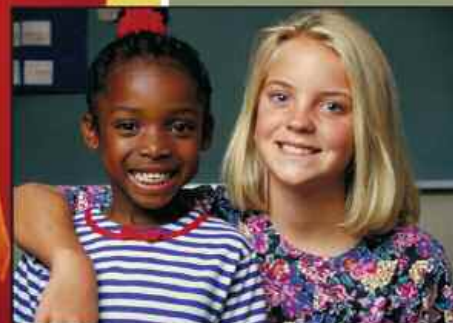


A POLICY ON SOCIAL INCLUSION...

Why not?



**MOUVEMENT ACADIEN
DES COMMUNAUTÉS EN SANTÉ
DU NOUVEAU-BRUNSWICK**



Practical Guide

PRACTICAL GUIDE

for Promoting SOCIAL INCLUSION



An initiative of the Mouvement Acadien des Communautés en Santé du Nouveau-Brunswick
funded by the Public Health Agency of Canada.

The opinions expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect those of the Public Health Agency of Canada.



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A. PREFACE

ABOUT THIS DOCUMENT

The Mouvement Acadien des Communautés en Santé du Nouveau-Brunswick Inc. (MACS-NB) (an Acadian network for the promotion of healthy communities in N.B.) is particularly interested in those individuals who are excluded from decision making and community life on the assumption that they have nothing to contribute. It believes that a community is healthy when the citizens take the necessary measures to influence public policy and make their community more inclusive. This is why we are inviting public authorities to take concrete, organized and consistent steps leading to the adoption of a policy on social inclusion.

To better understand the issues regarding social inclusion, several individuals and groups who work in communities throughout New Brunswick and elsewhere in the country were consulted. Their points of view and suggestions have been used to enrich this document.

MACS-NB wanted to make this document on social inclusion as simple as possible so that it would be accessible to everyone. It

contains basic information on inclusion as well as a policy model for organizations and municipal councils.

In the appendices you will also find:

- 1 A list of health determinants;
- 2 Practical examples;
- 3 A model for analyzing inclusiveness;
- 4 Advice on planning inclusive events;
- 5 How to react to opposition;
- 6 Evaluate your success.

This policy statement on social inclusion was made possible thanks to the support of the Public Health Agency of Canada, Atlantic region, and the Interdepartmental Partnership with the Official Language Communities.

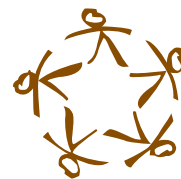
The Mouvement Acadien des Communautés en Santé du Nouveau-Brunswick is an Acadian network for the promotion of Healthy Communities.

This concept encourages communities and local people to take charge of their health by means of collective action toward wellness. The organization also offers its members, “Healthy Communities, Organizations and Schools,” a network for exchanging ideas and forming partnerships.



A POLICY on SOCIAL INCLUSION WHY NOT?

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DES COMMUNAUTÉS EN SANTÉ
DU NOUVEAU-BRUNSWICK**



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MACS-NB would like to thank:

- elected officials, groups, organizations and individuals who participated in the public consultation on inclusion;
- the members of the working group on social inclusion;
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- agencies and partners who provided photographs for this guide.

Their insights, comments and contributions were greatly appreciated.

Thank you also to the Public Health Agency of Canada for the Atlantic Region who had faith in our initiative and provided the necessary funding.

Finally, MACS-NB would like to acknowledge the support from Healthy Communities and Organizations members, as well as from the following partners:

- Association acadienne et francophone des aînées et aînés du N-B.
- Association francophone des municipalités du N-B.
- Canadian Mental Health Association
- Centre de Bénévolat de la Péninsule Acadienne
- Concertation sur les politiques publiques au N-B.
- Fédération d'alphabétisation du N-B.
- Fédération des femmes acadiennes et francophones du N-B.
- Fédération des jeunes francophones du N-B.
- Réseau-action Communautaire de la Société Santé et Mieux-être en français du N-B.
- Réseau québécois de Villes et Villages en santé
- Vie Autonome Péninsule Acadienne

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Note: The term "organization" is used here in a general sense to represent municipal councils, businesses, community services and public and private sectors. The expression "persons with differences" is all-encompassing and includes those who are generally excluded because they are vulnerable or in difficulty and those who have limitations or some particularity that sets them apart.

This document was published in French in 2006 and reedited in 2010.

It was translated in English in 2011, thanks to the support of the Canadian Partnership Against Cancer and CLASP.

It is available in both official languages on the MACS-NB website:

www.macsnb.ca

It is forbidden to use the content of this document for financial purposes. However, anyone wishing to promote a social inclusion initiative in their own community can draw from it and reproduce it in whole or in part, as long as its source is clearly identified.

B. THE BENEFITS OF INCLUSION

THE SEARCH FOR FAIRNESS

Regardless of their limitations and differences, all people are equal and are called to participate in community life in their own way and depending on their interests and capabilities. Individuals with differences can contribute socially according to their means when they are given the opportunity.

Article 15 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms guarantees that every person has the right to be treated equally.

The recognition of this right to equity requires that structures, policies, as well as planning and management methods be conceived, put into place and adapted according to the various needs and characteristics within society.

THE INCLUSIVE APPROACH

We all know people around us who participate very little in community life because they have difficulty expressing themselves, getting organized, moving around, or being heard and understood. These are the people that MACS-NB had in mind in developing this guide. It would be wonderful if, one day, these individuals felt that they have a place in our society and a contribution to make.

For that to happen, however, we have to give them the opportunity. Whether it be on an economic, social, cultural, educational or political level, the structures must be as welcoming as possible.

An inclusive society



Barriers to inclusion

The inclusive approach involves reducing the obstacles that exclude, limit or prevent participation. It also promotes access and participation for everyone. It relies on the fact that in society, people have a diversity of needs, financial means, strengths and limits. It seeks a formula that will reach all people in their own circumstances. In certain cases, limits are functional. At other times, obstacles are more intellectual or emotional. Social inclusion means that the opportunity to participate must be offered to everyone in a spirit that respects the limits and capabilities of each person.

The promotion of social inclusion is based on the recognition of the diversity in our society. Our structures must be adapted to people whose ethnic background, culture, living conditions, religious beliefs, capabilities, and needs vary enormously. Accepting diversity is already promoting inclusion.

WHY IS INCLUSION NECESSARY?

Social inclusion is a remedy for inequality, isolation and loneliness, the condition of many people in the community. It is part of the vision that the government, an organization or a community has for society and the economy. Ideally, every new initiative should take into account the dimension of inclusion.

The people who are interested in the issue of social inclusion are particularly concerned about fairness. They believe that each person should have a

just share in society. They do not make a distinction between the rich and the poor, the well-to-do or the less fortunate, or between those who are healthy and those with a handicap.

The promoters of equity see the community as a group of people whose needs, means and limits vary from one individual to another. Equal access, inclusion and participation are, for them, a constant preoccupation.

Inclusion is also a question of health, which means much more than physical health (see the health determinants in Appendix 1).

LEARNING FROM EXISTING PRACTICES

A good way to proceed to become more inclusive is to look at what is happening elsewhere. Many initiatives are aiming for social inclusion in our communities, and we must look to them for inspiration. Some community services, such as group homes for youth, recreation centres for people with mental disorders, and day centres for seniors, reach out to everyone without distinction.

On the fringe

Groups generally excluded

- Women, youth, seniors, visible minorities
- Individuals with a physical, social or emotional disability
- People who are dependent or weak due to isolation, minimal schooling or low income

of society

These structures are inclusive because they give everyone the opportunity to be welcomed and understood. Services are accessible to everyone who seeks them regardless of their circumstances.

Organizations turning toward social inclusion tend to favour complete participation, which is growing in popularity (see the practical examples in Appendix 2).

DEMONSTRATING OPENNESS

As soon as municipal councils, groups

or organizations take time to think about the well-being of all the members of the community, they are already thinking in terms of social inclusion.

By offering their services to the entire population, they demonstrate a cutting-edge spirit of initiative. They have foresight in aspiring toward the well-being of all citizens. Social conscience is part of their identity.

They envisage a community, province or country where each person finds their place. They have a vision of a better, just society.

They are aware that society is made up of a group of individuals, and they are particularly concerned about the silent minority who live in isolation.

Increasing the opportunities for inclusion means providing support services, making management more flexible, reducing certain requirements and making other such accommodations so that the doors can be open to those who are generally excluded.



C. Detrimental Effects of Exclusion

STRUCTURES THAT CAUSE ISOLATION

Exclusion is harmful in many ways. Think of the people we cast aside because of their gender, race, health problems or lack of education. These people do not have access to the same advantages as the rest of society. Because they have the impression



that they are unable to contribute to society, they feel unappreciated and useless or they believe they are a burden on others. They feel as though they do not belong to the community in the same way others do. They have the impression that what they have to say won't change anything.

Those who feel the effects of exclusion the most are clearly the less fortunate. Their needs are not understood very well because they are generally absent from the places where decisions are made.

We often exclude them, even when we are trying to find a way to reach out and include them.

The government, municipal councils and organizations can fight against exclusion by examining policies to see how they affect the less fortunate and by making improvements to render them more inclusive.

FORMS OF SOCIAL EXCLUSION

It is possible to identify at least four forms of social exclusion:

- **PERSONAL EXCLUSION** happens when individuals do not participate in community life because of difficulties on a personal level, and they lack confidence.
- **CIRCUMSTANTIAL EXCLUSION** happens when circumstances such as loss of employment or moving lead to exclusion.
- **STRUCTURAL EXCLUSION** appears when the structures prevent people with special needs to access goods and services, for example, when clients are not able to be served in their own language or when the homeless are refused assistance because they have no fixed address.
- **ECONOMIC EXCLUSION** prevents low-income people from participating and being heard. The unavailability of means of public transportation to attend meetings is a good example of economic exclusion.

EXCLUDING UNINTENTIONALLY IS EASY TO DO

Physical limitations and the lack of financial and material resources often prevent people from participating and getting access to services. Sometimes there are structural barriers that cause exclusion.

Most of the time, exclusion is never really intended. It happens because of established rules and traditions. Sometimes it is also the result of changes that arise in society.

People may be excluded because they don't have access to education, to the job market, to suitable housing, to health and social services, or to

other programs that allow them to improve their living conditions.

In some cases, exclusion is caused by social and economic structures, for example, when people must leave their region to look for work elsewhere or when the criteria to access services are too restrictive. Sometimes, what leads to exclusion is belonging to a particular group. This is especially the case for people living in poverty or those with mental health disorders, a handicap or other restrictions.

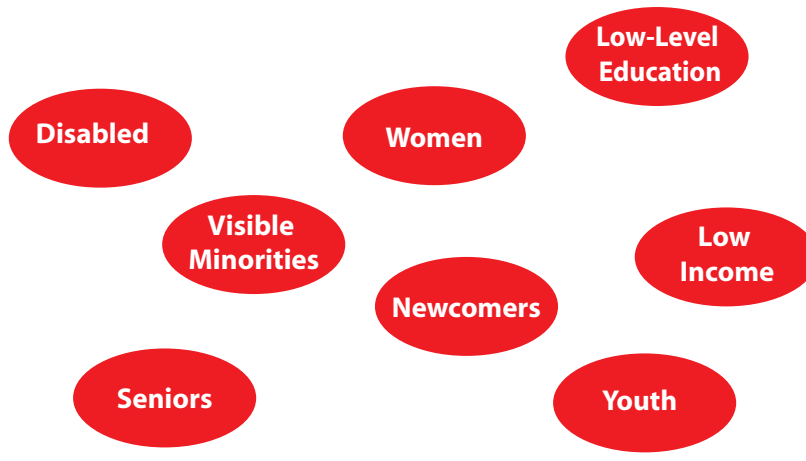
Including is uniting

The absence of personal contacts is a well-known barrier to inclusion. In certain places, human beings have been replaced by machines. Individuals who have difficulty coping with electronic devices like answering machines prefer to do without the services rather than tackle the problem. They would prefer to talk to someone and be in contact with a real person. Ensuring face-to-face meetings would be a good way to help their inclusion. In many cases, it is the only effective way to reach them.

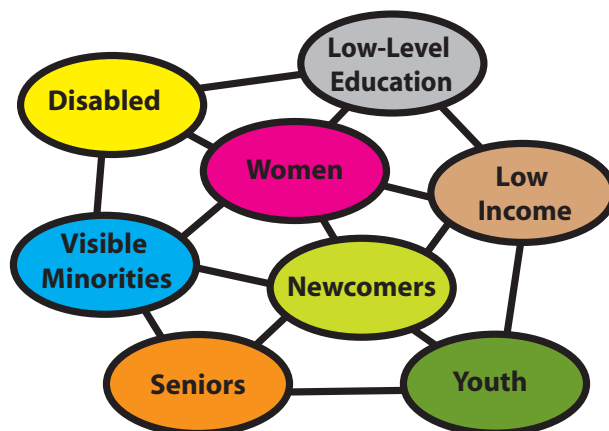
Regardless of the cause of exclusion, the effect is always the same. When individuals are kept apart, they begin to feel rejected, which leads to withdrawal and isolation.

COMMUNITY

Isolation



Inclusion



FROM EXCLUSION TO INCLUSION

Notwithstanding the importance of a formal, structured approach, we need to recognize that exclusion is first and foremost a question of attitude. We should all have values and principles

that support inclusive actions in our own circles. And there is an urgent need to end prejudice toward people who are different from us.

It is also important to get rid of the idea of a “mold.” Pay attention to the rigid admission criteria that we set up when

creating a program. People are then forced to respect these criteria in order to have access to the program, regardless of their circumstances. When we do this we are denying that there are individual differences and needs. Having only one solution to all problems inevitably leads to exclusion.

EXCLUSION

means preventing others from participating and keeping them out.

INCLUSION

means reaching out and integrating others to give them a place and an opportunity to participate in community life.



D. RECOMMENDED APPROACH

WHY A POLICY ON SOCIAL INCLUSION?

Social inclusion must be part of a structured approach if it is to come into existence and survive. That is why MACS-NB is proposing that it take the shape of a policy rather than remain a simple wish. It must then become a specific program. This way, it will have a much better chance of survival.

Adopting a policy is also a good way to promote change in social attitudes.

WHAT IS A PUBLIC POLICY?

A public policy is a line of conduct that supports an organization in guiding and justifying its decisions. The organization can be a municipal council, the government, a business or a non-profit community association.

According to experts, good public policy must be socially acceptable, politically viable and technically correct.

It must reflect profound values such as the ability to choose, the respect of rights, representation, and freedom to participate in community life.

It must also respond to community concerns and aim to protect the common interest. All of these elements should appear in a policy on inclusion.



FOR WHOM IS SUCH A POLICY INTENDED?

The policy on inclusion is intended for the entire community, but especially for two groups in particular. The first group we call the “leaders” is comprised of elected officials at the municipal, provincial and federal levels and the managers and heads of organizations. The second group is made up of “interveners.” It includes professionals, public service employees and executives.

This policy could also interest those who want to promote social inclusion in their community.

In short, it should appeal to all people who want their community to be a welcoming, dynamic place where everyone can participate and belong.

HOW SHOULD SUCH A POLICY BE PROMOTED?

One way to promote this policy on inclusion is through a public campaign to raise awareness locally. Promoting social inclusion must be more than a verbal promise. The competent authorities must make it a written priority of their agenda and see that it gets appropriate priority and funding.

We encourage all leaders and interveners as well as the actors and partners of the Mouvement Acadien des Communautés en Santé to take a strong commitment towards making social inclusion a reality.

This is how we will achieve Healthy Communities, Organisations and Schools.

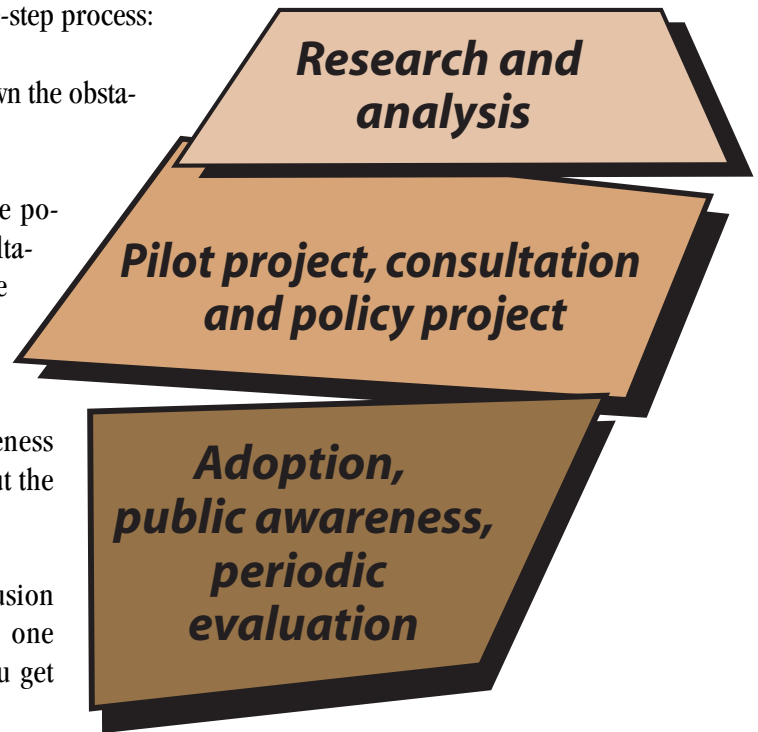
E. MODEL OF A SOCIAL INCLUSION POLICY

Adopting a policy on social inclusion is the result of a three-step process:

- **FIRST STEP:** Involves research and analysis to track down the obstacles to inclusion and find ways to overcome them.
- **SECOND STEP:** Aims to outline a pilot project for the policy and develop a common vision through public consultation. With feedback, improvements can be brought to the project.
- **THIRD STEP:** Entails presenting the policy project to the competent authorities for adoption. A public awareness campaign must follow to let the general public know about the policy. The adopted policy is then revised periodically.

At first glance, this may appear complicated. Social inclusion is a long-term challenge. It moves forward step by step, one action at a time. MACS-NB hopes this guide will help you get the process going and see it to the end.

The following policy model is proposed as an example and a source of inspiration. It is not intended to be a finished product to be replicated word for word. It's up to you to take whatever will be useful for your project.



MODEL

POLICY STATEMENT

The policy on inclusion aims to create an inclusive, welcoming and healthy community by:

1. ensuring that all those who wish to participate in community life have the necessary means to express themselves and be understood;
2. reducing as much as possible the obstacles that exclude or prevent the participation of people with “differences”;
3. facilitating access to public services;
4. encouraging people to think about inclusion when decisions are made.

FIELD OF APPLICATION

The goal of this policy is to provide access to public services for the following people:

- those with some kind of difference who are facing a financial, physical, psychological or social barrier;
- those who are dependent or frail;
- those living in isolation;
- those with minimal schooling; and
- those with a physical, social or emotional disability.

It also applies to groups that often tend to be excluded:

- youth;
- women;
- the elderly;
- low-income people and families;
- working parents with young children;
- newcomers; and
- visible, linguistic and cultural minorities.

IMPLEMENTING THE POLICY

The competent authority appoints an elected official as the person responsible for the file. This person ensures that the issue of inclusion is a priority in the organizational culture. The competent authority can also designate a committee on social inclusion to be responsible for the file. People who represent excluded groups should be part of this committee. Alternatively, the issue of social inclusion could be assigned to an existing committee that has a similar mission.

The person or committee responsible for this task will receive a sufficient budget, submit reports, and make recommendations, if necessary. A salaried employee will work closely with the person or committee responsible and see to the implementation of the policy.

POWERS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The person or committee responsible for the promotion of inclusion should:

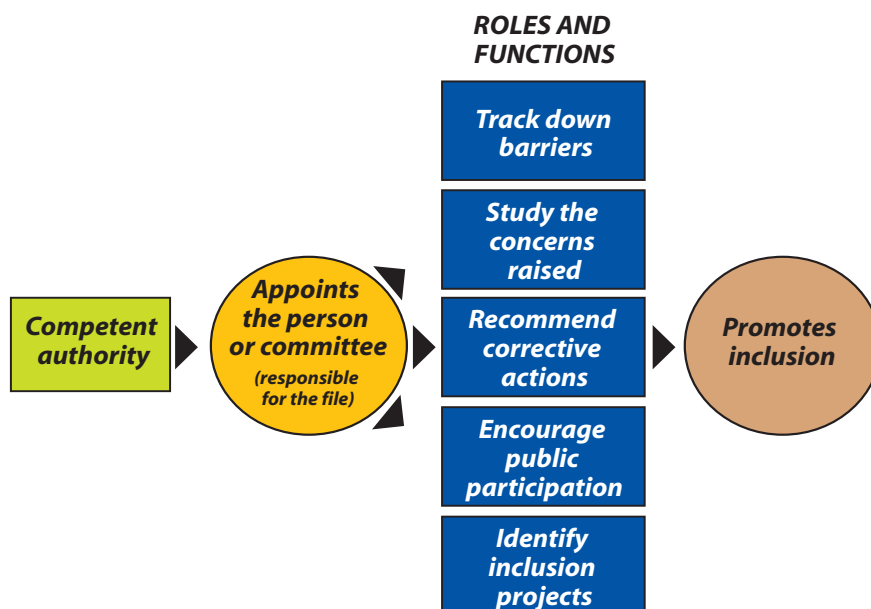
- Circulate this policy as widely as possible.
- Assess the level of social inclusion in the municipality, the community or organization (see Appendix 3) in order to identify the corrective actions needed to become more inclusive.
- Ensure public participation in the process of inclusion.
- Track down the policies and measures that are barriers to inclusion and suggest ways to reduce or eliminate these barriers.
- Investigate the weaknesses and the reported cases of exclusion and recommend measures to improve the situation.
- Encourage public, private and community organizations and their partners to adopt a policy on social inclusion.

PROMOTING THE POLICY ON INCLUSION

The person or committee responsible for the promotion of inclusion should try to convince the directors, senior executives, organizations, businesses and interest groups to adopt an inclusive approach that fits in with their daily activities. The objective of this policy should be explained to them and concrete methods suggested for modifying and adapting structures and services to make them more inclusive. The general public should be made aware of the benefits of inclusion through the publication of success stories.

APPEAL PROCEDURE

A mechanism should be set up so that those who believe that their right to inclusion or the rights of others in their community have not been sufficiently respected can appeal to the person or committee responsible for the promotion of inclusion. Any weakness in inclusive practices must be assessed. A written reply should be made to the complainant in a timely fashion.



F. PROPOSAL TO ADOPT THE POLICY

Adopting a policy on social inclusion is normally done through the presentation of a motion to the proper authority. Once adopted, the policy will be monitored periodically in terms of its effectiveness and revised accordingly.

The following elements can be included in the wording of the motion:

SUBJECT

Adoption of a policy on social inclusion

BACKGROUND INFORMATION AND ARGUMENTS

There are people in our society who have financial, physical, psychological or social barriers. Some are dependent or weak, others live in isolation or have physical, social or emotional disabilities, and others have a low level of education. There are also groups that are often excluded: youth, women, the elderly, low-income families and individuals, working parents with young children at home, newcomers and visible, linguistic and cultural minorities.

Their limited participation in community life raises the question of fairness (public structures and services should be available to the entire community); equality (the contribution of all citizens is of equal value); diversity (society is pluralistic and can be enriched by the involvement of those who have differences).

Adopting a policy on social inclusion is a way to encourage their participation. This method ensures a concrete, structured and sustainable process. The movement toward social inclusion is strong and is gaining ground at this time.

The proposed policy is centered on openness to difference, the call to action and being proactive. It aims at increasing access to public services by:

1. ensuring that all persons who wish to participate in community life have the necessary means to express themselves, to be understood and to share their talents and experiences;
2. reducing as much as possible the barriers that exclude and prevent the participation of persons with differences;
3. calling for public initiatives to increase social inclusion;
4. trying to get people to think about inclusion when decisions are made.

IMPLEMENTATION

To ensure that the social inclusion policy is implemented, a responsibility center should be designated. The responsibility could be given to either an elected official or a committee.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

The annual budget should be sufficient to cover the following expenses:

1. Expenses of the administrative body, if there is one; for example, refunding expenses incurred by low-income participants (transportation, child care, meals, accommodation and incidentals to enable them to attend meetings);
2. Costs related to support services, such as interpretation services during meetings and the rewriting of official documents to make them accessible for everyone;
3. Expenses related to promoting this policy;
4. A fund to support the execution of at least one public initiative on inclusion per year.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

1. Ideally, structures and public services should be as inclusive as possible and accessible to the entire community;
2. All those who wish to participate in community life should be given the necessary means to express themselves, to be understood and to share their talents and experiences;
3. As much as possible, barriers that exclude and prevent the participation of people with “differences” should be removed;
4. The society as a whole should be encouraged to build an inclusive and healthy community together.

IT IS RECOMMENDED TO THE COMPETENT AUTHORITY:

1. To adopt the attached policy on social inclusion;
2. To establish a budget;
3. To create a mechanism for implementation and monitoring.

ADOPTION OF THE POLICY ON SOCIAL INCLUSION

G. DREAMING OF A WELCOMING COMMUNITY

The Mouvement Acadien des Communautés en Santé du Nouveau-Brunswick (an Acadian network for the promotion of Healthy Communities in N.B.) is looking forward to the day where all communities will be welcoming and inclusive and where citizens will have the opportunity to be heard, to be served fairly and to participate fully regardless of differences, limitations or disabilities.

In these communities, minimal restrictions will be imposed on per-

sons with differences to allow them the maximum accessibility to services and different levels of participation. Ideally, they will have a word to say about how the services are offered. Those who wish to do so will be able to get involved and participate in community life to the full extent of their abilities.

Because social inclusion connects with the deep values that we all have as citizens of this country, we believe that this policy will be well received.

However, we are realistic and know that changing attitudes cannot happen overnight. Sometimes it takes a few years before an idea makes inroads. We are confident that if we succeed in planting the seed, social inclusion will grow and gain ground over the next few years.



APPENDIX 1

HEALTH DETERMINANTS

It is unthinkable to promote social inclusion without considering the health determinants. In general, these are the factors and conditions that have a major impact on health. The determinants do not work independently from one another; the way they interact increases their importance for health. The following list describes the determinants identified by Health Canada, as well as their effect on the health and well-being of individuals and communities.

Income and social status

The state of health improves with the rise in income and social status. A high income along with proper housing and the ability to eat well have an impact on living conditions.



Social support networks

These networks are built around families, friends and communities. The relations we have with others can be as important for our health as risk factors such as smoking, the lack of physical activity, obesity and hypertension, which are detrimental to health.



Education level

The more educated individuals are, the more likely they will have a job, and keep it, and feel that their life is under control. Literacy helps people function well in everyday life.



Employment and working conditions

Unemployment, the shortage of work and stressful working conditions affect health. People who have more control over their working conditions and who experience less work-related stress are in better health.



Social environments

Social stability, the acceptance of diversity, security, healthy working relationships and family and community solidarity form a group of favourable social conditions that reduce or prevent many health risks.



Physical environments

The physical factors of the natural environment, such as water and air quality, and various factors of the urban environment, such as housing, security in the workplace, community development and road construction, also have an important influence on individual and collective health.



Personal health practices and coping skills

To lead a healthy life, it is necessary to have a social environment that enables people to make good, healthy choices and a lifestyle that helps us stick to them. This supports the acquisition of knowledge, attitudes, behaviours and coping skills.



Healthy child development

Experience before birth and during early childhood have an important effect on health, well-being, coping skills and competence. This background will influence an individual throughout his or her life.



Health services

Health services, especially those designed to maintain and promote health or to prevent illness, contribute to a healthy society.



Culture

Culture and belonging to a specific race, ethnic group, and linguistic and cultural community relate to one's personal history as well as to larger social, political, geographical and economic factors. Health issues in multicultural societies and minority communities demonstrate just how necessary it is to consider physical, mental, spiritual, social and economic well-being as a connected whole.



Gender

Gender, as a health determinant, refers to the different roles, personality traits, attitudes, behaviours, values, influences and powers related to what society attributes to each gender. Each is subject to their own health problems and can be affected differently by the same problems.



Biology and genetic endowment

The genetic heritage, that is, the biological and organic constitution of human beings, influences how people are affected by sickness or particular health problems.



Source :

CENTRE DE BÉNÉVOLAT DE LA PÉNINSULE ACADIENNE. *Formation sur les politiques publiques et les déterminants de la santé. 2004.*

APPENDIX 2

PRACTICAL EXAMPLES

The following practices encourage social inclusion and provide ways to help translate the principle of inclusion into concrete acts. You may consider them as examples from which you can develop your own practices.

INFORMATION SHARING PRACTICES

- Effective communication strategies inform the entire community on all issues that concern the public.
- Messages can be relayed in plain, comprehensible language which is accessible to everyone.
- By-laws and other official documents can be rewritten in clear, simple and precise language for easy comprehension and accompanied by simplified visual and audio versions.
- All messages and communication documents should be made available at least in both official languages, including the language of choice of the community/people served.
- There is a wide range of use of communication tools, such as community bulletin boards, information kiosks at shopping centers, libraries, community radio and television, print media and the Internet.

PUBLIC CONSULTATION PRACTICES

- Mechanisms have been put in place that insure all citizens have the opportunity to express their opinions, requests and suggestions.
- Everyone should be given the opportunity to speak about their needs, concerns and dissatisfaction through suggestion cards, comment boxes in popular places, toll-free telephone numbers, email addresses, etc.
- A profile of the community can be developed with the community's help to identify the socioeconomic characteristics and the particular needs of persons with differences.
- Public hearings help identify the expectations and needs of all levels of society.
- Various partners and representatives of groups and organizations can be consulted before adopting new policies to adapt them to the real needs of persons with differences (for example, policies on services, communications, employment opportunities or the environment).
- A youth forum can serve as a permanent consultation group to ensure youth participation in community life.
- Persons with differences and individuals who are excluded and vulnerable can be invited to participate on working and planning committees.

ACCESSIBILITY AND PARTICIPATION PRACTICES

- Physical spaces, public and community establishments, social events and government programs can be made accessible, inviting and welcoming to allow the participation of all citizens.
- Physical space of offices and meeting rooms can be organized to accommodate people with reduced mobility or other physical or mental limitations.
- Offices can be located in convenient areas to facilitate access and getting around and the hours of operation can be made flexible to suit the lifestyles of different groups in society.
- Low-income parents who have to pay for child care and transportation to attend public meetings can be compensated.
- Businesses can be encouraged to create more employment for individuals who have work restrictions.
- A partnership in the community or region can be set up to implement a public transportation system aimed at helping persons with difficulties to get around and a policy can be adopted to set a reasonable rate for the needy.
- A companion service for persons with disabilities can be arranged to facilitate their integration into the community.

COMMUNITY SUPPORT PRACTICES

- Concrete ways can be found to support social inclusion efforts and stimulate community vitality.
- Groups that promote community development and social inclusion should be recognized and offered funding or other kinds of support, such as the use of meeting places and equipment.
- A program can be established to recognize groups and individuals dedicated to improving social inclusion in their milieu.
- A community day care center for all families in the community, using a progressive fee scale based on family income, can be established.
- In partnership with private, public and community stakeholders, youth projects supported by local or regional investment can be encouraged.
- Literacy programs can be supported by offering free or low-cost meeting space, for example.
- Assistance can be provided to people who live in isolation at home or in residence as well as volunteer companion services, collective kitchens, and community gardens.
- Training can be offered to women and young people to encourage them to participate at the political level.

APPENDIX 3

A MODEL FOR ANALYZING INCLUSIVENESS

1. Do you know individuals who are excluded and, if so, in what way are they excluded?

2. Are you aware of policies, programs or practices that cause exclusion?
If yes, what is the impact?

3. What are the social costs of exclusion? Who should take responsibility for them? Who benefits from exclusion?

4. Who has the required authority to change the source of exclusion?

5. Are you aware of laws, policies, strategies or programs that promote inclusion? If yes, what is the impact?

6. Who is responsible for social inclusion?

7. What inclusive measures would you like to see in the short term?

8. Are you aware of policies or programs that contribute to the reduction of isolation and give better access to resources?

9. What measures might remove the barriers to accessing public areas and facilitate social interaction?

10. Who should participate in the search for solutions?

APPENDIX 4

ADVICE ON PLANNING INCLUSIVE EVENTS

You can organize meetings and events that are more inclusive. Below you will find a list of factors to consider when planning a community event. All the factors mentioned won't apply for every meeting or event your organization holds. Your planning team will need to determine which factors pertain to a specific event, when they are appropriate, and for whom. If you do not know the particular needs of an individual or a group, be sure to ask them.

PLANNING AND DESIGN

Planning helps you respond to the needs of all the members of your community.

1. You should make the necessary arrangements so that the event location is accessible to all members of the community.
2. Plan your event by consulting a number of people who will give you suggestions on improving the program.

3. Consider what you know about the people who will likely attend the event, anticipate possible problems, and try to resolve them in advance.

Plan a variety of activities to encourage participation.

1. Ensure that the size of the event can support people with various needs and health conditions and allow them to participate.
2. Provide opportunity for movement throughout the event to reduce the length of time sitting in one position (this is important for everyone, but essential for others).
3. It is necessary to allow enough time to people with special needs, especially during breaks. Those who have physical disabilities, for example, may need more time and assistance to use the bathroom or other facilities.

Don't forget that diversity exists within groups as well as between groups.

Those who belong to a particular group do not all have the same needs and interests. In fact, needs may depend on the situation. When you address the needs of one person in a group, it is not a given that you have addressed needs of the entire group. Treat each person as an individual and, if possible, ask about his or her particular needs and wishes.

Create a budget to cover various needs.

Evaluate the financial cost of organizing your event. In this way, you will reduce the risk of trying to meet people's needs at the last minute, and you will increase your chances of success. Calculate the cost of the following:

- Publicizing the event in various ways (for example, by written invitation, radio announcement and user-friendly website);

- Presenting documents in several formats during and after the event (for example, a printed copy, a Braille copy, a DVD, a CD or cassette);
- Offering a child care service or an allowance for child care;
- Offering a travel allowance or paying the cost of travel;
- Covering registration or accommodation costs; and
- Food and refreshments.

Don't forget that, in some cases, these measures can be essential for some people to be able to participate (for example, parents, low-income individuals, people on fixed income and persons with a disability).

LOCATION

PHYSICAL ACCESS

Ensure that the location is barrier-free.

- Easy physical access to meeting place;
- Easy to find;
- Easy to get to on foot or by public transportation;
- Not intimidating for anyone.

Visit the location and conduct a walk through.

Ensure that entrances to the building, the meeting rooms, dining room and bathroom facilities are secure, accessible and welcoming.

Ensure that the access ramp is wide enough for wheelchairs, that the surface is not slippery, that it is well lit and equipped with hand rails.

Meeting room layout

Ensure that the meeting room is accessible to persons in wheelchairs and that any slopes are gradual. A person using a wheelchair or a walker should have easy access to tables, chairs and display tables and be able to move around easily between them.

Be sure to organize the seating plan so that participants who have difficulty seeing or hearing are in the front of the hall close to the presenters and speakers.

COMMUNICATIONS AND SIGNAGE

Ensure that the signs are easy to read and understand.

Signs that use clear and simple language, large characters and contrasting colours are easier to read. This is particularly important for those who are visually impaired or do not read well.

Provide information and services in accessible and alternative formats.

Each member of your community should be able to understand the information you provide. Ensure that all communications products for your event are written in clear and simple language. Presentations should be available in various formats (printed copies, Braille, audio recordings, and sign language) to respond to the needs of persons with disabilities. Ensure that presenters know the recommended content in advance and the formats of the presentation. Make arrangements to offer coded subtitles for all films and videos presented.

In your promotional material, explain that measures were taken to ensure community inclusion.

If the location is accessible to wheelchairs, make sure to mention it. If you provide a website address, ensure that it is user-friendly and accessible to the public at large, that the characters are big enough and that colours contrast. If people are required to complete a registration form for your event, be sure to include a check-list for the following special needs:

- Accessibility needs (physical access, documents in alternative formats, hearing or visual aids);

- Diet restrictions (based on health, culture, religion or other reasons);
- Financial assistance available (allowances for participation and travel);
- Other forms of assistance (for example, attendant care).

It is important that persons with special needs are not put in a position where they find it difficult to ask for special assistance or that they feel in any way uncomfortable making such requests.

Given that certain people have sensitivities or allergies, you can also ask participants in advance to abstain from wearing perfume or cologne and to use odourless personal care products (shampoo, hand cream, etc.) in order to create a healthier environment.

FLEXIBILITY

Schedule meetings at convenient times for participants.

Keep in mind that people do not all have the same work schedule from Monday to Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. This is important to take into consideration when setting the date and time for a meeting. It may be that daytime meetings are more convenient for seniors,

parents, and guardians who spend their days at home with their children. On the other hand, it may not be suitable to those who lead a busy life at school and at work.

Carry out activities on weekdays, weekends and evenings to reach the target audience and the largest number of people possible. Organize events in a way that respects social, cultural and religious activities and events.

Take time to make arrangements for persons with special needs so that they can participate in the event.

Make sure to give enough time before the event to allow for preparation of transportation, child care services, assistants and sign language interpreters for those who need these services. In other words, do not expect that people who have to make special arrangements will be able to attend a meeting on short notice.

Also, respect your meeting's start and end times so that people can get their transport service and other arrangements made in advance.

CONTENT AND PRESENTATION

Create an inviting physical and social environment.

Besides making sure that the physical location of your meeting is not intimidating, ensure that employees, board members and volunteers are friendly and welcoming to all participants. Organizers should be easy to identify and available to answer questions. They can help participants find locations, facilities and available resources.

Visually impaired persons will need assistance to become familiar with their environment.

Be sure to provide support such as access to computers and other technology. Determine whether the organizers have followed recommendations concerning presentation materials. Ask that presenters use clear and simple language and avoid the use of jargon and acronyms. Insist that they respect the time allotted for their presentation.

Provide background information about your organization.

Make sure that participants understand what your organization does (its objectives and activities) as well as the role of the board or advisory group. Explain simply and clearly the background and mandate of your organization.

Be aware of the different ways that meetings can be carried out.

Hold open and respectful meetings. Any imbalance in power and various forms of intimidation should be kept well under control. In order to participate, people need to feel at ease. Encourage and respect active participation so that they are left with the impression that they are genuine representatives of the organization.

Create the opportunity for real discussion. Do not put individuals in uncomfortable positions by asking them questions which may make them feel uneasy. Give everyone an opportunity to speak.

Organize the agenda effectively so that the meeting is not too long or too complicated.

Simplify the decision-making process as much as possible. Complicated decision making can be difficult for people with little experience or education. Besides, parents, persons with physical or mental disabilities, youth and the elderly can sometimes become tired, discouraged or annoyed if the time required to make decisions and to take action is too lengthy.

Ensure that nobody is left out.

Invite more than one person from a particular group to participate in or join your board or group. This allows for mutual support. A single representative of a group may feel like a token member or taken lightly and feel that they do not have an equal status and become frustrated and unhappy.

Provide refreshments and snacks.

Serve drinks, snacks and light healthy meals, especially if the meeting extends over mealtimes. This way, you will support the participation of various groups. Don't forget, for some this is simply a courtesy, for others it is a necessity. This practice can be very important if the event attracts families with small children and adolescents, low-income individuals or those with health problems.

Allow time for comments at the end of the event.

Hold a feedback session or provide anonymous evaluation forms to determine whether you have met the needs, wishes and expectations of participants. Be ready for various levels of experience and numerous comments. Help those who may have difficulty completing the forms. Listen to those who prefer other ways of providing comments. Seek the point of view of presenters on their participation. Make sure you acknowledge all groups and recognize everyone's contribution. Participants should be thanked in person after the event.

APPENDIX 5

HOW TO RESPOND TO OPPOSITION

Whether you talk about your initiative on inclusion with the members of your board or with employees, volunteers or the community in general, people will ask you why you are interested in inclusion. If you do not answer the questions and concerns in an effective manner, this can cause opposition and compromise your initiative. Appropriate communications throughout the process can mitigate the opposition.

Below you will find two current questions on the subject of change toward inclusion and some possible answers to those concerns:

Why tackle the issue of inclusion in the organization?

Begin by explaining the demographic situation in your commu-

nity, as well as any corresponding shifts in your organization, followed by additional information about projected changes in the population. You may wish to follow with a discussion of how those changes impact your organization and others associated with your organization.

What's diversity got to do with our work?

This question may require an explanation about the necessity of responding positively to increasing diversity. Point out that it will help ensure the organization's long-term survival and the pragmatic benefits to the individual and your community.

For example, learning how to communicate across language barriers may help you to speak with employees who have limited English or may

benefit staff who deal with a diverse membership, and can be useful in both preventing and resolving potential conflicts.

Responding to questions allows you to set the tone, to teach about diversity and to demonstrate your commitment to creating an organization which is really inclusive and respectful. The following points are the principal guidelines to help you formulate answers without making people feel uneasy about the issue of inclusion.

Request information

Ask questions for better understanding, to clarify the situation, or to obtain more information. Ask the person to explain his or her position in order to understand the validity of the comment or question. Make sure your question is a real search for information and not merely an accusation.

Here are some questions that can draw enough information to break down resistance:

- "What makes you say that?"
- "Does this problem concern you?"
- "Let's talk more about it."

Avoid polarization

You can prevent finding yourself in a compromising situation by asking people to express their opinion or point of view.

- "Would you give us other reasons for doing this?"
- "What impression would this situation make on a person coming from a different environment?"

Educate

When emotions have calmed down, take the opportunity to destroy the myths. Communicate the facts and explain them. Share your knowledge and reading on stereotypes, cultural and linguistic differences and the rights of the individual.

For example:

If you have been offended, you have the right to inform the other person of the impact of his or her comment or action. Make use of the pronoun "I" to explain your reaction.

- "I feel humiliated when I am called a "girl."
- "I feel ill at ease when we start talking in terms of "us" against "them"."

Show empathy

When strong emotions are expressed, it is important to acknowledge the emotions and to react in a way that defuses the situation. Be sensitive to the words as well as to the underlying feelings. During the process of change, you will likely notice that other people share the frustrations of the person you are speaking with. If you show that you understand, this will help the person who is upset to cool down and will facilitate the communication.

- "It is frustrating when we don't understand someone."
- "It is difficult to help people if you are not sure that they understand you."
- "This bothers me as well."
- "It is stressful to deal with a situation like this."

Silence as a possibility

Sometimes silence can be interpreted as approval. When you don't laugh at a joke or respond to a sarcastic comment, for example, this may be all the explanation you need.

Avoid defensive or argumentative remarks

Resist your impulse to debate, convince, argue or defend your point of view to avoid strengthening the opposition and hardening entrenched positions. One of the more difficult situations to deal with can be differences in values. Recognizing that we can have differences of opinion and still respect one another shows the capacity to put inclusion into practice. You will reap the benefits in terms of credibility and greater commitment to your initiative for more inclusion.

Express your needs and expectations

If you wish to see a difference in behaviour, let people know your expectations and what you do not wish to see.

- "Let's create an approach that suits all members."
- "Jokes about other people's religion or about other cultural groups are not acceptable."

APPENDIX 6

EVALUATE YOUR SUCCESS

Certain factors can jeopardize the success of an initiative for greater inclusion. If your organization's project did not work out as planned, determine whether one of the following factors may be the cause.

Poor timing

It may be that you tried to implement your initiative at a time when your organization was struggling with urgent priorities. Perhaps you were dealing with critical problems such as lack of funding, overwork, a particular conflict or political changes. During such a time, employees, the board of directors and members are working to survive as an organization, and it is likely that the issue of inclusion isn't a priority.

External intervention

If external forces such as financial need, political opinion or a court order got the initiative

going, some people in your organization may be resistant. They may oppose the initiative and feel that they are being forced to adopt it to reach objectives that they do not believe in, while other interests and needs are put aside.

Inappropriate approach

The opposition may be linked to the approach itself. Without realizing it, you may have painted certain people as criminals and others as victims. Those who think they are being accused become defensive. They believe that they are unjustly and they feel they are treated as "the enemy".

Limited definition of inclusion

If inclusion is seen to pertain to only certain groups (for example, racial, ethnic and cultural communities and women), others groups may have the impression they are being ignored. A wider definition of

inclusion covering such aspects as the level of education and the family situation makes it possible to create a group that is big enough to include everyone. In this framework, all the concerns raised are important. Once the reasons behind opposition are determined, you will be in a better position to move forward. The following points are strategies you can consider in order to rebuild credibility and create support.

Tackle your own obstacles first

Examine the structural hurdles identified in your needs analysis before looking at other areas where changes could be made. Creating policies on human resources issues, for example, or more flexible membership requirements can help differentiate needs and preferences of present and future employees and members. Providing opportunities for those who would like to participate more is another

example. When you respond to concerns that have been raised, it shows a real commitment on the part of the organization.

Obtain comments from the people who oppose the initiative

Create a discussion group to listen to the points of view and concerns of individuals and groups who have pointed out gaps in the initiative or who reject the notion of inclusion. Find out what their concerns and needs are. Determine whether there are ways the organization can solve their problems or reduce their frustrations. Once you have examined their concerns (even if the issues have

not all been resolved), they will be more interested in considering the idea of inclusion.

Seek wide support

Create a committee based on inclusion that represents a diversity of interests in order to gather a wide range of opinions and attitudes. It is important to include people who are resistant or sceptical. They can become the strongest allies if they are committed to the process. When they see the initiative in a new light, they can act as informal leaders and persuade others who are resisting. They can also provide critical comments when time comes to plan other initiatives.

Training options adapted to needs

If someone needs to acquire more knowledge and skills, find ways of providing this assistance without relying strictly on traditional group courses. A personal mentor would be more useful for a person who is resistant and would help deal with particular difficulties in overcoming obstacles.



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A healthy community aims to:

- Create a clean and safe environment
- Address citizens' basic needs
- Develop a strong and united community
- Encourage people to participate in local decisions
- Provide opportunities for an enriching experience
- Protect and share the history and culture of the community
- Offer easy access to health services
- Build a diverse and dynamic economy
- Support the sound use of resources

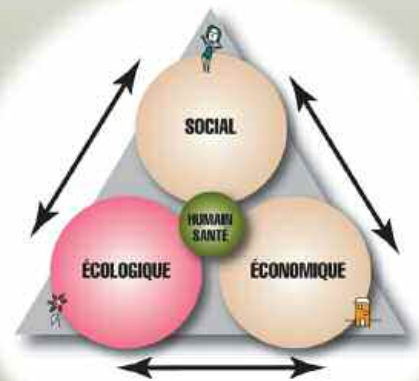
Factors tied to the concept of healthy communities

- A clearly articulated vision centered on respect for the 12 determinants of health
- An approach that places citizens at the heart of the process
- Sustainable development strategy
- Positioning in favour of the "Santé en français" movement.
- Breakthrough towards healthy schools
- An initiative toward attaining a higher level of community happiness

Conditions for success in building a healthy community

- Commitment to promoting health and well-being in society
- Ability to influence and make political decisions
- Action across sectors
- Community participation
- Innovation
- Healthy policies for the collective well-being and health of society

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