



## Environment & Diversity Project

### Overview of the Evaluation

#### Objectives

The key evaluation question that has focused the learning and evaluation process is:

- How can Sustainability Network facilitate and support organizational change in ENGOs so that they become inclusive and reflective of their target communities at all levels of their work?

The purpose of the evaluation is:

- To assess the effectiveness of EDP project design and implementation.
- To learn about effective processes for organizations to build diversity and inclusion in order to determine how Sustainability Network can build capacity within organizations to be more inclusive (including scaling up and reaching more organizations).
- To document tangible outcomes of the project

There are two general audiences for the evaluation. The first audience includes key stakeholders who will be actively involved in the evolving design, implementation and learning of the project. A secondary audience will be sent periodic reports and will be invited to periodic sharing/learning events over the course of the project.

#### Evaluation Approach

EDP is a developmental project that is iterative` in nature – as partners learn about diversity and begin to apply their practical learning about organizational diversity, the program has evolved. This has created challenges for evaluators – it's difficult to evaluate a moving target! As a result, Sustainability Network has taken a highly innovative, collaborative approach to evaluation, ensuring ongoing, *just-in-time* evaluative feedback and learning.

The evaluation team planned a formative evaluation process. The evaluation has been led by the Project Lead, with coaching and support from *Resources for Results* (an evaluation coaching firm). The evaluation approach can be describes as having:

- A flexible, developmental evaluation process which evolves with the emerging project design.
- Simultaneous planning and coordination of the program and the evaluation
- A focus on results
- Team building
- A focus on learning about the promising practices and outcomes, with regular, partner sessions to reflect on progress.

## Evaluation Plan

### Phase 1 – Foundation Building for Diversity (Already Completed Yr.1)

#### ***Priority 1: Performance Monitoring System***

- Development of output and outcome indicators and a foundation for documentation of project statistics and learning
- Baseline data collection

#### ***Priority 2: Project and Evaluation Design and Workplanning***

- The integration of evaluation and learning into the fabric of our initiative
- Ongoing assessment of our diversity capacity building strategy (workshops, partner meetings, one-to-one meetings, and resource development)

#### ***Priority 3: Ongoing Learning About Diversity Capacity Building***

- Design of a diversity action planning strategy that will pilot, document and assess promising practices in promoting ENGO diversity

### Phase 2 – First Steps to Building Diversity

#### ***Priority 1: Diversity Action Planning***

- Sustainability Network is currently piloting an diversity action planning process which will then be rolled out on a customized basis for all partners
- Each partner organization's staff and board will complete a detailed, on-line *diversity survey*
- SN and its diversity consultants will support each partner organization to establish an ad hoc diversity committee, which will develop a *Diversity Action Plan*
- This Diversity Action Plan will provide a foundation for diversity activities and for process and outcomes evaluation

#### ***Priority 2: Learning about Diversity***

- EDP is devising a number of initiatives to document and share learnings to date, including:
  - Web-based strategies: the development of a monthly blog, video interviews, resource sharing
  - Innovative community-based approaches: a human library project and our ongoing practical workshop series.
- The team has already drafted a Theory of Change that will capture promising practices in the development of ENGO diversity capacity. This framework will be the foundation for our outcomes documentation strategy. (See below for a preliminary draft of our holistic framework for outcomes)
- The team will discuss and review these promising practices and outcomes at a team learning session in the Fall of 2010

#### ***Priority 3: Internship Review***

- Evaluation of the effectiveness of the internship placement process

#### ***Priority 4: Assessment of Progress to Date***

- Review of performance management data, key informant interviews and collaborative review sessions with partners
- Review of ongoing diversity education and capacity building activities

***Sustainability Network (Last Updated: 06/05/10)***

## EDP - Ongoing Learning Questions:

The following questions will be revisited during the ongoing evaluation process, to help frame our work:

1. How does organizational diversity develop?
2. What is Sustainability Network's role in capacity building?
3. What are cultural groups' perspectives on our approach and progress?

## Diversity Capacity Building – Preliminary Learning Re: Early Conditions for Success



## Results to Date

EDP has made very good progress in advancing partner organization's diversity capacity in all five areas identified as necessary conditions for success:

### 1. Buy-in: Motivation for Intentional Change

The first year of the project can be described as a comprehensive foundation building process. The project leads for each of the six collaborative organizations were brought together by Sustainability Network to develop trust, create a support network, discuss opportunities and challenges related to diversifying their organizations. Sustainability Network gave groups tools (resources, coaching/advice, training) and implemented a plan to increase confidence amongst the group that they could be champions of diversity. Celebrating incremental and small successes gave them motivation to believe that they can help their organizations change.

### 2. Resources: Time and Money

Collaborative members indicated that funding was critical to the time and effort needed to focus on diversity. The addition of interns to each organization in year 2 is helping increase capacity and in the effort to build a critical mass and culture of diversity. However, busy schedules can shift priorities away from diversity. There is also some difficulty carving time to discuss diversity as an organization (staff and board) since funding is concentrated on the collaborative leads and interns.

*Sustainability Network (Last Updated: 06/05/10)*

### **3. Leadership: Champions at the Board and Management Level**

The foundation building of #1 helped to identify diversity champions. The project leads for each organization are committed and passionate. Some other staff members and some board members of some organizations have also been very supportive. Some organizations have already created a Diversity Committee (e.g. Sustainability Network as the lead organization has created a committee with the Diversity Project Manager, Executive Director and Board Chair).

### **4. Networks: Access to Diverse Communities**

The training strategy has worked to empower partners with the knowledge, motivation, confidence, connections and leadership to successfully build foundations for the launch of pro-active diversity strategies. To date, training topics covered: board diversity (with connections to Maytree DiverseCity onBoard program), ethnic media and communications (with guest speakers from several ethnic media outlets), First Nations training (included the presence and observation of a First Nations elder), recruitment and hiring (with HireImmigrants.ca). The interns also participated in a workshop on blogging and will receive facilitation training as well as anti-racism training. In addition, the interns have their own unique perspectives and networks to add to the project. Finally, the project's Advisory Council, consisting of environmental NGOs, cultural groups, academia, Aboriginal groups, provides an avenue for sharing information and networking with new communities.

### **5. A Plan: Accountability**

Sustainability Network has embarked on a Diversity Action Planning process. Our step-by-step process, diversity survey template and diversity action plan template are being used as examples for the collaborative members to use in their own planning process. Each organization's plan will include goals to strive for and a review process for updating the plan on a yearly basis. The survey acts as a check-point to also gauge progress. Although each organization is moving at a slightly different pace and will have different goals, being groups into a "cohort" helps them motivate and support each other.