

RURAL YOUTH EDUCATION PROJECT ANNUAL REPORT

FOR YEAR ENDING MARCH 31, 2003

BACKGROUND:

The Rural Youth Healthy Relationships Education Project is a four year project which started in February/02. This project is sponsored by the Antigonish Women's Resource Centre and funded by Justice Canada, Crime Prevention Investment Fund (CPIF). The project implements a gender-based, violence prevention model which will provide youth with skills to build and maintain healthy relationships.

In September, 2001, the AWRC was invited by the National Crime Prevention Centre (NCPC) to visit a CPIF project underway in British Columbia and to submit a proposal to replicate that model. The Saltspring Women Opposed to Violence and Abuse (SWOVA) Community Development and Research Society had obtained three years of CPIF funding for their project: "Women and Violence - Education in Prevention". SWOVA recently received additional funding from NCPC to extend the project by two years which will now conclude in July, 2005.

Jean Crosby and Pamela Fry travelled to B.C. to meet with SWOVA project staff, participants, school personnel and board members over a three day period (October 16 - 18). On returning to Nova Scotia, a proposal was researched and drafted. After several revisions and negotiations regarding the partnership with SWOVA, the proposal was accepted for consideration in December by NCPC. After delays relating to a change of Federal Cabinet Ministers, funding was approved for the "Rural Youth Healthy Relationships Education Project" in February/02. The project work is being carried out with ongoing consultation and collaboration with SWOVA staff and in partnership with the Antigonish East Education Centre in Antigonish County and Chedabucto Place in Guysborough County. These rural schools reflect a diverse population with a significant percentage of the students coming from Mi'kmaq and African Nova Scotian communities.

THE MODEL:

The model presents a gender-based, violence prevention approach for working collaboratively with teachers to deliver a core curriculum of 12 lessons to students in grades 7, 8, 9, and 11. It is designed to be presented as a multi-dimensional, multi-session, multi-year program. The multi-dimensional teaching approach is utilized to present the skill development and awareness of issues required to build and maintain healthy relationships.

This project will incorporate adaptations which will enhance the existing SWOVA curriculum, most notably in the area of diversity. Within Antigonish and Guysborough Counties there exists significant cultural/racial diversity with both First Nations and African Nova Scotian communities. Cultural diversity will be a priority and the diversity component will continue to be developed and integrated throughout the project. In addition student workbooks and resources

for teachers and parents will support and enhance the classroom lessons.

KEY COMPONENTS OF MODEL:

- School-based violence prevention programming
- Community based
- Collaboration with schools
- Linking forms of violence
- Gender based
- Interactive, discussion based education approach
- Facilitator teams represent diversity with dyads of female/male, adult/youth and also reflect the diversity of the community.
- Youth involvement
- Counselling Support

PERSONNEL:

STAFF LIST:

Project Co-ordinator:

- Jean Crosby
March/02 to present
Full-Time Permanent - 35 hrs/wk

Office Administrator:

- Jackie Jacques
March/02 to present
Part-Time Permanent - 20 hrs/wk

Financial Administrator:

- Christine Hanlon:
March/02 to present
Part-Time Permanent

Adult Facilitators:

- James Cameron June/02 to January/03
- Augy Jones June/02 to January/03
- Colleen Pelly June/02 to February/03
- Annika Peters June/02 to June/03
- Krista DeCoste June/02 to June/03
- Liam Timmons February/03 to June/03
- Steve Wardrope February/03 to June/03
- Flora Murphy February/03 to June/03

Research Assistant:

- Krista DeCoste June/02 to present

Diversity Consultant:

- Sylvia Parris May to October/02 (20 weeks)

Youth Facilitators:	October to June/03
CHEDABUCTO PLACE:	EAST ANTIGONISH:
Shanna Borden	Stephanie Gorman
Jessica MacDonald	Lindy DeCoste
Daniel Muise	Matilda Tate
Nathaniel Hart	Linda Peters
Christina Connolly	Angela Pelrine
Stacy Ash	Beth Jackson
Kailyn Peart	Janine Bernard
Lyle Munro	Lindsey Felix
Danielle Pellerin	Catherine Myette
Linda Wright	

ADULT FACILITATORS:

Hiring Process:

This process proved to be challenging. Our goal is to maintain in these positions : two men and two women with at least two of those individuals being either Mi'kmaq or African Nova Scotian. We initially achieved this goal but were then unable to maintain representation by an African Nova Scotian after January/03. This is an ongoing process.

In June/02 we started with a conventional process of advertising in the local papers, distributing the advertisement to key people in the two counties and with HRDC. The advertisement included a statement of support for affirmative action and specifically encouraged application from the Mi'kmaq and African Nova Scotian communities. Due to a lack of suitable candidates we then extended the deadline and readvertised as before but increased efforts to make direct contact with key people in these communities. Staff and board members also informally spread information about these positions. As a result of these efforts, we met our hiring goal. Due to the investment in training for these four and the possible need for a backup person during the year, it was decided to include training a fifth facilitator.

In January, Augy Jones and James Cameron resigned due to conflicting commitments with other employment. A rehiring process started immediately and resulted in hiring Liam Timmons and Steve Wardrope. Also in January, Colleen Pelly advised she unable to continue in this position due to conflicting commitments. Flora Murphy was recruited to fill this vacancy.

This change in staff came at a critical time as classroom sessions were scheduled to start on February 4th. All efforts were directed to re-hiring and reorganizing the schedules of the remaining two facilitators to ensure all classes were covered. This was achieved, however, it created a lack of continuity with Facilitators which did effect some classes in this first month. By March, the two teams were established and continued to the end of the school year: Annika and Liam at East Antigonish and Krista and Steve at Chedabucto. Flora acted as relief facilitator at both schools as needed.

Training:

The first round of training occurred in June for all new staff. With new staff also starting in February, it became necessary to replicate the original training in a condensed form. There are also ongoing education sessions as required on various topics with Adult Facilitators.

June: The original 5 adult facilitators received 8 days of training in June which covered the following:

- Initial Training: (three days)
Jean Crosby, Facilitator
Areas covered: needs assessment, orientation to project, orientation to AWRC (presenter: Lucille Harper), identifying expectations and strengths, socialization and sex-role stereotyping (presenter: Barbara Hayes), child abuse disclosures/reporting, dynamics of violence, working with youth, issues related to facilitation and curriculum delivery.
- Diversity Education Certificate Program - Level 1: Module 1 (two days)
Dalhousie University Diversity Initiative, Henson College
Co-Facilitators: Percy Paris, Barry Wambolt, Candy Palmater.
16 participants: 7 project staff, 8 AWRC staff, 1 school staff
Diversity Education Certificate Program - Level 1: Module 2 (two days)
The second of the three modules was presented in October.
Co-Facilitators: Percy Paris, Candy Palmater
13 participants
These workshops proved to be challenging. With a diverse and knowledgeable group, the discussions were lively. It became clear that the Henson format was geared to the corporate world and did not fit completely with our group's needs. The facilitators and participants were also challenged by discussion which pushed for a deeper level of analysis of diversity issues. It was acknowledged that discussions about level of privilege and oppression are complex and need to be ongoing. The third and final module will be delivered in June/03.
- SWOVA curriculum training with staff from BC Project: (three days)
- reviewed in detail curriculum delivery for grades 7,8,9, & 11.
These training sessions enabled the facilitators to try out the curriculum, do the exercises and games and discuss issues and strategies that have arisen in BC. Some important learning occurred through discussing diversity and the relevance of certain curriculum content to the students here. Specifically, the different level of awareness required when presenting to a class of all-white students versus a class with white, Mi'kmaq and African Nova Scotian students. In discussing how some exercises could be modified and made more culturally sensitive, it became clear that SWOVA staff were also aware that these "improvements" would also benefit their students.

February: To prepare the three new staff the following education sessions were held : These sessions were attended by all adult facilitators:

- 5 hours: Orientation to AWRC (Lucille Harper), orientation to RYEP and position of Adult Facilitator, review of materials provided: Resource Material / Adult Facilitator Information / Scheduling Information, personnel issues reviewed, ongoing training issues.
- 6 hours: Review of curriculum material and workshopped several key exercises: Folktale Exercise and Diversity Wheel
- 2 hours: Session on Protocol & Procedures for Disclosure and Reporting of Child Abuse.

YOUTH FACILITATORS:Recruitment/Hiring:

In September, both schools were actively engaged in recruiting Youth Facilitators. The role of the Youth Facilitator is to assist the Adult Facilitators in the classroom and to also attend regular

meetings and education sessions. As these are paid positions, resumes and cover letter were required and interviews were held. The goal was to hire ten youth from each school from Grades 11 & 12 who represented the diversity of the student population and also represented a gender balance.

- At East Antigonish 9 girls were hired with two Mi'kmaq students. We were unsuccessful in recruiting boys.
- At Chedabucto Place 7 girls and 3 boys were hired with three African Nova Scotian students.

Training:

The Youth Facilitators received 4.5 days training in October and November. This training was held jointly with AWRC's Teens Take Action Peer Facilitators. All the youth training was held in the Performing Arts Room at East Antigonish School. 32 youth were engaged in this process: 12 Teens Take Action, 9 East Antigonish and 10 from Chedabucto Place. Jean Crosby and Amanda Workman organized and facilitated the youth training.

- Irondale Theatre Ensemble provided a 1.5 days workshop:
These sessions introduced theatre as a tool for peer educators in providing information and raising awareness around issues of violence & prevention. There was a focus on diversity within the overall theme of developing and maintaining healthy relationships.
- 3 days training facilitated by Jean Crosby & Amanda Workman (held on consecutive Sundays)
These sessions include information and discussion on the following topics:
Definitions of violence, sex-role stereotyping and socialization, defining qualities of healthy & unhealthy relationships, diversity and relationships, dating violence/sexual violence, consent & coercion, choices & challenges, violence prevention strategies, working in schools, strategies for engaging students in classroom.

Following this joint training each group; ie Teens Take Action; Youth Facilitators/Chedabucto Place and Youth Facilitators/East Antigonish continued with additional meetings/training specific to their own needs. The two groups of Youth Facilitators started regular weekly meetings with their Adult Facilitator team for ongoing support and learning, reviewing classroom schedules and addressing any issues arising from the classroom work. In February each student was assigned to a specific class for which they were responsible to prepare for, attend and complete a written evaluation. The Youth Facilitators were also challenged by the temporary lack of staff in February as well as their own changing scheduled and adjusting to work in the classroom.

DIVERSITY CONSULTANT:

Sylvia Parris has worked in the field of cultural diversity as a consultant, facilitator and trainer and also brings to the project over 20 years of experience in the field of education. The majority of those as a teacher at the secondary level in Guysborough County. She presently holds the position of Multicultural Education Consultant for the Nova Scotia Department of Education. Sylvia was born and brought up in Guysborough and has an intimate understanding of the challenges facing African Nova Scotian communities.

The main objectives of Sylvia's work, which will be ongoing throughout the project, are:

- To develop supplemental resource materials for the curriculum which will:

- address diversity issues relevant to a rural student population
- address cultural diversity issues relevant to African Nova Scotian and Mi'kmaq students
- be age appropriate for students in Grades 7,8,9 & 11
- To develop and deliver educational material to support diversity awareness leading to competency for Project and School staff.

The following work was completed in 2002:

- Grade 7,8, & 9 curriculum and student workbooks were infused with cultural diversity content.
- Video and written resource material was reviewed and recommended
- Facilitator training material completed and presented.
- Information provided to school staff
- “The Fit” document was developed which provides a detailed comparison of the learning objectives of the Department of Education curriculum for PDR (Personal Development and Relationships) and CLM (Career Life Management) with the SWOVA curriculum..

COUNSELLOR POSITION:

Family Services of Eastern Nova Scotia, a non-profit counselling service, have agreed to provide counselling support as required for the Project. Discussions are underway to formalize this agreement.

SCHOOL BOARD APPROVAL:

In the very early stages of the RYEP, meetings had been held with Jack Beaton, Director of Educational Services, Strait Regional School Board and senior staff at both schools; Elizabeth Teasdale, Principal and Miles MacDonald, Vice-Principal at Chedabucto Place and Sherman England, Principal and Gerard Ryan, Vice-Principal at East Antigonish. From these discussions the RYEP gained the support of senior administration and school staff and encouragement to proceed to the School Board for approval. This meant that project work could proceed on some levels but that the School Board approval was required before the RYEP could move into curriculum delivery in the schools.

This proved to be a much longer and difficult process than originally anticipated. The cautious approach by the School Board was in part coming from an internal financial scandal that was consuming their time and attention. In addition, during July and August, a very intense e-mail campaign was focussed towards members of the School Board and was demanding that they not support the RYEP. During these months over 140 e-mails, all with lengthy attachments, were sent to all School Board members. This campaign originated with a group named S.A.F.E. (Stop Abuse for Everyone) which is based in Oregon. Members of this group support highly conservative notions regarding women's place in society and their e-mails forwarded a highly misogynist attack on feminist theory and practice.

Despite this significant challenge, the RYEP is now proceeding with the full support and co-operation of the School Board members and administration as well as staff at both schools.

TIMELINE:**March:**

- Curriculum documents were received from SWOVA and delivered to Jack Beaton who then initiated the process of reviewing the curriculum as a first phase.

May/June:

- Meetings with Jack Beaton and Principals/Vice-Principals at both schools to discuss the process of implementing the Project in September.
- Curriculum completed by staff from both school sites with positive outcome.

July:

- Scheduled August presentation to School Board and information package mailed out to all members.
- July 22nd : E-mail campaign from SAFE started.
- Contact/lobby with School Board members and administration

August:

- School Board presentation rescheduled from August 7th - 20th.
- August 7th: E-mail campaign from SAFE stopped (over 140 e-mails received)
- August 20th: Presentation made to the School Board with a request for their approval.
- Outcome of presentation: request for a letter of support from the Department of Education.

September:

- Starting in classroom is delayed pending School Board approval.

October:

- October 23rd - letter received from Minister of Education Jane Purves stating her Department's support for the RYEP.

November:

- RYEP request for approval on the agenda for School Board meeting.
- November 13th: School Board approved the RYEP to proceed in the schools

SWOVA: CONSULTATION AND COLLABORATION:

The RYEP is funded to replicate the model and curriculum developed by SWOVA. It is also understood that adaptations will be made to accommodate the particular needs and challenges of our multi-cultural, rural East Coast environment.

Consultation with SWOVA occurs on an ongoing basis and there are annual training and consultation visits. The first of these occurred in June and formed part of the Adult Facilitator training process. The SWOVA staff who travelled to Antigonish: Lynda Laushway, Project Coordinator, Meredith Knox, Advisory Committee Member and Adult Facilitators: Kim Davidson and Monty Bridgeman. Two days were spent in consultation meetings and the remaining three focussed on curriculum training.

As a result of ongoing communication with Lynda Laushway regarding the curriculum document and approval of adaptations made by the RYEP, it has been jointly agreed to by SWOVA and the RYEP that :

- there will be ongoing communication regarding adaptations to the curriculum proposed by RYEP.
- that both SWOVA and RYEP are providing their best advise and opinions when

- proposing or responding to any modifications.
- that when SWOVA's agreement/approval is not achieved on a particular adaptation that RYEP will document their position or rationale for the change and will proceed with the adaptation.
- that any failure by the RYEP will not reflect on SWOVA's work and vice-versa.
- that all documents originating with SWOVA and adapted by the RYEP, will carry the footer "Copyright SWOVA 2002: Adapted by AWRC - Not for Distribution"

The next visit to Nova Scotia has been planned for June. Lynda will be coming with one Adult Facilitator. There will be two days of meetings relating to the curriculum and one day for consultation meetings.

CURRICULUM WORK:

The required work on the curriculum documents and workbooks for all four grade levels, proved to be more involved than anticipated. This following work involved four grade levels and related to curriculum document as well as a student workbook for each grade level. This process involved ongoing, extensive communication with SWOVA staff and the Diversity Consultant and included;

- reformatting curriculum text for continuity and clarity
- creating additional facilitator notes
- developing of indexes of exercises and sessions to facilitate use
- developing supplementary information for facilitators.
- submitting revised documents to SWOVA for approval and integration of feedback.
- integrating diversity components
- development of various games and presentation props required by facilitators.
- completing final drafts of Grade 7,8 & 9 curriculum and Student Workbooks
- duplication and distribution of Student Workbooks.
- production and distribution of binders containing supporting information, curriculum and student workbooks for Adult Facilitators, Youth Facilitators and Teachers at both school sites.

As work started on the curriculum document, it became apparent that this work would require additional staff. Krista DeCoste was initially employed as a Research Assistant for July 2 - August 30 at 35 hrs/wk. It then became necessary to extend her work to the end of January at 15 hrs/wk to complete the necessary work required on the curriculum and student workbooks for starting in the classroom in early February. It is anticipated that there will be a need for the Research Assistant to be an ongoing position as curriculum review and development is an ongoing process for both SWOVA and the RYEP. There will also be additional layers of diversity material integrated in each school year.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE:

The Advisory Committee met six times in the past year with an average attendance of 12. Meeting location was rotated between the Project Office in Antigonish and East Antigonish School. The first meeting was held in May and during the past year met also in June, July, September, October and December. In this first year of meeting, the Committee was introduced

to Project personnel and provided with an orientation to the project. A significant role played by Committee members ,from July to November ,was their engagement in the lobby to gain School Board approval.

MEMBERS:

- Justice Representative Karen Swan, Senior Project Analyst, Atlantic Region
- Project Co-ordinator Jean Crosby
- Diversity Consultant Sylvia Parris
- AWRC Director Lucille Harper
- AWRC Board Member Nancy Forestell
- East Antigonish School Gerard Ryan, Vice Principal
- Chedabucto Place Mary Fisher , PDR teacher
Paul Long, CLM teacher
- Afrikan Canadian Heritage & Friendship Centre Wendy Campbell, Co-ordinator
- Guysborough Youth Health Services Centre Leona Purcell, Public Health Nurse
- Black Educator's Association of Nova Scotia Joanne Reddick, Regional Educator
- Antigonish/Guysborough Black Development Association Sheila Pelly, Employment Development Officer
- Crime Prevention Association Denise Wood, Youth Services Co-ordinator
- Naomi Society for Victims of Family Violence Tammy Lee Vautour, Director
- New Leaf: Intervention Program for Abusive Men Ron Kelly
- Department of Mental Health/ Child Adolescent Team Member Wendy Digout, Psychologist
- Antigonish Town & County Community Health Board Evelyn Lindsay, Chair
- Afton Band Council Tanya Frances, Education Director

EXTERNAL EVALUATION:

In late November, we were advised that the firm of Auguste Solutions & Associates Inc.(ASA) had received the contract for the external evaluation of the project.

- December 4th: first meeting in Antigonish with Gus Barrieau of ASA, Lucille Harper and Jean Crosby.
- December 17 & 18: Two day workshop with Gus Barrieau and Jim Cofflin of ASA and: 3 Project Staff , AWRC Director, two Advisory Committee members and Karen Swan and Lucy Burke, Regional Managers with NCPC for Projects and Evaluation respectively.

The focus of these two days was the development of a Theory of Change Model and other related discussions.

The delay in the evaluator being assigned resulted in time and work pressures for staff with the very short notice for both meetings, as well as a delay of one school year for the evaluation process to start with students.

As a follow up to the December meetings, requested documents were sent to ASA.

In March a number of major documents were presented by the Evaluator for review and comments.

These included:

- Workshop Notes from December/02
- Literature Review
- Theory of Change Model
- Discussion Paper on Class Samples
- Discussion Paper on School Comparison Site

These are all preliminary to the development of the Evaluation Framework which is to be distributed later this month for review and comments.

The Evaluation Advisory Committee was also developed this month and meetings will start in April.

OTHER ACTIVITIES:

PRISM PROJECT:

In September, Jean began participating as a member of the Steering Committee for the PRISM Project. The PRISM Project is funded by Status of Women Canada and sponsored by the Muriel McQueen Fergusson Centre for Family Violence Research. The goal of the PRISM Initiative is to identify and enhance conditions and resources that will help rural women and girls to live in relationships free from violence. Specifically, the intent is to document better practices and reflective approaches which address abuse of women and girls in rural/remote and socially isolated communities in Atlantic Canada.

As part of the PRISM research, eight sites were identified ,within the Atlantic Provinces, as those which reflected best practices in violence prevention. The RYEP was one of the sites

selected. Nancy Peters, a local researcher was contracted by PRISM to conduct the RYEP research which was completed in March. Jean and Nancy had initial meetings and discussions about how this work would proceed during the month. Questionnaires were completed by members of project staff, school staff and the Advisory Committee. Focus groups were held with a group of Grade 8 students, Grade 9 students and Youth Facilitators. Project staff assisted with these meetings. The Atlantic Conference, which will be the culmination of this phase of the PRISM Project, will take place in May.

ECOLE ACADIENNE DE POMQUET:

In February, Flora and Jean conducted four sessions with 36 students from grades 7 - 10 which explored the relationship between gender stereotypes and bullying. The AWRC was represented along with three other speakers; RCMP, a teacher presenting Bully Beware video, and school counsellor facilitating a mural project - all focusing on bullying. This was a very worthwhile experience with a high level of participation from the students.

YOUTH SEXUAL HEALTH CONSULTATION:

Jean attended a meeting in Antigonish on January 8th to participate in a discussion of issues related to youth sexual health. There were 13 in attendance with Jean MacQueen, Larry Maxwell and Janet Bickerton facilitating. The purpose of this meeting was to provide the N.S. Roundtable on Youth Sexual Health with community input from which they will develop an action-oriented approach for youth sexual health in this province. The mission of the Round Table is to work collaboratively to ensure the promotion and protection of youth sexual health.

CANADA WORLD YOUTH :

As part of the Antigonish-Indonesia Exchange for Canada World Youth Ada Pally and Novaliana Tambunan completed a seven week work placement with the Project in November. Ada and Nova worked primarily on developing and organizing the Project resource material and assisted with a wide variety of other tasks. This was a very positive experience including attending various activities organized by the 18 participants of the Antigonish-Indonesia Exchange for the host families and host work placements.

HUMAN RIGHTS IN EDUCATION CONFERENCE:

In October, Krista attended this two day conference in Halifax. This conference was largely attended by teachers and school administrators from across the province. The focus of the conference was to raise awareness on issues of diversity and the need to present and respect diverse perspectives.

HEARTWOOD COMMUNITY YOUTH DEVELOPMENT MODEL WORKSHOP:

In March, Krista attended this day long workshop in Antigonish presented by Heartwood, a non-profit organization whose work focuses on supporting youth engagement in their community. This workshop identified best practices for youth programs and provided an evaluation tool for youth involvement. The workshop was very helpful and from it staff have identified some concrete steps the RYEP could take in order to provide a stronger role for the youth facilitators.

Upcoming discussions are planned with the adult and youth facilitators to evaluate and discuss enhancing youth involvement for the Project.

PROJECT CHALLENGES:

- Scheduling in schools: for RYEP Sessions and Youth Facilitators
- Staffing for Adult Facilitator positions: maintaining continuity
- Evaluation Process Issues:
 - late start of external evaluation process
 - internal evaluation needs
- Obtaining additional funding

PROJECT SUCCESSES:

- Obtaining School Board approval
- Advisory Committee development
- Consultations/Negotiations with SWOVA
- Collaboration with School Board administration and school staff.
- Starting classroom sessions in February for all grades 7,8 & 9 classes in both schools.
- Engagement of Youth Facilitators in classroom sessions

Respectfully Submitted:

Jean Crosby, B.S.W., R.S.W.
Project Co-ordinator