

## **“TELLING THE STORY OF CANADA’S CHILDREN”**

### **A Roundtable hosted by the National Children’s Alliance**

8,9 September 2004, Donald Gordon Conference Centre  
Kingston, Ontario

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#### **I. INTRODUCTION**

##### **Moving beyond monitoring to storytelling....**

The National Children’s Alliance has been working on monitoring and tracking the progress of Canada’s children for several years. A focus of our work has been the role of the voluntary of sector as a “third party” in monitoring how governments are doing in meeting their public policy and international commitments. The National Children’s Alliance is committed to continuing to play a role in ensuring that in Canada we have the collective capacity to track how children are doing and how we are doing as a society to help them reach their potential.

While third-party monitoring of existing commitments has been an impetus and will continue to be a part of our work, we are hoping to develop a plan for telling an inclusive story of Canada’s children that speaks to all stakeholders. Over the two days of the workshop we have been able to deepen our understanding of how we can better tell the story of how children in Canada are doing. By illuminating the lives of children we can better help all of them reach their potential by: identifying, supporting and building on “what works”; addressing gaps and deficiencies that impact negatively on children’s lives; and, correcting problems.

Understanding and articulating how peers, families, communities and governments interact to create nourishing environments for each child is an important part of the story

– but is not the whole story. As we address the challenges of this complex story, we need to keep children at the centre – to find ways to help children tell their own story as well as taking care to tell our stories about them through their eyes and from their perspective. We also need frameworks that allow us to move towards action in public policy, research, practice and behavior. How do we build and sustain ways to capture these complex stories, bring meaning and stimulate action to ensure that all children reach their potential?

## II. LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Harvey Weiner, *Canadian Teachers' Federation*  
Katherine Scott, *Canadian Council for Social Development*  
Janet Davies, *Canadian Nurses Association*  
Sylvia Fanjoy, *Canadian Public Health Association*  
Bruce Ferguson, *Hospital for Sick Children Foundation*  
Peter Dudding, *Child Welfare League of Canada*  
Maggie Fietz, *Family Service Canada*  
Catherine McCourt, *Health Canada*  
Kelly Stone, *Health Canada*  
Deborah Parker-Lowen, *Saskatchewan Child Advocate*  
Doug Willms, *University of New Brunswick*  
Margaret Boone, *Lakehead U.*  
Ray Peters *Centre for Excellence in Early Childhood*  
David Hay, *Canadian Policy Research Networks*  
Marie-Adele Davis, *Canadian Pediatric Society*  
Elaine Orrbine, *Canadian Association of Public Health Centres*  
Cathy Vine, *Voices for Children*  
Maryann Bird, *Child Care Advocacy Association of Canada*  
Barb Coyle, *Canadian Child Care Federation*  
Gord Lenjosek, *Social Development Canada*  
Pierre Cyr, *Child and Youth Friendly People*  
Murielle Gagne-Ouellette, *Commission nationale des parents francophones*  
Miriam Levitt, *University of Ottawa*  
Carol Crill Russell, *Invest in Kids*  
Robin Williams, *Niagara Centre for the Early Years*  
Kelly Ernst, *Canadian Outcomes Institute*  
Penny Milton, *Canadian Education Association*  
Shirley Post, *Canadian Institute of Child Health*  
Wayne Helgason, *SPC of Winnipeg*  
Alan Zeesman, *Social Development Directorate*  
Nathan Gilbert, *Laidlaw Foundation*  
Charles Pascal, *Atkinson Charitable Foundation*  
Gordon Cleveland, *University of Toronto*  
Richard C. Mitchell, *Brock University*  
Robert Flynn, *Ottawa University*  
Carla Gasparini, *C.D.P.D.J.*  
Wendy Craig, *Queens University*  
Louise Hanvey, *Consultant*  
Robbin Tourangeau, *EKOS Research*  
Karen Kidder, *Consultant*  
John Burrett, *Federation of Canadian Municipalities*  
Sandra Morris, *United Way*  
Laurel Rothman, *Campaign 2000*  
Alan Mirabelli, *Vanier Institute*  
Janis Douglas, *Canadian Association for Community Living*

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### **III. AGENDA**

#### Wednesday, September 8

- 10:00 Registration and Coffee  
10:30 Welcome and Process Orientation  
Plenary Session  
12:30 Lunch  
1:30 Small Group Work  
3:00 Break  
3:30 Plenary  
5:00 Adjourn

#### Thursday, September 9

- 9:00 Plenary Session followed by small groups  
10:45 Break  
11:15 Plenary  
1:00 Roundtable adjourns  
1:00-2:00 Lunch in dining room (included)  
2:00 – 5:00 Canadian Council on Social Development consultation (Optional – please see enclosed invitation)

## **IV. PROCEEDINGS DAY 1**

### **A. The Story of the National Children's Alliance**

*Dianne Bascombe, Executive Director, National Children's Alliance*

The NCA was created in 1996 when a few of the national organizations working on children's issues began having conversations about working more closely together; some of those involved in those initial dialogues are here today, such as: Maggie, Harvey and Katherine Scott). At that time, organizations were under threat from program review – it had been a “competitive environment” in terms of government funding—yet we were still worried about children's issues falling off the radar in such a climate. The Child Welfare League of Canada hosted a conference to look at the notion of a national policy agenda for kids. The meeting provided the impetus for broadening the circle and exploring the idea of finding common ground on policy and advocacy issues.

In the beginning we made some choices: it was decided that there was no need for another “organization”. Rather, this coalition would be principles-based; it would share leadership; we were getting together primarily to share the “inside scoop” on government relations; and we were working towards a collective advocacy on broad issues.

Within the first year, about a dozen organizations met monthly. The early advocacy work was behind the scenes to push the “National Children's Agenda”, which was agreed upon and announced by the Federal/Provincial and Territorial authorities in 1999. The National Children's Alliance was funded by the federal government to do “awareness building” across Canada with constituent groups about the National Children's Agenda. It was also charged with doing policy work on mechanisms for an f/p/t process under the Social Union Framework Agreement that included participation by the NGO/NFP sector (this was the subject of a paper we commissioned and a round table we organized in early 2000), as well as by all levels of Govt and academics.

During 1999-2000, the NCA also worked to identify “priorities” under the National Children's Agenda, such as Early Childhood Development. We created a strategic lobby for the ECD and made an impact by working very closely with Minister Jane Stewart and the Department. The efforts culminated in one of our most resounding successes – the announcement in September 2000 on the ECD.

Up until this point most of the work was done on a volunteer basis. HRDC started provided funding to the NCA in 2000 and has continued to do so to the present under Social Development Canada.

### What are the priorities of the NCA?

- Our “policy lens” from the beginning has been inclusive of “family income security” + community supports and services + accountability to children (monitoring)
- We use the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child as a foundation for our advocacy
- We continue to call for improvements to the National Child Tax Benefit and to the Parental Leave program.
- ECD is still a priority – from ECDI, to the Multi-lateral framework agreement, to an election promise
- Our focus on school-age children centres around our policy work on “Public Spaces – Family Places”
- Our initiative on Children with Disabilities was successful – the 2002 Roundtable on this issue brought together groups that had not traditionally worked together before.
- Aboriginal children became our focus as the story of the appalling conditions in which they live, in sharp contradiction for as wealthy a country as Canada, became better known. Our efforts started a process of reconciliation and dialogue with our aboriginal colleagues that continues.
- Need for a national youth agenda – we have recently set up a new Working Group on Youth issues and are planning a roundtable early in the new year
- Accountability – the theme that we have working on since the beginning and is the impetus for why we are here today.

### What does accountability have to do with how Canada’s children are doing?

Over the past five years we have seen some fundamental changes in Canadian federalism: from SUFA (Feb 1999) to the National Children’s Agenda later that year (May 1999), to the ECD (Sept 2000) (\$5 billion), to the Multi-lateral Framework Agreement (March 2003) (\$900 million). All of these agreements specify the importance of public reporting for accountability and allude to the role of the “third parties” in monitoring how governments are doing. The Alliance has played a role in engaging its members and others in the dialogue of the role of the NGO sector – from an early roundtable looking at international models (based on the paper by Susan Phillips in 2000) to a paper by Scott, Kidder and Burke on monitoring ECDI in 2002 (which led to a dialogue at the March 2002 symposium) to a paper by Kidder and a subsequent roundtable held in November 2003. The lens of our work to date has been that of the NGO sector as the “third party” in monitoring government in “keeping their promises”

### How does the NCA work?

During the first few years we developed operating principles; this was an iterative process which started with the principle of consensus. These operating principles are:

- Respect for both independence and collaboration
- Focus on issues that can be better addressed collectively rather than by individual organizations
- Speak as a collective only when consensus has been reached
- Focus on outcomes – not only dialogue and process
- Manage input and consultation effectively
- Maintain an open table with respect and goodwill
- Keep room at the table for critical thinking and disagreement
- Keep government and media interventions strategic
- Seek resources that do not compete with member organizations

We were working on policy and advocacy in areas that were “broad”, there was continuous dialogue on “how we work”, we engaged in informal but developed “self-monitoring” and the role of NCA was “behind the scenes” ie we did only very few strategic public interventions.

Since 1996, the NCA has experienced steady growth. Most of the growth has occurred by organizations seeking out to become members of the Alliance . Today there are over 60 member organizations of the National Children’s Alliance, mostly in Ottawa and Toronto. The coming years will see us facing the challenges of working through the operating principles and working on consensus with a larger group.

The NCA continues to:

- Promote the development and implementation of a “National Children’s Agenda” (coherent policy framework with a children’s lens)
- Develop policy recommendations (through the route of going from research to multi-stakeholder dialogue to policy)
- Facilitate Dialogue on children’s issues among all sectors
- Engage provincial/territorial/regional constituent groups

## **B. Exercises**

The participants in the Round Table were introduced in a creative way: the facilitator asked each participant to sit beside someone they did not know. The participants then had to tell the story of how their partner came to be at today’s event. The participants then reflected upon their task: they said it was challenging to decide which story about the other person to tell; hard to bring substance into a one-minute narrative; difficult to tell a story without guidelines. On the other hand, they found it interesting to connect the different layers of information and how to balance them. When hearing their own story being told, participants had a different experience: it was suspenseful and ultimately interesting to see which pieces of information the participant decided to focus on and whether each felt the essence of his or her own story was being captured.

The participants then considered what it was like to tell someone else’s story: they said it was enjoyable to hear and entertaining to tell. They felt some pressure, out of respect, to

ensure that the other person's story was told accurately. Some challenges encountered were as simple as difficulty in pronouncing the partner's name, others in describing the partner's work and where they fit in their organization. The person telling the story also took some artistic licence, editing the partner's story for content, style, etc in order to make it more topical to the subject at hand. Overall, in the stories they told about their partners, participants tended to focus on the work connection, ie job responsibilities, mandate of the person's organization (especially as it related to this meeting), personal interest of the individual in the conference topic; how the individual and the organization can contribute and learn from the Round Table. They also spoke of shared interests and roles and activities, as well as an underlying interest in how we use and interpret the story of Canadian children. Some participants also mentioned that they positioned their partner's thinking in terms of their own work and the participants' stories on the whole affirmed their thinking and practice. Finally, some participants expressed a commitment to redress the challenge experienced by the partner.

The participants then undertook another "warming-up" exercise: they were asked to draw a map of Canada and indicate where they had lived as a child. One trend among all the drawings was that participants drew the map in greatest detail immediately around their childhood place. Some areas, from which there were no participants at the present meeting, were not even represented on the maps.

With this experience of attempting to tell the story of another, it hopefully flagged some points in the minds of the participants as they undertake the task at hand: how can we describe what life is like for children in Canada, from their perspective?

The traditional elements of the story were reviewed:

- narrative
- characters
- context
- perspective

Input was gathered from the group as to things to keep in mind when telling the story of Canada's children:

- Remember the different reactions and analyses from this morning's exercises: telling your story, telling someone else's story, listening to someone tell your story and mapping your context and how where you lived as a child influences your understanding of other children's origins.
- Listen, check your understanding and capture the story in writing
- Get all the input before challenging, analyzing, opposing

### **C. TeamWork**

The participants broke up into smaller discussion groups to consider: what questions do we need to ask in order to be able to tell the story of Canada's children? What are the components and characteristics of this story (characters, protagonist, context/setting,

movement, continuity, narrative, perspective/point of view)? What framework/form might the story take?

## **D. Report Backs**

### **Team #1**

These participants said the object was to look for **wisdom**, which constituted a combination of data from common indicators, plus compelling stories.

The team reflected on some of its own questions in undertaking this exercise:

- some confusion about the objective of the exercise
- framework imposed that we don't know about
- are we trying to monitor the National Children's Agenda?
- concerns about how research will be used
- plans for improvement alongside the data
- have to be careful to target all children; it is their story

In spite of these uncertainties, the group managed to reach consensus on what characteristics of the story we relate were fundamental:

- The data and stories must be complementary.
- The set of common indicators must include both pleasant and unpleasant ones, yet we should keep in mind that indicators change as child's development changes.
- The stories and data also need to be universal, accessible and compelling.
- It is critical that the voices of children are heard in telling these stories.
- Quotes are powerful tools in telling stories and we should use them to our advantage: for example, we were told that "An Aboriginal child has a greater chance of going to jail than of finishing high school."

There was some discussion as to whether, given our diversity, we can create a composite story? The group listed the different elements of a composite picture of Canadian children:

- national perspective
- regional particularities
- visible minority sub-population
- Aboriginal children
- immigrant sub-population

The biggest question, though, is: will we miss anything if we paint a composite picture?

There are advantages in having the diverse groups that are concerned with Canada's children tell a common story in a common report: a common report helps to plan and direct resources. However, the report needs to be popularized, accessible, easily understood and in clear language.

Finally, the group outlined the challenges ahead:

- to collect data through balancing strengths as well as weaknesses

- to identify the universal indicators for success: “We know we were successful when...”
- to undertake an independent holistic review of children’s well-being
- to assess the capacity of NGOs to do the work
- to collect the data and tell the stories regularly
- to ensure that the stories and data are accessible

## **Team #2**

This group focused on the role of children in creating and telling these stories. There are several things to be mindful of:

- Different experiences involving kids/youth.
- The youth who tend to want to participate in such exercises are older, more articulate and usually not from disadvantaged circumstances; thus, we risk not hearing the voices of those who are marginalized and who don’t usually have access to or participate in such opportunities.
- The means of getting youth involved have to be sustainable.
- Balance between qualitative stories and stats.
- For kids to feel comfortable telling their stories, we need to create a culture of a child/family-friendly society: this requires a major cultural shift, like the societal norm against drunk driving that exists today.
- Success is being defined or pursued on behalf of children/what is role of family/society in defining success?
- Principle here is that all children have inherent human rights and dignity and deserve the same respect as adults.
- Value is in finding creative ways of packaging (voices, images).

## **TEAM #3**

How the story is told is critical -- can’t just be data and graphs (although there is a place for these). Kids talking about what they want (eg running water) could be very effective in influencing policy.

But there are many ways of telling stories, depending on who is listening. When the audience is **children**, the focus should be on what they can achieve; when **policy makers** are the target, they have to be spoken to in terms of what the problem is and what they can do to respond. Audience should not only be policy makers but also “influential people.” For example, stories should also involve the **business community** to enhance credibility of any policy response. The story told will vary with the sensitivities and **abilities of the audience to respond** (eg local mayor vs federal politician) and will seek to achieve solutions that benefit all parties. **Teachers** and school boards and trustees are also part of the audience: the challenge is how to reach them, give that they are overworked and limited in what they can do given curriculum?

- Support them
- provide training,
- emphasize importance of kids succeeding in school,
- keeping schools open year round and partnering with communities very important

The **media**, too, is an audience. The place of media in storytelling very important yet hard to handle –we have to ensure that the story is not changed. From the media’s point of view and even if we consider in terms of increasing the effectiveness of the story in achieving our awareness-raising goals, the story may need to be interpreted, so that its meaning can be understood by general public and others.

What questions do we ask children to uncover the story? While this may sound like adults leading children to get answers we want, it should be recognized that kids sometimes don’t cover all the ground or know all the answers. For example, stories told by children at Dan Offord’s funeral indicated many types of success motivated and fostered by Offord himself, ie the successes achieved may not have been envisioned by the kids without Offord. It can be argued that successful projects are those that instill confidence and motivate/empower recipients themselves to achieve. Aspirations will become more reflective of the barriers children face as they grow older.

- Finally, some factors were considered that may limit the storytelling approach: Qualitative research (ie storytelling) is becoming more popular, but is not always part of the “rewards system” – researchers need to get noticed.
- Some stories are so big that they risk collapsing under their own weight

#### **TEAM #4**

The group listed things to consider:

1. Why tell the story in the first place?
2. Main characters may not be telling the story.
3. What are the layers to the stories?
4. Multiple perspectives.
5. Narrative as link tells the themes.
6. Recognize both positive and negative.
7. Focus on stories of one family.
8. Focus on a major life event eg graduation – how different children experience it differently (chapter).
9. Where is the starting point?
10. Begin story at the end.

The core story should be on wellbeing, education, family stability with discussion of the variations, while statistics and data and quotes could be sidebars. The corridor must be wide and inclusive: we have to consider what resources, etc needed to achieve “corridor” and who is moving them through the corridor? The ending of the story must focus on future actions.

## TEAM 5

Storytelling is about describing what life is like

1. Many stories, multiplicities of points of view in many places: different perspectives, diversity. Caveat: in this regard, is storytelling effective or even useful in policy development?
2. The narrative, like life, is composed of:
  - myths
  - drama
  - a quest component
  - focusing on what is working well
  - path to assets, positive outcomes
  - includes past, present and future
  - helps to make sense of complexity and show connections.
3. Remember, the protagonist carries his/her own baggage: child development not linear, but complex: their stories are not about one single point, but often nested. In these complex stories, are the children the key centre of the story?
4. Does a good news story negate where there are real needs and need for policy changes? Being courageous about identifying challenging issues and population groups. When you ask all the questions, you succeed in extrapolating the factors that made the story successful.
5. What to use as a framework or guide eg the UN Convention or Determinants of Health framework?
6. Connecting stories in a global world; inter-relatedness of these factors and rights.
7. Points of view: past, present and future. Not just reporting on last year – stories need to be visionary – where we want to be.
8. The story will serve to explode myths.

To effect a change a policy for children, we need:

- **wisdom**, which is a balance of data and stories
- **balance** between quantitative and qualitative
- **multiple** stories, data, audience
- **direction/destination**, ie where to go from here
- **strategy**: understand that there is a difference between policymakers and politicians; politicians usually follow, so policymakers must first reach the public.

### Day 2: Where are we and we are we going?

Participants preferred the concentric circle (environmental?) model of monitoring ie monitor via children's relation to family, community, government, etc, rather than the linear approach to monitoring (ie from child to story to communication strategy to policies/programs to monitoring).

## Discussion points:

### I. Our overall goals:

- our goal to day is to develop an action plan on how to go about understanding the information we are collecting and how we might use it; ie how we can use stories to complement what we are already doing or identify gaps where we are not taking action on what we already know is needed;
- we have agreed that we need a better way to tell a complex, national story, which was part of what the NCA wanted;
- how do we all fit into telling the story?
- are we looking for a synthesis of recommendations and policies and research that have already been developed?

### II. Strategies:

#### A. Existing political environment:

- consider what institutional arrangements will get our policy issues on the agenda
- let conceptual notions be driven by opportunities, ie, in current political environment, we need to ask:
  - what do we want to see in a National Child Care Program
  - what do we want to put in Submission to Finance Committee pre-Budget brief?
  - what monitoring/stories resonate with this Government's priorities?
- Canada Fit for Children is a completely fresh opportunity; all sectors had input on agreeing on basic direction for which we will be accountable to the UN and to our citizens.
- the theme for the story may change from year to year, which altogether will create cumulative momentum. Theme this year could relate to the political opportunities now available eg waiting lists for child care are now unconscionably long.
- how to capitalize on critical issues raised in the popular consciousness.
- should government and private sector also be involved?

#### B. Format of the message

- we need to gel around something memorable and concrete
- pick one issue: eg kids need to be successful at school; what's involved for all partners; how to focus on those things that are most preventing our kids from succeeding in school?
- can choose priorities from a Canada Fit for Children and press for action: just need to know how to leverage it to push us forward rather than to be a political football (like Kyoto)
- children themselves do have input into this process
- language is important: find a catchy phrase or slogan to address a focused concern/goal.
- how not to confuse telling the story with monitoring of current policies and programs
- stay together?

- use the concentric circle model of the child at the centre with links, relationships to community, family, government, etc.
- include different methods of analysis from evidence through to anecdote

### C. Accountability

- Our reporting has to be inclusive, can't let us off the hook.
- frequency of reporting: from the NCA perspective, we are talking about a regular story, whether annual or every two years...an ongoing enterprise.
- how will we sustain a response so that we are not repeating the cycle?

### NEXT STEPS:

- Facilitating the creation of the composite/coherent/comprehensive story
- Choosing the theme for the stories in the short/medium term
- Developing a strategy for sharing and communicating the stories
- What are our operating principles

#### 1. What unique role can the NCA play?

- is the NCA alive and well in each province (yes, via reps on national organizations)
- group regional stories together to make up the national story; commonalities may emerge
- how to use the expertise of our members (eg Centres of Excellence, aboriginal community)
- should it be an NCA priority to resource regional stories?
- should NCA take on a story-telling initiative like Social Watch, Kids Watch? Intent has not been for NCA itself to monitor but to press for it and be the broker that brings people to the table to support implementation of monitoring and access by the others
- should NCA call for a Commissioner or Ombudsperson for Canada's children (as recommended by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child) appropriately funded to do this monitoring.
- we also don't have a mechanism to disseminate the information about outcomes that we do have; this could be a role for the NCA

#### Example of successes using this approach:

-Offord Centre and Voice for Children went to Trillium Foundation in Ontario to get funding to tell the story for Ontario's children and youth by creating a network for this purpose. This is also happening in BC and elsewhere. There will be a symposium in 2005 affording an opportunity for all those with information to share.

-United Way another success story: it succeeds largely by telling the story at the local level. Note that none of it is government-supported. The United Ways have discovered the power of telling stories to one another, now on a national basis and more broadly than

they used to do. “Eagle’s Eye View” at the national UW conference was essentially a collection of stories.

-storytelling has also helped build supports in the disability community.

So, storytelling is happening, there is just no coherent mechanism for sharing the stories more broadly.

-After 10 months, the network would propose a model for a continuing mechanism. The story of Canada’s children is a complementary piece to lobbying for a permanent national monitoring mechanism

-the challenge is how to bring stories together in a way that is manageable and gives meaning: what can we learn from others, including outside of Canada, who have done so? potential work in doing research on which models are effective. Manitoba already has a data-sharing mechanism; we can find out how it’s working. International organizations also have resources on monitoring that we can consult eg UNICEF, World Bank.

-NCA proposed a collective data strategy to enable access to existing data, but didn’t get it.

-our next step is to develop a proposal that incorporates some of the elements we have identified here today. At the same time, we can start to work within existing frameworks and facilitate the development of regional/provincial stories.

-There are two NCA meetings coming up at which time we can work on those two pieces

-the presence “outsiders” in sector meetings influences/promotes cross-sector dialogue

-we will continue to lobby for the use of government data in budget briefings

-there is a gulf in government between evidence and policy development; it’s a part, but always only a part of the mix. Currently in Social Development Canada, research and policy divisions are together. There is a move to put research organizationally so that it feeds policies, which leads to program development, to ensure evidence-based policy making.

-keep in mind how we stir evidence into policy and into the story is both fairly new and very timely.

-challenge for all of us is still trying to correct the deficiencies in data-gathering, including how to ensure that the whole range of evidence is included.

The NCA has begun work on a proposal for the initial stages of a monitoring mechanism: the Council of Communities for Children. The Council is envisioned as a distributed organization that is built on strong networks operating on a hub and spokes model. The Council would be designed to build the collective capacity of all sectors to play a key role in public accountability. The Council would serve as catalyst, facilitator, broker and connector.

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### **Operating Principles**

The “Council” would be driven by the voluntary-NGO sector – it could build on the model of collaboration and operating principles successfully established through the National Children’s Alliance and other coalitions. These networks would need to be

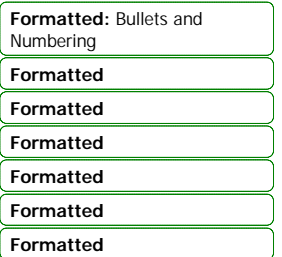
broadened to include partnerships with researchers and academics. Operating principles include:

- a broad based approach to accountability that includes process, content, context and roles and responsibilities
  - bring coherence and builds upon existing and new initiatives
  - linking of research, policy and practice
  - uses asset-based philosophy
  
- collaboration and shared leadership hub and spokes model
  - consortium model based on active partnership to do the work
  - bridging role linking academics, the voluntary/NGO sector and governments across Canada
  - multi-disciplinary approaches
  - engage all players including children and youth
  - transparency
  - capacity building

Such a broad-based principles driven approach to accountability brings coherence to the issue and provides a framework within which we can “tell the story of Canada’s children.

### Concrete Outcomes

Within the first five years, the Council of Communities would produce:

1. Accountability framework that includes the foundational set of questions and national level indicators
  2. clearinghouse for data and information: from local to national
  3. Pan-Canadian data strategy: from qualitative to quantitative
  4. National Reports – series of reports telling the “Story of Canada’s Children” (would include support for existing work)
  5. Accountability tools – to enable and build capacity for community initiatives
  6. Knowledge Transfer Networks – multi-disciplinary and cross-sectoral
  7. Resource Bank on Accountability – from expertise to information products
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### MEMORABLE QUOTES FROM THE PARTICIPANTS:

- I hope we didn’t become lost in the search for the elusive monitoring mechanism and that we can still move forward in the short-term in advocacy action.
- Let’s start building regional piece.
- I hope all sectors will work together to gather the evidence and build the story.
- I lament the absence of the voice of youth here.
- children can be a source of wisdom

-if we ask the right questions, we don't have to come up with an exact methodology; it may vary according to the context.

-telling the story of Canada's children can maximize their chances in many environments to be valued, nurtured, recognized, engaged and included.