

Connecting Self-Employed Women for Success Project

Meeting Notes

February 1, 2016 – 12:00 pm - 2:00 pm
CRC Office - 5520 Trail Ave

In Attendance: Patrick Bocking, SD46
Crystal Cox, Open Door Group
Sue Elliot, CRC Board
Pat Hunt, CRC Board Co-Chair
Christabelle Kux-Kardos, CRC Program Manager
Marilyn Magas, M. Magas & Associates
Sandy McBride, CRC Director and Project Management team
Donna McMahon, CSEWS Project Consultant
Cheryl McNicol, Project Manager
Lori Pratt, Voice on the Coast
Raphael Shay, SCRD
Brian Smith, Community Futures
Lydia Watson, Capilano University

Absent: Sharon Anderchek, SCCU
Kim Banks, KB MicroBiz
Margaret Hodgins, Sechelt Library
Darnelda Siegers, District of Sechelt, Mortgage Alliance - Enrich Mortgage Group Limited
Tracey Therrien, Gibsons Library
Nancy Tiffin, SC Community Services Society

1. Brief Introductions were made.
2. Review Project direction and timelines

Cheryl reviewed previous project activities since March 2015.

April to July	Project start-up activities, Cheryl hired
July-Oct	Advisory team was recruited, project manager connected with community partners, first advisory team meeting - August 23, 2015; an introduction to GBA+ analysis was held
Oct-Dec	Inventory of existing services for self employed women, second advisory team meeting - November 18, 2015
Dec-Feb	Needs Assessment and project activities documents prepared

March 1 All project reports, including financial reports and timelines, are due to Status of Women Canada.
 Mar - Oct 2017 Implementation of project activities
 Dec. 31, 2017 Final reporting due to SWC.

3. Feedback on Needs Assessment Report

Donna did a brief introduction to the preparation of the Needs Assessment Report. The group was asked for any additions or corrections.

4. Overview of Project Activity Parameters

Cheryl outlined what the project can and cannot do, based on the parameters outlined in the original RFP from Status of Women Canada. In general, we coordinate activities, but we do not perform them ourselves, e.g. we do not train women or hold events such as job fairs. Other organizations in the community are already funded to do those activities. We DO look for initiatives that will continue to have an impact after SWC funding concludes and that align with our partner's strategies and activities.

Cheryl is in regular touch with our project manager at SWC to make sure we are sticking to our mandate.

5. Feedback on Key Project Activities Report

Cheryl listed the seven main areas of activities (see Activities Report) and went through them one by one.

i. Promote Gender Based Analysis as a planning tool and an ongoing HR practice.

Pat noted that this is the one area where we CAN provide training. We intend to hire somebody to teach some workshops.

Crystal: Open Door Group has workshop rooms in Sechelt and Gibsons available free of charge for any activities related to employment

Raphael said that concrete examples are helpful, e.g. the federal GBA+ online training included an example of how sports programs affect girls versus boys. This type of analysis can be helpful to the SCRD in delivering recreation programs. The SCRD's strategic plan includes supporting professional development for staff and there are some new senior staff, so the timing could be right for training.

Patrick: The school district already employs this type of analysis. For instance, they always consider how their programs and activities will impact aboriginal children and children in care. They compile a lot of data about how children perform, e.g. children from the above groups or girls vs boys in reading,

enrollment in particular high school such as sciences, and graduation rates. They have data available.

- ii. Make resources and information about business more accessible to women.

Crystal: Open Door Group sends some clients to Vancouver for Dress for Success. Perhaps it could be hosted here. Also there is some funding for eligible clients to purchase interview clothing, office attire or work boots.

Lori asked if we have a mentorship database. (No.) She noted that it's very hard for younger people moving to the coast who are trying to connect.

Sue: what about partnering up with existing activities such as Take Child to Work and Job Shadowing?

- iii. Encourage women and girls to explore non-traditional career choices and self employment.

Patrick: This is a big priority for SC46. We find that by the time girls reach grade 7 and 8 they have already decided that there's a lot of jobs they can't do because they're girls. We'd like to bring in female leaders and women in non-traditional occupations as speakers. Young people need models.

Crystal - The Industry Trades Authority encourages people to go into trades (both men and women). Shannon Hanson from that program comes to the coast once a month. Crystal will send contact info to Cheryl.

Lydia: Cap U just had a Dean's Advisory Committee meeting and discussed the fact that most of our students are women. We have three career programs in predominantly female fields. And the Business Administrator program enrollment is 3/4 female.

- iv. Promote women in Leadership.

A number of women have applied to be on the new Regional Economic Development (RED) board, and CSEWS presented to the SCRDC committee in December about importance of gender diversity. Within next month the new board will be in place, and we will approach them about partnerships. It's important to make women more aware of opportunities and find champions, who can contribute via knowledge philanthropy.

Brian noted that there has been gender parity on the Community Futures board for the last two years.

Lori: Can we look at politics? There are only 3 women elected in local government on the coast. (Yes.)

Raph asked if there are ways to support women's involvement in boards and organizations, e.g. by assisting with transportation or child care. Are there examples of policies that boards can put in place?

Crystal noted that Open Door Group does have some childcare and transportation support for qualified individuals taking their self employment programs. In particular, the single parent employment project is a new initiative which offers eligible single parents 12 months of skills training, and a top up on child care support for up to two years.

- v. Increase awareness of the contribution of women's businesses to the community.

Many younger people don't read the local newspapers, so our message will have to go out via multiple channels, including social media. Partners were asked to share our information in their own organizations.

Lori noted that it's important to reach people at gathering places on the Sunshine Coast, and posters and pamphlets. Quite a few younger people are dropping social media. Patrick said that the school district uses everything.

Brian: Some data would be helpful, e.g. how many jobs are created by women owned business, and how much a multiplier effect does that have in the community?

Raph: The SCRD would like to promote businesses that are doing good work in the community. Is it feasible to create a narrative with local papers, e.g. do profiles?

Donna: It would be helpful if the SCRD provided better information for people running home-based businesses as most people don't understand zoning and licensing requirements, and may think they are more onerous than they really are.

- vi. Facilitate education and networking on key topics.

Brian: Community Futures is definitely interested in partnering in this area. One systemic change they've made is in the client data they gather as part of intake for loan clients. They ask them how much of a positive impact they're having on their community and employees, and are using the answers to those questions to guide loan rates and fees--in other words, rewarding positive community contributions.

Brian also noted that networking is the area of largest value he sees in this project. Studies show that the healthier people's social networks are, the healthier their economic well-being is. There is great value in social networking around business and self employment, and mentoring.

Sue suggested that the Seniors Planning table (also coordinated by CRC) might be one place to connect to mentors.

Marilyn commented that Innovation Island has been holding very good workshops in Sechelt, but attendance is not high because the word is simply not getting out well enough. Do we have a communication plan?

- vii. Establish means to measure progress of women in future.

VOICE is currently doing a survey of people under 45 asking about family income and employment. They will send us a copy. The possibility of tracking a sample group was discussed, though this would be anecdotal data.

Crystal: Open Door Group holds workshops every month, and everyone is surveyed when they complete them. Perhaps they could add in something about gender.

- 6. Cheryl briefly outlined the projects next steps: revisions to Needs Assessment, Project Activity, and Resource Inventory Report based on feedback from Advisory Team; completion of required Status of Women reports by March 1; Cheryl to connect with potential partners over the next few weeks to discuss project activity details.
- 7. Meeting dates for 2016 - May 9, 2016, August 22, 2016 (12 - 2 pm with lunch provided)

WRITTEN COMMENTS SENT VIA EMAIL

KIM BANKS

Okay, I've reviewed the docs and concur... Donna's report was very compelling and shed a candid light on the issues we are facing here on the coast. Great job!!

Here are my 3 choices from the Key Project Activities and my reasons are listed

2.d. Work with partners organizations to develop key hubs for networking, business partnerships and mentoring.

I think our new direction with SEWN could help with being one of the "hubs" for this info. We can easily compile the info into a resource/directory on our site and even allow for people to submit info to be added via a webform on that page. This is the "resources" page we discussed in our meeting today :)

4.c. Find champions—women with business and self-employment experience who can lead and mentor.

I would totally be interested in being a part of this for 2 reasons... (1) I am seeking to be a leader/mentor for other "startup" business women... and (2) I want to find one for my own growth as I develop/refine my own leadership skills and evolve my business.

6. Business Tune-Up: refining your business model for profitability.

I think this is so important - and Donna brings attention to this - there is not enough education here to show women the finance/profitability piece... especially women who are "in service" to others and in the helping/healing industries. They struggle with charging for what they do, understanding how to be profitable, scalable etc. and a lot of the advice is gender biased and discounts the "soft skills" that women bring into their businesses - it's not always about money for them. It's a big part of what I have been focussing on in my own offerings - helping these women go from a "great idea"/hobby to being more profitable/sustainable in a business that supports all their needs not just the \$\$ so I know from experience that it's something they struggle with.

COMMUNITY FUTURES

Feedback RE: 7 "key project activities" from the Connecting Self-Employed Women For Success project

1. Promote Gender Based Analysis (GBA) as planning and HR practice

- There is an online GBA free online training program designed for federal civil servants. This training program could be offered through the CF HUB, or another coastal agency, to interested parties.

2. Making resources and information about biz accessible to women

- CF staff agreed on how important this resource is, and how much it is needed. We are also interested in how such a resource could be made, and updated, in a non labour intensive & cost effective manner.

- If someone develops this package of information, CF could support distribution, and possibly collaborate with its development.
3. non traditional employment for women
 - Admittedly not non traditional, but consider starting a temp agency specifically for women to help address seasonal hiring needs, such as tax season.
 4. Promoting women in leadership
 - CF is happy to report that we have gender parity on our board of directors, and we have for the last two years.
 5. increasing the visibility of women/ this project in biz community
 - CF is available to publicize this project at our upcoming events, as well as via our website and facebook feed.
 - A suggestion to create an “excellence in women entrepreneurship” award to acknowledge the successful women entrepreneurs we already have.
 - Consider including education and outreach to young women in high school, since they make up our future business leaders.
 6. Education and networking
 - CF is available to do short presentations at events on business topics
 - CF doesn't have capacity to create and deliver course content. However, organizations like Womens Enterprise Centre may have skype-able programming content, which we could host. We have a work hub which has capacity to host weekend/evening virtual workshops on business topics.
 - Local women's entrepreneurship community could benefit from partnering with international microloan organizations by building common goals.
 - Consider building a mentoring program to connect Sunshine Coast women entrepreneurs with similar women in Vancouver. This could facilitate market penetration and export facilitation of products to the lower mainland, especially since your needs assessment highlight how many coastal woman are already doing limited work in the lower mainland.
 7. Establish means to measure progress of women in the future
 - CF collects the gender of our loan applications and we can share this data. We may be able to access other pools of data as well, once we know more about what type of data you need.

Re partnerships in area, we recommend you add the following:

Local Government

- shishalh Nation/ Squamish

Other business, Self Employment and Community Organizations,

- CF Community Work Hub

Community Resources

- Sunshine Coast Community Forest- does community projects (Glen Borderud)

Potential Private Partners

- This is the coast.ca

DARNELDA SIEGERS

Needs Assessment Draft

Section 1. Introduction

I don't know if this information is available but it would be helpful to know how many potential self-employed women are we talking about. Even an estimate would be helpful.

Major Employers – Sunshine Coast Regional District – number is only SCRD but, in other places in the report, SCRD seems to encompass the whole region so perhaps the FTEs should also reflect all three governments.

Section 2. The Issues

I didn't see any reference to the number of women surveyed for the Progress Plan. I do believe it was quite a substantial number. Given the small population here, this number would add weight to the issues and concerns. Perhaps this could be indicated under 2.1.

Grammar correction - 2.2.3 appear to be have the most flexibility

Key Activities Draft

I like the report.

I have some issue with 3. Encourage women and girls to explore non-traditional career choices and self-employment. What are some actions that could be taken around this that fit the mandate of this group? Is this rather something that we would partner with another group to provide? What are considered 'non-traditional' career choices?

With regards to #4a) as this group doesn't have the ability to put a woman on the Regional Economic Development board, what is an action that could be taken? Lobby or make the decision makers aware of the need for a female representative on the board? If so, this should be done soon as the board members will be chosen within the next month.

Could 4 read Promote women into leadership? Promote women IN leadership, to me, reads finding women who are already in leadership roles and promoting them to the public or other women

2d) refers to mentoring. Perhaps some of the verbiage from 4c) could be included there. Once the champions are found who can lead and/or mentor, what will happen with the list? How will this list be used?

4c) could be focussed more on the promotion of and support of new women into leadership roles – which is having women recognize and be aware of opportunities for leadership and then getting the encouragement and support to take the step into the role. Given this group cannot provide this under the mandate, perhaps partnering with another group to actively take on this role.

The rest of the document is very good and hits the mark. I look forward to what comes out of the meeting tomorrow.

TRACEY THERRIEN

Unfortunately, like many of us, my workload is such that I must prioritize projects, though I see a role for the Gibsons & District Public Library in this project (as outlined in the Key Activities



document) we cannot commit to taking a lead in the activities. If there are any specific ways that the advisory team or yourself can see the Library contributing (i.e. hosting workshops on resources) we would be happy to help out. I did note that the Library's free online training courses (successful completion of courses come with certificates) are not included in the Resources Inventory Report nor the Needs Assessment report. I believe many of these courses would be of value to female entrepreneurs (such as accounting, business correspondence, computer software, business finance, leadership, project management), the list is lengthy and the price is right - free!

If you or any of the advisory table members would like to learn more or would like to discuss specific ways the library can contribute to the project, I would be happy to meet with you.