

When Kids Flourish..... Crime Doesn't

Peter Dudding, Executive Director, attended the *Strengthening Canadian Communities: A National Showcase on Community Safety, Health and Well-being* in Winnipeg, from March 4 – 6, 2007. This meeting was hosted by the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police (CACCP), who has been providing leadership in the development of a “coalition on community safety, health and well-being”. It involves a wide range of organizations including police, health, education and social services, government at all levels, corporate sector, community and university partners.

Currently, in Canadian society, there is greater emphasis being placed upon the law and order agenda and the law and order approach of ‘getting tough on crime’. This discussion is occurring despite the fact that crime rates in Canada are stable and in the case of youth crime, decreasing. However, the perception of increasing risk and insecurity in our society is growing.

The chiefs of police from across Canada are that clear that **crime prevention through social development** in an essential part of crime reduction and making Canadian communities safer places to grow up and live. They also recognize that the conditions of social inequality are increasing in Canada, including poverty, racism and exclusion, and that these factors particularly impact negatively on children and youth. Specific concerns about the full participation of Aboriginal persons and communities in Canadian society must be addressed. In the words of Gord Mackintosh, Minister of Family Services and Housing in Manitoba, we need to be “tough on crime and tough on the root causes of crime”.

In the 1980s Canada was a recognized international leader in the area of crime prevention through social development. However it is clear that we have lost our way. In 2007 we lack a coherent and coordinated approach to crime prevention, and there is an urgent need for re-focusing, and revitalizing an approach that is tailored to the needs of contemporary Canadian society.

The primary purposes of this meeting are:

1. To bring together a broad range of interested parties to build a consensus about future directions.
2. To demonstrate what some Canadian communities have achieved through a “crime prevention through social development” approach.
3. To develop a public awareness strategy to increase the understanding and awareness of Canadians regarding crime prevention.
4. To form a coalition of community safety, health and well-being.

CWLC is very pleased to be an active participant in the development of this coalition with the CACCP and many other partners from justice, health, education and social services. CWLC has been representing the National Alliance for Children and Youth and its members.

During 2007 the Coalition will continue its efforts under the leadership of CACP in formalizing and expanding the Coalition membership. We will continue to keep you informed about these developments.

In the meantime should you require further information, please contact Peter Dudding at info@cwlc.ca or (613) 235 – 4412. You can also visit the CACP [website](#) for further information on *Strengthening Canadian Communities*.