

**CHECK UP**

August 2, 2013

Sigh........ A Cowichan Sunset..... Sigh again!

**Today’s Check up Includes:**

* Meeting Schedules
* Community meetings and events
* Underlying Premise Evidence-

(part 3) Education and Literacy

* Social Innovators Guide to Systems

Thinking (Tamarak)

* The Possibilities of Neighbourhood

Power (Tamarak)

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**CCHN Network Member Meetings-**

* None scheduled for this week

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**Upcoming Events/ Workshops/ Community Meetings**

* **Cairnsmore Neighbourhood Barbeque- August 8th** The CCHN presented the Cairnsmore Neighbourhood Working Group with a community grant. The Working group is striving to build a cohesive and resilient neighbourhood by distributing newsletters, hosting a neighbourhood barbeque and establishing a website to continue to engage community. **All members of the CCHN have been invited to participate in the Neighbourhood Barbeque on Thursday August 8th from 5to 7 pm in the St Andrews Presbyterian parking lot.**

### 2013 Youbou Regatta

August 10, 10:00 AM - 7:00 PM @ Youbou, BC

Cowichan Lake Recreation invites you to attend the annual family swimming event, Saturday, August 10, 2013 in Youbou, BC. The parade will marshal at the Youbou Hall at 10:00am. Everyone is welcome to enter! Come out for tons of fun with canoe races, the Clarence Whittingham Memorial Quarter Mile Swim, swim races, watermelon eating contest, volleyball tournament, concession and so much more. For more information check out the Summer PlayBook online or call us at 250-749-6742.

### 2013 BC Kidney Walks | Cowichan Valley

August 11, 10:00 AM @ Cowichan Valley Sportsplex

Join the Kidney Walk – Cowichan Valley The Kidney Foundation of Canada, BC Branch is holding its annual Kidney Walk to raise funds and awareness of organ donation that will help support the work of The Kidney Foundation. Everyone can be a hero. Join in, sponsor a walker, volunteer and/or register to be an organ donor. The Kidney Foundation of Canada, BC Branch is a not-for-profit healthcare organization that raises money to improve the lives of all people affected by kidney disease by funding research; providing education and support, and increasing public awareness and commitment to advancing kidney health and organ donation. Come join in the fun. Be a Hero. Save Lives, Register

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**KEY DETERMINANT -- 3. Education and Literacy**

**UNDERLYING PREMISES**

**EVIDENCE**

Health status improves with level of education.  
  
Education is closely tied to socioeconomic status, and effective education for children and lifelong learning for adults are key contributors to health and prosperity for individuals, and for the country. Education contributes to health and prosperity by equipping people with knowledge and skills for problem solving, and helps provide a sense of control and mastery over life circumstances. It increases opportunities for job and income security, and job satisfaction. And it improves people's ability to access and understand information to help keep them healthy.

Evidence from the **Second Report on the Health of Canadians:**

* Canadians with low literacy skills are more likely to be unemployed and poor, to suffer poorer health and to die earlier than Canadians with high levels of literacy
* People with higher levels of education have better access to healthy physical environments and are better able to prepare their children for school than people with low levels of education. They also tend to smoke less, to be more physically active and to have access to healthier foods.
* In the 1996-97 National Population Health Survey (NPHS), only 19% of respondents with less than a high school education rated their health as "excellent" compared with 30% of university graduates.

Evidence from **Investing in the Health of Canadians:**

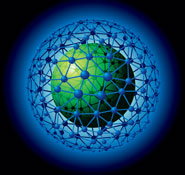
* The 1990 Canada Health Promotion Survey found the number of lost workdays decreases with increasing education. People with elementary schooling lose seven work days per year due to illness, injury or disability, while those with university education lose fewer than four days per year.

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**From Tamarak Newsletter**

**A Social Innovator's Guide to Systems Thinking [By: Tim Draimin]**

***Realizing the ultimate impact of community-based innovations***

"Systems loom large in our lives", says Charlie Leadbeater, a leading writer on social innovation. Our planet of 7 billion inhabitants depends daily on a myriad of interlocking systems for clothing, food, and shelter as well as meeting health care and other needs.

Our primary man-made systems were born - or matured - in the immediate post-World War II era when the planet was far less populated and its needs less complex. Unfortunately, many of those systems are now reaching - or have passed - their "best by" date.

Which systems do you experience as wearing thin: Social welfare? Education? Food? Health? Democratic Engagement? Global Finance? Environmental protection? Management of the Global Commons?

Geoff Mulgan - the CEO of [Nesta](http://www.nesta.org.uk/home1), a UK-based independent charity that helps people and organisations bring great ideas to life, and Charlie Leadbeater have co-published two excellent articles in [*Systems Innovation*](http://www.nesta.org.uk/publications/assets/features/systems_innovation_discussion_paper): Mulgan's *Joined-Up innovation: What is Systemic Innovation and How Can it be Done Effectively?* And Leadbeater's *The Systems Innovator: Why Successful Innovation Goes Beyond Products*. They explain what systems are, why they are so important, and how they should be a focus for change by people involved in building and scaling social innovations.

**Systemic innovation** is definedas "an interconnected set of innovations, where each influences the other, with innovation both in the parts of the system and in the ways in which they interconnect."

As Leadbeater predicts, "systems innovation will become the most important focus for companies and governments, cities and entire societies. In the last decade there has been a growing focus on innovation in products and services as a source of competitive advantage. **In the next decades the focus will shift towards the innovation of new kinds of systems.**"

As I wrote in [*Shifting From Scale to Reach*](http://tamarackcommunity.ca/downloads/engage/vol10issue6.pdf)***,*** an article featured in last month's issue of Engage!, individual social innovators are making enormous strides in building valuable innovations that generate meaningful social change.

However, in order for those individual initiatives to scale up to achieve deep, broad and durable impact, we need to shift gears to collaborate with others operating in the related system.

In most cases individual social innovators begin their change-maker careers focused on specific symptoms of systemic malaise. As they engage their system, they deepen their knowledge of it and often shift, as Pathways to Education's David Hughes would say, from an - **organizationally-centred strategy** of ameliorating symptoms to an **issue-centred strategy** of altering systems.

For example, many social innovators in the environmental movement started their careers focused on local issues like pollution or local conservation. Their experience with the underlining forces that produce negative local impacts provided them with the insights to re-think their goals and strategies in a more systemic fashion. This description reminds me of the work of Nicole Rycroft, who cut her teeth as a passionate campaigner for the protection of Clayquot Sound. Today she is an [Ashoka Fellow](http://canada.ashoka.org/what-ashoka) who leads [Canopy](http://canopyplanet.org/), working with the forest industry's biggest customers to protect the world's forest, species and climate by shifting markets.

In recent decades the world has seen the rise of numerous valuable fellowships supporting individual social entrepreneurs like Ashoka, [Schwab Foundation Fellows](http://www.schwabfound.org/), and [Echoing Green](http://www.echoinggreen.org/). Their [field building](http://www.sigeneration.ca/field-building/) work, and that of their fellows, has helped to crystalize today's extraordinarily exciting new era of entrepreneurship, experimentalism and innovation. Today however, we are preparing to enter the phase of connecting up the approach of individual innovations with the emerging "systems" innovation approach.

**Core Elements of Systems Thinking**

[SiG's Knowledge Hub](http://sigknowledgehub.com/), which has a section on [Systems Thinking](http://sigknowledgehub.com/2012/02/01/introduction-to-systems-thinking/) , lays out the following Principles in its resource [*Introduction to Systems Thinking*](https://sig.app.box.com/s/4558741d8770855ee343/4/279329139/6407256494/1) :

* Systems are a way of thinking about the world
* Systems behave as a whole
* Systems understanding is observer or perspective dependent
* A systems approach requires multiple perspectives
* Where WE draw systems boundaries effects the system
* We need to be aware of what is going on inside the system but also outside
* Systems are ‘nested' - we should always think about the system we're looking at as being made up of smaller systems and being part of larger systems

An excellent opportunity to learn more about systems thinking in action is at this year's [Social Enterprise World Forum](http://www.socialenterpriseworldforum.org/), taking place in Calgary this October 2 - 4. Hear from systems thinkers like [Charmian Love](http://www.socialenterpriseworldforum.org/program-streams/social-innovation/) of Volans, [Ros Tennyson](http://www.socialenterpriseworldforum.org/program-streams/collaboration/) of Partnership Brokers, and [Vickie Cammack](http://www.socialenterpriseworldforum.org/program-streams/social-innovation/) of Tyze Networks. Each of these individuals is currently collaborating with many partners to shift systems in new directions

[*Click here to continue...*](http://tamarackcci.ca/files/tim_dramin_-_summer_2013_engage_article.pdf)

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**The Possibilities of Neighbour Power [By: Sylvia Cheuy]**

This past month, Tamarack's [Seeking Community](http://seekingcommunity.ca/) Learning Community hosted ***Neighbours 2013: Policies and Programs.*** This unique gathering brought together 140 dynamic individuals to more deeply explore the idea of our neighbourhoods as assets and then consider two questions:

1. How do we organize to realize our neighbourhoods as assets?
2. What are the outcomes and benefits of doing this?

A comprehensive synthesis of highlights from each of the event's three days is now available and links to the presentations shared at [*Neighbours 2013*](http://seekingcommunity.ca/library-topics/neighbours-2013) can be found on Tamarack's Seeking Community Learning Community website at [www.seekingcommunity.ca](http://www.seekingcommunity.ca/).

One of the many important insights emerging from this gathering was a clarification about the complementary but distinct roles of citizens and service organizations. Organizations provide important services; but neighbours offer care to one another. Neither is a substitute for the other and both are needed to build strong neighbourhoods. A primary question both citizen and organizations must now confront together is: **How do we create space for citizens and organizations to collaborate in developing responses to complex social issues?**

Dialogues, presentations and hosted ABCD Walk-abouts profiling an array of neighbourhood revitalization initiatives gave participants inspiration and opportunities to experience what is possible through the harnessing of neighbourhood power.

The importance of belonging, and the essential role that hosting and dialogue play in tending to human's innate need to belong was highlighted as an essential foundation for nurturing the collaborations necessary to mobilize neighbourhoods effectively. To illustrate this, Milton Friesen shared findings from a recent U.S. study that concluded that social isolation can be as significant a factor as smoking and heart disease in its link to a person's early mortality.

Al Etmanski shared conclusions that he has reached in his own work of translating belonging from a sentiment into action:

* It's okay to be uncertain and in ambiguity;
* it's helpful to anchor in our own wholeness and humility and let go of hubris; and,
* We tend to move to "how" more quickly than we should...because we want to be useful.
* Come to a deeper understanding of what gives life to you, and then anchor your work within that...

His advice to those of us engaged in the work of neighbourhoods, reminding us to anchor ourselves in our own passions and our relationships. He then illustrated this message with a quote from Thomas Moore which says,**"Slight shifts in imagination have more impact on living than major efforts of change."**

The other element that made this an exceptional learning experience were the moments of celebration and fun that were co-created by the sharing of participants' gifts. These were woven throughout the gathering and included: a Grand Porch Party featuring East Coast music; a Learning Community Square Dance; wonderful music by Michael Jones to open each day; and, an opportunity to celebrate the life's work of John McKnight as he received a honourary doctorate from the University of Waterloo. Together these celebrations served as powerful reminders that having fun and celebrating are essential ingredients in the work of building community and mobilizing neighbours.

**Related Links:**

* Download a [PDF of the highlights](http://seekingcommunity.ca/files/neighbours_2013_-_complete_event_highlight_summary.pdf) generated at ***Neighbours 2013: Policies and Programs***
* Visit the [Neighbours 2013](http://seekingcommunity.ca/library-topics/neighbours-2013) section of [www.seekingcommunity.ca](http://www.seekingcommunity.ca/) to access event resources
* Read [*Persistence, Underwritten by Hope*](http://seekingcommunity.ca/blogs/milton-friesen/persistence-underwritten-hope) Milton Friesen's reflection of the ***Neighbours*** event
* John McKnight receives an [Honourary Doctorate](https://uwaterloo.ca/stories/waterloo-awards-nine-honorary-degrees-convocation) from the University of Waterloo

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**Do you have a resource, event or information you would like to share?**

**Send it to** [cindylisecchn@shaw.ca](mailto:cindylisecchn@shaw.ca) **and it will be included in the weekly**

**Check UP Newsletter.**