Alternative Service Delivery Project

The Canadian Social Service Policy Landscape:
A Roadmap of Recent Initiatives

This roadmap is one of a series of reports prepared for the Canada West Foundation's Alternative Service Delivery Project (ASDP). The ASDP was initiated to increase understanding of, and stimulate debate about, Canada's non-profit sector, its relations with the state, and its role in the delivery of social services.

The purpose of this roadmap is to provide an overview of recent changes to social service policy across Canada, and to identify general trends. The roadmap provides important context for studies of Canada's non-profit sector, as many non-profit social service agencies are directly or indirectly affected by the policy changes it outlines.

The Alternative Service Delivery Project is one of a number of research projects funded by the Kahanoff Foundation, and collectively known as the Non-Profit Sector Research Initiative. The Initiative was established by the Kahanoff Foundation to promote research and scholarship on non-profit sector issues and to broaden the formal body of knowledge on the non-profit sector. The Initiative works to increase understanding of the role that non-profit organizations play in civil society and to inform relevant public policy.

Provincial and territorial social services are in a constant state of change in response to a number of demands including: the need to control public spending, calls to reduce the duplication of services caused by overlapping jurisdictions, evolving social dynamics and social issues, and the willingness or unwillingness of citizens and corporations to tolerate certain levels of taxation. Within this context, the federal, provincial, and territorial governments must decide which programs to provide, and the most effective and fiscally responsible way to do so.

This roadmap addresses these issues through the identification of significant changes to social services since 1994 in select policy areas. The roadmap does not provide a comprehensive picture of social services across Canada; rather, it provides a snapshot of changes from which it is possible to identify key trends in the area of social services.

Social policy in the 1990s has been constrained by the pressing need for fiscal restraint. This has been accompanied by significant interest in restructuring the delivery of social services on the grounds that the system can be made more efficient. Recent budget surpluses and fiscal dividends raise the question of the value of continuing a program of restraint and restructuring. Governments must now come to terms with making the choice between increasing social services spending or reducing taxes.

CANADA WEST FOUNDATION

Per Capita Provincial and Territorial Government Spending on Social Services

(Fiscal Year 1998/99 in dollars)

Average Provincial/Territorial Per Capita Spending on Social Services: **$987**

Total Provincial/Territorial Spending on Social Services: **$29.9 billion**

Region	Per Capita Spending
YK	1608
NT	1426
BC	938
AB	723
SK	991
MB	897
ON	897
PQ	1299
NB	761
NS	787
PEI	894
NF	1214

Source: Statistics Canada
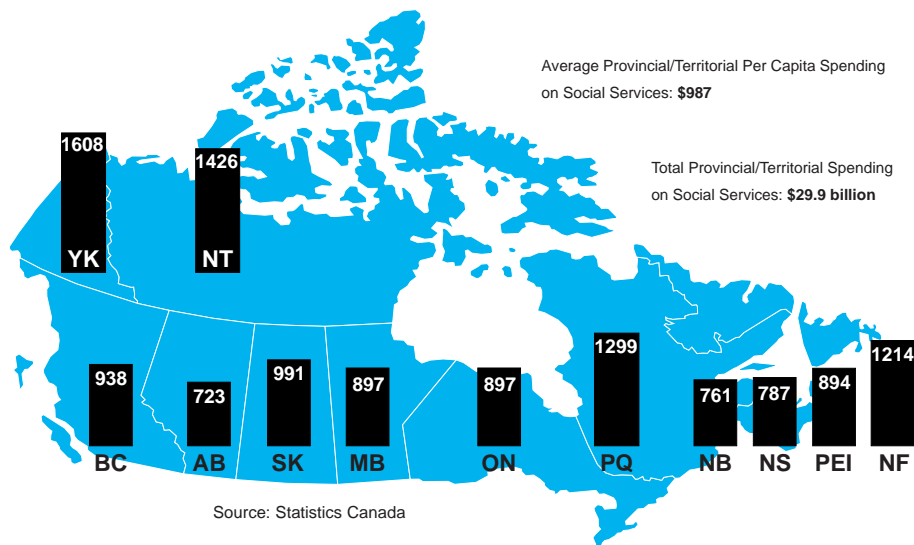
NOTE: These figures should be interpreted as estimates only. Nonetheless, because the figures are based on a consistent definition, they can be used to compare the provinces and suggest orders of magnitude. Statistics Canada defines social services as actions taken to offset or forestall situations where the well-being of individuals or families is threatened by circumstances beyond their control. The definition excludes health care, education, and housing expenditures.

THE FEDERAL WELFARE STATE

The 1990s have seen dramatic changes to the federal system of social services that began to take shape in the first half of the 19th century and came of age in the 1960s and 1970s. This period saw the gradual establishment of major social programs: old age assistance (1927), industrial accident insurance (1930), unemployment insurance (1940), family allowances (1944), old age security (1951), the Canada Assistance Plan (1966), and Established Programs Financing (1977). For much of the 1990s, on the other hand, changes to federal social policy have been abrupt and, in most cases, rooted in the need to control spending. These changes include: the transformation of universal social programs into targeted ones, the restructuring of federal involvement in provincial social policy, and the implementation of policies based on negative income tax/guaranteed income principles.

PROVINCIAL TRENDS

The roadmap of social services across Canada (see pages 4,5, and 6) reveals that, although provinces are unique in their goals and programming with respect to social services, numerous common trends are evident such as regionalization, training requirements for welfare, general restructuring, single entry integrated delivery systems, accountability, community engagement, and the transfer of the delivery of social services to Aboriginal communities.

I. Regionalization

Many provinces are creating regions for the delivery of social services and the allocation of funding. The province establishes program guidelines, but direct management is performed at the regional level. Each region is responsible for developing a management and delivery structure that best meets the diverse needs of its geographic area. Regions are responsible for service delivery which may include: assessing client/community/regional needs, providing and managing services, planning/evaluation/reporting, determining regional resource allocation, maintaining accountability for outcomes, implementing effective front-line complaint processes, and ensuring equitable access to services for a diverse population.

The main objective of regionalization is to overcome service fragmentation and implement service integration to produce long-term efficiencies and change the often-confusing patchwork of fragmented services into a user-friendly continuum of services. Although this has occurred to varying degrees in most of the provinces, critics argue that regionalization is a way for governments to deflect blame away from the central government and toward local communities.

II. Welfare Requirements

The seeds of a trend are apparent in provincial experiments with "workfare" programs as a means of assisting welfare recipients with the transition from welfare to the workforce. This is part of a larger trend toward using welfare as a re-employment/job training program focused on getting clients back to work and off welfare. Workfare programs vary in their requirements, but usually involve a mandatory work placement to help welfare recipients gain employment experience.

Another key trend across the country is the shift to "leaner and meaner" welfare programs. This shift has been heralded as a necessary step toward breaking

welfare dependency and reducing abuse. It has also been soundly criticized as an attack on the poor in the name of fiscal restraint.

III. Restructuring

Governments in Canada are exploring ways to restructure their public services and the programs they deliver because of pressure to: reduce deficits and accumulated debt, respond to citizen demands, provide more hospitable environments for business and investment, and offer a range of services consistent with the willingness of citizens and corporations to tolerate certain levels of taxation. It is within this context that governments have been actively reviewing their programs to determine if there are alternative ways to deliver services that are more effective, less costly, and more responsive to client needs.

Restructuring is more than just the cancellation of programs and services, and more than restricting the available resources for programs and transfers; it involves the redefinition of the role of government. Restructuring involves major changes to the basic features of public social service provision with important ramifications for communities, families, Aboriginal communities, minorities, non-profit organizations, and other institutions. This can occur by replacing universal programs with targeted programs, changing relationships between the federal government and provincial governments, and changing longstanding expectations and practices.

The approaches that Canadian governments use to restructure their services are numerous and include: outsourcing, contracting out, partnerships, privatization, commercialization, total quality management, service quality, re-engineering, client empowerment, downsizing, deregulation, delayering, decentralization, regionalization, single window service, and devolution.

IV. Single Entry Integrated Delivery

A prevalent provincial trend is the development of a single entry integrated delivery system ("one-stop shopping") in order to improve customer service and simplify the process for clients. These centres are aimed at reducing red tape and allowing a greater degree of service assistance for clients by offering comprehensive services at one location.

V. Accountability

Another trend is increased evaluation of services and programs in order to enhance accountability in social services programming. As social service ministries continue to deal with budget restrictions amidst increased demand for new programs or expanded services by citizens, program evaluation is one avenue for ensuring accountability and maximizing available resources. Program evaluation can play an important role in determining ministry priorities, the allocation of resources, and the need to either create or discontinue social service programs.

VI. Community Engagement

The provinces are also increasing their use of community resources such as non-profit organizations and public consultations as a means of exploring alternative service delivery and restructuring. The use of community resources can mean cost-savings through the use of volunteers, and increased responsiveness to local needs and emerging social issues. This is particularly true in the general trend across Canada of assisting people with disabilities to move out of institutions and into the community.

VII. Aboriginal Alternative Service Delivery

A major trend in social services is the transfer of social services delivery to Aboriginal communities. One interesting example of this trend is the January 1999 Strategic Plan for Aboriginal Services released by the British Columbia Ministry for Children which states: "The Ministry for Children and Families acknowledges the significant disruption in the lives of Aboriginal children, families, and communities attributed to past provincial child welfare practices. This acknowledgement signals a desire to engage in a reconciliation with Aboriginal communities to ensure the impact of past practices no longer hinders the healthy development of Aboriginal children and families." The Ministry is committed, wherever possible, to have services for Aboriginal people provided by Aboriginal people.

Alternative arrangements with Aboriginal people across Canada highlight a recognition by governments that direct state delivery of social services has failed to address the unique needs of Aboriginal people. There is a growing awareness of the importance and value of cultural diversity. This is illustrated by the transfer the delivery of social services to Aboriginal communities.

CONCLUSION

Social services in Canada are provided by a complex web of interactions between the state, the non-profit sector, the for-profit sector, and the informal sector (family, friends, and neighbors). Based on the research for this roadmap, it is clear that there is a general reduction of state delivery of social services, with greater emphasis on the role of communities in the provision of social services. While the state is less involved in the actual delivery of social services, governments still control much of the funding and continue to set policy. Many issues arise from this situation, particularly in terms of responsibility for programming. The values at stake include effectiveness, equity, and efficiency.

While it is difficult to determine the effects these trends will have on the non-profit sector as a whole, it is clear that these trends and policy changes alter the context in which non-profit organizations operate. As social policy changes around them, non-profits must adapt to their rapidly changing environment in order to fulfill their mandate as a supplement, complement, and alternative to government services. ∎

	British Columbia	Alberta	Saskatchewan	Manitoba	
Children and Youth Policy	**1996:** A new Ministry for Children and Families was created which integrates services from five ministries to streamline child and family services and strengthen the province's child protection system	**May 1999:** A new Ministry of Children's Services was created which is responsible for child welfare, day care, Family and Community Support Services, the Children's Initiative and the new Child and Families Authorities	**1995/96:** Initiatives under the Saskatchewan Action Plan for Children include partnerships with Rural Services Centres, which provide families with information on children's issues, and the development of a child care registry for rural families	**1999:** Creation of three new youth programs: Business Mentorships, Youth Services Manitoba and Part-Time STEP to generate career-related employment for young people	
Aboriginal Policy	**July 1999:** Six agreements have been signed with Aboriginal agencies (representing 54 bands in total) to transfer the provision of full child protection services to the agencies	The province is progressively signing agreements with Aboriginal communities to transfer the delivery of welfare programs for Aboriginal people to their own communities	**1995:** Social Services began to enter into agreements with Aboriginal communities to delegate authority under *The Child and Family Services Act*	**1999:** Presently in the process of creating an Aboriginal Education Strategy to improve graduation rates from both high school and post-secondary institutions	
Welfare Policy	**1998:** BC Benefits was created to replace welfare. Differences include: stricter eligibility, employment training requirements, and increased benefits for the working poor	**1993/94:** Major welfare reforms were introduced signaling a shift from a passive welfare system to an active system focused on helping people to regain independence through employment and training	**1998:** The Saskatchewan Employment Supplement introduced. The new program will replace the Family Income Plan and provide a monthly benefit to low-income working parents to assist with child-related work costs	**1996:** Introduction of the Employment and Income Assistance Program to replace the Social Allowances Program. The focus is on employment as the first priority	
Persons With Disabilities Policy	**1999:** A task force was set up to determine how to help BC Benefits clients with disabilities succeed in the labour market	**1997:** A Provincial Authority and six Regional Authorities will take over planning and delivery of all current community services for persons with disabilities	**1997:** The Office for Disability Issues was created to improve coordination and integration of policies, services and programs for persons with disabilities	**1996:** Proclamation of the *Vulnerable Persons Living with Mental Disabilities Act* which is designed to promote and protect the rights of vulnerable persons, and to empower them to make their own decisions and direct their own lives, with support if necessary	
Other	**July 1999:** A new Ministry of Social Development and Economic Security was created	**1996:** Reform of services for persons with disabilities was announced. The management of services will be transferred to communities	**1996/97:** The Saskatchewan Women's Secretariat developed the Equal Pay for Work of Equal Value, and Pay Equity Policy Framework as a guideline for the implementation of government policy	**1999:** Implementation of a one-tier system for the delivery of income assistance in Winnipeg	
Service Delivery Models	Regionalization	Regionalization	Regionalization	Regionalization	
Trends	Emphasis on labour market participation	Service delivery reform	Pursuing community-based alternatives	Community-based approach	

NOTE: This roadmap is *not* a comprehensive list of social policy changes since 1994; it is a set of highlights intended to illustrate key trends.

Manitoba	Ontario	Quebec	New Brunswick	Nova Scotia	Prince Edward Island	Newfoundl
Creation of three new ograms: Business hips, Youth Services a and Part-Time o generate career-employment for eople	**1997/98:** Learning, Earning and Parenting (LEAP) Program which will provide $25 million in child care subsidies and other supports to help single parents on welfare finish school and thereby help break the cycle of welfare dependency	**1997:** $5-a-day day care introduced ($2-a-day for parents on social assistance)	**1996/97:** Earth Works NB is a mentorship program that joins high school graduates with university students in order to expose youth to individuals who are pursuing a post-secondary degree, as well as to create summer employment and protect the environment	**1999:** Will establish a children's ombudsman to provide an independent voice for children under provincial care	**1999:** A provincial healthy child development strategy is presently being initiated to bring a multisectoral perspective to children's issues	**1999:** Implementatio new *Child, Youth and Services Act*
Presently in the of creating an al Education y to improve on rates from both ool and post-ary institutions	**1997:** Building Aboriginal Economies is an economic development policy which includes increasing Aboriginal partnerships with the corporate sector, removing barriers, improving access and creating opportunities	**1999:** Signing of an agreement between the Kativik Regional Government and the Government of Quebec which includes funding for development projects and community infrastructure projects	**1994/95:** The department began discussions with Indian Affairs and Northern Development Canada and several Aboriginal communities to create new tripartite agreements for the continued development and delivery of social services to these communities	**1999:** Developing Aboriginal studies and language curricula for use in band and provincial schools	No special programs due to very small population of Aboriginal people. However, the government is in the process of consultation with the Aboriginal population to ensure their needs are being met	**1996:** Davis Inlet res were moved 18 kilom south to Little Sango on the Labrador main
ntroduction of the ment and Income ce Program to the Social ces Program. The on employment as priority	**1998/99:** The *OntarioWorks Act* is part of the reform of Ontario's welfare system to turn welfare into a transitional program of last resort	**1997:** A single allowance for children replaces Quebec social assistance allowances. Benefits are now calculated based on household income rather than given out universally	**1995/96:** *Family Income Security Act* which includes separate rate structures for youth and specialized policies for persons with disabilities	**1997:** Social Assistance Restructuring Initiative (SARI) was launched to improve the social assistance system through creation of a single-tier delivery system and the development of new social assistance policy and legislation	**1999:** New Directions is an employment-based delivery model intended to increase self-sufficiency and to help clients to enter and remain in the workforce	**1999:** NewfoundJOB new pilot project to as 500 social assistance to enter or re-enter th labour market
Proclamation of the *ble Persons Living ntal Disabilities Act* designed to and protect the vulnerable persons, mpower them to eir own decisions ct their own lives, port if necessary	**1998:** The *Ontario Disability Support Program Act* is intended to move persons with disabilities off the welfare system and onto the Ontario Disability Support Program which meets their unique needs while protecting their benefits	**1999:** Plans to set up an integrated service network for people with autism and behavioral disorders	**1999:** New action plan for persons with disabilities released	**1998:** Canada-Nova Scotia Employability Assistance for People with Disabilities Agreement through which the two governments will cost-share programs and services that reduce barriers faced by persons with disabilities in obtaining and maintaining employment	**1996/97:** Work was completed on the development of a policy framework for the Choice and Opportunity Project (a project to improve service delivery and community inclusion for persons with a mental handicap)	**1998:** Job training fu up to help persons wi disabilities find emplo
mplementation of a system for the of income ce in Winnipeg	**1997:** Sweeping welfare reform under the *Social Assistance Reform Act:* cuts drug and dental benefits for the working poor, narrows welfare eligibility, and transfers welfare costs to municipalities while retaining policy control at the provincial level	**1998:** Development of interventions to improve parenting skills and food security (in Montreal)	**1995:** Introduction of a provincial shelter subsidy	Moving to a single-tier municipal service delivery system	**1999:** Continuing implementation of Child Welfare 2000 to improve child protection services	**1998:** Strategic socia entitled "People, Part and Prosperity" which over unprecedented a of policy developmen community groups. T views will be channel through a new Premie Council on Social Development
lization	Transfer of service delivery to the municipalities	Regionalization	Regionalization	Implementing regionalization	Regionalization	Implementing regiona
nity-based approach	Welfare reform	Extensive public consultations	Service delivery reform	Increased use of community-based symposiums and conferences to involve citizens in the policy process	Exploration of community alternatives	Community partnersh

	Newfoundland	Yukon	Northwest Territories	Federal Government	Trends
	1999: Implementation of the new *Child, Youth and Family Services Act*	**1999:** Residential youth treatment program is being changed from a contracted service to a direct operated service	**1998:** New child and family law promotes a team approach for child protection issues	**1998:** National Child Benefit was introduced as a national initiative to reduce child poverty, help individuals obtain training and employment, and reduce duplication between governments	Early intervention into children's health and wellness
	1996: Davis Inlet residents were moved 18 kilometres south to Little Sango Pond on the Labrador mainland	**1999:** New taxation regime for Aboriginal people	**1998:** Workshops organized for health and social workers and Aboriginal traditional healers to discuss health, wellness and healing	**1998:** Aboriginal Head Start Program expanded to give Aboriginal children on and off reserves a nurturing pre-school environment	Greater awareness of cultural issues, as well as movement towards self-government and the transfer of social services delivery to Aboriginal communities
	1999: NewfoundJOBS - a new pilot project to assist 500 social assistance clients to enter or re-enter the labour market	**1999:** Low Income Family Tax Credit (LIFT) will provide up to $300 a year for people with net incomes less than $25,000	**1994:** Began transition to a community delivery system to provide income, employment and social/medical support in communities. Communities can direct Income Support toward programs that, for example, strengthen traditional activities or create jobs	**1996:** The Canada Health and Social Transfer replaced the existing federal transfers (the Canada Assistance Plan and Established Programs Financing) with block funding for health, education and social services (the Equalization program remained intact)	Emphasis on re-employment
	1998: Job training fund set-up to help persons with disabilities find employment	**1999:** Changes to service delivery system for adults with special needs including: single entry integrated delivery system, ensuring service is comprehensive, increasing responsiveness and improving the client-centred approach to case management	**1998:** Developed a Mental Health Strategy to improve mental health services	**1996:** Entrepreneurs with Disabilities Program to help entrepreneurs with disabilities in rural areas pursue their business goals and contribute to economic growth in rural communities	Moving people with disabilities out of institutions and into the community
	1998: Strategic social plan entitled "People, Partners and Prosperity" which turns over unprecedented amount of policy development to community groups. Their views will be channeled through a new Premier's Council on Social Development	**1998:** Introduction of a Healthy Families Initiative to offer support to parents from the time of a child's birth until they reach five years of age	**1998:** Developed 22 strategic directions for social and health policy under "Shaping Our Future: A Strategic Plan for Health and Wellness"	**1999:** Social Union is a new agreement between the provinces and the federal government to develop a national approach to social policy	Increased emphasis on program evaluation
	Implementing regionalization	Service delivery is primarily at the community level. The 14 different First Nations in the Yukon deliver their own social assistance programs, addiction services, and homemaker services	Regionalization	Co-management with provinces (emphasis on bridging jurisdictional boundaries)	Regionalization
	Community partnerships	Anti-poverty strategy	Community-based alternatives	Increased emphasis on the role played by the non-profit sector in social service delivery	Community-based alternatives including the continued/expanded use of non-profit social service agencies