approach a Ministry representative directly instead of first dealing

with the concern at the Association level. The letter was distributed to Association members at that meeting, for the purpose of discussing it at the next meeting. In the meantime, a special meeting was to be held by the Francophone group with an outsider acting as chair.

On April 16, the Francophone community worker was dismissed from his position. Following this incident, special meetings were held which involved the Ministry representative who had received the letter, members of the Association and members from the research group. The latter were part of all meetings. The community worker who had been dismissed was present at one of the meetings. Some Francophone members of the Association, but not part of the Francophone Working Group, also took part in some of those meetings.

Finally, out of necessity, a personnel committee was formed on April 29, 1992. On June 15, 1992 a new Francophone community worker was hired along with a family support worker for the Francophone group. Both started work on July 14, 1992.

In addition, an interim steering committee was established to work on the contract. The committee was made up of one member from each of the four cultural working groups, one from the agency working group, and another from the Friendship Centre. These committees met regularly until the end of June. A draft of the contract was sent to the Ministry on June 11, 1992. Another, final version was sent on June 28, 1992.

Official correspondence from the Ministry, dated July 3, 1992, was received by the Better Beginnings, Better Futures Association, confirming approval of the contract.

Although the Better Beginnings Association of Sudbury continues to flourish beyond what is covered in this chapter, this chapter concludes with the confirmation of the acceptance of the contract by the Province on July 3, 1992. This confirmation symbolizes that the project is mutually agreeable to the Association and the Ministry and that from this point on, it is officially sanctioned by all parties involved. The data collection ends on July 3, 1992.

## GENERAL CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS

### **The Proposal Phase: September 1989 - January 29, 1991**

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|----------------------|--------|---|
| September<br>(1989)  | -      | Emergence of an idea<br>- Ideas on prevention (independent of Better Beginnings Better Futures)                               |
| October              | -<br>- | N'Swakamok Native Friendship Centre<br>Document on prevention (rationale)   |
| November             | -      | Sudbury Children's Mental Health Centre presents brief to Sudbury Board of Education on prevention (4th-R)                    |
|                      | -      | A group of faculty at School of Social Work are meeting to discuss prevention of child poverty                                |
| Fall                 | -      | Better Beginnings Better Futures - Prevention Model is published by MCSS  |
| December 06          | -      | First official meeting of Sudbury Better Beginnings Better Futures Association  |
| December 13          | -      | Sudbury Better Beginnings Better Futures and Laurentian University faculty meeting  |
| January 31<br>(1990) | -      | Meeting/Decision made by Better Beginnings Association to keep minutes and logs   |
|                      | -      | Two new members joined the Association  |
|                      | -      | A desire is expressed at the meeting to use French and English as two languages and to translate if need be                   |
| February 14          | -      | Open Community Forum, sponsored by N'Swakamok - to "propagate" ideas about child poverty and Better Beginnings Better Futures |
| April 05             | -      | Initial application made to province  |

- April 18 - Invitation to community leaders to come and discuss project proposal and time-lines are designed
- April & May - Community Consultation Interview questionnaire is developed  
- "Snowball approach", deadline of May 30 is set to finalize the process
- May 29 - First Community Advisory Committee meeting
- June 15 - Letter and draft project proposal sent out to agency and community representatives
- June 27 - COMSOC - indicates that more than 4-6 sites might be selected (eventually 11 sites were selected)
- July 13 - A full Proposal for a Sudbury Better Beginnings Better Futures project is submitted to MCSS
- August 07 - Site visit organized by Sudbury Association
- September 02 - New Democratic Party forms the new Provincial Government
- September 12 - Delay in the announcement of acceptance of Better Beginnings Better Futures proposal, due to government change
- Fall - Association members maintain spirit, using dreaming session
- October 24 - Contacts report that selection of site announcement was not expected before November 24
- December 12 - Member informs Association that no announcement will be made before January 1991
- January 28 (1991) - Meeting in Toronto: Candle Ceremony
- January 29 - Announcement made of the 11 sites selected, Sudbury is among them



### **The Planning Phase: January 31, 1991 - July 03, 1992**

- January 31 (1991) - Multicultural Folk Arts Association joins Better Beginnings Better Futures
- February 12 - Three Association members meet with their agency's management team
- February 20 - Researcher attends first meeting with Better Beginnings Better Futures
- February - Issue of contract is discussed, first draft of a request is submitted
- March - Association plans a meeting with CAC on March 26
- Committee formed to deal with contract
- Members go to Guelph Round Table
- Glossary of terms is developed
- March 16 - Sudbury Star advertises position of Program Coordinator
- April 10 - Program Coordinator of Better Beginnings Better Futures is appointed
- April - A letter of agreement is signed (budget of \$ 75,000) with the province
- Drafting of job description and newspaper ads for support staff positions are prepared
- Media issue is addressed
- Agency Working Group is set-up
- May 28-29 - Round Table in Sudbury (took place at Villa Loyola)
- June 12 - First Community member joins
- June 19 - Agency working group first meeting - terms of reference established
- July - Association is ready to hire staff
- August - New staff members are introduced to Association members
- First meeting at O'Connor Park

- September - Document describing Association and staff role responsibilities are prepared
- Series of workshops
- November - Workshop on decision-making methods
- November 27 - Community potluck
- December 04 - RCU gives an update to community members on research
- December 11 - Jean-Marc Bélanger presents research proposal to Association and gets permission to use logs and minutes
- December - List of Broad Categories of activities is prepared
- December 20 - Draft of proposed contract sent to site supervisor and provincial coordinator
- January 08 (1992) - Sudbury host site visit by two Ministry representatives - they bring in new set of guidelines
- January 22 - New letter of agreement approved - program to receive funding until end of March
- January 29 - Workshop on what people would like their children to look like at different stages of their lives (4, 6, 12 and 20 years of age)
- February 19 - Workshop on how the Association should spend \$ 65,000 before the end of the fiscal year
- March - Large research caucus meeting Association members workshop on questionnaire to interview parents and children
- April 01 - At Association meeting a proposal is made to have an "in between" committee to deal with personal issues
- 
- April 09 - MCSS sends a letter, re - Francophone working group letter of concerns
- April 16 - Francophone community worker is dismissed
- April 29 - Personnel Committee is formed
- June 11 - Draft of contract is sent to MCSS

- June 15        -        New Francophone community worker is hired and a family support worker**
- June 28        -        Final version of contract is sent to MCSS**
- July 03        -        MCSS confirms approval of contract**

## **APPENDIX B**

### **GUIDELINES FOR INTERVIEWS<sup>1</sup>**

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<sup>1</sup> Source: Logbook, June 1991.

## **GUIDELINES FOR INTERVIEWS**

### **SHORT INTERVIEW (JUNE 1991)**

**Note:** No need to follow the questions in exact order. But, do ask all the questions at some time. Sometimes there are several ways of asking the same thing. Pick what makes sense to you. Both the interviewer and interviewee can have the questions, and together sort out how they want to do the job. Feel free to answer or not answer now (or later).

#### **1.1 GIVE YOURSELF A CODENAME**

#### **1.2 Write down or put on tape recorder:**

- a. Date**
- b. Interviews - the one doing most of the talking**
- c. The interviewer - the one asking the questions**
- d. Note where you are doing the interview and procedures - e.g. in someone's office, at the kitchen table, under the lilac tree, with a tape recorder, writing rough notes and dictating later or rewriting notes, etc.**
- e. Both interviewee and interviewer circle or check in - say anything interesting, special, funny, or whatever about how your are...**

#### **2.1.1 Perhaps start talking about getting interested and then involved in Better Beginnings. The when, the why, and how?**

2.2.2 Were you picked - by whom? Do you represent anyone?

anything? and who?

2.2 What are some of the things you give (or plan to give) to Better Beginnings? Now? in the next year? What contributions, skills, tasks? What role(s) do you usually play - and outside meetings?

----- Next questions may seem the same; but answers can be quite different

2.3 What goals (hopes, dreams ...) do you have for yourself in the next year or so in your work with BBBF?

2.4 What goals (dreams, hopes ...) do you have for your agency, or group, or community in the next year or so?

2.5 What goals do you think (or know, or hear) your agency (your community, supervisors, board, or group) have?

2.6 What keeps you interested in and wanting to work in Better Beginnings?

2.7 What are some of the things you have learned - if any - from work with Better Beginnings? Any skills you've picked up? Anything you are using in other parts of your work (or personal)life?

2.8.1 Let's talk about cultural differences or barriers or strengths you notice in our work with each other.

2.8.2 What effect do these differences have on our work with each other and our communities?

2.8 Do you feel you have, or can have a real impact on what happens in Better

Beginnings? Discuss please.

- 2.9.1 How you think the Association makes decisions?
- 2.9.2 We say we sue consensus; what does that mean to you?
- 2.9.3 When should we use consensus? When not?
- 2.10.1 What will prevent you from getting too tired, or "burned out"?
- 2.10.2 What will help others from burning out?
- 2.10.3 What does Better Beginning members do to help "care" for you? For others? What more can or should we do?
- 2.11 What would make you less interested, or less willing (able) to work with Better Beginnings in the next year? Or, why will you "quit"?
- 2.12 Who "owns" the project right now? In a year from now, who do you hope will "own" the project?

#### OPTIONAL QUESTIONS

- 2.13.1 What are some of the specific strengths of the Association? of any members? And what about the weaknesses of the Association? of any members?
- 2.13.2 How do you use the strengths to help the weaknesses?
- 3.1 We talk a lot about community, community development, participation and so on.
- 3.2 What do you mean by "community"?
- 3.3 What "community" or "communities" are you part of in your work with Better

**Beginnings?**

- 3.4 Who in your mind "speaks" for a community? How can a community be best represented?
- 3.5 What is the difference between community "participation", "ownership", and "empowerment"?
- 3.6 How can community participation, ownership, or empowerment increase in Better Beginnings?
- 3.7 What does integrated services mean to you?
- 3.8 What about prevention?
- 4.1 Overall, what are the accomplishments of Sudbury's Better Beginnings?
- 4.2 Overall, what are the priorities for work in the next few months for Better Beginnings?

**IF YOU HAVE INTEREST AND ENERGY KEEP ASKING EACH OTHER MORE QUESTIONS. Like, what shall we do if individuals fall in love or in hate with others in the Association, and that love or hate affects our work together?**

**PLEASE CIRCLE BOTH OUT AS PART OF INTERVIEW**



## **APPENDIX C<sup>1</sup>**

### **COMMUNITY INDICATORS OF HIGH-RISK FOR EMOTIONAL, BEHAVIORAL, SOCIAL, PHYSICAL AND COGNITIVE PROBLEMS IN CHILDREN**

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<sup>1</sup> Source: Better Beginnings, Better Futures Project Policy Research Demonstration Project: Primary Prevention, Request for Proposals: Research Sites, March 1, 1990.

## **COMMUNITY INDICATORS OF HIGH-RISK FOR EMOTIONAL, BEHAVIORAL, SOCIAL, PHYSICAL AND COGNITIVE PROBLEMS IN CHILDREN**

"There are a number of risk factors for emotional, behavioral, social, physical and cognitive problems in children, which have been identified either in the Ontario Child Health Study, or in similar research on children and poverty. A number of these risks are listed below.

Proposing groups should select the most appropriate risks for their particular neighbourhood or community. There are no specific risks, which are required for this proposal. There should be no attempt to gather information on all risks listed below. There may be additional risks, appropriate to a particular locality which are not listed below, but could be cited in the proposal.

It is advisable to turn to the local public health unit, school board and local Ministry of Community and Social Service Area Office, as well as Statistics Canada, in gathering the information on local risk factors associated with particular neighbourhoods or communities. Additional sources of local information can include local police, community agencies and recreation programs.

### **ECONOMIC DISADVANTAGE:**

The Better Beginnings Projects will be located in very economically disadvantaged communities/neighbourhoods. The economic indicators listed below can be used to demonstrate this characteristic in submissions:

#### **Unemployment rate**

The percent of the labour force that was unemployed in the most recent years for which data are available.

#### **Families living in poverty**

The proportion of families with income under the poverty line in the most recent years for which data are available.

#### **Child living in a family receiving social assistance**

Number of children per 1,000 children, age 0 - 19 years, who reside in families where any portion of the family income in the past year came from government social assistance sources such as Family Benefits or F. W. A.

**Child living in subsidized housing**

Number of children per 1,000 children, age 0 - 19 years, who reside in a dwelling where the rent is subsidized by the government.

**OTHER INDICATORS OF RISK FOR POOR CHILD DEVELOPMENT:**

In addition to indicators of economic disadvantage, proposing communities can demonstrate other risks of healthy child development. Some of the most well-demonstrated risks are listed below:

**Low birth rate**

Number of live births under 2,500 grams per 1,000 live births.

Number of live births under 1,500 grams per 1,000 live births.

**Preterm birth rate**

Number of live births before 37 weeks gestation.

**Perinatal mortality rate**

The sum of stillbirths and deaths of liveborn infants, regardless of weight up to 7 days of life per 1,000 total births.

**Infant mortality rate**

Number of infants deaths under one year of age per 1,000 live births.

**Lone parent family rate**

Proportion of families that are single parent families with children under 18 years of age.

**Out-of-wedlock birth rate**

The number of births to unmarried mothers per 100 live births.

**Ratio of births to teen mothers**

The number of pregnancies per 1000 to mothers under 20 years of age per 100 live births. If appropriate, note the rate for each age specific cohort of teen mothers.

**Large families**

Number of families with five or more children living at home per 1,000 families with children at home.

**Over-crowded housing**

The same number or fewer rooms than there are household members.

**Educational attainment**

The number of adults with less than a Grade 9 education per 100 persons age 15 years or older.

**Mother's low education**

Number of female parents or guardians of all families who have completed no more than elementary (Grade 8) education.

**School drop-out rate**

The number of secondary school drop-outs (Grade 9 - 12) per equivalent school age population.

**Poor school performance**

The number of children, per 1,000 children, who have ever received full-time remedial education or ever failed a grade.

**Immigration rate**

The rate per 1,000 population of immigrants from outside Canada who have not lived in Canada for more than five years.

**Mother tongue not English or French**

The number of people per 1,000 who speak a language other than English or French as their mother tongue.

**Native Indians**

The number of Native Indians per 1,000 population.

**Alcoholism rate**

The number of hospital discharges following treatment for alcoholism, per 100,000 population.

**Alcohol psychosis rate**

The number of hospital discharges following treatment for alcohol psychosis, per 100,000 population.

**Suicide rate**

The number of suicides per 100,000 population.

**Violent crime rate**

The number of total actual offenses, including assaults (not indecent) and robbery per 100,000 population.

**Juvenile crime rate**

The number of juveniles found delinquent per 10,000 population between the ages 0 - 19 years.

**Domestic violence**

Any local surveys which document the percent of parents who report hitting or being hit by spouse/partner when quarrelling."

## **APPENDIX D<sup>1</sup>**

### **THE 9 PRINCIPLES OF THE SUDBURY BETTER BEGINNINGS, BETTER FUTURES ASSOCIATION**

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<sup>1</sup> Source: Better Beginnings, Better Futures Project Policy Research Demonstration Project: Primary Prevention, Request for Proposals: Research Sites, March 1, 1990

## **THE 9 PRINCIPLES OF THE SUDBURY BETTER BEGINNINGS, BETTER FUTURES ASSOCIATION**

- "1. Wish for collective concern to meet the needs of all children in a community.**
- 2. Recognizing the health of children depends on the health of families, schools, the physical environment and community services.**
- 3. Starting and staying with strengths and concerns of those who live, work and play in the neighbourhoods.**
- 4. Building strong partnerships among those who live, play, work, and serve in the neighbourhoods.**
- 5. Designing partnerships to include "holding out our hands, learning from each other and walking together"; or in other words, sharing decisions, tasks and accountability as well as joys and sorrows.**
- 6. Caring for ourselves and our partners, especially during times of change and stress.**
- 7. Learning and sharing that the process of expanding integrated prevention services through community development is the primary source of change, not the services themselves.**
- 8. Expanding the services and ideas that are known to better prepare children for their futures.**
- 9. Committing to active participation in research to understand processes of change and impact of services."**

**APPENDIX E**

**DOCUMENT PRESENTED TO THE SUDBURY ASSOCIATION**

**DECEMBER 11, 1991**



## APPENDIX E

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION AND  
STATE PARTICIPATION AT THE LOCAL LEVEL: A CASE STUDY OF  
THE SUDBURY BETTER BEGINNINGS BETTER FUTURES MODEL.

The research project which I propose explores the relationship between community participation and state participation at the local level. Specifically, I want to study the topic by using Sudbury's BBBF model as a case study.

Not much has been done in research on examining the relationship that exists between the community and the state and particularly on how this process evolves, shapes itself and defines itself. I want to analyse what is meant by the state and the community group around the concept of community participation.

**Methodology:**

In order to achieve this project I will do first of all a content analysis of three major public documents: "The Better Beginnings, Better Futures" provincial document; the "Request for Proposals" document; and the "Sudbury Better Beginnings, Better Futures" document. In addition, I will do a content analysis of the log notes and minutes kept by the Sudbury Association since the beginning of the project.

The second phase of the research involves conducting interviews with key individuals. The questions for the interviews will come from the knowledge gathered by the content analysis in order to further our learning on participation. The third component to the research will come from my own observations as a participant in the Association.

**Request:**

My request today is to get your consent to have access to the log notes and minutes of the Association. I'm interested in the material you have that has helped develop the project, and as well to the data kept since the official announcement of the project which was January 29, 1991, up to when the contract with the province will be signed. In addition, I would like to have access to interviews already done, -- so not to redo what has already been done, -- once all identifying information would be deleted.

**Time-lines for the research:**

January - February: Content analysis.

March - April: Interviews with key individuals with

questions resulting from the data from the content analysis.

May - June - July: Analysis of the data.

September -- Writing of the dissertation.

### **Confidentiality:**

All identifying aspects of individuals or agencies will be kept confidential. A consent form will be signed by everyone who wishes to participate in the interviews. Anyone who wishes to drop out of the study at any time will be able to do so.

### **What's in it for the Association:**

Most studies tend to focus on outcomes and evaluations of programs. Although these are quite useful and even necessary, not much attention has been paid on the process of developing a project and planning for it. What do people gain through participating for example, or where does that possibly lead them afterwards, are questions that are important to know. This Sudbury group has asked itself these types of questions from the beginning and this gives me an opportunity to help answer them. I think that the knowledge that will come out of such a project will be beneficial to all of us.

I also believe that a sharing of information needs to take place between the Association and myself. My interviews, once coded, will be shared.

I have met with my Thesis Committee on November 28, and have been given approval for such a project. Two members on my Committee are familiar with BBBF and they are \*\*\*\*<sup>1</sup> and \*\*\*\*. I have also consulted with \*\*\*\*, and after getting approval with the Association, I need to present the project to the provincial Research Coordination Unit (RCU). In order to be able to conduct this research project I need a clear decision from the Association, at your convenience, so that I can formalize the process.

My results will be shared with the Association and a copy of the Dissertation will be provided before going to the defence.

Thank you,

Jean-Marc Bélanger

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<sup>1</sup> Names of persons have been removed.