

**WORKBOOK ON ENVIRONMENTAL  
SCANNING SKILLS**

Determining community needs for HBM

November 16, 2011

CLE project

Knowledge about our external environment assists in responding to change and planning future courses of action. This knowledge comes from gathering and analyzing information and data about events, trends, and relationships. This is called environmental scanning. It can position you and the organization to:

- take advantage of opportunities;
- identify best practices;
- mitigate risks;
- maximize resources; and
- anticipate issues/challenges/delays.

Environmental scanning is a deliberate action of people in an organization who have developed formal and informal networks and who are able to understand and communicate the effect of information and data on the organization's programs and strategy.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL SCANNING CHECKLIST**

- 1) What subjects are important and relevant to my program (or organization)?
- 2) When to collect information on the subjects
  - i. On-going
  - ii. In preparation for an event
  - iii. In response to event or policy/direction change
  - iv. To support program planning and evaluation
  - v. Other
- 3) How to use the information
  - i. Analyze information from variety of sources to:
    1. Identify trends
    2. Identify issues or changes
    3. Identify and analyze unexpected and unusual
  - ii. Confirm analysis with networks
  - iii. Identify decisions needed and the who, how & when of those decisions
- 4) What are the sources of information on those subjects?
  - a. Which organizations?
    - i. VON NB Board
    - ii. Media (web, print, electronic)
    - iii. Provincial Legislature
    - iv. Parliament
    - v. Government Departments
    - vi. Competitors
    - vii. Like-minded organizations
    - viii. other
  - b. Which events?
    - i. Conferences
    - ii. Meetings
    - iii. HBM activities
    - iv. Other
  - c. Which networks?
    - i. Other program facilitators
    - ii. Informal sources (friends)
    - iii. HBM Advisory Committee
    - iv. Others

**Individual task for completion by November 16, 2011**

*Are there opportunities to improve HBM in your region?*

*When is the most appropriate time to act on the opportunities?*

*Who (which organizations) can help?*

*What are the risks?*

*What decisions are needed to take advantage of the opportunities?*

*Who has the authority to make those decisions?*

***Position Title:***

Program Facilitator VON Healthy Baby and Me Project

***Summary of Function:***

To assess the community needs and implement pre- and post-natal education programs for pregnant and parenting adolescents.

***Responsibilities (excerpt):***

- Network with existing resources within the community to assess needs and to determine how Healthy Baby & Me will continue to be implemented within the area.
- Network with the Family Resources Centres and other community agencies, services clubs, and the business and volunteer sectors to establish partnerships to help meet the identified needs of the Healthy Baby & Me participants.
- Work with an Advisory Committee in developing and modifying programs and delivery methods appropriate to specific communities.
- Provide input into long-range planning for Healthy Baby & Me at the provincial level.

*What is going on outside my organization that affects the HBM program?*

### **Demographics**

Based on 10 years of research in the area of women's economic development, the Canadian Women's Foundation ([http://www.womenmovingwomen.ca/aboutthemovement\\_EN.asp](http://www.womenmovingwomen.ca/aboutthemovement_EN.asp)) states that:

- The number one predictor of health for a woman in Canada is her income.
- One in seven women<sup>1</sup> in Canada lives in poverty; almost half of Aboriginal women live in poverty;
- Over half of single mothers live in poverty;
- More than one million children live in poverty in Canada
- Infant mortality rates are higher when their mother lives in poverty. They face increased susceptibility to infectious disease and heart disease along with a heightened vulnerability to mental illness.

In addition, in a 2010 news story, the Canadian Journal of Human Sexuality showed that, between 1996 to 2006, Canada's rates of teen pregnancies declined 36.9 per cent, compared with a 25 per cent decline in the U.S., a 4.75 per cent fall in England and a 19.1 per cent increase in Sweden. <http://www.cbc.ca/news/health/story/2010/05/26/teen-pregnancy.html>

Another source [http://www4.hrsdc.gc.ca/.3ndic.1t.4r@-eng.jsp?iid=75#M\\_3](http://www4.hrsdc.gc.ca/.3ndic.1t.4r@-eng.jsp?iid=75#M_3) shows the rate of births to teens (females 14 to 19 years of age) declined from 29.9 per 1,000 female teens in 1974 to 12.0 in 2008. Average national is 12.0 births per 1000; NB is 17.9 per 1000 (highest is Atlantic Canada)

### **Questions**

Is this information relevant to the HBM program?

How could you use this type of information in your community?

What are the sources of research and data in your community?

The Canadian Centre for Social Development monitors demographic information related to Canadian families. It uses data bases from Statistic Canada, among others. Based on CCSD information ( <http://www.ccsd.ca/factsheets/family/> ):

- There were 8.4 million families in Canada in 2001.
- The majority of Canadian families are married households. In 2001, 70.4% of families were married couples, 13.8% were common-law relationships, and the remaining 15.6% were lone-parent families.
- Over the last decade, there has been a steady increase in the number of lone-parent families. Between 1991 and 2001, the number of male lone-parent families grew by 49%, while the number of female-lead lone-parent families rose by 35%.

Province/Territory	Married, children at home	Married, no children at home	Common-law, children at home	Common-law, no children at home	Female lone-parent	Male lone-parent
New Brunswick	40.1%	30.9%	6.0%	6.9%	13.1%	3.0%
<b>CANADA</b>	<b>41.4%</b>	<b>29.0%</b>	<b>6.3%</b>	<b>7.5%</b>	<b>12.7%</b>	<b>2.9%</b>

Source: Calculations by the CCSD using data from Statistics Canada's 2001 Census, Ivision Table 97F0005XCB01006.ivt.

## Questions

How do these numbers compare with the make-up of families in your community?

What sources of information would you use to estimate the number of pregnant and parenting adolescents in 2012?

### **Program Effectiveness**

In February 2006, *First Steps Housing Project Inc.*, Saint John, did a comprehensive overview of the published literature on the topics of teen pregnancy, poverty, homelessness, effects of teen parenting and of poverty on child development, effects of childhood abuse and the societal and financial costs of “doing nothing”.

([http://tamarackcommunity.ca/downloads/vc/SJ\\_Literature\\_Review.pdf](http://tamarackcommunity.ca/downloads/vc/SJ_Literature_Review.pdf))

### **Questions**

Based on your experience, what do you think the conclusions of the report were?

Are you aware of other research in this area?

How could HBM Program use information on program effectiveness?

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The Canadian Journal of Human Sexuality concluded that sex education and easier access to birth control partially explain why far fewer teenage girls are getting pregnant.

### **Question**

How could the HBM program use this type of information?

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## **Issues**

The Canadian Institute for Health Information recently published [http://www.cihi.ca/CIHI-external/pdf/internet/WILLMS\\_VULNERABLE\\_TEENS\\_EN](http://www.cihi.ca/CIHI-external/pdf/internet/WILLMS_VULNERABLE_TEENS_EN) the results of its 2009 research identified four major health issues among Canadian children and adolescents:

- Smoking;
- Overweight and obesity;
- Behavioural and developmental outcomes of children born to adolescent mothers; and
- Mental health (self-esteem).

## **Questions**

How significant are these issues for adolescents in your community?

What, in your view, is the major challenge for adolescents in your community?

Apart from school, which two organizations are most involved with adolescents in your community?



**Advisory Committee**

Describe (do not name) the most active member of the HBM Advisory committee.

What modifications have been made to the HBM program in your community in the last two years?

What was the reason for the modification?

What results were obtained as a result? What did you learn?

What opportunities exist for service clubs, businesses, government agencies and community organizations to discuss issues and programs?

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