



Policy Internships and Fellowships Program
Projet des Stages et bourses en élaboration de politiques

Policy Internships and Fellowships

Bridging the
Policy Dialogue
Between Voluntary
Organizations and the
Federal Government

Voluntary Sector
June 2003

Canada



Centre for Voluntary Sector Research & Development
Centre de recherche et de développement sur le secteur bénévole



**University
of Victoria**

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This report and the final reports of interns and fellows are available at the following websites:

- www.cvsrd.org
- <http://publicadmin.uvic.ca/CPSS>

Print copies may be obtained by contacting:

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FOREWORD

The Policy Internships and Fellowships Program was launched through the efforts of many individuals and organizations, including those who participated in the Capacity Joint Table of the Voluntary Sector Initiative, in the PIAF Roundtable Consultation and in the PIAF Committee, which were instrumental in the conceptualization and development of the Program.

As a result of these and other efforts, and generous funding from Human Resources Development Canada and Health Canada, the PIAF Program began as a pilot, with nine enterprising interns and fellows, who spent the better part of a year in a host organization in the federal government or voluntary sector.

This final report on the PIAF Pilot Program provides useful information on the history of the program, its objectives and outcomes achieved through the nine interchanges between federal government departments and voluntary sector organizations. The report captures the highlights of the experience of interns and fellows as well as their insights into the effectiveness of PIAF and ways of enhancing inter-sectoral collaboration.

We would like to take this opportunity to recognize the tireless efforts of the interns and fellows, their immediate supervisors, their student research assistants and their mentors, without whom this pilot program would not have been possible. We also wish to express our sincere appreciation to the funders, members of the advisory committee, the home and host organizations, staff of the Centre for Voluntary Sector Research and Development (CVSRD) and the Centre for Public Sector Studies (CPSS), and many other individuals who supported this innovative development in public policy.

The Pilot Program was an excellent first step in fostering inter-sectoral awareness, understanding and collaboration. With support from Human Resources Development Canada, we have embarked on a new recruitment initiative, with a view to initiating exchanges of individuals between the respective sectors. We anticipate that this phase of the PIAF Program will build on the successes of the Pilot Program and break new ground in conducting policy research and in developing public policies that meet the needs of diverse constituencies and communities.

Dr. Susan Phillips
Director, CVSRD

Dr. Sharon Manson Singer
Senior Fellow, CPSS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This is a report on a pilot program initiated by the Capacity Joint Table of the Voluntary Sector Initiative, namely the Policy Internships and Fellowships (PIAF) Pilot Program. PIAF was launched in 2002, with funding provided by Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC) and Health Canada, with the objectives of developing policy knowledge, experience and skills in both the voluntary sector and the federal government and enabling the voluntary sector to become a more viable partner in the development of public policy.

PIAF is managed by the Centre for Voluntary Sector Research and Development, a joint initiative of the University of Ottawa and Carleton University, in with the Centre for Public Sector Studies of the University of Victoria.

Following an intensive recruitment effort, a rigorous selection process, arrangements for placements under the auspices of the Interchange Canada Program of the Public Service Commission of Canada, and two weeks of training in the area of policy at a summer institute organized by the Centre for Public Sector Studies, nine interns and fellows proceeded to their interchange assignments:

- **ALLAN BENTLEY**, Manager of the TOTAL Non-Profit Resources website at Volunteer Hamilton, did a fellowship with HRDC's Greater Hamilton Regional Office, focusing on the issue of homelessness and how to bring various levels of government together.
- **DOROTHÉE GIZENGA**, Policy Development Consultant for the Canadian and African Business Women's Alliance, interned with the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, with a view to monitoring, and contributing to, Canada's policies for the New Partnerships for Africa's Development Plan.
- **BARBARA HILL**, Director of Policy Development at the John Howard Society of Ontario, did her internship with Solicitor General Canada to work on the reforms to the Corrections and Conditional Release Act. She also researched models of voluntary sector-public sector collaboration.
- **KAREN HILL**, Senior Policy Analyst, Program Policy, Health Canada, did a blended fellowship with the Canadian Public Health Association. She provided general policy support to senior staff and board members and worked on issues such as health system reform, literacy and health, and public health infrastructure funding.
- **HELEN FRIEL**, Director of Citizen Engagement, Correctional Service Canada, did her internship with the Canadian Criminal Justice Association to broaden its membership base and strengthen stakeholder participation in public policy. She was instrumental in revitalizing the Association's Policy Review Committee.
- **JOANNE MURRAY**, Executive Director of John Howard Society of Moncton, did a fellowship with Correctional Service Canada (Moncton Regional Headquarters). She conducted research on the effectiveness of the mechanisms for strengthening and maintaining the family and social connections of inmates.
- **JANICE NELSON**, External and Governmental Affairs Consultant, HRDC, BC-Yukon Region, was placed with First Call-BC Child and Youth Advocacy Coalition to provide assistance to communities around the province of BC to mobilize for the improvement of the health and well-being of children and youth.
- **AMY SEABROOKE**, Manager of the Land and Water Stewardship Project at Wildlife Habitat Canada, did her internship with two federal departments-Environment Canada and Fisheries and Oceans Canada-to further the work of Canada's Stewardship Program.
- **CATHY WRIGHT**, Executive Director of the Human Development Council of Saint John, did an internship with HRDC, New Brunswick Region, in the Strategic Services Unit, working on the skills development agenda and forging closer links between government and community.

Participation in PIAF proved to be a rewarding and enriching experience for the interns and fellows, with impacts that far exceeded the stated objectives of the program in many cases. They gained a greater appreciation of the public policy process and deepened their understanding of the value of the voluntary sector in the public policy domain. Their networks were significantly enhanced, both in their own and in their host sector. They also increased their knowledge and skills in the area of knowledge transfer, particularly as it relates to policy development. Among other contributing factors, this was achieved by attending various conferences and symposia, assessing the context for their PIAF work (and in some cases undertaking a literature review), developing workshops, and preparing a final report on their participation.

The nine final reports collectively offer valuable insights into the workings of the PIAF Pilot Program itself. Program elements such as the summer institute, mentors, student research assistants, monthly teleconferences and periodic face-to-face meetings at national or international conferences or symposia, contributed to a multi-faceted learning experience. Other supportive factors included a “natural fit” between the interests and prior experiences of the participants and the mission, goals and/or programs of the respective home and host organizations, an effective working relationship with the immediate supervisor, the flexibility inherent in PIAF placements and diverse networking opportunities within and across the government and the voluntary sector.

Interns and fellows made a number of observations concerning ways to enhance inter-sectoral collaboration, and these are outlined in the report, with suggestions addressed to the federal government, the voluntary sector and both (together). Mutual respect, open communication, opportunities for interaction and joint efforts, meaningful consultative processes, and strategic research are advocated, among other things. Perhaps the most pervasive recommendation relates to the need for both sectors to respect the various *Codes of Conduct* and *Guiding Principles* emanating from the Voluntary Sector Initiative.

In conclusion, the PIAF Pilot Program has proven to be an innovative approach to developing policy knowledge, experience and skills in both sectors and to enabling the voluntary sector to become a more viable partner in the development of public policy. It is anticipated that the benefits of the PIAF experience will have multiple effects as interns and fellows return to their home organizations, enriched and inspired by their experiences, and ready to apply what they have learned, and to share their learnings, within and beyond their own organization and sector.

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Background

Among the Joint Tables established by the Voluntary Sector Initiative (VSI), the Capacity Joint Table seeks to contribute to a better understanding of the challenges facing the voluntary sector and to develop ways of strengthening its ability to meet the demands placed on it by Canadian society. Its work is focused on three areas: human resources; research and information sharing; and policy.¹ This is a report on a pilot program initiated by the Capacity Joint Table under the rubric of policy, namely the Policy Internships and Fellowships (PIAF) Pilot Program.

In June 2001, the Capacity Joint Table held a PIAF Roundtable Consultation to help lay the groundwork for the establishment of an exchange program, initially on a pilot basis. Roundtable participants agreed that the pilot program should:

- Be based on mutually sustainable models
- Have a positive and visible impact on both decision-makers and stakeholders
- Focus on inclusivity and diversity in their broadest sense
- Encourage innovation
- Foster mutual respect for the goals, culture and strengths of the participating sectors
- Ensure the transfer, across sectors, of knowledge generated through the pilot program

Roundtable participants also identified four key areas of emphasis for the PIAF program:

- Impact on policy development
- Multi-sectoral policy development, from consultation to collaborative change
- Measurement of effectiveness of policy outcomes and impacts
- Strengthening knowledge transfer specific to policy development²

Following the Roundtable, a committee of representatives from the federal government and the voluntary sector designed the PIAF pilot program and presided over a process that culminated in the selection of the Centre for Voluntary Sector Research and Development (CVSRD) as the managing organization.³ CVSRD is a joint initiative of Carleton University and the University of Ottawa. The University of Victoria's Centre for Public Sector Studies was identified as a partner.

In 2002, PIAF was launched as a VSI program, with \$1.1 million in funding provided by Health Canada and Human Resources Development Canada-HRDC (initial funding for a one-year pilot). PIAF's objectives were to: develop policy knowledge, experience and skills in both the voluntary sector and the federal government; and enable the voluntary sector to become a more viable partner in the development of public policy.

Recruitment and Selection

The recruitment initiative was launched through press releases issued by Carleton University⁴ and the University of Victoria, which invited applications from across Canada, and from a variety of work environments, for one of the following endeavours: (a) *internships*, i.e., integrated operational placements, with a focus on public policy development where the intern is incorporated into an existing work team and assigned regular work tasks; and (b) *fellowships*, i.e., stand-alone policy research projects in specific policy areas that are anchored to work teams but not part of the regular workflow. Application forms and details were posted on the websites of the partner organizations.

¹ Website reference: http://www.vsi-isbc.ca/eng/joint_tables/capacity/index.cfm

² *Report on the PIAF Roundtable Consultation*, Capacity Joint Table, Voluntary Sector Initiative. Available at the following website: http://www.vsi-isbc.ca/eng/joint_tables/capacity/roundtable_report/doc1.cfm

³ Website reference: http://www.vsi-isbc.ca/eng/joint_tables/capacity/policy_piaf.cfm

⁴ Website reference: <http://www.carleton.ca/duc/newsrels/volexch.html>

“This intensive recruitment effort generated considerable interest among leaders and practitioners in the public and voluntary sector, who saw a real opportunity to build cross-sectoral understanding”

The Voluntary Sector Secretariat of the VSI sent a notice to more than 4,000 voluntary organizations that had attended VSI consultations, while CVSRD asked 24 local, provincial and territorial voluntary sector coalitions to send a notice to their membership. In addition, the Coalition of National Voluntary Organizations (NVO) included a notice on their webcast to members, a public sector promotional campaign was carried out by HRDC (Capacity Table program officers), a paid advertisement was placed on the Charity Village website and letters and notices were sent out to other voluntary sector contacts.

This intensive recruitment effort generated considerable interest among leaders and practitioners in the public and voluntary sector, who saw a real opportunity to build cross-sectoral understanding. Completed applications were screened for eligibility based on the following criteria:

- Have at least five years of experience
- Hold a Bachelor's degree or have relevant work experience
- Are considered leaders in their field
- Can demonstrate how their participation would enhance public policy capacity in their respective sector

The 32 eligible applications were sent to the Selection Committee, which consisted of the Director and the Managing Director of CVSRD, the Senior Fellow at the Centre for Public Sector Studies, and a representative from HRDC, from the International Development Research Centre and from the Association of Professional Executives (APEX). The Selection Committee took into consideration the quality of the applications (clarity and completeness, background and experience, definition of project and its alignment with project goals, and capacity to transfer knowledge as reflected in involvement with networks and coalition), as well as geographic diversity, range of issues and balance of public and voluntary sector participation.⁵

Ten interns and fellows were selected from a variety of voluntary organizations and federal government departments, with a wealth of experience in a number of public policy areas including health, the environment, youth protection, trade, justice and community development. Nine individuals completed the pilot program.

Training

During the summer of 2002, selected interns and fellows, as well as funders and representatives from the voluntary sector and from academe, participated in an intensive 10-day summer institute organized by the Centre for Public Sector Studies. The goal was to develop policy-making capacity and cross-sectoral understanding. Workshop topics included: “Policy Processes in the Voluntary Sector and Federal Sector”; “Managing Stakeholders”; “Getting and Spending Money”; “Ethics and Advocacy”; “Performance Management and Accountability”; and “Future Trends”.

Interns and fellows can apply to receive graduate credit for the training program and/or a Certificate in Voluntary Sector/Public Sector Policy Analysis, from the University of Victoria or the University of Ottawa.

Internships and Fellowships

Placements were arranged under the auspices of the Interchange Canada Program of the Public Service Commission of Canada. Under the terms of this program, participants were sponsored by their “home” organization, continued to be employed (and paid) by that organization and were to return there after the assignment.

The PIAF Pilot Program provided funding for the above-mentioned summer institute at the Centre for Public Sector Studies and attendance at: the conference of the Association for Research on Nonprofit Organizations and Voluntary Action (ARNOVA) in Montreal in the fall of 2002; a national symposium, “Moving Forward: Linking Practice and Research with the Voluntary Sector”, co-sponsored by CVSRD, the Canadian Centre for

⁵ Reference: *Policy Internships and Fellowships Pilot Project – Six-Month Report*, December 2002. Unpublished paper prepared by the Centre for Voluntary Sector Research and Development, December 2002.

Philanthropy and NVO in January 2003; and the Canadian Social Welfare conference in Ottawa in June 2003. CVSRD also arranged for orientation to the program's intranet site and for electronic and (monthly) teleconference learning exchanges, recruited student research assistants from a variety of disciplines to work with the interns and fellows, facilitated the identification of a mentor for the intern or fellow in the host organization, arranged a meeting of participants after the ARNOVA gathering in Montreal and continued to provide support to research assistants, mentors, interns and fellows throughout the period of placement (fall 2002-spring 2003).

Interns and fellows prepared final reports on their placement. They will be sharing their learnings (the highlights of which are presented in the next section of this report) with colleagues in the public and voluntary sector and the academic community, at the PIAF Showcase as part of the aforementioned Canadian Social Welfare Conference in June 2003. It is anticipated that the knowledge transfer process will continue, once participants return to their home organization, through internal dissemination mechanisms, through their involvement in networks and associations, and through ongoing cross-sectoral dialogue.

In May 2003, CVSRD announced that it was recruiting up to 15 interns and fellows, with funding from HRDC. The deadline for application was June 2. The selected interns and fellows are expected to begin their placements in the fall.

“The nine interns and fellows were asked to prepare a final report on their PIAF experience, including details on their own background and interests, the home and host organization, the policy context, their placement and achievements.”

REFLECTIONS ON INTERNSHIPS AND FELLOWSHIPS

Overview of Internships and Fellowships

There were nine PIAF participants, three fellows and six interns. The six voluntary home organizations and three voluntary host organizations reflected a range of interests (Canadian and African business women, offender reintegration and crime prevention, land and water stewardship and human development in the case of the home organizations and public health, criminal justice and child and youth health and well-being in the case of the hosts) and geographic reach (city, province or Canada wide). The home government departments were HRDC (British Columbia-Yukon Region), Correctional Service Canada-CSC (Citizen Engagement) and Health Canada (Office of the Voluntary Sector), and the hosts were HRDC (Hamilton Human Resource Centre and New Brunswick Regional Office), Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade-DFAIT (Foreign Policy Development), Solicitor General Canada (Corrections Policy), Correctional Service Canada (Moncton Regional Headquarters), and co-hosts Environment Canada (Canadian Wildlife Service) and Fisheries and Oceans Canada (Oceans Sector).

The nine interns and fellows were asked to prepare a final report on their PIAF experience, including details on their own background and interests, the home and host organization, the policy context, their placement and achievements. In addition, they were asked to include a brief literature review (as applicable), an analysis of voluntary and public sector comparisons and their perspective on the two sectors as partners in public policy. Collectively, these reports present a wealth of information and insights on both sectors and on possibilities for future collaboration.

Highlights of these reports are presented (below) from three perspectives: individual experiences; reflections on the PIAF Pilot Program as a whole; and, more generally (beyond PIAF), observations on ways to enhance inter-sectoral collaboration.

Individual Experiences

ALAN BENTLEY is the Manager of the TOTAL Non-Profit Resources website at Volunteer Hamilton, an organization that provides ongoing support to community volunteerism and member agencies, in the context of building community leadership through volunteerism. He was interested in enhancing, through a PIAF fellowship, his understanding of the federal government policy process, the role that voluntary sector organizations could play and the most effective methods for involvement in the policy process. The purpose of his fellowship, based in the Hamilton Human Resource Centre of HRDC, was to evaluate the community consultation and citizen engagement strategies and the collaboration models used in the implementation of the Supporting Communities Partnership Initiative (SCPI) in the City of Hamilton, Ontario.

“My role in the PIAF fellowship has enabled me to be exposed to a wide variety of initiatives related to SCPI ...”

SCPI, a demonstration program launched as the cornerstone of the National Homelessness Initiative of HRDC, was designed to be a community-driven response to homelessness. HRDC contracted the City of Hamilton (through its Social and Public Health Department) to manage the SCPI program in that municipality. The other players were: the Social Planning and Research Council of Hamilton-Wentworth, which was responsible for the Community Action Plan; the Community Advisory Board, comprising various community partners, which made recommendations to the City on the disbursement of funds; and community service provider organizations, which were funded by SCPI.

Alan’s research project revolved around three information gathering activities: interviews with representatives of the above-noted organizations, in addition to members of local advocacy groups and selected academics; a literature review that included community consultation and citizen engagement theory, research and processes, and models/theories of collaboration and partnership; and participation in selected forums, seminars and workshops on collaboration, consultation and homelessness. He also participated in several committees related

to homelessness, namely: the aforementioned Community Advisory Board (ex-officio member); the Food, Shelter and Housing Advisory Committee, which reports to the City of Hamilton's Social and Public Health Services Volunteer Coordinating Committee; the SCPI Evaluation (Progress Report) Committee; and the Prevention, Awareness, Choices, Education (PACE) Committee and Policy Sub-Committee. PACE provides education to health professionals and promotes awareness of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder.

Through his PIAF fellowship, Alan has gained an understanding of what constitutes effective public consultations, including clear expectations concerning the use of information gathered through consultation, an inclusive strategy to ensure representative consultation, and review of the consultation process in terms of building trust, sustaining a two-way dialogue and achieving a credible, transparent and legitimate process. He has also gained a better appreciation of the decision-making process in voluntary sector organizations and in the federal government, and the ways in which the latter can effectively engage the voluntary sector in public policy development.

HELEN FRIEL is the Director of Citizen Engagement in the Community Engagement Sector of Correctional Service Canada. This Sector operates within CSC's mandate for community capacity building, and reflects CSC's view that citizens and organizations who understand and are engaged in supportive activities and who help, advise and offer a support network bring particular assets to programs and services that contribute to public safety through crime prevention and the successful reintegration of offenders. Her interest in PIAF stemmed from her 23 years of experience working in CSC, her involvement in the VSI from its early inception, her volunteer work on initiatives that addressed social justice issues, and her interest in exploring synergies between the voluntary sector and government. She had previously attended congresses sponsored by the Canadian Criminal Justice Association (CCJA), and had attended meetings with that organization on funding and other issues of concern to the voluntary sector and to her department.

“I am proud to be a public servant who has been part of this initiative...”

tribute to public safety through crime prevention and the successful reintegration of offenders. Her interest in PIAF stemmed from her 23 years of experience working in CSC, her involvement in the VSI from its early inception, her volunteer work on initiatives that addressed social justice issues, and her interest in exploring synergies between the voluntary sector and government. She had previously attended congresses sponsored by the Canadian Criminal Justice Association (CCJA), and had attended meetings with that organization on funding and other issues of concern to the voluntary sector and to her department.

CCJA is an independent national voluntary umbrella organization representing all elements of the criminal justice system, including the public, which promotes informed and responsible debate in order to develop a more humane, equitable and effective justice system in Canada. Its activities revolve around publications, conferences and congresses, building a representative membership base, and supporting various committees dedicated to furthering particular areas of interest within the national umbrella organization. Helen's internship at CCJA was designed to meet the following objectives: revitalize the Policy Review Committee; build up and diversify the membership base; assist in identifying emerging issues; and enhance trust and foster a sense of partnership between government and the CCJA. Helen assumed the role of managing and coordinating the Policy Review Committee, and she helped establish a mentoring program in CCJA, pairing newer with more established members in the development of policy papers. Under her watch, the Committee produced several briefs on legislation (related to Conditional Sentencing, Decriminalization of Cannabis and the Sex Offender Registry) for presentation to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights. She liaised with the Clerk of the Standing Committee to ensure timely submission of documents and to schedule CCJA appearances before the Committee.

Helen was an active contributor to the *Criminal Justice Bulletin*, which she helped shape so as to promote awareness, among CCJA members, of the current areas of focus of the organization. She acted as a facilitator and a rapporteur for workshops at a jointly-sponsored CCJA and CSC conference on restorative justice, and has helped plan and organize the next CCJA conference, to be held in November 2003. She represented CCJA at a number of meetings, including the joint CSC and National Associations Active in Criminal Justice (NAACJ) meeting, the Solicitor General Canada's Corrections Roundtable, another meeting sponsored by NAACJ, dealing with social inclusion and diversity in the criminal justice field, and the Solicitor General Canada's research colloquium, "Canada Meets America".

Helen returns to CSC with a better appreciation of both the voluntary and the public sector, and particularly with a better sense of how they work together in the development of policy, the design of programs and the delivery of services. By helping strengthen linkages between her department and the voluntary sector, Helen has furthered the work of the Citizen Engagement Sector in building the capacity of voluntary sector organizations and taking steps toward social change needed to improve public safety and indirectly the quality of life of other aspects of Canadian society.

DOROTHÉE GIZENGA is a Policy Development Consultant for the Canadian and African Business Women's Alliance (CAABWA), a non-profit, membership-based organization with a mandate to strengthen business linkages between Canada and African countries, and particularly to open new avenues of trade and investment for women entrepreneurs. With experience as a community volunteer in non-profit organizations, seven years in the Government of Ontario, and as one of the founders of CAABWA, Dorothée (and her organization) recognized the importance, to CAABWA, of the Africa Action Plan prepared by G8 countries in response to the New Partnerships for Africa's Development Plan that had been submitted to G8 countries by African leaders. The possibility of an internship at the Canadian Centre for Foreign Policy Development in the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade was attractive, given that the Centre had funded CAABWA to prepare a policy option paper reviewing Canadian policies towards Africa, and that CAABWA had participated in the National Forum for Africa in Toronto, organized by the Centre. The mandate of the Centre is to gather public input into foreign policy, by hosting roundtables, policy development discussions, the annual National Forum on Canada's International Relations and an annual graduate students' seminar. The Centre achieves its goals by working in partnership with universities, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), business organizations and others.

During her internship, Dorothée gained an understanding of some of the ways in which the voluntary sector may participate in the foreign policy-making process as she assisted in the policy work of the Centre. She was a rapporteur at a Canada-Norway Roundtable, at a

Discussion on Islam, Iraq and American Foreign Policy and at the Minister's Townhall on the Dialogue for Foreign Policy in Montreal (reporting on the panel presentations and public interventions). She also assisted in the planning and organization of the Dialogue on Foreign Policy launched by the Minister in January 2003.

Dorothée contributed to a presentation to graduate students at the Norman Patterson School (Carleton University) and chaired a session on international trade and development at the Conference of the Halifax Branch of the Canadian Institute of International Affairs and the "Halifax Dialogues" Committee. As part of the Centre's outreach efforts, Dorothée made presentations to two universities (Université de Montréal and McGill University) and to five NGOs in the Montreal area. She also reviewed public funding proposals submitted to the Centre.

Dorothée's internship activities fell short of her objectives of learning more about policy-making processes in trade and investment and of mapping implementation of the Africa Action Plan and determining opportunities for participation, due in part to the Centre's focus on foreign policy. However, she succeeded in conducting some research on the Africa Action Plan and was able to keep a watching brief, through meetings with the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), with DFAIT's African Bureau and with various NGOs that contributed to consultations on implementation of the Africa Action Plan, and through attendance at various trade and investment networking events and presentations. She also travelled to Ethiopia to attend the Mapping Exercise Conference on New Partnerships for Africa's Development.

Dorothée's internship proved to be beneficial to her as well as to her organization, in terms of gaining a better understanding of policy-making roles of, and issues facing, DFAIT and CIDA, hands-on experience with the Centre's processes of citizen engagement in foreign policy, an awareness of the role of the voluntary sector in the implementation of the Africa Action Plan and an

“The internship provided an opportunity to position the (home) organization as a viable partner to government in relation to policy-making...”

appreciation of the government's commitment to the Plan. Notably, the internship also provided an opportunity to position Dorothée's home organization as a viable partner to government, in the area of policy-making with respect to Africa and the implementation of the Plan.

BARBARA HILL is the Director of Policy Development, John Howard Society (JHS) of Ontario. The mission of JHS Ontario is to promote effective, just and humane responses to crime and its causes. The 17 affiliates of JHS Ontario provide direct service, while the Society takes the lead in education and reform activities beyond local issues and concerns. Barbara has a firm commitment to the correctional client and to creating a service and policy framework within which those in conflict with the law can become productive, contributing members of society. In this context, she is concerned with finding appropriate and effective ways in which her organization can provide input into the public policy process through

“I have acquired new knowledge and skills and have developed contacts...”

policy dialogue with government. She accepted a PIAF internship as a Senior Policy Analyst with the Corrections Policy Directorate of the Department of the Solicitor

General of Canada as it seemed to offer a favourable environment for learning more about, and participating in, the policy process in government.

Reforms to the *Corrections and Conditional Release Act (CCRA)* served as the vehicle for learning about the public policy process (in this case, drafting a Bill, seeking Treasury Board funding and managing the legislative process). Barbara's activities on this file included: participation in drafting sessions and meetings to resolve policy issues; preparation of the Briefing Book for the Bill, which included a clause-by-clause analysis; preparing an update, with related briefing material, on government responses to the recommendations of the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights based on their review of the *CCRA*; and drafting an article on the 10th anniversary of the *CCRA*, published in the December 2002 issue of *The Bulletin*, a publication of the Canadian Criminal Justice Association. With an analyst colleague, she kept a watching brief on the Supreme Court hearings and on hearings of the above-noted Standing Committee relevant

to her work responsibilities. She also attended a two-day conference, “What Works in Conditional Release and Community Reintegration”, organized by the department.

Two other files were assigned during the internship: the Corrections Roundtable and crime prevention. Barbara's contribution to the Roundtable (an avenue for ongoing policy discussions between the department and 14 national voluntary organizations) included the preparation of briefing material for departmental staff, the Minister and other politicians. As for crime prevention, she represented her division on the Portfolio Crime Prevention Working Group, monitored and responded to developments of interest to the division, and prepared a vision document outlining the role of corrections in crime prevention (the paper will be in draft form by the end of the internship). Beyond her specific job responsibilities, Barbara attended conferences and forums that provided the opportunity to learn more about the VSI, about research resources focused on the voluntary sector and about non-profit organizational issues.

Through her internship experience, Barbara gained an enhanced understanding of the policy process, which she hopes to utilize (transfer) on her return to JHS Ontario by identifying ways in which the JHS at the local, provincial and national level, as well as other sector agencies, can contribute more effectively to the process. She has built relationships and developed contacts in the Corrections Directorate based on mutual respect and trust, and anticipates maintaining these important contacts when she returns to JHS Ontario. Finally, she hopes to enhance, within her home organization, an appreciation of the value of the work of the VSI and an understanding of the *Accord between the Government of Canada and the Voluntary Sector*, the *Code of Good Practice on Policy Dialogue* and the *Code of Good Practice on Funding*.

KAREN HILL is a Senior Policy Analyst, Program Policy, in the Office of the Voluntary Sector (OVS) at Health Canada. Among its responsibilities, OVS leads the implementation of the Health Canada framework for building the relationship with National Voluntary Organizations Working in Health and of the *Accord and Codes of Good Practice* in Health Canada, and

manages the department's participation in the VSI. The Office also provides development grants to national voluntary health organizations and supports the Ministerial Consultative Committee on the Voluntary Sector. Karen's 15 years of prior experience in the voluntary sector (social planning organizations), her interest in supporting a dialogue between government and the voluntary sector about the role of community in changing times (post-September 11), and her employment in an office at Health Canada that had helped to develop the PIAF pilot program contributed to her interest in a PIAF placement. She was drawn to the Canadian Public Health Association (CPHA), a national, non-profit voluntary association with a long history, a constituency comprising over 25 health disciplines as well as the public at large, a key player in partnerships with federal and provincial government departments and international agencies, NGOs and the private sector and a leader in advocating for public health principles of disease prevention, health promotion and protection and healthy public policy.

Karen's initial placement as a research fellow working on an asset-mapping project shifted (because of insufficient funding for this work) to a blended fellowship combining research activities with the duties of a policy analyst. In addition to providing general policy support to senior staff and Board members, she worked on issues such as health system reform (including the [Romanow] Commission on the Future of Health Care and public health infrastructure), response to the federal budget, advocacy around Ministers'/First Ministers' meetings and the formation of the Health Council. Policy-related output included draft press releases and letters to the Prime Minister and the federal and provincial Ministers of Health, and a proposed method to document public health infrastructure funding. Karen also contributed to conceptual development for the second Canadian Conference on Literacy and Health and for a new activity on climate change and its impact on children and seniors, and will contribute to the planning for the CPHA's national conference, Board of Directors' meeting and a 'think-tank' on the future of public health, in mid-May.

Karen's PIAF placement provided an invaluable opportunity to better understand, from her perspective as a public servant, the value of the voluntary sector, its contributions and the pressures it faces. She became more aware of factors that enhance the voluntary sector's role in public policy development, such as collaboration among voluntary organizations, connectedness across disciplines and sectors, a clear mission and focus, staff dedicated to public policy, a long-term and broad perspective in policy development and research on how the voluntary sector manages relationships - elements that are not necessarily recognized by government funders. She also gained a better understanding of how government can more effectively engage the voluntary sector in public policy development, and of possible planning, (management) accountability and funding implications.

“The PIAF fellowship has provided an invaluable occasion for me as a federal public servant to understand better the value of the voluntary sector...”

JOANNE MURRAY is Executive Director of the John Howard Society of Greater Moncton Inc., a non-profit, community-based organization that belongs to a federation of 55 local, provincial and national organizations engaged in crime prevention. As her agency began to look at broader, more systemic issues and to examine its capacity to influence policy locally and nationally in an effective way, she and her organization were receptive to an offer from Correctional Service Canada for a fellowship to conduct research on the effectiveness of the mechanisms for strengthening and maintaining the family and social connections of inmates.

Her study of approximately 50 inmates and 50 family members looked at the impact of the family visiting experience on the maintenance of family relationships. The report will be submitted to CSC Regional Headquarters and to the JHS Board and disseminated to key stakeholders within CSC, to relevant provincial government ministries and to community agencies that work with offenders' families. The highlights will be presented at the “Focusing on the Family: Partnerships for Success” policy conference in Kingston, Ontario in May

and at the Annual General Meeting of the Canadian Families and Corrections Network in June. Three other projects were completed during the placement: development of an audit tool to verify compliance with CSC's programming directives; compilation of statistics on program delivery, by district, in Atlantic Canada over a two-year period; and establishment of a coalition of community agencies and government departments

"I have valued every moment of my fellowship, and I am looking forward to my return to John Howard Society..."

that address social problems contributing to crime.

The fellowship achieved other positive results, including a productive working relationship with a researcher that helped

advance a demonstration project in which the JHS was involved and that resulted in a co-authored paper on government/community relations, which was submitted to CSC's research journal. The above-noted coalition has provided an effective vehicle for government and the community to learn more about one another. Joanne's participation in the aforementioned "Moving Forward" national symposium in January 2003, which embraced the concept of a "community of inquiry", inspired her as a member of PolicyLink New Brunswick's Research Sub-Committee, to help organize and participate in a dialogue with academia, government and the community on partnering in research.

Joanne returns to the JHS in Moncton with a broader sense of the voluntary sector and the range of issues it addresses, an appreciation of the techniques and merits of participatory and collaborative research, an in-depth understanding of the policies related to programming in her field, stronger links to CSC and other stakeholders in crime prevention, an understanding of the synergies between government, the community and academia in the research endeavour, a first-hand knowledge of public policy development, and a sense of pride in the professionalism and value of work within the voluntary sector.

JANICE NELSON, External and Government Affairs Consultant with HRDC, BC-Yukon Region, has responsibility for managing a cost-sharing agreement that enhances the employability of persons with disabilities.

She also monitors federal and provincial policies impacting children and families. The opportunity to intern in First Call-BC Child and Youth Advocacy Coalition came at a time when the cost-sharing agreement she was overseeing had ended and her regional office was undergoing reorganization. With a strong professional as well as personal background and an interest in children's services and issues, she welcomed the chance to help First Call, a cross-sectoral and non-partisan coalition of individuals and organizations, provide assistance to communities around the province of British Columbia to mobilize for the improvement of the health and well-being of children and youth through legislation, policy and practice.

Among her achievements, Janice assisted in the development of a vision paper for early child development (ECD) in BC and provided support to an ECD roundtable in the Lower Mainland. She also participated in an ECD coalition in the greater Victoria area. With the Human Early Learning Partnership, a research project based at the University of British Columbia, First Call co-hosted a two-day forum on ECD, with Janice as its lead contact. At this forum, she organized a workshop on First Call's agenda and call to action ("Keys to Success") for healthy children and families. She was also responsible for the development of a framework, with coalition partners, to guide First Call's activities related to the needs of children aged six to twelve. The paper was presented at a First Call coalition meeting and, once finalized and adopted by coalition partners, will be shared with government officials, researchers and other stakeholders. Janice developed a workshop on the federal system of government and its policy process, which she delivered on two occasions. Janice also prepared a submission, on behalf of First Call and its partners, to the federal/provincial/territorial Social Union Framework Agreement (SUFA) Review process, which was posted on the SUFA Review website.

"...once I retire... I plan to use the various contacts that I have made to enable me to be involved with these issues either as a volunteer or on a part-time basis."

In addition to her specific achievements as indicated above, Janice made contacts and networked with organizations and communities with expertise in children's issues, provided support to communities in BC that have adopted First Call's "Keys to Success" and helped them link to regional, provincial and national partners. She shared, with these organizations and communities, her knowledge and expertise concerning the federal government, and in return gained an understanding of how government policies impact children, youth and families.

Janice will return to her home department, HRDC, with a better understanding of how national organizations such as the National Children's Alliance and their partners operate and work collaboratively with the federal government, with an appreciation of the importance of human stories in helping change attitudes, and with an awareness of the need for improved communication and coordination between all levels of government in developing priorities and in better serving the needs of children and families. The many contacts she has made across the province will help her keep track and apprise regional and national HRDC officials of community views on federal government policies on children and families. She hopes that these contacts will serve her in good stead not only as a federal public servant but also when she retires in due course and looks for ways to remain involved in issues related to children and families.

AMY SEABROOKE is the Manager of the Land and Stewardship Program at Wildlife Habitat Canada (WHC), a national, non-profit conservation organization established in 1984 by Environment Canada, provincial wildlife agencies and conservation agencies within the Wildlife Habitat Coalition. Her organization seeks, through partnerships, effective solutions to complex environmental problems facing wildlife habitat. Amy's PIAF assignment was synergistic with her work on at least four interwoven initiatives at WHC, namely: VSI National Stewardship Workshop Series (on building volunteer capacity to support stewardship); development of Canada's Stewardship Agenda-CSA (a multi-jurisdictional policy framework to guide collaboration on broad issues) led by the Canadian Wildlife Service of Environment Canada); the

Stewardship Canada Web Portal; and the 2003 national conference, "The Leading Edge: Stewardship and Conservation in Canada". The term "stewardship" refers to the wide range of voluntary actions that Canadians take to achieve (environmental) conservation goals.

The overall purpose of Amy's PIAF internship was to encourage the (continued) engagement of the voluntary stewardship sector in the development and implementation of Canada's Stewardship Agenda. Her internship was unique to the PIAF program in that she divided her time between two federal departments, Fisheries and Oceans Canada (Habitat Management Programs Branch of the Oceans Sector) and Environment Canada (Stewardship Division of the Canadian Wildlife Service). Across the two departments, Amy's achievements included: assisting in the coordination of Canada's Stewardship Agenda Working Group meetings and teleconferences; facilitating a dialogue between that group VSI workshop participants; coordinating jurisdictional reports in a national roll-up and report on CSA as part of the brief for the September 2003 Ministers' meeting; as Organizing Committee member, helping to develop and promote the aforementioned "Leading Edge" Conference to be held in July 2003; and supporting the work of the Stewardship Canada Web Portal Working Group, including the development of a strategic business plan. Amy also participated in teleconferences with federal/provincial/territorial working groups whose interests aligned with the CSA and she contributed to briefing notes about the VSI and the CSA.

"I expanded my knowledge of the Canadian political system and of the structure of the bureaucracy..."

Through her participation in the PIAF program and related opportunities, Amy gained a better grasp of the voluntary, non-profit sector, of the public policy development process and of the Canadian political system and public service structure(s). She also gained experience in consultation and facilitation through the VSI Workshop Series and a more in-depth appreciation of challenges facing the stewardship and conservation community in Canada. When she returns to WHC, her learnings will help put her work in a broader context and increase her effectiveness in addressing the complex problems facing wildlife habitat.

CATHY WRIGHT is Executive Director of the Human Development Council (HDC) of Saint John, a social planning agency whose mission is to promote and coordinate social development in the greater Saint John area, by facilitating access to information about community programs and services and developing opportunities to work together on issues of common concern. Her 17 years of experience as Executive Director of the HDC and her extensive volunteer involvement, frequently in a leadership capacity, have led her to understand community issues and how all sectors of society can work together in addressing these issues. HDC was concerned about the limited opportunities to discuss issues or initiatives with the government and was interested in arriving at a more in-depth understanding of the policy process and ways in which the government and the community could work together more effectively. Having been involved in the development of the PIAF program through the VSI, Cathy was aware of the potential of a PIAF internship to add value to human development and related work in New Brunswick.

Cathy was placed through PIAF as a consultant to the Strategic Services Unit of HRDC-New Brunswick Region, with the objectives of enhancing her knowledge of government (HRDC), achieving a better understanding of the policy process and bringing a community perspective to the work of the department at the regional and national level. The Strategic Services Unit provides leadership for the region, with respect to the Skills and Learning Agenda, in support of Canada's Innovation Strategy: Knowledge Matters. The Agenda involves federal/provincial collaboration in five priority areas: workplace training and development; literacy; immigration; lifelong learning; and broadband support. Cathy's work focused primarily on workplace training and development. She was part of an informal research team in her unit analyzing barriers and gaps. She undertook the development of an inventory of HRDC programs in this area and, in collaboration with two provincial ministries, acted as a catalyst in the initiation of a research funding program designed to shed light on the voluntary sector as an employer in NB. Her work

has contributed to the mapping out of the next phase (new approaches and interventions) of the workplace training and development agenda.

As the lead person for HRDC-NB in the development of a comprehensive New Brunswick strategy for literacy, Cathy brought together stakeholders from the provincial government, from her department and from a community literacy program to better understand existing programs, as a first step. She has also kept abreast of developments in the area of service enhancements to support the retention of immigrants to New Brunswick. In a more general vein, she prepared a brief report entitled *Voluntary Sector Initiative: Accomplishments and Challenges* and joined a national working group, which is reflecting on the current and future role of HRDC in working with communities to address a range of social problems facing the country. She has also connected with the Income Support Policy Group, who welcomed a regional perspective on issues associated with the working poor.

Having presented a workshop on learnings from her internship, at a provincial conference on policy and poverty, "Together, Changing Policy from the Outside-In", organized by the Urban Core Support Network, Cathy hopes to conduct similar workshops in the future and provide opportunities to share perspectives on how governments and communities can work better together. She has also learned from her internship about how research informs the policy process and how to accommodate issues that cross different levels of government and different programs within government—knowledge that will not only continue to enrich her work at HDC, but will also be shared with partners and stakeholders in years to come.

“Greater levels of collaboration will be achieved, through the growing leadership of community groups and government.”

Benefits of the PIAF Experience

It is impossible to adequately capture the benefits of the PIAF experience for individual participants, because of the richness of the experience and its spin-off effects that in some cases far exceeded the stated objectives of the program. Certainly, interns and fellows gained a greater appreciation of the public policy process, including the need for multi-sector collaboration and citizen engagement, of the context and constraints impacting on their host organization, and of the essential similarities and differences between the two sectors. Regardless of their sector of origin, PIAF participants deepened their understanding of the value of the voluntary sector in the public policy domain. Their networks were significantly enhanced as a result of their placement, both in their own and in the host sector. Of equal importance to the objectives of the PIAF Pilot Program, interns and fellows furthered their knowledge and skills in relation to knowledge transfer specific to policy development, not only by developing and presenting workshops in relevant areas but also by participating in conferences and symposia such as ARNOVA and “Moving Forward” (and in gatherings specific to their field of placement) that had a major networking component and that acted as a catalyst in stimulating the development of shared agendas and undertaking of collaborative action.

There is no better way to describe the overall benefits of PIAF participation than to quote the participants themselves:

“ My role in the PIAF fellowship has enabled me to be exposed to a wide variety of initiatives related to CPI and I am regularly provided with information on policy issues, SCPI and related subjects. The role has also provided me with the freedom to pursue research activities and topics as needed.”

ALAN BENTLEY

“ I am proud to be a public servant who has been part of this initiative, and I am prepared to return to my home organization with a better appreciation of both sectors.”

HELEN FRIEL

“ The identification of issues and current topics of interest in foreign policy, of areas within DFAIT where projects are funded and of key players provides valuable information to the host organization... The Dialogue on Foreign Policy and the Community Outreach provided hands-on experience with the Centre’s engagement of citizens in foreign policy... The internship provided an opportunity to position the (home) organization as a viable partner to government in relation to policy-making...”

DOROTHÉE GIZENGA

“ I have acquired new knowledge and skills and have developed contacts, which will undoubtedly increase my capacity to do my job as Director of Policy Development with the John Howard Society of Ontario. I also plan to work on ways to transfer the knowledge about the policy process within my organization. Perhaps the best way to conclude is just to say that I did a lot and learned a great deal.”

BARBARA HILL

“ The PIAF fellowship has provided an invaluable occasion for me as a federal public servant to understand better the value of the voluntary sector, its contribution, and pressures to be resolved. I am very grateful for this opportunity.”

KAREN HILL

“ I have valued every moment of my fellowship, and I am looking forward to my return to John Howard Society, and to the opportunities that will be afforded the agency because of what I have learned.”

JOANNE MURRAY

“ I have made many contacts across the province as I had hoped to achieve as part of my placement. It is my intention to keep in contact with these organizations after I return to HRDC, in order to track what the community thinks about federal government policies... I hope this information will be used to make informed decisions regarding programs for children and youth... once I retire... I plan to use the various contacts that I have made to enable me to be involved with these issues either as a volunteer or on a part-time basis.”

JANICE NELSON

“I learned about the way in which public policy is developed in Canada in general, and was able to experience it first-hand, from consultation to development and implementation. I expanded my knowledge of the Canadian political system and of the structure of the bureaucracy... Perhaps most importantly, I developed an appreciation of the challenges that bureaucrats face in their work—challenges which I did not fully appreciate prior to the internship.” **AMY SEABROOKE**

“I am very honoured to have had this unique opportunity to learn so much about governments, their priorities and the policy process. It is truly stimulating, integrating these learnings with my community experiences and understanding. Greater levels of collaboration will be achieved, through the growing leadership of community groups and government.” **CATHY WRIGHT**

PIAF Pilot Program

While the above presentation of highlights of individual experiences focuses on the placement itself, it should be noted that for the majority of participants as well as for home and host organizations, exposure to the VSI helped provide an interest in, and a framework for, collaboration between government and the voluntary sector before they were even aware of the PIAF program. Several participants had the advantage of having contributed to the development of PIAF through VSI connections, and this experience helped draw them to the program.

A number of individual reports make complimentary references to the summer institute, in relation to: the quality of staff and expert lecturers; the curriculum in terms of imparting knowledge about policy (development and processes) in both sectors and about models of collaboration; the opportunity to witness first-hand the impact of prior policy decisions through a visit to the downtown Eastside of Vancouver; and the networking with fellow participants that continued through monthly teleconferences and attendance at two conferences

during the placement period. Several PIAF participants noted that they took an academic course relevant to their assignment, which complemented their learnings through other means.

In most cases, the assignment was a “natural fit” between the interests and prior experiences of the participants, and the mission, goals and/or programs of the respective home and host organizations. A number of the interns and fellows had had prior government experience, whether at the municipal, provincial or federal level, and conversely those working in the federal government tended to have had considerable exposure to the voluntary sector, whether through prior employment, voluntary experience or extensive interaction as part of their current work. In some cases the home and host organizations were already engaged in a common agenda, either on a bilateral or multilateral basis. In some cases, the intern or fellow and the eventual placement supervisor were acquainted, or had already established a working relationship prior to PIAF. In at least one case, the PIAF placement was enhanced by the fact that the supervisor also attended the summer institute.

Reports of individual interns and fellows placed more emphasis on the (effective) working relationship with their immediate supervisor; fewer made mention of the role played by the mentor in the host organization. One participant noted the possible value of discussing the mentoring relationship during the monthly teleconferences with PIAF interns and fellows, which points to the potential utility of further developing and supporting the mentoring component of PIAF. When the work of student research assistants, another element of the PIAF program, was mentioned in final reports, it was always in a favourable light, although it should be noted that the references were made in passing and without much elaboration.

Several participants commented on the flexibility afforded by PIAF placements. PIAF objectives were broad enough to allow more detailed planning of placement activities once the assignment had started. In some cases, the

original premise of the placement turned out to be unworkable due to funding or other constraints, and it was possible to redesign the placement to suit the needs of the individual as well as the home and host organization. Most if not all assignments were flexible enough to allow the participants time to learn more about the host organization, its partners and stakeholders, activities and processes, and issues (e.g., through meetings, visits, conferences, forums and roundtables, presentations, employee orientation sessions and short courses, etc.). Placements in government, although in regional offices, offered exposure to national issues, perspectives and committees, and even helped broaden the participants' knowledge about the voluntary sector.

While fellowships allowed participants to concentrate on a particular policy issue or set of issues (related to a program) to a greater extent than was the case for interns, who were integrated into their host work units and assigned a wider variety of activities, it should be noted that fellows were given the chance to broaden their exposure by being given several other responsibilities that involved interaction within or beyond the work unit on non-research files (e.g., committee work).

Learning occurred not only through attendance at events as outlined above, but also through a program of intensive reading of documents, research reports, published articles, etc., as well as through exposure to experts in the field of placement. In some cases, PIAF participants developed workshops on various subjects (e.g., the VSI, policy development) and this development process stimulated their own learning. Participants attended the ARNOVA conference and the "Moving Forward" national symposium, which they considered to be of value—not only in terms of networking, but also in terms of exposure to, and appreciation of, issues, sources of information and models and providing an impetus to apply learnings on return to their home organizations. The requirement to prepare a final report on their placement similarly encouraged participants to learn as much as possible about the host organization, the context and key policy issues of relevance to their assignments, and to reflect on differences between the voluntary sector and the government.

Pairing a voluntary organization with a government office through PIAF proved to be mutually beneficial. For example, public servants enriched the policy-related work of voluntary organizations with their policy analysis skills, knowledge about federal policy processes and broad exposure to national issues (to cite a few examples). Voluntary sector participants shared (among other things) their knowledge about communities, their experience in collaborative partnerships, their client/outreach orientation, their network of contacts, and their perspective on social issues of concern to their host department. Maintaining contact with their home organizations throughout the placement helped participants sustain their knowledge, skills and networks, which will no doubt help ease their re-entry at the conclusion of their assignment.

Benefits derived from the PIAF experience sometimes transcended the placement itself, as in the case of one fellow whose contact with a researcher in the field during her fellowship proved beneficial not only to the research project at hand but also to a demonstration pilot project in which their respective organizations were involved. Their professional relationship also resulted in the co-authorship of a paper on the topic of government and community working together. Several interns noted that they intended to organize, on return to their home organization, workshops they had developed and presented during their placement. In other cases, participants noted their intention to continue relationships with government and or voluntary sector contacts that they had made during their placement. Exposure to broader issues prompted at least one participant to join a few new committees or boards that focus on larger voluntary sector issues. Experiencing PIAF first-hand inspired another participant to consider the development of the model to include the private sector, and its possible introduction in her area of work as a way to encourage professional growth and career development among those at an early stage in their careers.

Participants who addressed the question in their reports were unanimous in recommending that the program be continued. As indicated above, one participant thought

that the program could be enhanced, at least in her sector, to embrace a multi-sectoral model. While specific recommendations related to a future PIAF program were not part of the intent of the final reports, another participant offered the following: continue the program with a higher profile/more visibility; invite the host organization to participate in structured joint sessions with PIAF organizers; and develop, during the placement, capacity-building tools such as documentation of department-specific policy processes or strategies for the evaluation of public consultations, in order to facilitate collaborative efforts.

Enhancing Inter-Sectoral Collaboration

The various benefits, to inter-sectoral collaboration, accrued through PIAF participation, have been described above. As part of their final report, interns and fellows were asked to reflect on the voluntary and public sector as partners in public policy, including how voluntary organizations can have greater input into public policy, and on how governments can more effectively engage the voluntary sector in public policy development. Following is a compilation of views, as expressed in individual reports:

The Government can:

- Understand how the voluntary sector operates
- Place more value on the wisdom, experience and investment of time of voluntary sector organizations at the national, regional and community level
- Develop and implement departmental policies and strategies for voluntary sector engagement in the development as well as implementation of policies and programs
- Clarify the nature of the process as well as government views prior to consultations; engage the voluntary sector meaningfully in the consultation process
- Educate citizens and the voluntary sector as to opportunities for, and benefits of, engagement
- Consult widely (inclusively)
- Coordinate consultations on policies involving more than one stakeholder government department
- Explain the machinery of government and the policy process
- Debrief after the consultation, and ensure evaluation and follow-up
- Provide funding for stakeholders to prepare their own position papers on important issues and to disseminate conference findings
- Commission NGOs to run consultations in their areas of expertise; engage sectoral NGO experts as advisors in sector negotiations
- Provide regular briefings and updates
- Share its information resources with the voluntary sector
- Support programs such as PIAF that further enhance the ability of the voluntary sector to contribute to governmental policy-making
- Examine the barriers to policy dialogue inherent in the Memorandum to Cabinet process
- Provide multi-year core funding to enable voluntary organizations to contribute effectively to the policy process
- Include relationship building and maintenance in (senior) managers' job descriptions, accountability frameworks and performance evaluations

The *voluntary sector* can:

- Advocate for issues and perspectives that may not be understood by decision-makers; share their perspective on challenges and choices
- Foster citizen participation, civic education and leadership training
- Monitor, and make public, governmental processes and results (both positive and negative) in relation to federal and/or provincial commitments
- Be aware of “hot” issues and priorities within government
- Participate in official consultations; be aware of what is possible and what cannot be changed
- Attend (public or other) presentations and networking sessions offered by government
- Articulate important positions; submit briefs based on consultations with their constituencies and/or expert input
- Take the lead in initiating meetings with government
- Speak with a coordinated voice and provide individual stories about the impact of policy decisions
- Educate federal politicians on the benefits of including the sector in the policy process
- Become more diverse/inclusive in its makeup and outreach
- Maintain a clear mission focus
- Conduct research (with communities and universities) on how the voluntary sector manages multiple partnerships and relationships within and outside the sector

***Both sectors* can:**

- Disseminate information about, and ensure adherence to, the various *Codes of Conduct* and *Guiding Principles* emanating from the VSI
- Build relationships: co-plan and co-host events; seek opportunities to engage in dialogue and to interact, both formally and informally, possibly through the good offices of community-government “brokers”
- Conduct a pilot project to help define and assess the various roles a “broker” could play in developing opportunities for connection and linkage
- Hold the other sector accountable for its policies and practices in relation to VSI *Codes*
- Develop measures and indicators to evaluate effective implementation
- Share sources of information about one’s sector, work together to assess the impact of interventions and examine various collaborative inter-sectoral (including business and labour, other levels of government; Aboriginal governments) models in order to develop mutual trust and understanding
- Acquire the knowledge and skills needed to become partners in public policy

“The benefits derived from PIAF participation have undoubtedly enriched not only the working lives of its participants but also the capacity of their organizations to work collaboratively with the other sector(s).”

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CONCLUSIONS

Public policy development often seems out of reach and too complex to deal with, yet citizens and voluntary organizations want to make important changes in society. The PIAF Pilot Program has proven to be an innovative approach to achieving the objectives of developing policy knowledge, experience and skills in both the voluntary sector and the federal government and of enabling the voluntary sector to become a more viable partner in the development of public policy. The benefits derived from PIAF participation have undoubtedly enriched not only the working lives of its participants but also the capacity of their organizations to work collaboratively with the other sector(s). It is anticipated that these impacts will be multiplied through greater participation in cross-sectoral initiatives, through expanded networks and through increased knowledge transfer endeavours, once participants return to their home organization. More generally, it is hoped that this modest pilot program will have made an important contribution to mutual understanding, respect and appreciation for the ways in which the sectors can work together to achieve public policy changes in years to come.

The Policy Interns and Fellows Program (PIAF) is one of the initiatives funded by the Government of Canada through the Capacity Joint Table of the Voluntary Sector Initiative (VSI).

The Capacity Joint Table, one of 7 joint tables created to undertake the work of the VSI, undertook projects in four key areas of capacity-building for voluntary organizations.

- Research and Information Sharing
- Skills Development and Human Resource Management
- Policy Capacity
- Financial Capacity

These projects have resulted in a multitude of resources that are available to non-profit and voluntary organizations, governments, educational institutions, volunteers and voluntary sector researchers. Many of the products will be released during 2003.

For more information about these projects, the joint tables and the VSI, please check the VSI website at www.vsi-isbc.ca.

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Policy Internships and Fellowships Program
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