

## Youth as Facilitative Leaders

In the last four months, YFL has trained more than 80 youth from a variety of different backgrounds and organizations. This is a result of two fee-for-service agreements and our first ever free public course offerings for each of our three core courses, Tools for Teamwork, Group Facilitation and Facilitated Planning.

## The Courage to Lead

Two Study Groups are being held this Fall—one at University Health Network and one at ICA. A committee is being struck to do a rewrite of the book. It will be headed by Jeanette Stanfield.

## Worldviews Research Project

The research committee is in the process of putting together a series on worldviews for participants to explore the various questions they have and see how the exploration informs our worldview. Questions are the lubricant for consciousness change.

## An update on Listen to the Drumming:

The Toronto Marathon fundraising event was a huge success! The Listen to the Drumming Team had over 70 runners running and raising funds for youth HIV/AIDS prevention programs in 5 African ICAs including: Nigeria, Kenya, Tanzania, South Africa, and Zimbabwe. Our fundraising goal was \$40,000. We do not have a tally as of yet, but we believe we will be very close!

## Upcoming:

ICA Canada is hosting an incredible benefit night on November 13 featuring Stephanie Nolen as our keynote speaker as well as presentations by Philip Berger, Canadian Physician focused on HIV/AIDS, and Anurita Bains, former assistant to Stephen Lewis. To purchase tickets please go to: [www.icacan.ca](http://www.icacan.ca). Proceeds from this evening will go toward women's programs throughout Africa.

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Telephone 416-691-2316 • Fax 416-691-2491

Published by The Canadian Institute of Cultural Affairs

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#### Statement of Purpose for Edges

*Edges* highlights new cultural patterns and fresh approaches to participation and social change.

The opinions in *Edges* articles do not necessarily represent the policies or views of ICA Canada.

Printed in Canada

Date of Publication: October 2007

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# EDGES

N E W P L A N E T A R Y P A T T E R N S



**Collaborating**

**to make**

**a**

**difference**

# Holistic Strategic Planning

## Integrating Strategic and Operational Plans in the Public Sector

THOMAS PLANT

### **Introduction: The Challenge of Integrated Planning**

Many people see the process of strategic planning as a complex and time consuming exercise. The intent of course, is to develop a strategic plan document which represents an organization's vision for the future. But sometimes this plan fails to become a "living" document. After being composed with great effort, it may have little impact on the daily operational decision making process. So it is important when engaging in a strategic planning exercise to consider how to align the organization's strategic vision with the front line operations of the organization, so that the vision guides decision making at all levels of the organization.

This article will focus on the strategic and the operational components in the strategic planning process. It suggests that a successful approach will view these two components as an integrated whole system through a holistic strategic framework. Additionally, the article will focus on strategic planning in the public sector, reviewing the gaps which can develop in applying strategic and operational planning. It discusses ways to

overcome those gaps in order to ensure a successful strategic planning process.

### **Background: The Pressure for Better Results**

The current environment in which the public sector operates is defined by heightened fiscal caution and increased scrutiny of public organizations. These organizations are under growing pressure to become more responsive to the needs of their constituency. One way to respond to these challenges is to develop a strategic plan which outlines the organization's vision and strategic priorities. And to successfully implement this, an operational planning mechanism needs to align the service delivery departments with the organization's strategic vision. In this way a strategic direction can be set for the organization which can be used to guide daily management decisions, focus performance, and prioritize resource allocation.

The challenge here is to develop a system which allows the organization to meet its long-range challenges, and this requires a planning system that is integrated into the senior management decision making process. The first step is to create a strategic plan document which

outlines the broad vision, key goals and strategic initiatives. The next step is to operationalize this plan, by aligning it with the goals of all operational teams that are delivering the service to the public. Implementing both of these components of the strategic plan process creates a holistic framework.

### **Components of a Holistic Strategic Planning Model**

The ICA facilitated planning model sets out a number of steps which an organization can take to develop a comprehensive strategic plan. They include establishing a practical vision, identifying underlying obstacles, and then setting strategic directions with action plans. The result is a plan which encompasses a vision, identifies obstacles in achieving the vision, sets priority directions to focus the organization on achieving the vision, and lays out action plans to implement the strategies. Then an operational planning model provides a template to apply this process within the organization's more specialized operational teams, projects, or departments. This process involves the following stages of project development: analysis of opportunities, identifying aims, exploring options, selecting the

best options, planning in detail, evaluating plans, then implementing and bringing the plan to closure.

When the facilitated and the operational planning models are integrated together in a common approach, a holistic strategic planning model is created. A holistic system is based on the assumption that all of the system elements are interrelated and interdependent. As can be seen in Figure 1 (The Holistic Strategic Planning Model), the model consists of four key elements as follows:

### Holistic Strategic Planning Model

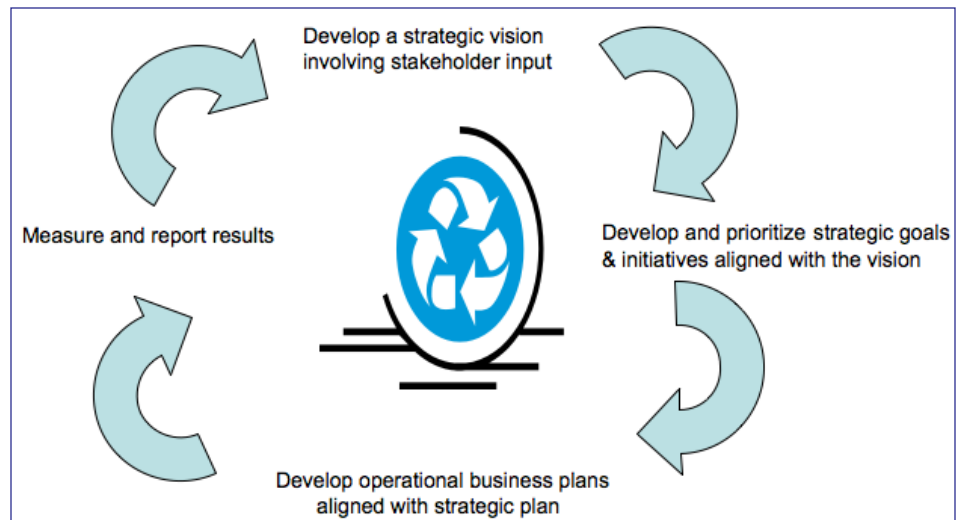
#### *Facilitated Strategic Planning:*

- 1) Developing a strategic vision involving stakeholder input
  - 2) Aligning and prioritizing strategic goals and initiatives with the vision
- Operations Level Planning:*
- 3) Developing operational business plans which align with the strategic plan
  - 4) Measuring and reporting the results

The first two elements are part of the facilitated planning approach. And the first step in the development of a holistic model is to develop a strategic vision involving all relevant stakeholders in the process, in order to achieve buy-in. Once a strategic vision has been developed, there needs to be alignment between this vision and the strategic goals and initiatives which were established to implement the vision.

The last two elements of the holistic model are part of the operational planning approach. The main component is the development of an operational business plan which is essentially an action planning document. This highlights the key business objectives for the organization's operations, and the key strategic goals which all levels of the organization are linked with. Further, the last major element is the establishment of a performance measurement system, in order to be able to evaluate success in achieving strategic goals and furthering the organizations' vision.

Overall, the creation of a holistic strategic planning system creates a framework which supports the review of the strategic priorities, analysis of results, and taking corrective actions. The key components are the following:



**FIGURE 1: HOLISTIC STRATEGIC PLANNING MODEL**

a) Creating accountability for results through timely review and discussion with senior management that specifically focuses on the measures, variances to plan, analysis of problems and plans for corrective action

b) Operational business plans, or some other mechanism that is used to plan specific actions to realise the strategy

c) Tight alignment between the strategic plan, operational business plan, and performance measures

### Gaps Between Strategic and Operational Planning

Implementing the holistic strategic planning model is of course easier said than done. The integration between strategic and operational planning is often tenuous if a strong connection has not been developed linking the two approaches. Also there are many organizational dynamics which can over time create growing gaps between the strategic and operational planning.

One gap that can develop is a lack of distinction between strategic and operational initiatives. This can easily develop when brainstorming potential initiatives during the visioning stage. If there has not been any criteria established to distinguish major strategies from operations-level initiatives, the result can be a confusing mixture of broad directions and specific tasks. So it is important to utilize criteria in defining a strategic initiative such as the following:

- Major cost implications, both short and long term

- Significant community wide impact
- Strong intergovernmental or inter-departmental impact
- Long term implementation time horizon (2+ years)

Another gap which can develop is between formulating strategy and executing it. It is not enough for senior management to know where the organization is headed; it is also important to put strategy into action and learn from experience. However, this inevitably involves taking a risk. It involves incorporating the knowledge and experience of staff at all levels of the organization, and generating these into tangible, actionable strategic goals. This can be accomplished by involving operational staff in the development of an operational business plan. It is also essential to ensure there is a process in place for accountability in accomplishing strategic priorities, and for tracking or measuring progress.

A third gap which can develop is a lack of prioritization in establishing strategic initiatives or action plans. If the strategic plan contains a long list of initiatives which need to be done, but no clear priority has been set between them, then operational decision makers inevitably initiate work on all of the initiatives, without understanding what is most important to senior management. The end result is often some work done on all the initiatives, without completing any. Thus, in establishing the strategic plan and setting operational action plans, assigning priority to various strategic initiatives is paramount. An example of criteria which can be used to prioritize is:

- Level of impact on the organization or community
- Interdependencies (timing with other strategic initiatives)
- Municipal risk exposure (legal, political or financial)
- Corporate-wide implications

Finally, strategy that isn't measurable will not provide an indicator of success. Successful organizations also establish a review mechanism to allow senior decision makers to be updated on progress in implementing the strategic vision. Often this step is missed in the strategic process, since the expectation is that once the plan is created it will automatically be implemented. Often there is little thought given to follow up. Establishing key operational performance measurements can assist in this by providing timely information on progress in achieving key strategic objectives and goals. Then senior management will have a tracking tool for comparing performance year to year.

### Conclusion

Implementing a holistic strategic planning process helps ensure that public organizations are able to establish a clear strategic vision for all stakeholders, and deliver value-added results to their constituents. Through the alignment of the organization's strategic vision and the delivery of services at the operational level, a process is established to create a "living" strategic plan to guide the whole organization. The end result will be greater success in providing service to the citizens and actualizing the strategic goals of the organization. ♦



Thomas Plant MBA, MPA is the Senior Manager of Strategic Planning with the City of Vaughan. He has worked in the municipal government strategic planning field over the past ten years and is currently writing a book entitled Strategic Planning for Municipalities: A Users Guide which will be published by Municipal World in fall 2007. To reach Thomas, contact him at [thomas.plant@vaughan.ca](mailto:thomas.plant@vaughan.ca)

## Radical Collaboration

DEBBIE ACKLEY

When I think of the words "We value the collaborative approach as a means to making a difference", I usually think of a group of people working together. I picture them working collaboratively... stepping inside and growing the "participation paradigm" as ICA has been known to call it. My own training in organization development has given me ways of knowing, seeing and valuing this collective approach to work and life.

But in 2004, my work and my world as I had come to know it, ended. I had reached the limits of my understanding of work and life, as is often the case in mid-life. And then this "ending" was compounded by an "intruding event" which brought me face to face with evil and violence. Our then eighteen year old son, Scott, was brutally assaulted by somewhere between twelve to fifteen guys on a front lawn in Rosedale, Toronto, on a Sunday evening around ten o'clock.

*Born from Silence* is the name of the book of poetry (2007) that I wrote to tell the story of the assault, the judicial process that failed everyone, and the healing that came through uncommon ways. The book is written from the perspective of the mother, through the heart of one who has been assessing and working with organizational systems for nearly thirty years. It is written in the language of poetry to reach up and burst the limits of all institutional language (legal, psychological, medical) — languages which distance, abstract and conceptualize — to search for a more holistic and ecological voice; a language of peace.

*Born from Silence* is a metaphor that stresses the collaboration with Silence... with the dark, the dark night of the soul, which is often thought of as a very lonely place, torn from the edges of comfort and that which is known. And yet the paradox is, silence is still a collaboration... a collaboration that took me to the deepest roots of my own fears, my own capacity for evil and injustice, my own deepest emptiness... so that I could interrupt the cycle of projecting it out and on to others, in the name of heroism, and find a creative way to move beyond what Walter Wink calls the "myth of redemptive violence."

Here are two poems from *Born from Silence*.

### The Dance of Becoming

To choose life  
to choose peace  
when all around me  
is a death wish  
a world gone supernova  
spiraling into a vast black hole  
before it dies into that void  
sparks of wisdom fly toward freedom.  
I long to catch a flying fire feather  
but the firebird will not be caught  
and anyway  
my body will not move  
not even to reach for your flame.  
Tending the broken boys and men  
First you, dear boy  
mending the bruises, cuts  
and bleeding brain  
And then the fear  
the bone-pulverizing affliction  
You cannot find your old self  
in your body or your life  
so you flail about  
becoming new  
on the pyre of an old self.  
And then you, the father,  
whose broken heart  
now beats in chaotic staccatos  
steals your breath  
and bends your body low  
How many nights I prod  
your breathless sleep  
into beats of life once more.  
My body is now spent  
from the vigils at the  
precipice of life and death  
one more trip to the hospital  
can I summon the strength?  
For one whole summer  
I sit  
I rock  
and I rock  
this body back to life  
the words come slowly  
acid drips on paper  
at first  
until I can calm the edges of my rage  
breathe and rock  
it is all I can do at first  
Breathing and rocking  
turns circular  
and a sacred dance  
impels my body to  
move first forward  
and then back  
like a dancing cross stitch

whole body, whole heart.  
 and the music slides into  
 cells that have been wrung out  
     wrung dry  
 the music fills the black hole  
     like Ruah filling  
     a lifeless kite  
     inspiring it  
 to dance on the winds of Gaia.  
 one hand holds me on the left  
 as my hand supports another on my right  
     and we dance  
     and we breathe  
     as one  
 and slowly in the dance of the round  
     I dance myself back to  
     Wholeness.  
 what good is a dance when  
     the politics of this story  
     begs resistance  
     and clear eyed naming?  
 I have barely started to breathe and dance  
     again  
     choosing life I learned  
     from the courageous ones  
     is an act of resistance.  
 Edith, Etty and Simone  
 at the edge of unspeakable  
     horror and terror  
     the holocaustum...  
     they chose life  
     even as they died  
 the victors claimed exterminated vermin  
     but they live on  
     and teach me how to  
     choose life  
     And so I dance  
 with their dangerous memory inflaming  
     my steps  
     an ethical power  
     born from memory  
     not as a thought  
     but a still point  
     in the dance itself  
     and my body begins  
     to remember life  
 in the sacred spiral of the dance  
     as we breathe together  
     in the beauty of the round  
 I take back the power of the circle.

### Dancing Into Justice

I stepped into the circle  
     We were only three  
 but the circle spun out from us and  
 I could feel the magic and the mystery  
     of the unseen weave.  
 The music sounded  
 and an ancient YES  
     rose up and was  
     breathed out  
 as a deep prayer of  
     Thanksgiving.  
     I was home  
 in this unruly garden  
     grass growing high  
     blades of emerald  
     combed by my toes.  
     I took one hand  
 my right hand supporting one  
     and my left hand  
     supported by another.  
     The music filled  
     each living cell until  
     my cells and the music  
 became One Shimmering Dance...  
     one dancing spiral  
     connected and free.  
     Barnyard kittens  
     danced and watched  
 The birds did too from above  
 All was right with the world  
     for this moment.  
 And the dance became  
     the midwife  
     in that wild and stormy  
     birth.  
 The words that had been  
     silenced, stuffed down  
     and buried  
     began to loosen  
     to dance into form  
     Until one day  
 the words formed and a voice was born.  
 A voice no longer rooted in anger and rage  
     A voice that had  
     found the spaciousness  
 the freedom born from the dance  
     A voice of justice  
     A voice to uphold  
     the fidelity to the  
 demand of right relationship  
     A voice that could say  
     NO  
     and  
     Enough is Enough  
 And finally be heard. ❖

### Debbie Ackley Writer and Consultant

Debbie Ackley is a change management/organizational learning facilitator and consultant with over twenty-seven years of management, change management (cultural orientation), and leadership development experience in the private and public sectors. She founded DAPA Consulting in 1989; delivering facilitation, consulting and coaching services. She is co-author of the book, *Towards the Learning Organization: A Guide*.

Debbie is co-founder of the non-profit learning organization, The Center for Emerging Leadership, whose flagship program is “Women in Leadership: A Learning Community Exploring the Path of Wisdom”. She co-led and edited the leadership anthology book, *My Story Listens to Your Story: An Anthology of Women’s Leadership Images and Stories*.

Debbie has taught change management in the International MBA, and leadership development in the Executive Development programs at the Schulich School of Business, York University. She has served as academic advisor to interdisciplinary students from the University of Toronto and Royal Roads University.

She has a B.Sc. from the University of Toronto and a Masters of Science in Organizational Development from Pepperdine University, Malibu, California. Debbie was educated in Canada, the US and Europe, and brings a strong cultural lens to all her work.

Just back from a sabbatical, Debbie brings a renewed sense of commitment to organizations and communities who are wholeheartedly searching to “find the story as the basis of wise of action”, and to re-mythologize cultures towards peace, justice, and sustainability.

She has just published her first book of poetry, *Born from Silence*, in May 2007.

Debbie is a recent semi-finalist in a poetry contest sponsored by Concordia University, Montreal, Canada, and *Walrus Magazine*. Her prize was a partial scholarship to study poetry in St. Petersburg, Russia in July, 2007.



# Collaboration

*Nobody ever came up with a great idea all by themselves.* —Thomas Edison, 1847-1931

M. MYATT

*For our country to succeed requires the combined efforts of all of us, in all walks of life. By working together we can build the country of our dreams. (Then) together let us work with other nations for peace and happiness across our continent and our globe.*

—Nelson Mandela

This powerful challenge of Mandela's is a call to a certain group of people to unity of action or collaboration, so as to achieve a greater good for themselves, and ultimately for those beyond their ken.

Perhaps most of us are not considering the unity of a whole country as our immediate goal. But for any worthwhile concern, exploring the call to collaboration is a popular exercise these days!

Collaboration may be defined as the interdependence of all parties' gifts and talents for the achievement of a mutually agreed upon goal. It has many characteristics, such as:

- a common mission
- a desire to work together toward this mission, and
- a delineation of the values, gifts and commitment of all parties.

Some authors, for example Loughlan Sofield and Carrol Juliano, describe the nature of collaboration as relational, with a danger that group relations may erupt into anger and conflict. But the opposite result is probably more common: many friendships are forged, and the few difficult situations are often overcome through the commitment of the parties to a stated goal.

I would like to offer two examples of collaboration which may illustrate some of the above comments and relate to ICA Canada's emphasis on the "value of the collaborative approach as a means to making a difference".

In the Catholic Archdiocese of Toronto there are many religious congregations of women and men. Historically,

these groups have, for the most part, carried out their ministries independent of one another. Today, due to many factors, new and different types of ministries are needed. So, one congregation posed a question to the others: "Would you be willing to have a conversation about a shared or joint ministry?"

Because of a positive response from everyone, a meeting was held of the leaders of these congregations. So the concept of a Joint Apostolic Ministry was born—affectionately known as "jam". It took approximately one year to determine the overall focus of the ministry: a ministry to and with new immigrants living in Toronto. A small group of dedicated women and men religious spent many months of the second year working out the practical issues of this collaborative venture:

- a board of directors was formed, which organized corporate status in order to ensure visibility of the ministry
- each congregational member determined their commitment: financial, personnel, and/or prayer,
- an executive director was hired—who is a male religious,
- a pilot project was established, to be reviewed for its sustainability after 2 years
- a charitable number has been received so as to provide receipts for donations;
- personnel from the member congregations were recruited—to date 35 companions for new families to Canada, and 45 prayer partners for individuals.

"Jam" has just completed its first year of this ministry, and at the year-end party over 100 people attended. Many new immigrant families came, some in their native attire, as well as the women and men companions and prayer partners.

Only through this collaborative approach could this outcome be achieved,

i.e. no one religious congregation could make such a difference in the lives of the participants.

The next example is a collaboration of the women religious of Toronto. It began in 1999 with a "working group" which recommended a programme to build affordable housing to celebrate the Jubilee Year of 2000. Because their concept was different than other affordable housing projects (ownership instead of rental housing) the City Council determined this would be a pilot project.

Since the inception of this endeavour, some 41 women religious congregations have partnered with Habitat for Humanity, and a developer well known for innovative approaches to providing affordable housing. So far the accomplishments of this collaboration include:

- forming a board of directors
- obtaining a corporate status and charitable number
- gathering a wonderful group of volunteers, including a very well known architect and a group of dedicated lay professionals, who have piloted this project through City Hall.

The group may begin construction in the fall of 2007—but you really don't want to read about the difficulties the Board has endured to reach this point! Suffice it to say, this collaborative approach has provided those of us on the Board with extended experience at various committees of the City Council and several appearances before Council itself. However, when the 60 houses are built, a huge difference will occur in the lives of the families who will own their homes.

My personal preference for new ventures is this collaborative approach. The setbacks, the celebrations, the newly formed relationships plus the wonderful ideas that have been generated are incentive enough to constantly renew our commitment to the projects at hand. ❖

# Collaboration

WAYNE NELSON

Values are guides we use in making intentional choices. They become reference points to use in seeking direction. In this issue, we explore collaboration, one of ICA's core values.

When we say we value collaboration, we often think first of “collaborative initiatives”; groups working together on a specific project. We are also learning that any group can adopt a “collaborative approach” in their discussion and work.

Leaping into the 21st Century We live in a complex, networked, relational world. We are, as a society, breaking through the bonds of 20th century “go it alone” individualism. We are learning to find what we have in common and we are learning to form relationships that bring us together and make us larger. Some companies, like Nike, are emerging from this sea of change as networks operating under a common brand identity. The global dialogue over climate change says we are seeing our world in new ways.

Working collaboratively turns traditional hierarchical models upside down by seeking participation, encouraging consensus and generating commitment. Collaboration may be one of the key building blocks toward a truly new form of economic, political and social interaction and one of the major ways for us to live creatively in the complexity we face.

## Toward a Common Purpose

Collaboration is about working together toward a common purpose. It involves thinking, organizing and acting together. Cooperation suggests doing things in a harmonious way. Partnership suggests a deeper, longer term, more formal relationship.

We've experienced requests to collaborate, only to find that it meant buying software or finding clients for someone. Collaboration may involve investment of those involved, but authentic collaboration is not a matter of sales.

ICA Canada's collaboration with Il Ngwesi, Kenya began with a common desire to find ways to address the HIV/AIDS pandemic at the community level. Everyone involved is clear that this means working intensively in the community and finding ways to replicate the project in other communities.

## Making it Work

Successful collaborations are made up of groups that are viable on their own. People come together because they share clear common interests. It is the common task that truly binds collaborative groups together.

Collaborative initiatives use methods and approaches that promote healthy interaction and transparent, participatory decision-making processes. Successful collaborative ventures have plans for sustaining membership, resources and activity. They have policies, structures and systems that allow the venture to function effectively; as well as implementation, monitoring, accountability and evaluation plans to ensure effective action and learning from experience. Collaborative leadership facilitates team building, and weaves the strengths of the members together.

## The Impact of Collaboration

Collaboration brings more people to the table. Multiple perspectives generate a greater variety of ideas and enable the flow of creative energy toward innovative solutions. Successful collaboration leads to increased motivation and a commitment to increased productivity and tangible results.

As we strengthen our social networks; respect, trust, connections and practical results generate social capital. Working together reduces social distance among people and builds the common good. This is a substantial re-patterning of society and collaborators act as social pioneers; opening the way for new modalities of social interaction.

## ICA as a Collaborative Organization

ICA needs to be thinking of the “Big ICA”—the larger network in Canada and the global “movement of those who care” for the future of the planet. The global ICA network has an amazingly diverse texture of social entrepreneurs and organizations active in progressive social change. We need ways to weave this network together to be the “force of nature” we have always wanted to become.

ICA needs to make connections that are substantial and can deliver, like the relationship with the Toronto Marathon. We also need relationships that build long-term sustainability; like the relationship with ICA Associates whose royalties for use of

## BOARD MEMBER PROFILE

### Rhonda Mauricette

Five years ago Rhonda Mauricette first connected with ICA the same way many of its current volunteers do, through the Group Facilitation Workshop. At the time, she was in transition to a new role as Education and Training Specialist to Organizational Development Consultant at the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH) in Toronto, a role she still has today. Rhonda applies her MA in health promotion and ICA tools to this task, providing training in conflict management, honoring diversity, workplace health promotion, team effectiveness, personal coaching and leadership development to staff at all levels in her organization. She has developed leadership training programmes for managers and informal or emergent leaders, and provides human rights training and consultation to CAMH and other organizations.

Progressively over the years, Rhonda wanted to explore the application of her facilitation skills and experience in organizational development to the field of social justice. The ICA Canada and the Youth as Facilitative Leaders program seemed the perfect vehicle with which to begin this journey. Rhonda joined the ICA Canada Board in April 2007 and has assumed responsibility to oversee the operations of the Youth as Facilitative Leaders programme. ❖

intellectual property provide core funding. A key challenge for ICA is creating a deeper framework of collaboration and support to intensify the “on the ground” impact.

As ICA moves forward, we need to continue our strategic thinking. What trends are emerging? How do we address the “moral issues of our time?” What programmatic activity does ICA need to engage in to make the kind of impact that fuels our dreams? Who do we need as collaborators?

As we work together, we give shape and meaning to the emerging world. We are at the edge of a new social form that will be a part of the “new social vehicle” that carries the world into coming centuries. ❖

*Wayne Nelson is a senior consultant with ICA Associates Inc. He has worked with organizations and communities around the world to plan and implement projects. He is currently working on a book focused on facilitative leadership in strategy implementation.*