

Our Closing the Distance Partners

Community Development Halton
www.cdhalton.ca

Social Planning Council of Kingston & Area
www.spc.kingston.ca

Social Planning Council of Cambridge & North Dumfries
www.socialplanningcouncil-cnd.org

Social Planning Council of Sudbury
www.spcsudbury.ca

Lakehead Social Planning Council
www.lspc.ca

Social Planning Council of Peel
www.spepeel.com

Social Planning Council of Kitchener-Waterloo
www.waterlooregion.org/spc/kw

Brant Community Social Planning Council
www.brantspc.on.ca

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Closing the Distance



Social and Economic Inclusion Initiative

www.closingthedistance.ca

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What is the Closing the Distance Project?

Late in 2002, the Social Planning Network of Ontario (SPNO) launched a number of local projects under the Social and Economic Inclusion Initiative supported by the Public Health Agency of Canada (Ontario and Nunavut Region). These projects are designed to help "close the distance" between certain marginalized populations and mainstream community life.

From this mandate, the SPNO and local social planning councils and community leadership collaborated to initiate the development of community mobilization strategies around issues of local concern related to population health. The five projects include:

- Kingston working with the homeless population
- Peel-Halton working with health and social services to become diversity-competent
- Central West Ontario (Kitchener-Waterloo, Cambridge, Brant County) working with youth and seniors in rural and urban communities
- Sudbury working with Aboriginal and Francophone children and local schools
- Thunder Bay working with isolated youth

Social Planning Network of Ontario (SPNO)

Created in 1991, the SPNO (www.spno.ca) is a province-wide network of twenty community-based social planning councils that provide research, policy analysis, community education and community development supports on issues of social and economic development in their local areas.

What do we mean by 'Closing the Distance'?

The current status quo looks something like the picture on the right - a more privileged elite in the upper triangle separated economically, socially, culturally and politically by a group in the middle from the poor and marginalized in the lower inverted triangle. If anything, wealth and income studies show that the upper triangle is becoming more distant from the middle and lower sections and more people are falling out of the middle into the bottom triangle.



Status Quo

Our notion of "closing the distance" means supporting those now excluded to move out of the margins and become part of society. It also means, however, that there is movement in the "upper reaches" of society to change structures, policies, and systems that support privilege and exclusion and that keep different parts of the community at a distance from each other. Closing the distance demands change from the top as well.



Closing the Distance

Actually, a truly inclusive society would be re-shaped in a way that would minimize hierarchical relationships and boundaries and create a stronger sense of a universal commitment to the social well-being of everyone.



Re-shaping Society for the benefit of all

Closing the Distance in Communities

We would like to share what we have learned in our communities with you. Closing the Distance Case Studies are now available!!

Our experiences in these five projects have produced important learning and understanding about inclusive practice in communities and organizations.

Each case study is presented in two sections. The first section is a narrative of the origin and development of each local project. The second section uses a capacity building framework to analyze and assess the learnings from each project in terms of how to create and sustain the capacity to do successful work on social and economic inclusion at the community level.

Resources Available on the Closing the Distance Website:

Case Studies

- Sudbury - "A Community Where All Kids Belong"
- Kingston - "A Room of One's Own"
- Thunder Bay - "Supporting Youth Voices Against Racism"
- Peel-Halton - "Creating Diversity Competent Organizations"
- Central-West - "Closing the Distance for Seniors and Youth in Central West Ontario"

Other Available Resources

Video: "Mobilizing Communities to Close the Distance" - A 20 minute video in 4 parts introducing Closing the Distance

And More...

Social and Economic Inclusion Initiative

For more information, go to our website: www.closingthedistance.ca