**Theme C – Awareness and Public Appreciation**

This theme addresses the general lack of awareness across the private and public sectors, as well as throughout society, of the role, impact and struggles of non-for-profit organizations, as well as misconceptions about their importance to communities, social programs, business activity and the economy.

**Issues and Opportunities**

1. The public does not view the community sector as a ‘sector of the economy’ and, often, does not understand what services the sector offers, does not have confidence in the sector and values it only for its social contribution.

2. Organizations may be penalized for showing a profit – there is often a view from funders and the public that a community sector organization should not earn money and, if it does make a profit, then it does not need money.

3. The administrative cost of running an organization and the differences among organizations are not fully recognized in funding programs.

4. Some people tend to see the community sector as a job, not as a career.

5. Some in the private sector view the community sector negatively or as competition, especially if government funds are being sought.

6. The public funding model depicts the community sector as dependent on government.

7. There is growing societal focus on social enterprise, social impact and social return on investment.

8. Many people (e.g., youth) have a great deal of passion and a desire to make a difference.

9. Immigrants offer a new source of labour, skills, knowledge and energy.

10. The community sector is a great opportunity for women and diverse populations.

11. The skills required for social innovation must be recognized in order to create and capitalize on new opportunities.

Other –

* ERMA (Environment Resources Management Association) has 25,000 visitors annually. No one knows what the organization is. It is not advertised enough, no budget to do so. Able to assist with getting the word out with regards to what each organization is about, increasing tourism etc. Add enhancements – awareness!
* Non-profits are poorly advertised – not good at promotion etc. because there are no funding programs for marketing and advertising.
* Staff Stability an issue – funding not consistent.
* Allow for transfer of knowledge from ‘baby boomers’ to the youth.
* Does the Government realize how much extra is done above and beyond for the organization – not just the typical ‘daily duties’ due to other services being lost in the rural communities - ‘the little extras’ that take away from the other duties that are expected.

**C. Awareness and public appreciation**

**Considering the assets identified as well as the various issues and opportunities associated with this theme, please answer the following questions:**

Question 1 – In the most concrete terms possible, what action(s) can **government** take to address these issues or seize these opportunities?

* Promote local infrastructure and community non for profit organizations.
* Funding from Government has to be a core investment for program possibilities.
* Development of a directory to know who is out there for services (non-profit). Government not fully aware of what services are out there. Make it electronic – easily accessible.
* Studies to promote the services of employment opportunities, change how others think of non for profit organizations.
* Allow for opportunities to gather and communicate needs of non for profit organizations.
* Stop telling me – ‘that’s not your job’ don’t do the extras.
* Allow for longer term funding, core funding to relieve job stability worries.
* Public appreciation – business taxes being charged on non for profit organizations – shouldn’t be.
* Allow for investment of leftover monies back into the organization.
* Co-op programs to aid organizations.
* Having to follow the money to ensure programming is sustainable – expectations with regards to getting this money – money needs to be more accessible.
* Government needs to focus attention on rural communities to promote and expand community sector – not just tourist type destinations i.e. Twillingate, etc.
* Government needs to show ‘we believe in you’ to small organizations.
* Allow an area at AGM for community sector organizations – i.e. Fire dept., etc is on the agenda but not the community sector areas.
* Need a group section to gather for meetings of boards for organizations – promote what we do.
* Start looking at us as vital to the community as a whole, provide the means to provide the programming instead of barriers.
* Funding for a regional board member (just one) to oversee the various organizations in the region.
* Civic awards – recognition of community groups, not only the volunteers honoring the organization, not just an individual volunteer within the organization
* Services provided may not be offered elsewhere – promote what is available
* Simpler application formats – 42 pages is unacceptable. Costs more to get it filled out than it is for sometimes.

Question 2 – In the most concrete terms possible, what action(s) can the **community sector** take to address these issues or seize these opportunities?

* Have a ‘fair’ specifically for the community organizations to get the information and awareness out – for the community to learn about us and for each organization to learn more about each other.
* Lobbying to get everyone together to show what these services provide, gives Government an opportunity to see what their investments give – get the most from the investment in the organization.
* Partner with other community groups/municipalities – allow for bigger and better programming opportunities.
* Show the benefits that each organization provides to the communities that they are located in.
* Allow youth to become engaged – invite them to the conferences.
* Expansion beyond our normal region area to allow for more opportunities of participation.
* Take advantage of every pot of money that is available.
* Use terminology that would promote the organizations.
* The word is not getting out – no invites to Government sector to come out to AGM’s etc. to see what we do.
* Regional board to oversee the various organizations in the region.
* Offer support and guidance to the community organizations – to offer a voice to speak to Government.
* Community Sector Council to aide in the process to availing of the funding – help with the application, know what is available.
* To sit at the tables in Government to promote non for profit organizations, and enhance funding opportunities.
* Work with the municipalities to get the awareness out within the community – build a directory of services available, specific to each area.
* Put up a photograph/slide show – depicting various services offered in the community solely by non for profit organizations.
* Ensure each municipality has a non for profit organization listing.
* As a non for profit organization – speak to promote the factor of what they provide as a non for profit organization.
* Piggy back with other events – trade shows, community events to spread the word.

Generalization made by an attendee -

There is a disconnect between the two – need to make the connection – no idea as to how to do so. Coordinate meetings, start the dialogue. Some organizations are connected better than others.