URBAN RESTORATIVE JUSTICE: 
DEVELOPING A RESTORATIVE JUSTICE PROGRAM 
IN THE CITY OF VANCOUVER

by

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Abstract

This study examines how to implement an urban restorative justice-based community development program using as a case study Thunderbird Restorative Justice (TRJ), based in Vancouver BC. The term restorative community development is used to describe the program central to the study. Restorative community development is distinct from other community development approaches because of its values-based orientation and emphasis on social interconnection. It is distinct from conventional restorative justice practice because of its intentional focus on building and strengthening community, which is consistent with restorative justice theory, but sometimes missing in practice. The researcher identifies nine key steps to implementation and offers a conceptual model through which to better understand three stages of implementation: foundation, design, implementation. Main challenges to program implementation are discussed, such as making meaningful connections with locals, obtaining and maintaining organizational capacity, and securing sustainable funding. Key lessons about implementation that can be learned include striking a balance between planning and action, being prepared to address many time-consuming details, and planning ahead by creating an ongoing engagement strategy to stay connected with community, partners, and volunteers. New avenues are identified for future research and academic examination, including using more holistic approaches to community development, exploring further the overlap of restorative justice and social work, and investigating implications for restorative social work arising from the communitarian movement. The study identifies additional skill sets that should be included in social work education, including grant writing, visioning and strategic planning. The researcher advocates for better communication and collaboration within the broad social justice movement, beginning with increased interdisciplinary education opportunities.
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Dedication

I dedicate this thesis to the restorative justice advocates in Metro Vancouver who came before me (especially Charlotte, Roberta and Eileen), and those with whom I’ve had the privilege to work during the last five years. Your tireless work and dedication to the field is inspirational. Thank you for making this world a better place.
Chapter 1: Introduction

Walking into the community of Thunderbird, in the north-east end of Vancouver, BC, there is no particular sense of transition; there’s no feeling that you’ve entered a community distinct from the one you just came from. The streets and houses look the same, the atmosphere is similar. But all this changes as you move towards the heart of Thunderbird, the area enveloping Thunderbird Community Centre, Thunderbird Elementary, and Skeena Terrace, the lower mainland’s largest public housing development. As you turn onto Cassiar Street, there are people on the street, in the parking lot, outside of houses, and outside of the community centre. They are talking, laughing, or arguing; they are engaging. Whereas the single-family houses you passed on your way into the community were neatly ornamented and lawns were tidy but bare, Skeena Terrace patios and lawns are furnished, populated, and

Illustration 1.1: City of Vancouver.
The highlighted area in the north-eastern corner of the city is the Thunderbird community.
alive. Curtains are drawn, and perhaps you can even hear some music playing from an open window down the street.

Most Vancouverites I speak to have never heard of the Thunderbird community, even those who have lived in this city their whole lives. Most will recall, however, some of the tragedies that have taken place there. In May, 2006, an arson at a Skeena Terrace townhouse led to the death of five people, the only survivor being the intended target, sixteen-year-old Bolingo Etibako. The arsonist took the lives of Bolingo’s mother, three younger siblings, and girlfriend. News reports reflect the appreciation and love that Thunderbird had for the Etibako family, Congolese immigrants with strong ties to the Vancouver African community (see, for example: Canwest News Service, 2007, June 12; CBC News, 2007, May 7, June 14; Dykk, 2006, September 2; Ramsey & Baron, 2006, May 17). The tragedy emotionally ravaged Thunderbird; it was in shock. For weeks after the arson, small fires were started around the community, in garbage cans, and in the community centre dumpster. Neighbourhood youth whispered stories of what they saw that night: how they could see the victims burning to death through the windows, and felt helpless to save them.

Thirteen months after the fire, nineteen-year-old Nathan Fry was charged (Canwest News Service, 2007, June 12; CBC News 2007, June 14), and in October, 2008, he was convicted of five counts of first-degree murder and one count of attempted murder (CTV.ca 2008, October 5).

The Etibako arson, though dramatic, was not an isolated incident in the Thunderbird community. Early in the investigation, police wondered if the fire was connected to an attempted arson a month earlier, when a molotov cocktail was thrown at another townhouse
(Ramsey & Baron, 2006, May 17). Thunderbird Community Centre had been lobbying for a dedicated neighbourhood police officer, hoping that a regular police presence would deter the youth gang activity, graffiti and vandalism they experience on a regular basis. The arson was also not the first time the police had visited the Etibako home. On New Year’s Eve, in 2004, police interrupted a party at the Etibako townhouse, when the party was crashed and someone was stabbed (Ramsey & Baron, 2006, May 17). Bolingo and Nathan had a history; Nathan’s motive for murder was based on the fact that Bolingo had implicated Nathan in a couple of earlier skytrain stabbings (CTV.ca 2008, October 5). Thunderbird was again in the news as recently as January, 2009, when William Peter Canning was found dead in another Skeena Terrace townhouse. Canning’s death has been tied to the “Winter of the Gun” gang violence that took place in Vancouver from January to July, 2009 (Maniquet, 2009, para. 11, 2).

What do the Etibako fire, and the other crimes and tragedies of Thunderbird community, have to do with restorative justice? Restorative processes were not used in any of these situations, either before, during, or after the events. There is no way of knowing how things might have been different if a restorative justice program had been available when these events took place, or if they would have ever happened in the first place. Restorative processes have not been tried to deal with any of the neighbourhood conflicts or crimes that residents experience, such as disputes between neighbours, or concerns about drug use, child welfare, youth gang activity, or any other conflict that is amenable to restorative process. The Etibako fire, and other events, highlight the challenges that this community faces on a daily basis: poverty, crime, violence, and retribution.
The present study considers how to implement a community development program based on the values, principles and processes of restorative justice, in a community that faces these enormous challenges on a regular basis. In 2006, start-up money became available to develop a restorative justice pilot project in the City of Vancouver, and the Thunderbird community was chosen as the site for the project. Thunderbird Restorative Justice was formed and began developing partnerships in early 2007. Its goals were: to support the community to overcome the numerous challenges present in Thunderbird by creating and fortifying community relationships; to develop and foster within the neighbourhood a stronger sense of community, in an effort to resolve conflict and crime in a restorative way; and to provide local residents with the skills and confidence to take ownership of their conflicts and to support them to resolve conflicts on their own in the future. This case study will consider how to successfully implement such a program, learning from the experiences and trials of Thunderbird Restorative Justice.

1.1 What is Restorative Justice?

Before we can discuss the implementation of a community development program based on the values and principles of restorative justice, it is important to understand the term itself. Simply put, restorative justice is a philosophical framework that emphasizes social interconnectivity, and offers guidance to resolving conflict in constructive and healthy ways (Pranis, Stuart & Wedge, 2003). It is a future-focused lens through which we understand that the products of crime and conflict are harm, needs, and obligations (Zehr, 2002). Through this lens we find creative solutions to crime and conflict that address underlying causes, seek true accountability, and strive to prevent harm in the future (Pranis, Stuart & Wedge, 2003).
Restorative justice makes certain assumptions about human nature (Pranis, Stuart, & Wedge, 2003): we are fundamentally social beings; we are driven to have positive relationships with others, and on some basic level there is a shared, although often unspoken, understanding about what it means to be in good relations with each other, based on common, core principles. Unfortunately, because we are human beings and can make mistakes, maintaining positive relationships is not always easy, particularly when personal emotions get in the way. Pranis, Stuart, & Wedge (2003) maintain that, given the right circumstances, people have the capacity to rediscover their core values and reestablish right relations with others.

In practice, restorative justice offers a way of responding to wrongdoing that is drastically different from mainstream approaches. Restorative justice is usually best understood by comparing it to what it is not, and as such it may be best to consider how restorative justice is different from retributive justice. The philosophy reflected in some people’s reactions to harm today, as well as in our mainstream criminal justice system, is one based on retribution. Retributive justice is a “just deserts” approach to harm that suggests we ought to restore balance by doling out as much harm as was caused through punishment. Sometimes this punishment comes in the form of incarceration, other times it comes in the form of a physical altercation, the silent treatment, verbal abuse, and so on. While the desire for punishment or retribution is (arguably) a natural reaction to conflict, these responses do not usually offer constructive or proactive solutions. Pranis recognizes the value in shifting from negative reinforcement, to a focus on relationship building.

We now know from years of research that positive forces are more powerful motivators than negative forces, that relationships shape behavior more than fear.
We have changed the way we raise children and the way we run the workplace based on that research. It is time to apply that knowledge to the way we discipline community members who violate our rules. (Pranis, 1997b, para. 5)

These days, when it comes to interpersonal conflict, we generally use exclusion (for example, the silent treatment) or violence (physical, verbal, or emotional) to make those who hurt us pay for their actions. In terms of crime, the mainstream justice system is concerned with the breaking of laws. It responds with punishment, and is designed to deter future crime through fear. In both interpersonal and criminal contexts, responses are based on retribution and negative reinforcement. On the other hand, restorative justice looks at both interpersonal conflict and crime through one lens. Where there is wrongdoing, it sees broken relationships and harm. Responses are based on identifying needs and obligations (Zehr, 2002), repairing relationships between people, and healing communities (Holtquist, 1999).

1.1.1 Restorative Practice

Restorative justice processes are meant to be dynamic and unique, each designed to meet the specific needs of participants. There is no one specific restorative practice model, and many restorative practices are used globally, including family group conferences, scripted conferences, victim offender mediation, reparative boards or community panels, and peacemaking circles. There are commonalities among processes based on restorative justice; most restorative processes are based on a story-telling approach that encourages willing participants to educate others about how the wrongdoing affected them, and all restorative processes are values-based. Restorative justice theorist Daniel Van Ness writes:

> Restorative justice reflects values, and is not limited to particular program elements, which means that it is possible to reflect those values fully or partially.
When they are partially expressed, there will be some restorative impact, but not a fully restorative outcome. (quoted in Sharpe, 2004, p.19)

In other words, restorative practices can be understood as laying on a continuum, with some practices being more reflective of restorative justice values than others. There are many articulations of the values on which restorative practices are based. Pranis et al. (2003) suggest these values are universal in nature, although the way in which they are defined or expressed will vary. The authors offer a tentative list of these values: “respect, honesty, trust, humility, sharing, inclusivity, empathy, courage, forgiveness, and love” (Pranis et al., 2003, p.34). These values represent who we want to be with each other, ideally. When we are in conflict, we have usually injured relationships with other people by neglecting to embody these values; when we participate in restorative processes, we use these values to repair and strengthen the damaged relationship, and to restore ourselves to our core values.

Theory and ethics aside, there are several practical reasons restorative justice is gaining momentum in mainstream society. Most importantly, many who participate in the criminal justice system are often left dissatisfied with their experience, despite any motivations they may have had for retribution (Herman, 2005; Walgrave, 2004); meanwhile, satisfaction with restorative approaches is almost always high (Umbreit, 1994; Umbreit, Coates, & Vos, 2004). Although reduced recidivism is not a stated goal of restorative processes, it is a common outcome; when recidivism rates are measured, restorative processes receive positive evaluations (Bonta, Wallace-Capretta, Rooney, & McAnoy, 2002). Finally, most restorative justice programs are more cost-effective than the traditional criminal justice system; while it may cost roughly $75,000 annually to run a restorative justice diversion program, it costs over $40,000 annually to incarcerate one young offender, and this figure
does not consider the cost of additional police, courts, and other criminal justice system officials required to address the crime rate (Vancouver Association for Restorative Justice, n.d.; see Appendix G).

1.1.2 Criticisms of Restorative Justice

I’ve noticed that critical responses to restorative practice often reflect one of four general perspectives: victim advocates who are concerned that restorative practice is too offender-focused, and therefore is at risk of being hijacked for rehabilitative purposes, leading to possible revictimization (see, for example, Achilles, 2004; Strang, 2004); offender advocates who are concerned that restorative practice is too victim-focused, and therefore is at risk of being hijacked for retributive purposes, leading to possible harm, and shaming without reintegration (see, for example, Maxwell & Morris, 2004; Toews & Katounas, 2004); critical feminists who question the ability to fully address power imbalances in restorative practices (see, for example, Daly & Stubbs, 2006); and law-and-order advocates who argue that justice can't be achieved without punishment and just deserts (see, for example, the analysis of public demand for punishment in Tyler & Boeckmann, 1997). Each of these critical perspectives offers valuable reflection on restorative practice. True restorative practice needs to balance the needs of all participants, whether they wear the victim, offender, or community “hats”; good restorative practice needs to be safe for all participants, which includes safeguarding the balance of power during restorative processes; and from the start, practitioners and participants need to be clear about their expectations from the process, and in particular, what the achievement of justice means for them. This includes getting clear about what it means to be held accountable for your actions.
Annalise Acorn, author of *Compulsory Compassion: A Critique of Restorative Justice* (2004), offers a different critical reflection on restorative justice. Instead of the issues raised above, Acorn’s critiques are based on a more fundamental issue. Although she offers specific criticisms of restorative practice, underlying each of her concerns is a fundamental concept of human nature that is discordant with restorative justice. Throughout the book, it is made clear that Acorn characterizes human nature as violent and aggressive, self-serving, and unforgiving; quite the opposite of Pranis, Stuart & Wedge’s earlier description, which includes that we are socially minded and driven to be in good relations with others. Acorn questions the genuineness of participation in restorative processes. She suggests offenders who participate in restorative practice choose to do so because it is easier than jail time. Acorn supports her argument against genuine offender participation by referring to an alcoholic character from the novel *Huckleberry Finn* who seemingly repents for his alcohol-induced wrong-doings, only to get drunk again later that night (Acorn, 2004, p. 67-68). On the contrary, reports from actual restorative justice participants suggest otherwise; that participating in restorative processes is anything but painless, and is certainly not the “easy way out”.

I had a Circle myself before I went to jail. Circle didn't lessen my time or help my case. I was meeting with the Circle just on my own, and that is the Circle I really didn’t want to be in very much, ‘cause it was so hard - you yourself acknowledging the harm, what you’ve done and the need to talk about it, who I’ve harmed, what ripple effect it had. (Pranis, Stuart, & Wedge, 2003, p. 59)

Interestingly, Acorn maintains that literary accounts of feigned remorse, such as the *Huckleberry Finn* character, “resonate as more true to human experience” (Acorn, 2004, p. 24), than do real-life accounts of restorative justice participants.
Acorn often portrays offenders as fundamentally different from non-offenders. For example, she writes:

[R]estorative justice presumes to be able to offer something better: a healing process that will morph the offender into someone capable of mutual relations of respect and accountability. Restorative Justice asks us to will away at the outset our overwhelming inductive pessimism about the possibility of radical transformation. (Acorn, 2004, p. 61)

This “othering” - the idea that offenders are different creatures than the rest of us, incapable (in this case) of respect and accountability - is at the heart of her concerns about offender participation.

Acorn also questions the genuineness of victim participation in restorative practice. She proposes that victims are manipulated into thinking restorative processes will help them heal, while restorative practitioners allegedly revictimize them by denying their angry and negative emotional reactions. As her title suggests, Acorn argues that restorative justice is the practice of compulsory compassion, in other words, that to take a pro-active, constructive, and hands-on approach to resolving your own conflicts is contrary to human nature and alien to the natural order of things. Acorn's characterization of human nature as vengeful, violent, and unforgiving is particularly interesting given her concession that victims participating in the mainstream justice system are rarely satisfied with outcomes that ought to have met those fundamental drives she purports all victims have. Clearly this contradicts her earlier argument that the only proper way to deal with the negative feelings arising from wrong-doing is to act on them. Any other response to these emotions is unhealthy.
Finally, restorative practice is sometimes criticized for its seemingly high, front-end costs. The costs of the criminal justice system are largely obscured, since it is a well-established and complex system that most citizens do not fully understand or think about. Meanwhile, costs of restorative processes are mostly front-end, and are thus more often criticized. The most apparent cost associated with restorative processes, which is often raised by critics, is the time required for people to participate in restorative processes, which depending on the situation, could require anything from a few hours to a few weeks. The reality is that taking ownership of your problems and taking an active role in your community take time.

Participating in restorative processes represents a conscious decision by participants to prioritize these relationships. Unfortunately, doing so is sometimes easier said than done. For example, not everyone can take several hours off work to participate in restorative processes, which is why many restorative processes take place during non-working hours.

**1.1.3 Restorative Justice & Social Work**

Throughout my social work education, my understanding of restorative justice has developed and expanded. I began by considering what restorative justice looks like within the context of social work practice. I came to realize that the scope of restorative practice is broader than simply conflict resolution and criminal justice. In fact, restorative justice can be understood as part of an expansive social justice movement. Since social workers are in the business of “promoting social justice” (Canadian Association of Social Workers, 2009, para. 2), there seems to be a good fit between social work practice and restorative justice (Holtquist, 1999). But what does restorative social work look like?
First we need to consider where the term restorative justice comes from. Within the field there has been much deliberation about what we mean by both “restorative” and “justice”, and there is little consensus on the matter (Sharpe, 2004). There have been several suggestions put forth about what is “restored” through restorative practice. A common explanation is that restorative practice restores a sense of balance or harmony in a relationship that has experienced conflict. Taking this notion further, some practitioners suggest that a more accurate term would be transformative justice (Van Ness & Strong, 2002) because the goal of restorative practice ought to be to improve relationships, not simply to return them to the status-quo. So for many practitioners, the object of restoration is damaged relationships.

For some practitioners, restorative justice has a much more personal focus. In January, 2008, I participated in training on a specific approach of restorative justice, called peacemaking circles. One of my trainers, Kay Pranis, related her notion of the “restorative” part of restorative justice. When we participate in restorative processes, she explained, we reflect on our principles and consider how we want to be with each other, ideally. Restorative processes give us the opportunity to practice our values, and in that sense, they restore us to our best selves. In Pranis’ view then, what is restored in restorative practice is us, to our best selves.

These notions of restoration are not inconsistent, and both help us to understand what restorative social work practice might look like. The focus of restorative social work is on repairing damaged relationships, and is values-based work that calls on people to reflect on their principles and strive to act accordingly. In many ways, restorative social work practice
at the individual level is consistent with the strengths-based approach, which celebrates a
person's inherent abilities and encourages development of those in an effort to address the
challenges they are currently facing (Saleebey, 2006). Restorative social work practice holds
a broader view of a person than strengths-based theory, by recognizing the
interconnectedness of the individual to her or his community. Furthermore, restorative
social work practice is values-based, helping people to get clear about their values and to
learn how to embody those values.

Social workers are particularly well suited for community-based restorative justice work by
virtue of our mandate to pursue social justice, and because many social workers are already
working in the community context, particularly with people facing conflict and injustice
daily. Boyes-Watson illustrates the problem social workers face today:

Shifting our attention from poor children's deficits to sources of resiliency in
their lives surfaces the crucial role of relationships that support and nurture
children and families (Burger, 1994; Werner & Smith, 1992). For this reason,
child welfare professionals are moving toward closer collaboration with
communities….We may know it takes a village to raise a child, but if
professionals are expecting to connect families with the churches, parent-teacher
associations, or bowling leagues of yesteryear, they may search in vain. Over the
last 20 to 30 years, community-based activity has significantly atrophied in
neighborhoods across the nation (Putnam, 2001). Although this is true for
wealthy and poor communities alike, the effect is far more consequential for poor
children whose families are less robust and have fewer resources to shield
children from the negative effects of community dysfunction. It appears that
child welfare professionals may not only need to find the village for each child,
but also, somehow, take part in building the village in the first place. The
question is, how? (Boyes-Watson, 2005, p. 192).

Most Western ideas about justice are based on the concept of a social contract; that there is
an unspoken rule among citizens about how to engage each other, and when the social
contract is broken, we experience injustice (Sharpe, 2004). Most people think about this kind
of justice, just between individuals - which I’ll call interpersonal justice - when they think about restorative justice. In mainstream society, if someone is familiar with restorative justice, they usually think of it as little more than an alternative to the criminal justice system. In this limited view, restorative justice is an alternative because it offers justice through healing, reparation, and often apology.

A participant in the current study offered a useful image for describing the different approaches of restorative and punitive justice (see Illustration 1.2). In theory, both retributive and restorative justice involve a rebalancing; one through punishment, one through making amends. A significant difference is that in the criminal justice system, when the scales of justice are tipped because of a wrong-doing, they are rebalanced by doling out an equal amount of harm, through punishment (whether it be through a fine, imprisonment, shaming, or some other harm). On the other hand, responses rooted in restorative justice attempt to rebalance the scales by addressing the harm that was caused and restoring the scales to its original position, or better.

To take matters further, in mainstream society we think of conflict in terms of two people - the offender and the victim. As
such, the justice scales are an appropriate image because they have only two sides that need to be balanced. In reality, however, there are more than just two sides to a conflict, and this important concept is reflected in restorative justice’s value of inclusivity. An important tenet of restorative justice is the notion that people are interconnected; that when someone wrongs my neighbour, I am also affected. The popular image offered here is one of concentric circles that ripple out when a stone is tossed into a pond: although the focus of the harm is at the centre, the damage ripples out in varying degrees. Here, the concept of community is integral. In restorative practice, the community has a vital role to play in addressing conflict and preventing future harm. Through the principle of inclusion, restorative practice acknowledges the importance of community by ensuring that all people affected by damaged relationships are invited to help address the issues.

As a social worker, I cannot conceive of justice simply in terms of interpersonal justice. It is important to consider the bigger picture. The value of restorative practice is that it allows for the possibility of addressing broader issues of social justice, such as poverty and addiction. Do all restorative processes resolve these crucial and enormous matters? Of course not. Restorative justice is not a panacea for all injustice. However, by encouraging and creating safe spaces for constructive, values-based dialogue on the issues, restorative practice can help strengthen community relationships, create social bonds, and develop the capacities of communities to work together to address these very serious social issues.

This is the theory behind what I will call restorative community development. Ficher & Shragge (2000) write that the goals of community-based social work have traditionally been social change and social justice, through community organizing. By building and
strengthening communities, community development social workers facilitate change from the ground up. These goals are consistent with restorative practice, which seeks to address conflict through a holistic lens that encourages community participation. After all, crime and conflict do not occur in a vacuum. It is important to understand the broader social context so as not to overlook root causes such as poverty, addiction, racism, and so forth. These issues are tough for one person to address. *Les Miserables'* Jean Valjean may have served his nineteen years for stealing a loaf of bread, but upon release from prison, he was still hungry and poor. Who better to help address the social issues plaguing community members than the community?

The reason restorative community development is distinct from restorative practice is because although restorative justice theory places great significance on the role of community in conflict intervention, restorative justice-based initiatives do not always attend to building and strengthening communities. In other words, community development ought to be part of good restorative practice, but it often is not. As such, restorative community development brings together the values and goals of both restorative justice and community development to create a hybridized form of practice.

### 1.2 Legal Context for Restorative Practice in Canada

Restorative justice is not legislated in Canada, as it is, for example, in New Zealand. Within the Canadian criminal justice system, restorative justice-based programs are most commonly used with youth, although there are programs across the country that serve adult offenders, as well as programs that are designed to specifically serve Aboriginal communities. Because it is primarily based within the area of youth justice, before we
discuss restorative practice in Canada it is important to understand the context of how Canadian youth justice has been approached over time. We can think of the criminal justice system as being on a continuum, with punishment and retribution on one end, and rehabilitation on the other. It seems like youth justice in Canada swings from one philosophical extreme to another, from rehabilitation to punishment. What follows is a brief review of Canadian youth justice legislation through this lens, followed by an alternative way of understanding Canadian youth justice policy.

Until 1857, young offenders were housed in adult prisons (Bell, 2003). The passing of the Act for Establishing Prisons for Young Offenders in 1857 marked a change in how youth crime was perceived. While earlier, young offenders were seen much the same as adult offenders, this bill reflects a shift towards seeing young offenders as impressionable and markedly different from other offenders. In the late 19th century, a social reform movement began to take hold. Before, the causes of crime were considered to be “overindulgent” parents and the debauched fur trade, but by the late 1850s, discourse on youth crime was more concerned with public morality, especially of the lower class.

Throughout the latter half of the 1800s, the issue of youth crime seemed to be a moral one. Because of poverty and destitution brought on by a lack of employment and severe working conditions, countless numbers of children and young people were spending a good portion of their lives on city streets, which they worked by begging, stealing, and selling whatever they could to make a living. … The public issue was not poverty and destitution, however. Rather, it was the morality of an impoverished working class. The parents of these children were perceived as immoral and unable or unwilling to control their children. Attitudes toward the poor were very unsympathetic. (Bell, 2003, p. 15)

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1 A thorough analysis of Canadian youth justice policy is beyond the scope of this thesis. What follows is a brief review that is meant to help the reader understand the legal context in which restorative justice is practiced in Canada. For a deeper understanding, see, for example, Bell (2003), or Doob & Sprott, 2004.
A social reform movement, which was championed by leaders such as J.J. Kelso and W.L. Scott, was marked by a shift towards rehabilitation rather than responding to youth crime through severe punishment (Bell, 2003). The underlying philosophy promoted by the “child savers” was that rehabilitation, even involuntary in nature, would be a more effective response to youth crime than punishment (Bell, 2003). The outcomes of this movement include the creation of reformatories, children’s aid societies, and Canada’s first youth justice act, the *Juvenile Delinquents Act* of 1908.

1.2.1 The JDA

The Canadian juvenile justice system was born with the *Juvenile Delinquents Act (JDA)* of 1908 (Bell, 2003). The underlying philosophy of the *JDA* was “*parens patriae*, meaning ‘parent of the country’” (Bell, 2003, p. 43), which posits that it is the State’s responsibility to care for orphans and other children who seemingly lack appropriate parenting. A unique feature of the *JDA* is that it covered only one crime, delinquency, which was very broadly interpreted to include a range of illegal activities, as well as behaviour considered immoral, such as truancy (Doob & Sprott, 2004).

The *JDA* was based on welfare principles (Doob & Sprott, 2004), its goals being rehabilitation and moral reformation (Bell, 2003). The newly envisioned probation officer was a one-stop shop for the justice system: an investigator, a foster parent, a supervisor, and
an advocate (Bell, 2003). The tone of the legislation made clear that rehabilitation was meant to benefit the delinquents, not punish them.

The direction to those working in the system was that the juvenile delinquent “shall be dealt with not as an offender, but as one in a condition of delinquency and therefore requiring help and guidance and proper supervision (JDA, sec. 3 [2]). Furthermore, “the care and custody and discipline of a juvenile delinquent shall approximate as nearly as may be that which should be given by his parents, and that as far as practicable every juvenile delinquent shall be treated, not as a criminal but as a misdirected and misguided child, and one needing aid, encouragement, help, and assistance” (JDA, sec. 38). (Doob & Sprott, 2004, p. 190)

Even before the JDA was enacted, there was not agreement on the rehabilitative philosophy characteristic of the social reform movement; some were concerned that “anything less than a term in an institution would serve to ‘cheapen’ the offence in the mind of the offender” (Bell, 2003, p.17). Others were concerned that it was too lenient on delinquents, and as time went on, more contemporary issues arose regarding child and parent rights (Bell, 2003). There were also concerns that agents of the juvenile justice system, such as social workers, were not accountable to the courts (Bell, 2003). Eventually, these concerns, in addition to the Human Rights Movement and the eventual adoption of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, resulted in dramatic changes to the JDA.

1.2.2 The YOA

The Young Offenders Act (YOA) was implemented in 1984, after over a decade of drafts and debate over the new underlying principles (Bell, 2003). Should it be punitive in order to promote deterrence? How should
it address youths’ rights, and what are youths’ rights in the first place? Doob & Sprott (2004) describe the new legislation as focused on legalistic or criminal law principles more than welfare and rehabilitation. Designed to emphasize responsibility and accountability, the YOA acknowledged youth rights and the “special needs” of young offenders, who have limited responsibility for their actions on account of their age. The YOA introduced the notion of “alternative measures” options for situations in which the protection of society was not a concern. Unfortunately, this concept was never operationalized, and crime control\(^2\) remained a priority over rehabilitation and diversion, as revealed by the following:

(c.1) the protection of society which is a primary objective of the criminal law applicable to youth, is best served by rehabilitation, wherever possible, of young persons who commit offences, and rehabilitation is best achieved by addressing the need and circumstances of a young person that are relevant to the young person’s offending behaviour (December 1, 1995);

(d) where it is not inconsistent with the protection of society, taking no measures or taking measures other than judicial proceedings under this Act should be considered for dealing with young persons who have committed offences;...

(f) in the application of this Act, the rights and freedoms of young persons include a right to the least possible interference with freedom that is consistent with the protection of society, having regard to the needs of young persons and the interests of their families

(Section 3c.1, Young Offenders Act, quoted in Bell, 2003, p. 51-52)

There was indecision surrounding the creation and redevelopment of the YOA, which Doob & Sprott (2004) describe as “an inability or unwillingness to make difficult decisions about what the goals are of the youth justice system. This led to an apparent ambivalence about what the youth justice system should look like” (p. 187). Doob & Sprott (2004) point out that while the JDA essentially combined the welfare and youth justice systems, the YOA

\(^2\) The theory of crime control assumes offenders to be calculating, rational actors; that people who commit crimes weigh the costs and benefits of their actions before doing so, and that crime can therefore be curbed if the punishments outweigh the benefits of crime (Bell, 2003).
created a clearer distinction between behaviours that deserve attention from the justice system, and those that should be dealt with by the child welfare system. The authors suggest that this separation allowed for legislators to take a “tougher” approach for youth behaviour that was clearly criminal. Despite its tougher approach to youth crime and respect for youth rights, people remained unsatisfied with the *YOA*. While some were concerned that the *YOA* was too punitive, others felt that it was still too soft on crime, particularly for violent offences (Bell, 2003). Over the course of its use, the *YOA* was revised several times to make it more punitive, for example by increasing the severity of punishments for serious offences (Bell, 2003; Doob & Sprott, 2004). Over time, it seemed that respecting youth rights would be an insurmountable hurdle that prevented the implementation of a youth justice act that would appropriately serve the underlying principles of protection of the public, deterrence, and rehabilitation.

Once again there were two “camps” in public discourse on youth justice. While the law-and-order side insisted on the need to “get tough” on youth crime, the other side, which was largely comprised of youth advocates who worked closely with young offenders, recognized the need to address the social and economic conditions in which young offenders find themselves (Bell, 2003). These youth advocates held that the media was largely responsible for exaggerating the state of youth crime, while the law-and-order camp insisted that youth crime was the worst in Canadian history, that young offenders had no respect, and that only tougher sentences could “straighten out” these problem youth (Bell, 2003). It should be

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3 This distinction was not always maintained, however. Doob & Sprott (2004) report that in several surveys, youth court judges under the *YOA* recalled often using incarceration for welfare purposes.
apparent that the concerns of both sides are remarkably similar to those that led to the development of both the *JDA* and *YOA*, and these are still present today.

1.2.3 **YCJA**

In an effort to revamp Canada’s youth justice act, a Federal-Provincial-Territorial Task Force was created to survey Canadians and people working in the system, and recommendations for the new youth justice act were made based on this research (Bell, 2003). After nearly a decade of draft revisions, the *Youth Criminal Justice Act (YCJA)* was introduced in 2003. Although the *YCJA* retains protection of the public as an underlying principle, this is actualized through rehabilitation and “meaningful consequences” rather than simply trading a pre-determined punishment for an unrelated criminal act. Doob & Sprott (2004) point out that this shift away from deterrence and incapacitation was markedly different from its precursor, and illustrates a change in youth justice policy to focus on “the long-term protection of the public” (p.229) instead of more immediate protection of the public. The *YCJA* also introduced a new goal of reintegration, in recognition of the damage caused by labelling and shaming after a youth has completed their sentence. Reintegration was accomplished by including a fixed “supervision” component to all custody sentences (Doob & Sprott, 2004). The act seemingly returned the pendulum toward the rehabilitation end of the continuum, requiring that police divert youth to extra-judicial measures (EJMs) before proceeding with
charges, and should those fail, that judges use extra-judicial sanctions (EJSs) before considering imprisonment. Furthermore, the YCJA described these alternative processes and mandated their use, a stark difference from its precursor. These were articulated as:

5. Extrajudicial measures should be designed to

(a) provide an effective and timely response to offending behaviour outside the bounds of judicial measures;

(b) encourage young persons to acknowledge and repair the harm caused to the victim and the community;

(c) encourage families of young persons — including extended families where appropriate — and the community to become involved in the design and implementation of those measures;

(d) provide an opportunity for victims to participate in decisions related to the measures selected and to receive reparation; and

(e) respect the rights and freedoms of young persons and be proportionate to the seriousness of the offence.

(s.5, Youth Criminal Justice Act, 2002)

Although the term “restorative justice” does not appear in the YCJA, most restorative justice-based programs in Canada appropriately match the description of these EJMs. In short, legislators set out clear guidelines to restrict the conditions under which young offenders could be incarcerated (Doob & Sprott, 2004). Bala, Carrington, & Roberts (2009) evaluated the YCJA five years after its implementation and called it “a qualified success”, noting a decrease in youth formally engaged in the criminal justice system across the country in areas such as the number of youth dealt with through courts and the rate of youth incarceration, though they report that concerns remain regarding the high use of remand custody across Canada.
1.2.4 Youth Justice in Canada: So What?

Doob & Sprott (2004) describe the history of youth justice policy in Canada as being trapped between two different systems: “the political youth justice system (the system as it is seen and discussed in the political realm) and the operational youth justice system (the system as it operates on a daily basis)” (p. 186). These authors are referring to the discordance between political rhetoric - historically, the need to “get tough” on crime - and the actual administration of youth justice legislation, which varies between provinces and territories. In fact, this discord reflects a false dichotomy between punishment and rehabilitation that Holtquist (1999) suggests has plagued the field of criminal justice for centuries.

Generally, academics, policy makers, and the general public have viewed punishment and rehabilitation as two distinct and opposite models of criminal justice … While these two models of criminal justice appear to be very different, in rhetoric as well as in practice, in substance they represent two approaches within one overarching paradigm of criminal justice—a retributive paradigm. This retributive paradigm of criminal justice, embodying at various times both punishment and rehabilitation approaches, has evolved since the 12th century in the Western world when it replaced a restitutive, or compensatory, justice paradigm… (emphasis added. Holtquist, 1999, p. 63-64)

The political rhetoric and legislative actions of the current criminal justice discourse are limited to the dichotomization of a retributive paradigm of justice—get tough versus rehabilitation. The result of this dichotomization has been a pervasive sense of hopelessness, that “nothing works” to stem the incidence of crime. (Holtquist, 1999, p. 66)

Youth justice legislation in Canada can be viewed through this pendulum swing. The JDA was influenced by the “child savers”, it was rehabilitative and based on welfare principles. The YOA was much more legalistic and “tough”, which resulted in an increase in incarceration and punitive responses to youth crime. The YCJA was much less tough than its precursor, but in order for it to gain support, legislators sold it as a punitive response to the
rising youth crime rate (for a more thorough analysis of this political puppetry, see Doob & Sprott, 2004, p. 230-232).

To better understand the administrative, or real-life youth justice system, I think it is more useful to consider Canadian youth justice policy through a different lens. By shifting the spectrum to one reflective of Holtquist's suggested dichotomy, we can see that both the YOA, and to some degree the JDA, lie on the punitive end of the spectrum, whereas the YCJA represents movement away from this ideology. Although neither Bell (2003) nor Doob & Sprott (2004) characterize the JDA as punitive, the welfare principles on which the Act was based were sometimes (but not always) actualized through punitive measures, such as the youth reformatories and other “rehabilitative” measures that were created during that period (Bell, 2003; Doob & Sprott, 2004). On the other hand, the YCJA emphasizes individual growth and change through meaningful consequences over negative reinforcement through incapacitation and deterrence. (Doob & Sprott, 2004). In this way, the YCJA has shifted Canadian youth justice policy away from punishment towards an alternative paradigm focused on learning and reparation.

A significant issue that continues to plague justice policy in Canada is its focus on changing offenders rather than addressing the crimogenic social circumstances that facilitate crime.
Over the last hundred years, youth justice has failed to address the social circumstances that lead to criminal behaviour, despite repeated calls for such action by youth advocates since the time of J.J. Kelso and W.L. Scott. This is, in my opinion, one reason youth justice has failed in Canada. It is not to say that young offenders are not responsible for their criminal behaviour; only that when considering crime by any age group, it is ignorant not to address the poverty, addiction, exclusion, abuse, disability, and many other crimogenic social issues that are currently ignored by the criminal justice system. Bell offers an example to illustrate this disconnect, quoting directly a worker from St. Patrick’s Home for Boys from 1908:

> I find that boys sent to us for theft have absolutely no realization of its gravity. I had two lads committed here not long ago for stealing clothing. I questioned them, and they replied with perfect directness, that they stole the clothes because they needed them. (“Suspended Sentences,” 1908) (Bell, 2003, p. 15)

From this person’s perspective, the biggest problem these two youth experience is not that they lack sufficient clothing, but that they lack the moral education that would prohibit them from stealing. Clearly the speaker has missed the point, much in the same way Canadian youth justice legislation has missed the point for the last hundred years.

Two major differences between the YCJA and its precursors that give me hope for future justice policy in Canada, are its emphasis on “meaningful consequences”, and the inclusion of reintegration as an underlying principle. This represents the first indication in Canadian justice policy that legislators are genuinely considering a new approach to crime, moving away from punishment and negative reinforcement, which may not be as effective on criminal behaviour and recidivism as once thought.4 Interestingly, Doob & Sprott (2004)

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4 See, for example, Bonta, Rugge, & Dauvergne (2003) which found that 44% of offenders from 1994/5 were reconvicted within two years of release, or Alfie Kohn’s work on the impacts of rearing children with negative and positive reinforcement, Punished by Rewards (1993), which suggests that using punishment or rewards result at best, in blind obedience rather than moral development.
suggest that the YCJA marks an historic change in Canadian youth justice legislation in its “shift away from the assumption that the reduction of offending by youths can best be accomplished within the formal youth justice system” (p. 185). This shift opens the door to restorative justice-based initiatives because it shares common goals: for people to better understand the effects of their wrongful behaviour; to reintegrate those who have been affected by harm, by building or rebuilding community around them; and to reduce the risk of further harm by addressing the root causes of crime. In turn, this movement towards the restorative end of the continuum will lead youth justice in a new direction, opening up the possibility of addressing the social issues that are at the root of crime. Restorative justice approaches allow for the possibility of addressing these social issues, whereas the current criminal justice approach, which is narrowly focused on punishment and deterrence, is not designed to address these wider crimogenic factors.

1.3 The State of Restorative Practice

The field of restorative justice is ever changing and expanding, but it seems more so in the last few years than in the last decade. In June, 2009, I attended the 2nd Annual International Restorative Practices Conference, held in Vancouver, BC. A common trend internationally seems to be toward implementing restorative practice at the whole-community level, often beginning in the classroom and expanding out from there. New Zealand has legislated the use of restorative justice with young offenders since 1989, and in the UK, some towns are striving to become “restorative communities”. Restorative justice remains predominantly volunteer-based, but the restorative practitioner seems to be changing; whereas restorative practitioners used to be concerned local residents who learned of the movement through
their professional careers (as lawyers, social workers, and so forth), many of the restorative justice champions I met at the conference were youth workers, teachers, and school principals. The contemporary Canadian restorative justice movement started with a probation officer and a young offender in 1974 (Nyp, 2004), but much of the work presented at the conference was taking place in primary classrooms and on playgrounds, through prevention or harm-reduction approaches. These observations are not offered as a thorough analysis of the global restorative justice movement, but rather they offer a glimpse of what is happening at the international level.

In the City of Vancouver, BC, before the development of the program described in this study, there were three programs based on the values of restorative justice. RestART is a restorative justice-based anti-graffiti program that diverts graffiti-involved youth into a four-day restorative justice workshop, at the end of which the group creates a public mural. Circles of Support and Accountability (CoSA) is a federally funded, group based program that serves federal sex-offenders in the community. CoSA is a national program. Finally, Vancouver Aboriginal Transformative Justice Services Society (VATJSS) is a non-profit organization that offers traditional processes for Aboriginal youth involved in crime. As a federally funded Aboriginal initiative, VATJSS has different criteria and funding sources from the other restorative justice programs in the region. In addition to these programs, some Vancouver high schools have attempted to develop student-based peer mediation programs based on restorative justice values, but little is known about these, other than that they’ve had a reputation for being sporadic and short-lived (this is discussed in more detail on page 90). The exception is a Peer Mediation program based out of Windermere Secondary School, which has operated since 2006 (Steffenhagen, 2009).
Since the late 1990s, restorative justice advocates in the City have made attempts to foster new, sustainable, community-based initiatives through various piecemeal approaches: grassroots organizing, lobbying before City Council, and broad community education; all with (seemingly) few tangible results. One such advocacy group, which I joined in 2006, worked for nearly a decade to establish a successful and sustainable restorative justice program, but after several years of public education and advocacy, such a program remained elusive. While support for the idea seemed broad, on-going funding seemed non-existent, and we remained puzzled as to why our neighbouring municipalities were so successful at running their decade-old programs.

The YCJA created an interesting challenge for restorative justice advocates. During the ten years that the YCJA was in development, the Federal-Provincial-Territorial Task Force recommended, among other things, a series of principles that should be included in the new Act. Each of those principles were adopted except one: “The need for coordination between youth justice and other youth services” (Bell, 2003, p. 59). While the federal legislation mandates the existence of Extra Judicial Measures and Extra Judicial Sanctions, it is the provincial government that is responsible for administering justice; in other words, it would seem to be the responsibility of the province to ensure that such programs are available, given that the police and courts are mandated to rely on said programs before pursuing more punitive measures. It would seem that this challenge was foreseen, but for whatever reason, the Task Force’s recommendation was ignored. This has resulted in inconsistent funding and community-based programming across the country.
In BC, the provincial government had already established a funding program for restorative justice-based programs before the *YCJA* was implemented. The Community Accountability Program (CAP) funding initiative was developed in 1997, and created a set of standards, guidelines, and regulations for communities interested in developing restorative initiatives (Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General, 2004). CAP offers $5,000 start up funding for the organization's first year, and then $2,500 annually. Unfortunately, this meagre amount is hardly enough to sustain a fully-functioning program, which has resulted in many new restorative justice programs being developed and then quickly fading away as the start-up money is used up. According to a participant in the present study, 51 programs across BC applied for CAP funding in 2008. The following year, the provincial government announced a funding freeze, and CAP was lost to all BC restorative justice programs for the 2009-10 fiscal period, although it has been renewed for the 2010-2011 fiscal year.

The lack of suitable provincial funding led some service providers and advocacy groups to lobby municipal governments for core operating funds. While many municipalities see restorative justice as another downloaded provincial responsibility, most of the municipalities in Metro Vancouver provide core operating funding to local restorative justice programs, in recognition of the immediate benefit to their citizens and communities. Vancouver remains one of only a few local municipalities that does not include restorative justice in its annual budget, although City staff are currently in discussion with restorative justice advocates to consider a change to this tradition (this is discussed in more detail on page 154).
Within the field, there remains ongoing discussion about whether restorative justice ought to be publicly funded, or whether this threatens the integrity of its grassroots, volunteer-based principles. The question remains, however: “From where in the community would these core operating funds come?” There are many funding opportunities from the private sector, such as businesses, institutions, and foundations. Unfortunately, the vast majority of these funds may not be used for core funding, including wages, operating funds or capital expenses. This results in a difficult situation for an organization that would like to run an event, for example, and can use the grant to pay for the event, but can’t hire someone to coordinate and execute the event. It becomes a more challenging problem when considering the many administrative details that non-profit organizations deal with on a daily basis, which are difficult, or not appropriate, for a team of unpaid volunteers to manage.

1.4 Who I Am

With a BA in Criminology, I have studied the causes of crime, social disorder, and restorative justice since 2000. I have been actively involved in restorative justice education and advocacy in Vancouver since 2006 when I joined Vancouver's Family Court Youth Justice Committee. From 2006-2007 I worked with an established group of dedicated advocates, and together we created Vancouver Association for Restorative Justice (VARJ), a non-profit, volunteer-based organization designed to promote restorative practice and help foster new restorative justice-based initiatives in the City. Since its creation in 2007, VARJ has worked to educate Vancouver communities about restorative justice; has lobbied to identify and secure a sustainable source of funding for local restorative initiatives, and has helped to connect existing restorative justice practitioners throughout the Metro Vancouver
area. I'm also a RestART facilitator and advisory committee member, and I co-coordinated Thunderbird Restorative Justice, the program at the centre of this study, from 2008-2009.

Transparency is key to good research. It should be clear that I have advocated for and promoted restorative practice for most of my adult life. That being said, I remain critical about the widespread use of restorative practice, particularly in terms of widening the criminal justice net, the over-reliance on shaming as a tool for social control, and most importantly, the alarming tendency for practitioners to view restorative justice as a panacea. In short, although I strive to be a champion for restorative justice, my aim is always to remain critically reflective in my practice, and my hope is that this critical lens will guide the present research to be useful, valid, and reliable.
Chapter 2: Literature Review

In preparing for this study, I turned to existing research to find out what has already been said about implementing restorative justice programs. If I wanted to develop a new program tomorrow, what resources are available? I was surprised to find that little has been written on the topic. It may be that because restorative justice is meant to be grassroots, dynamic, and unique to the specific needs of the community it serves, there has been hesitation to suggest that a clear set of steps exists. Certainly, the intention of this study is not to imply there is only one way to implement a restorative justice-based community development program. Rather, here I will reflect on one program’s experiences in an effort to highlight general stages of implementation, supported by real life experiences and examples.

I began my literature review with a list of sources provided by the restorative justice consultant who initiated Thunderbird Restorative Justice. She was also surprised by the lack of available resources on restorative justice implementation, but managed to find a few useful works none-the-less. Authors Daniel Van Ness and Karen Strong dedicate a chapter to implementation theory in their text, *Restoring Justice* (1997), which Bright (1997) reflected on for Prison Fellowship International. Peacemaking circle practitioner Kay Pranis prepared a report on implementing restorative justice for the United States Department of Justice, based on her experience developing the Minnesota Restorative Justice Initiative (Pranis, 1997b). These works were helpful in identifying the broad strokes of program implementation, as will be discussed below, but they lacked a clear and complete set of steps, examples or scenarios, and specific details. Several of the sources addressed how to effectively create social change in general (National Institutes of Justice, 1999; Umbreit &
Fortunately, mid-way through my data collection, a participant recommended a new resource: Susan Sharpe (1997) prepared a thorough implementation guide for Edmonton’s Mediation and Restorative Justice Centre. Sharpe’s work comes closest to what I was looking for; clear and practical reflections on implementing a restorative justice program, including specific suggestions, issues to consider, and challenges to anticipate. What Sharpe’s work doesn’t offer, which I hope to add through this study, is a concrete example, a story through which implementation is demonstrated, and real-life lessons that can be extrapolated.

2.1 Safeguarding Restorative Principles during Implementation

Throughout these works are recurring messages about implementation. Pranis (1997b) begins her report by emphasizing that shifting to restorative practice needs to be about broad social change. It is about changing the way we think about crime, conflict, and our relationships with each other, and it shouldn’t be just another way of doing case management. Bright (1997), and Van Ness & Strong (2002), emphasize that restorative justice practitioners should always be “working towards transformation” (Bright, 1997, p. 2), with an aim to transform our way of thinking, our institutional structures, and ourselves individually (Bright, 1997; Van Ness & Strong, 2002). Sharpe reminds us that if a restorative justice program is doing its job, transforming the way community members handle conflict and work with each other, the role of the program will change as time goes on. “That means that the best recommendation for a restorative justice program may be a paradox: a program should strive for long-term stability and a strong presence in the community, in order to work itself out of business altogether” (Sharpe, 1997, p. 99).
A sustainable restorative justice community development program needs to be based on a holistic vision shared by a broad and inclusive group of stakeholders (Bright, 1997; Pranis, 1997b; Sharpe, 1997; Van Ness & Strong, 2002). A common vision is integral to the success of any community collaboration: “The foundation for lasting change needs to build on a broadly shared vision” (Pranis, 1997b, para. 18). Bright (1997) and Van Ness & Strong (2002) encourage program developers to revisit the vision on a regular basis to ensure that the organization is still on the right track. Pranis (1997b) reminds us that it is not enough to revisit the vision, but in fact we must revisit our values and philosophy as well, to ensure not only that we are on the right track to get where we are going, but also that we’re still travelling on the right train.

Each of the authors also emphasize the importance of inclusion. As one of the core values of restorative practice (Pranis et al., 2003), inclusion is an important part of program development. Bright (1997) and Van Ness & Strong (2002) emphasize the importance of diversity in the community of support for the program, and Sharpe (1997) agrees that stakeholders should represent the diversity of the community, whether it is culturally, professionally, socio-economically, or by some other measure. The spirit in which we work together is just as important; an open and collaborative attitude is imperative to successful program implementation (Sharpe, 1997). Sharpe suggests an initial list of people who restorative justice program developers will want to consult before program development and implementation: police officers, crown prosecutors, judges, defence counsel, probation and parole officers, citizen advisory committees, cultural groups, and service providers who primarily work with victims and offenders of crime (1997, p. 61). While collaboration and inclusion are important, it is also important to move forward. Each author notes that it is
not worthwhile trying to “convert” every last nay-sayer (Bright, 1997; Pranis, 1997b; Sharpe, 1997; Van Ness & Strong, 2002). Instead, Pranis (1997b) encourages us to always extend an open invitation for dialogue and engagement, but to move on. It is important that, throughout the implementation processes, open and clear communication is protected in order to ensure a safe environment for dissent.

In terms of roles, Pranis (1997b) suggests that the appropriate role of government is facilitation and leadership. In other words, government’s role is to help identify and obtain resources, facilitate connections, and to hold the program and organizers accountable to the wider public. It is always important to consider power imbalances when making decisions as a group (Pranis, 1997b), and this is particularly important when government is represented at the table; restorative justice initiatives must remain community-owned in order to ensure sustainability. Each author emphasizes the importance of restorative justice initiatives being developed from the community-upwards, which is why the aforementioned collaboration, inclusivity, and shared vision are so integral to its success (Bright, 1997; Pranis, 1997; Sharpe, 1997; Van Ness & Strong, 2002).

From a more practical perspective, Bright (1997) and Van Ness & Strong (2002) recommend that all restorative justice programs include in development a thorough evaluation strategy, and maintenance of relationships with other restorative justice programs. Ongoing communication with existing restorative justice programs is important for learning from others’ experiences, identifying support networks, and developing new strategies for success. Finally, the authors encourage us to take on the challenges we come across, instead of ignoring them, avoiding them or giving up. Pranis reminds us that all of our activities
should work towards strengthening communities, and that “there is no single path to restorative outcomes” (Pranis, 1997b, Pointers in Promoting and Implementing Restorative Justice, point 4).

2.2 Key Decisions during Implementation

Sharpe (1997) offers a general list of key decisions that need to be made in order to develop a restorative community development program. These questions guide the implementation of the program by narrowing the scope of the program, setting boundaries, and “laying the framework” for the initiative:

1. Where should responsibility for such a program lie?
2. How should this kind of work be funded?
3. Why does this program exist?
4. What is required for the program to succeed? (Sharpe, 1997, p. 77)

The author emphasized that there are no right answers to the above questions, but rather that program developers need to determine the answers that best fit their circumstances at that point in time.

Sharpe (1997) also offers a more practical list of key aspects of program development for people for whom this area may not be familiar. The author goes into great detail describing important aspects of program implementation, such as the determining how the program will be structured, how referrals will be received and handled, questions to consider about human resources and employment, and communications.
2.3 “Pitfalls” to Watch For

Sharpe (1997) cautions her readers about dangers to be aware of when developing a restorative justice-based program. Net-widening refers to the concern that providing a restorative justice option to law enforcement, for example, as a diversion program, may widen the reach of the criminal justice system. This occurs when the police refer a minor offence to a restorative justice program rather than dealing with it in a less official way, such as doing nothing. An example of this would be truancy, which is not illegal, but perhaps a caring adult will refer a truant to the local restorative justice program in order to “teach her or him a lesson”. Although this effort comes from a place of good intention, it is important to consider whether or not to accept such referrals; balancing the potential positive outcomes with potentially labelling the youth, the program’s time and resources, and other factors involved in proceeding with a referral.

Labelling is a particularly dangerous component of this net-widening effect. According to labelling theory, when people internalize negative public perceptions and cannot separate themselves from their actions, the person becomes stigmatized in the community, they internalize their label, and it becomes a self-fulfilled prophecy (Williams & McShane, 1999). In other words, if a youth goes through a rigorous and time consuming restorative justice process to deal with a small matter of truancy, this response may be perceived as “overkill” by the youth, it may mislabel this youth as a troublemaker in the community, and may result in just that: a youth who perceives her- or him-self as a troublemaker.

Related to labelling is another pitfall, shaming the offender (Sharpe, 1997). The use of shame is a somewhat contentious issue in the restorative justice field. Although some
practitioners suggest that shame can be beneficial when harnessed properly, according to Braithwaite’s reintegrative shaming theory (Braithwaite, 1989), many practitioners argue that shame is more commonly used harmfully as a tool of retribution, and therefore has no place in restorative practice. Reintegrative shaming theory suggests that the healthiest way for a community to respond to wrongful behaviour is to express denunciation of the act, while still offering compassion and acceptance to the actor (Ahmed & Braithwaite, 2006). For Braithwaite, an important part of this process is the expression of forgiveness and acceptance on behalf of the community (Ahmed & Braithwaite, 2006).

Reintegrative shaming theory is at the heart of many restorative processes because it proposes a way of understanding how restorative processes can reintegrate harmdoers after censuring their behaviour. The challenge with using shame is the manipulation of shaming processes for retributive purposes. Many people have trouble moving beyond their desire for retribution, and see shaming processes as opportunities to integrate punishment into restorative processes (Duff, 2003; McLernon, Cairns, Hewstone, & Smith, 2004; Walgrave, 2004). However, an important principle of restorative justice is to do no more harm (Pranis, et al., 2003), and any use of punishment in restorative processes is inconsistent with this important principle. As such, many practitioners argue that shaming processes should never be used in restorative processes if they cannot be done according to Braithwaite’s theory, which is arguably the only way to use shaming in a healing way. Additionally, many others deny any role at all for shaming in restorative processes (Maxwell & Morris, 2004).

Sharpe (1997) warns new practitioners of the professionalization of restorative practice. The misperception that restorative justice services are best delivered by professionals, such as
those who work within the criminal justice system, can threaten community ownership of
the program, and could lead to co-optation of the restorative justice field by the criminal
justice system. Pranis et al. (2003) emphasize that the values on which restorative practices
are based are innate, and that the skills required to practice are commonsensical, not skills
you need a professional degree to develop. As Pranis et al. (2003) practice it, restorative
justice is about deepening our interpersonal relationships and becoming better community
members. From this perspective, we are all “experts” in the field. The dangers of being seen
as an “expert” are common throughout the social work field, as well as other helping fields,
of course, but the issue is particularly problematic because the role of a restorative justice
practitioner is to guide people to resolve their own conflicts, rather than be themselves a
problem solver, judge, or jury. Although the skills used in many restorative practices are
innate, this is not to suggest that training, practice, and preparation are not necessary. On the
contrary, lay practitioners need to be versed in restorative justice theory and practice, they
need to learn how to practice impartiality, how not to let their own perceptions and
experiences get in the way of good practice, and all practitioners, lay or professional, can
benefit from skills development, practice, and dialogue and reflection on promising
practices.

Restorative justice processes need to be flexible and varied to meet the specific needs of the
situation. An oft-quoted sentiment reminds us of an important lesson for all practitioners in
the helping field. “There are few presumptions in human relations more dangerous than the
idea that one knows what another human being needs better than they do
themselves” (Ignatieff, 1984, p. 11). Sharpe (1997) warns program developers about
routinization, and reminds us that no matter how familiar a situation may seem, it is
important to help guide participants to a solution, rather than offer your own, based on other cases.

Finally, Sharpe (1997) cautions restorative justice practitioners about trying to do too much, too soon. It is easy to get carried away when developing a restorative justice community development program; challenges and issues in the community are glaring you in the face, and you want to address all of them, right away. Sharpe emphasizes the importance of not “overreaching the skill base” of the program (1997, p. 97), and ensuring that the program has appropriate resources, such as staff and volunteer time, before extending the services of the program.

2.4 Survey Research

Two studies suggest that before a restorative justice program is developed, it may be useful to conduct preliminary research to determine the community’s values and opinions regarding justice. In 1994, the Vermont Department of Corrections funded a public opinion survey on crime and corrections (Doble & Greene, 2000). This survey revealed low public faith in the efficacy of the criminal justice system, openness to exploring alternatives to incarceration for nonviolent offenders, and strong support for Vermont’s plans for a restorative justice-based alternative, called reparative boards (Doble & Greene, 2000). The researchers updated their survey findings in 1999 with a second survey, which found increased satisfaction with the criminal justice system after the implementation of the restorative options (diversion programs were implemented in addition to the reparative boards). Survey respondents offered support for the restorative options as the preferred response for a variety of offences, not only because they were less expensive than
incarceration, but because these were seen as more effective, more rehabilitative, and that they “make sense” (Doble & Greene, 2000, p.6).

Holtquist (1999) offers an interesting preliminary survey that could be used before implementing a new community-based restorative justice program. Using a 40-item Likert-type questionnaire, Holtquist surveyed a community about its attitudes and values regarding justice, in order to determine where the community lay on the punitive-restorative spectrum; the purpose of the study was to determine how open that community would be to the principles and values of restorative justice. The survey was conducted in a Midwestern university city. Several of the questions asked about respondents’ attitudes towards the current criminal justice system, for example: “Do you think it is important for the victim to heal when an offense is committed?”; “Do you think offenders are held accountable by the criminal justice system?”; and, “Are you satisfied with the criminal justice system?” (Holtquist, 1999, p. 69-72). The study found that respondents were generally dissatisfied with the criminal justice system and were generally supportive of the “right relations” justice at the heart of restorative justice theory. However, respondents did not agree that relationships exist between offenders and victims, even by virtue of the crime, a fundamental assumption underlying restorative justice theory. Notably, respondents generally disagreed that the stigma associated with the “offender” label should be removed, and there was also little support for the notion of meeting offenders’ needs through justice processes. Likewise, respondents were generally only in favour of healing victims, and not communities or offenders.
Interestingly, I wonder how the results may have changed if the questions were worded more philosophically, for example, instead of asking: “Do you think offenders are treated fairly by the criminal justice system?” (Holtquist, 1999, p. 71), asking, “Do you think offenders ought to be treated fairly by the criminal justice system?” I suspect that asking a more direct question may reveal more about respondents’ attitudes and values than the former, as there would be less interpretation. Furthermore, dissatisfaction with the criminal justice system does not, in itself, suggest support for a more restorative option. By asking the former question, we are not learning the respondents’ attitudes towards the offenders as clearly as we would from the latter question.

2.5 “Community” in Community Development

Thunderbird Restorative Justice (TRJ) is unique from other restorative justice programs in Metro Vancouver because of its focus on community development. During my second practicum placement, I had the opportunity to informally survey many of the Metro Vancouver restorative justice programs to learn about their organizational development and histories. Although other restorative justice-based programs in the region deliver community development-related services, many of them started off as straightforward diversion programs for youth involved in crime and conflict, expanding to community development initiatives after several years of restorative justice work. On the other hand, TRJ’s vision is more broad, with the aim of building community and educating local residents at the same time as offering conflict intervention services. Because of this significant difference, it was important for me, as a researcher as well as a program developer, to reflect on the underlying theory and goals of community development. Kretzmann & McKnight’s (1993) work on
asset-based community development seemed the best place to start in exploring what existing community development theory has to say about implementing a restorative justice program like TRJ. Asset-based community development theory advocates for grassroots organizing, identifying strengths, assets, and other existing resources in the community, and building upon those. This approach is consistent with the values of restorative practice, but does not have the values-based principles on which restorative practice is based. In other words, from a restorative perspective, building community also entails bringing to the foreground the interconnectedness that unites community members, and strengthening social capital through an intentional focus on shared values.

I felt it was important to revisit the discussion of what community is, for two reasons. First, community plays an integral part in restorative practice, which aims to bring together victims, offenders, and “community” to help resolve a conflict. Secondly, the program at the heart of this study is designed in part to develop and strengthen “community”. With this in mind, I read Delanty’s *Community (Key Ideas)* and Bauman’s *Community: Seeking Safety in an Insecure World* (2001). Although it is clear that community is an important concept to restorative justice theory and community development, it remains contentious what community is. Discourse on community is ancient. While some argue that community is an “illusion” we use to “fetishize the face-to-face” (Brent, 2004, p. 213), others argue that community never has, and never will, exist (Bauman, 2001). Bauman suggests, rather, that it is an ideal we continually strive for but will never achieve. In post-modern society, the constant balance we face between security and freedom renders us incapable of ever realizing it (Bauman, 2001). Modernism, and its associated individualism, globalization, and capitalism, are barriers to achieving community, while the insecurity associated with
these phenomena are, at the same time, our motivations for rediscovering it (Bauman, 2001; Brent, 2004; Delanty, 2003).

The security-freedom discussion is unavoidable when community is on the table. Bauman (2001) summarizes the issue.

There is a price to be paid for the privilege of “being in a community”. The price is paid in the currency of freedom, variously called “autonomy”, “right to self-assertion”, “right to be yourself”. Whatever you choose, you gain some and lose some. Missing community means missing security; gaining community, if it happens, would soon mean missing freedom. Security and freedom are two equally precious and coveted values which could be better or worse balanced, but hardly ever fully reconciled and without friction. At any rate, no foolproof recipe for such reconciliation has yet been invented. … We cannot be human without both security and freedom; but we cannot have both at the same time and both in quantities which we find fully satisfactory. (Bauman, 2001, p. 4-5)

As Bauman describes it, the security-freedom problem is irreconcilable with community. This issue comes down to the problem of individualism, and in particular, individual rights versus the good of the community. As a community member in my apartment building, for example, Bauman argues I have lost the freedom (or my “right”) to play music as loud as I want. I would argue, however, that I am more interested in maintaining good relations with my neighbour than I am in playing music loud. In other words, I believe that a necessary component of being a community member is wanting to be in right-relations with your neighbours. As such, acting in the interest of the community does not automatically negate my individual interests as Bauman suggests; in fact, they are one in the same.

At the end of the day, it is hard to deny that there exists a thing that many of us intuitively understand to be community, although what it is lies beyond our reach. Community has been described as a feeling, a social structure, or a geographic location, among other things.
Throughout the discourse on community, it is clear that a common aspect of many interpretations is a sense of belonging (Delanty, 2003). Tönnies described community as an unintentional and “organic” form of social organizing (Delanty, 2003, p. 32), held together by a sense of shared understanding (Bauman, 2001), in contrast to “society”, which is forced and utilitarian (Delanty, 2003). Contrary to Tönnies, Brent (2004) argues that to say community is organic is to suggest that it is something more than simply a social construct, whereas he holds that community cannot exist independent from society. Furthermore, Brent suggests that whether or not community exists is inconsequential; what matters, in fact, is the very real effect it has on our world.

Rather than rejecting community for being an illusion, I would argue that the workings of community opens the way for recognizing how much illusion is part of social and political life. While illusions may be dangerous they cannot be dismissed for being “unreal”. Community, even if an illusion, has very real effects, even if these do not produce utopia. (Brent, 2004, p. 216).

Community can be powerful, and can lead to both great and dangerous things: mutual aid, unity, and crime prevention on the one hand; or homogeneity, exclusion, and nationalism on the other. Additionally, community has very real implications for social policy that must be addressed. An interesting turn in the discourse on the reclamation of community is the issue of what Mowbray (2005) calls “state opportunism” (p. 255). Mowbray questions whether the state’s newfound interest in supporting the redevelopment of community is genuine, or simply “a frugal means to legitimate the state’s continuing commitment to economic fundamentalism” (Mowbray, 2005, p. 255). Is community, in relation to social policy, just a term of convenience? Is it just a selling point, the way advertisers use “new and improved!” to sell the same old tube of toothpaste? Most importantly, Ficher & Shragge (2000) express concern that social workers involved in community development have strayed...
from the original purpose of grassroots organizing and social action, and are now simply maintaining the status quo by keeping social problems in the hands of communities, rather than the State. It is true that restorative justice community development programs aim to support community members to reclaim ownership of their own conflicts. Restorative justice advocate and retired Judge Barry Stuart has said that today’s communities suffer from a “911 Mentality” (Moore & Douglas, 2004): that we have a tendency to relinquish ownership of our conflicts and depend on experts to resolve these conflicts for us. However, restorative justice practitioners recognize that even the strongest community cannot alone address the many social issues that lead to crime, such as poverty, addiction, and abuse. In answer to Ficher & Shragge (2000) and Mowbray (2005), the State still seems to have a significant role to play in rebuilding and strengthening communities.

Individualism also poses problems for community in terms of individual rights, and this is where communitarianism enters the discussion. In this spirit, I was directed towards Etzioni’s works on communitarianism: The Spirit of Community (1993) and Next: The Road to the Good Society (2001). What I took away from Etzioni’s work is a better understanding of the communitarian agenda, which has some common themes to the concept of restorative community development. Etzioni introduces communitarianism in The Spirit of Community, noting the decline of civic participation and overemphasis of individualism in contemporary American society. The answer, he argues, is a move back to smaller, more engaged communities in which a common, secular morality creates strong social bonds and controls that encourage people to be civically-minded, socially responsible, cooperative, and caring. In the second book, Etzioni offers more concrete ideas of how to achieve this moral society, particularly in such a heterogenous and culturally diverse reality.
Etzioni (1993) writes that the loss of community has occurred, in part, due to the proliferation of rights discourse in contemporary society, which has overshadowed the associated issue of responsibilities. For example, we have the right to be tried by a jury of our peers, and yet few of us are willing to shoulder our responsibility to serve on a jury ourselves (Etzioni, 1993). It is no wonder that Bauman (2001) and others see a zero-sum game when balancing security and freedom; they have forgotten that you can only take out of a thing what it is you put into it. Thus, an individualist will never find value in a community until she or he contributes to her or his community by fulfilling her or his responsibilities.

These aspects of the communitarianism - stronger, more engaged and more moral communities, and increased attention to social responsibilities - are what I took to be the main points of the communitarian agenda, and these seemed consistent with the restorative justice movement, as well as the social justice movement in general. Critical responses to The Spirit of Community have highlighted several important concerns about communitarianism that are particularly compelling from a social justice perspective. At the microlevel are concerns that the shift back towards moral living and the restoration of family is synonymous with a shift to more conservative, christian values. Crawford (1996) and McNutt (1997) point out that the tone of Etzioni’s lamentations about the loss of family and degradation of parenting suggests a reversion back to conservative ideals. From Crawford’s perspective, Etzioni over-emphasizes the value of two-parent (and two gendered) homes, undermining advances of the feminist movements, and overlooking issues such as heterosexism, as well as the many issues that lead to single-parenthood.
... [T]his raises a central problem within his agenda, which is that the trouble with strong ‘moral voices’, which Etzioni is seeking to regenerate, is that those who do not accord to the dominant moral values are intrinsically devalued and are deemed to be, or even labelled as, ‘deviant’ or ‘abnormal’. … It is as if decades of feminist research on gender-based violence has been neatly and conveniently brushed under the ‘family’ carpet. (Crawford, 1996, p. 251)

McNutt expresses similar concerns.

There is limited recognition (by the new communitarians) that some of their ideas can have negative consequences. Mainstream community values can create problems for oppressed groups. … Derber (1994) and Walker (1993) argue that new communitarians have failed to deal meaningfully with the economy, poverty, and inequality. (McNutt, 1997, p. 48)

From McNutt’s perspective, the communitarian movement could lead to policies that could both strengthen and threaten social work practice. For example, while communitarians “endorse policies that support family life, such as flexible time, family leave, [and] child allowances … [they] also advocate tightening divorce laws…” (McNutt, 1997, p.50). Another concern about the communitarian agenda at the micro-level is Etzioni’s suggestions for how to actualize a greater emphasis on social responsibilities. In reading *The Spirit of Community*, I envisioned this point as the creation of more and greater opportunities for civic engagement, for example. However, Crawford (1996) summarizes Etzioni’s ideas about what this would look like.

He proposes a number of specific new approaches - including sobriety and drug checkpoints, drug testing of certain public officials, national identity cards, the use of curfews for young offenders, and so on - before setting out the principles with which to secure against sliding down the slippery slope. (Crawford, 1996, p. 257)

These measures strike me as a clear infringement of human rights, and while Etzioni calls for a balance of rights and responsibilities, these do not suggest to me a healthy balance.
These measures seem more punitive in nature, discouraging people from behaving immorally through fear of being caught, rather than encouraging moral behaviour.

At the meso-level, I found several critiques of communitarianism that are common issues associated with the concept of community. In particular, Crawford (1996) highlights the tendency for advocates to romanticize the concept of community, while ignoring its dangers, such as exclusion, nationalism, self-interest (or in his terms, parochialism), and isolationism. Crawford emphasizes that attention must be paid to how these stronger communities relate and work with each other.

At the centre of such an analysis should be the extent to which the values of a given 'community' and its strategies for achieving them, accord with a vision of social justice and public good, so that it does not just have a responsibility to its own members but to a wider 'community of communities': the social. (Crawford, 1996, p.254)

At the macro-level are concerns about the communitarian movement that relate to political power and responsibilities. McNutt (1997) notes that while the field of social work is largely grounded in the liberal notion of state responsibility for social welfare, the communitarian agenda promotes a different notion. Crawford (1996) notes that the shift towards a focus on community implies a shift away from public responsibility for issues such as social welfare.

The ‘community’ constitutes a site around which individuals and groups can be mobilized to take on board greater responsibility for their own well-being and security. This, in turn, sheds the responsibility from the State (and government) as well as the associated cost and the burden of blame for failure. Appeals to ‘community’ thus appear to represent the site at which shifts in the legitimate responsibilities of individuals, organizations, and the state are currently being played out and contested. (Crawford, 1996, p.250)

McNutt (1997) notes that the communitarian movement is consistent with a political philosophy that “rejects many of the assumptions of the welfare state, such as legal rights to
assistance without corresponding responsibilities, unlimited entitlements and national social programs” (p. 52). This position strikes me as inconsistent with tenets of social justice, for example the entitlement of human beings to a minimum standard of living.

It seems clear that communitarianism has much to offer the social justice movement, and yet it also contains several potential threats. These texts led to more questions than answers, such as to what extent we are obligated to participate in community; do we need to get our hands dirty, or is it enough that we vote, and allow the State to do the work for us? These questions are beyond the scope of this study, but they deserve some reflection here because after all, the program created in this study asks community members to engage in many of the ways described by Etzioni, and it is worth considering whether this is asking above and beyond a reasonable expectation of civic participation, and further, what such engagement implies about political responsibilities for social welfare. As such, I reflect on this issue further in the Discussion chapter.

2.6 Justification for Study

When I began my MSW, it was in order to learn how to bring restorative justice into the mainstream, in an effort to see more restorative work take hold in Vancouver. Over the course of my social work education, I continued to volunteer as a restorative justice advocate and practitioner, and it became clear to me that in order for restorative practice to succeed in Vancouver, we would need some basic understanding about implementing a restorative initiative. I came to realize that, rather than guessing at the answers, we needed to ask the fundamental questions: What steps need to be taken to develop a sustainable and successful restorative justice initiative? What are the challenges to developing a restorative
justice program, and what are some promising practices for overcoming those issues? The available literature offers piecemeal reminders and advice, but there is nothing that combines all these recommendations together, while also providing concrete examples from which to learn.
Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Design & Methods

Qualitative research author John W. Creswell describes case study research as “a qualitative approach in which the investigator explores a bounded system … over time, through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information … and reports a case description and case-based themes” (2007, p. 73). The present research is a case study designed to explore the history and development of Thunderbird Restorative Justice (TRJ) from its inception in mid 2006 to October, 2009.

In designing this case study, I took Maxwell’s advice and created a “tentative plan” for my study, but also planned to remain flexible and see where the data led (2005, p. 81). In studying TRJ’s development, I used several sources of information, including written notes from the consultant who initiated the project, minutes from the project’s steering committee meetings, preliminary research conducted during the early stages of the program’s implementation, and semi-structured interviews with those who contributed to the creation of the program. I also interviewed others who were not involved with TRJ’s development, but who have experience in restorative justice program development. This effort to triangulate my data, by obtaining it from varied sources and using multiple techniques, was intended to strengthen the validity of my findings (Maxwell, 2005).

The goal of this case study was to gain insight into how to implement a restorative justice-based community development program in an urban setting like Vancouver, BC. Through the case of TRJ, I hoped to learn what steps need to be taken in order to establish a sustainable restorative justice program, identify major challenges that might be experienced
along the way, and determine some promising practices. In short, I wanted to create something that might help prepare other practitioners, in Vancouver and abroad, who may be interested in developing their own restorative justice-based initiatives. Although the main focus of my study is TRJ, throughout the course of my research I relate my findings to the experiences of similar programs; as such, my research can be described best as a collective case study (Creswell, 2007).

3.2 Study Setting
Located in the north-east end of the city, the Thunderbird community is home to Metro Vancouver's largest social housing development, Skeena Terrace. In 2006, Skeena Terrace was home to 698 tenants, including 322 youth under the age of eighteen. The Thunderbird community is served by an elementary school, a non-profit organization based out of Skeena Terrace called The Hut, and a community centre that is jointly operated by Vancouver Parks & Recreation and a non-profit organization called Thunderbird Neighbourhood Association. Aside from these, there are no other organizations or services within the Thunderbird jurisdiction (see Figure 4.3 on page 122 for the geographical boundaries), although just outside its boundaries there are a variety of family service organizations, such as Frog Hollow Neighbourhood House. Thunderbird teens attend Vancouver Technical Secondary School, one of Vancouver's largest high schools, serving nearly 2000 students.

Though most mistake Thunderbird for an Aboriginal community because of its name, the community, in fact, has a very multicultural population. Thunderbird is comprised of single-family housing, a large seniors' complex and a range of cultures and languages. It is a
predominantly low-income community, and many residents of Skeena Terrace face multiple barriers to participation in society, including addiction, poverty, language, and mental health issues.

3.3 Data Collection

The first stage of data collection involved analyzing all available documents pertaining to TRJ’s inception and development, beginning in late 2006. These records include notes made by the restorative justice consultant hired to develop the program, minutes from steering committee meetings, and various newsletter publications. I also had the opportunity to review a research project that was undertaken by university students during the early stages of the program’s implementation.

In the second stage of data collection, I held one-on-one interviews with TRJ’s steering committee members, who were directly involved with the implementation of TRJ. The steering committee is comprised of volunteers and representatives of TRJ’s partner organizations. These participants gave me first-hand accounts of TRJ’s development.

The third stage data collection was interviews with people not directly involved in TRJ’s implementation. These participants either had experience developing similar restorative justice initiatives, both successfully and not, or else I identified these participants as being key to the program’s success, although they had no direct involvement with its implementation.
3.4 Sampling & Selection Criteria

In identifying participants for this case study, my goal was to learn as many perspectives on TRJ’s development as possible. Coming from a restorative justice perspective, I support strongly the notion that it is hard to know the whole reality of a situation, especially when relying on only a handful of perspectives. As such, I made an effort to interview as many people as possible in order to paint a more holistic picture of TRJ’s implementation. In addition to inviting all steering committee members to participate, I also invited those in the community who are most directly affected by TRJ’s activities.

I used purposeful sampling (Creswell, 2007) to interview members of TRJ’s steering committee. Representatives from almost all\(^5\) of TRJ’s partners were invited to participate in the study. Of the nine steering committee members, not including myself, I obtained consent to interview eight; I did not inform steering committee members about who had or hadn’t agreed to participate. All eight participants contributed to the development of the program, many of them right from the beginning.

After interviewing those at the core of TRJ’s development, I again used purposeful sampling in contacting people I identified as key to TRJ’s success who were not directly involved with its development, as well as restorative practitioners who have experience developing other restorative initiatives. In total, I interviewed seven people external to TRJ’s development.

I planned to use snowball sampling to interview an additional two to three people, members of the Thunderbird community who were not directly involved in TRJ’s development. My intention was to hear local perspectives on the initiative, learn how the program was viewed

\(^5\) The exception is Vancouver Police Victim Services, which was not invited to participate because it’s a relatively new partner and would not have information pertaining to TRJ’s development experience.
by the community, determine their awareness and perception of restorative justice, and gain insight into how they viewed the anticipated success of the program. Unfortunately, I found local residents to be inaccessible, even through local “gatekeepers” (Maxwell, 2005, p. 82) with whom I had established relationships. This barrier was not unforeseen. During the action research project that was undertaken in 2007, student researchers found accessing local residents challenging, and community engagement was an ongoing challenge for TRJ.

In total, I interviewed fifteen adults for this study. Participants in this study reflect a broad range of experiences and relationships to restorative justice development: from representatives of TRJ partnering organizations, to experienced restorative justice practitioners who have implemented programs in the past, both successfully and unsuccessfully, to someone who has seen restorative practice from the funder’s perspective.

3.5 Interviews

In designing the interviews, I was aware of the fact that the majority of people I would be interviewing are people I know personally. Having been actively involved in the restorative justice movement in Vancouver for the past four years, and in the TRJ program specifically for a year, it was unlikely that I would interview people I did not know, except for Thunderbird residents. With this in mind, my invitational interview letter (see Appendix B) was clear about the purposes of my research, my intentions being to learn participants’ perspective on program implementation, the challenges they experienced or witnessed, and their perspectives on overcoming these barriers. I specifically designed the interviews to focus on the experiences of participants for two reasons: first, individual experiences make up reality, and we can only have a full understanding of a phenomenon by learning as many
different perspectives and experiences as possible. More importantly (from a research design perspective), I wanted to ensure that participants did not feel the need to give me specific answers they might think I am looking for. In other words, by encouraging them to tell their story, my hope was that our pre-existing relationship would not alter their answers.

All interviews were conducted one-on-one, and all but one were conducted face-to-face in public settings, such as an office space or a coffee shop. One interview was conducted over the phone because the participant lives outside the Vancouver area. Individual interviews were preferred over focus groups because I wanted to ensure participants would feel comfortable sharing their experiences and opinions freely. Especially for those participants directly involved in TRJ’s development, they may have felt compelled to be overly positive about TRJ’s implementation process if they were surrounded with other TRJ volunteers. Additionally, one-on-one interviews allowed me to accommodate the busy schedules of all my participants, another way in which I made an effort to make participants feel comfortable. Interviews lasted approximately 50 minutes on average, although three interviews were about 75 minutes, and two were just over 30 minutes.

I most commonly met with participants in their offices or work sites. After personal exchange and greetings, I began each interview by thanking the participants for their time, and reminded them of the purpose of the study. In order to ensure participants were informed about my study before giving their consent, I provided them with a hardcopy of the information sheet and consent form (see Appendix C for the adult consent form, Appendix D for the parental consent form, and Appendix E for the youth assent form), and gave them time to read it, if they had not yet done so. After asking if they had any questions, I made
sure they understood, in particular, the limited confidentiality portion of the consent form; that although their names wouldn’t be used, it was possible that those “in the know” could deduce their responses by virtue of their titles or comments. I discussed with all participants that they would have the opportunity to review the transcripts and indicate any comments they made that they prefer to remain anonymous. After clarifying any concerns and questions, participants signed the consent form and were encouraged to keep a copy of the information sheet for their records. At this point, if participants had indicated that they consented to the digital audio recorder, I took it out and turned it on for the remainder of the interview.

The interviews were semi-structured, starting off with broad questions designed to encourage story-telling. I came to each interview with a list of general questions I planned to ask (see Appendix F).6 These questions were based on the common themes and issues that arose from the preliminary documented data, examined in the first research stage. While not all interviews took the same path, these pre-set questions ensured I spoke with each participant on the key issues that came out of stage one, but also allowed for the participant to reveal new issues or challenges that had not yet been addressed. During the interviews, I also asked some participants specific follow-up questions I had identified earlier from the document analysis.

I made an effort to take notes during each interview, even if the digital audio recorder was being used. I mainly noted key topics or issues the participants raised, about which I had further questions, or which raised further questions for other participants. When the

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6 A list of questions were also prepared for Thunderbird community members who were not involved in the program’s development, but these were not used because such participants were not found.
recorder was not being used, my notes were more extensive, but because I do not use pen and paper very often, I found it difficult to record as much as I would have preferred ideally. Often, I used key words from the participant’s responses, and then immediately after the interview, I filled in my notes from memory. Post-interview reflections allowed me to think about the general message each participant had for me, the themes they touched on, which topics they did not touch on, and what questions I had now that the interview was done. The interviews resulted in “rich data” (Maxwell, 2005, p. 110), detailed information in the form of both written notes and, in most cases, transcriptions and audio recordings for further reflection. In total, 11 interviews were recorded and transcribed. Of the four that were not, two participants elected not to be recorded, one interview was done over the phone and so could not easily be recorded, and the forth was done in an outdoor location that made recording difficult.

There was one particularly unique aspect of my interviews. Before each interview was completed, I made sure to ask if there was anything that the participant wanted to discuss that had not yet been addressed. When I was satisfied that the participant had shared everything they wanted to, I thanked them with a personally designed thank-you card (see Illustration 3.1), a homemade miniature bundt cake, and a recipe for the bundt cake on the back. Inside the thank-you card I explained the significance of the gift.

The Bundt Cake

The name “bundt” (boont) comes from the German word “bund”, meaning union. The bundt cake is a traditional German coffee cake served at social gatherings. It's shape - a fluted circle - is symbolic of the interconnection that exists in community. The bundt cake represents a coming together, a celebration of relationships and an affirmation of interconnection. It's circular shape, unbroken, represents the bond shared between those who partake in it.
This sense of union - of community - is at the heart of restorative practice. Without community, we lose an important part of what it means to be human. Restorative justice reminds us of the important part we play as members of our many communities, and encourages us to be open to the support our communities offer.

Thank you for participating in my study. Your support, and your contribution to the field of restorative justice research, is greatly valued. I hope this token gift will convey my appreciation for the contribution of your time, thoughts, and experiences.

The idea for this message and gift came after my preliminary literature review. In particular, Etzioni’s (1993) discussion about the importance of community to contemporary society, and reflections about the loss of community over time (Bauman, 2000; Delanty, 2003; Etzioni, 1993), motivated me to consider the context of my research within the restorative justice community.

I came to realize that when we talk about restorative justice being about more than just conflict intervention, what we are really getting at is that community is at the heart of restorative practice; in fact, the underlying goal of restorative practice is to build and strengthen the relationships that create a sense of community. This is, ultimately, why many restorative justice programs go beyond simple conflict intervention services, and are better understood as community development initiatives. Since this notion of community is so important to restorative justice, it seemed appropriate to confirm and celebrate participants’ membership, and contributions to the restorative justice field.
3.6 Data Analysis & Dissemination

In preparing to analyze my data, I kept in mind the concept of data analysis being like a spiral (Creswell, 2002). I was prepared to start with the written documents, but knew that I would be coming back to them frequently as more data was gathered. Likewise, although I frequently spiralled back to data, it was a forward-moving process, having gained more insight and created a bigger picture of what it was telling me. I never considered one stage of my research “completed”, always leaving open the possibility of gaining more clarity. As one participant in the present study aptly noted, “at the end, you know where to start, and you’re ready to go”. This spiralling approach to data analysis had an interesting parallel to my findings, as will be discussed below. I took time throughout the study to look at data literally first, and then interpretively, but the strength of my findings was found through reflexive analysis. Maxwell reminds his readers that “the researcher is part of the social world he or she studies” (2005, p. 82), and this was a particularly vital thing to keep in mind in this situation, as the focus of my study is a program that I helped create. Through reflexive analysis, my data transformed from banal step-by-step instructions for program development, into something tangible, practical, and realistic for others interested in implementing a restorative justice-based community development program. Creswell calls this “naturalistic generalization” (2002, p. 163), an approach to case study analysis with the view to generate results that others can learn from.

During the first stage of data collection, documents were collected and read through entirely, taking a literal approach (Mason, 2002). In this preliminary reading of the background documents, I made an effort to read with fresh eyes; that is, to take the data at face-value, ignoring for the moment anything else I may have known about the program.
Creswell describes this level of case study analysis as getting the “facts” about the case study (2002, p. 163). Once this first reading was completed, I then reread the documents, making note of common themes or issues that seemed to reoccur. Questions that arose from the documents were noted for follow-up in stage two with the appropriate participants.

Subsequent readings of the documents were done with a more interpretive lens (Mason, 2002), in which I allowed myself to draw connections between the literal text, and what I thought I knew about the context of the program through my year-long involvement.

Throughout the interview process, I periodically returned to the initial documents and read them again interpretively, as more contextual data was gathered. I also reread the documents reflexively (Mason, 2002), putting on my TRJ co-coordinator hat, and asking questions about the relationship between the data and the reoccurring themes, issues, and challenges that had been identified so far. Mason (2002) notes that the keeping of a research journal for further reflection is another source of data, which she calls generated data. My thoughts were sometimes noted in a research journal, although I was not as diligent in this practice as I had intended to be. I found that much of my reflecting was done while I was doing other things, like running or cooking, and so I found it difficult to always record my thoughts at the time of their occurrence.

Near the end of the data collection stage, in May, 2009, I worked with TRJ Co-Coordinator Evelyn Zellerer to prepare a presentation on TRJ’s implementation process for the 2nd International Restorative Practices Conference (Zellerer & Adam, 2009). Preparing this presentation was an excellent opportunity to synthesize the data I had already collected, and discuss it with a broader audience for feedback. We received positive feedback from the
attendees, including many comments that they had experienced the same challenges as TRJ. I and my co-presenter plan to prepare a journal article about our presentation, which will reflect some of the findings discussed here.

Upon completing a draft of my thesis, I contacted participants with the offer to review the preliminary draft of Chapter 4 and Chapter 5, and provide feedback before the final draft and defence. From an ethical perspective, I wanted to ensure participants were accurately represented. I also wanted to continue the spirit of collaboration, transparency, and reflexivity in which I had so far practiced, and also strengthen the validity of my findings; “member checks” (Maxwell, 2005, p. 111) are an established method of testing validity. Participants were contacted only once, and those who expressed interest were given a week to provide feedback. In total, seven participants requested a copy of the draft, and five responded with feedback. All participant feedback was positive, and some minor factual corrections were offered.
Chapter 4: Results & Analysis

In following the development and implementation of Thunderbird Restorative Justice (TRJ), three general areas of data were identified: key steps towards implementation, promising practices or key lessons that were learned throughout the implementation process, and major obstacles that were experienced along the way. During data analysis, it became clear that there are distinct stages that are undertaken in order to implement a program. The following results will be framed through these stages, which have been organized into nine key implementation steps. These steps create a general guide to implementing a restorative justice community development program. The implementation process discussed here reflects the general order in which TRJ was developed. An analysis of this ordering will be offered in the Discussion chapter. Interwoven throughout the description of these key steps are promising practices and key lessons that shaped the direction of the program. I also identify several challenges that TRJ encountered, some of which were underestimated at the outset. Through triangulation, I was able to clarify which of these challenges may be expected by others, and which are more likely unique to this initiative. Direct quotes of participants’ observations, comments, and reflections are interspersed throughout the following chapter. At the conclusion of each steps’ description there is a timeline to reflect key events during that step, followed by an analysis.

In June, 2009, I had the opportunity to present my preliminary findings at the 2nd Annual International Restorative Practices Conference. While synthesizing the data to prepare for

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7 The model presented here was influenced by a final report that was prepared by TRJ Co-Coordinator Evelyn Zellerer for the Vancouver Police Department in early 2008, which included an initial list of implementation steps to date.
the presentation, I worked with TRJ Co-Coordinator Evelyn Zellerer to create a visual model to describe the implementation process involved in creating TRJ (Zellerer & Adam, 2009). Although clear steps were taken towards implementation, the progression was not linear. As with the methodology of this research project, no step was ever “complete”; it was always revisited throughout the implementation process. To reflect this, we chose to echo Creswell’s (2002) image of a spiral to demonstrate that in implementing TRJ, even when a step was accomplished, we always came back to it later on, but from a new and more informed perspective. In fact, from time to time the steps (or the spiral’s coils) overlapped or double-backed.

In this model, there are three main phases of implementation, and each phase is comprised of three steps (see Figure 4.1).

**Phase I: Foundation**
- Step 1: Form Partnerships
- Step 2: Educate & Outreach to Community
- Step 3: Identify Stakeholders & Foster Ownership

**Phase II: Design**
- Step 4: Assess Needs
- Step 5: Create the Restorative Model
- Step 6: Train & Build Local Capacity

**Phase III: Implementation**
- Step 7: Create Administrative Infrastructure
- Step 8: Identify Sustainable Funding
- Step 9: Evaluate & Reflect

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8 A summary of our presentation can be found in Appendix H.

9 In the presentation that we developed for the 2nd Annual International Restorative Practices Conference (see Appendix H), we called Phase I “Engagement” and Phase II “Development”. However, upon further reflection “Foundation” and “Design” seem more appropriate in terms of the overall model.
The first phase was about building relationships, which are at the heart of restorative practice. Through partnerships, and engaging local residents and service providers, we worked to foster a sense of ownership that would help sustain TRJ in the long-term. The second phase was about planning; taking the time to design a thorough strategy, and being intentional about each major decision, were key to the longevity of the TRJ, so that it would exist beyond any one particular volunteer or organization. The third phase was about actually implementing the plan. It was a long, well thought-out process to get to this stage, but by this point a strong foundation and structure were developed, which meant TRJ could outlast the final hurdle it experienced in the last stage of implementation.

4.1 Phase I: Foundation

The first phase of implementation I chose to call *Foundation* because at the early stages of a program’s development, fostering relationships, engaging locals, and creating a place within the existing community is crucial to program survival. In this phase, there are three steps.

- Step 1: Form Partnerships
- Step 2: Educate & Outreach to Community
- Step 3: Identify Stakeholders & Foster Ownership

The value and importance of these early steps should not be overlooked. Although some observers may be surprised by the amount of time TRJ put in to foster community relationships and engage the Thunderbird community, these steps were vital to the program’s sustainability and success.
4.1.1 Step 1: Form Partnerships

The idea for TRJ came in January, 2006, when a Vancouver Police Department (VPD) member obtained funding from the Ministry of Children and Family Development, with the suggestion that it should go towards a youth-oriented pilot project. This VPD officer, who had been involved in the restorative justice movement in Vancouver for several years, recognized the opportunity to initiate a restorative justice pilot project that would be based out of one of Vancouver’s nine Community Policing Centres (CPCs).

The decision to develop the pilot project out of a CPC was based on the premise that the CPCs have capacity and resources that many other existing non-profit organizations do not, by virtue of the CPCs’ relationships with the City and the VPD. A benefit of this decision, from the VPD’s perspective, may have been that they would maintain a role in the development of the initiative, while supporting the creation of a truly community-based program. From the start, the VPD recognized the importance of fostering a program independent from the police. While other programs, mainly in communities with Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), may create police-based programs, a strategic decision was made early on to create a community-based initiative. One participant reflected on this important decision.

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10 The grant was for $50,000, but was used for two separate projects. According to the Restorative Justice Consultant, TRJ was given approximately $30,000 of this grant.

11 Vancouver’s model of community policing is unique in the region. Each CPC is operated independently by a community-based non-profit organization. Each CPC has an operating agreement with the VPD, through which the CPC receives core funding from the city, in exchange for acting as liaisons between the community and the VPD. The VPD assigns a neighbourhood police officer to each CPC.

12 Although CPCs are operated independently, the VPD retains some say in CPC operations due to the nature of their operating agreements.
I [recognize] that there are issues with a restorative justice program if they’re seen to be run from the CPC, it’s not at arm’s length from the police, so you’re sort of bringing that judicial role/function within the police; the perception of the police sphere of influence. That’s not a good thing. I know that the RCMP do it, but I think it’s not a good thing, philosophically, in a democratic society.

Using his relationships in the local restorative justice community, the officer identified and hired Evelyn Zellerer as the restorative justice consultant for the initiative. Evelyn approached the work with the knowledge that to build a solid foundation would take time.

I think that’s one of my gifts is that I have a vision, I see what’s possible, and I inspire people, and I love doing that. But with that comes responsibility, because I can’t hype everybody up and then walk away. So there’s a lot of work that needs to be done. That’s the ethical piece for me, that I have felt I have to continue to the best of my ability, and ensure that a solid foundation is built, and that we build a sustainable program.

After an extensive search and consultation process with several CPCs, one was identified that was interested in collaborating with Evelyn. Hastings Sunrise CPC, which joined the initiative in May, 2006, has a very large jurisdiction that encompasses multiple distinct communities. Together with a CPC representative, Evelyn examined the CPC’s jurisdiction and decided to focus the pilot project on one neighbourhood in order to keep it manageable. The process of narrowing the scope of the project to a specific community helped Evelyn and the CPC determine who next to approach for partnership.

Thunderbird was chosen as the neighbourhood in which to house the pilot project for several reasons. Most importantly, those from the community who were approached by Evelyn and the CPC expressed interest in collaborating early on. Thunderbird was an appropriate choice because it is a high-needs community, it is the home of three established service providers that could potentially serve as partners or ambassadors, and because the

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13 The sense at this time was that the project could be adapted for other neighbourhoods and CPCs in the future once it was established and proven.
call volume from this neighbourhood to the VPD was exceptionally high, indicating a significant level of crime and conflict. The local community centre, Thunderbird Community Centre (TBCC), had been requesting a dedicated “beat cop” because youth crime, including drug trafficking, arson, and graffiti, was rampant and interrupting operations at the centre. Thunderbird also made an ideal location for the pilot project because it was a community with which the CPC was interested in forming stronger ties. TBCC was motivated to get involved, as one participant reflected, because:

"legal “justice” - in quotation marks - has not worked particularly well in this community. We have a lot of immigrants that come from places in the world that have repressive, sort of paramilitary - if not military - justice systems, so they don't function very well with authority figures."

After a presentation and information session with staff and the board of directors, TBCC became the second partner in September, 2006.

Throughout the course of the first phase of implementation, more partners were engaged through a variety of activities (discussed further in Step 2). Ultimately, TRJ developed six partnerships: the CPC; TBCC, which is jointly operated by Vancouver Parks & Recreation and Thunderbird Neighbourhood Association, both of whom are formal partners; Skeena Terrace Tenants Association, which operates The Hut, a non-profit organization based in a small amenity building inside Skeena Terrace; the VPD; and Vancouver Police Victim Services. By “formal partners”, I mean that high-ranking (where applicable) representatives from each organization expressed support for the initiative, and each partnering organization has at least one representative on the TRJ steering committee (the development of the steering committee will be discussed in further detail in Step 3). Each partnering...
organization has a unique relationship with TRJ, including varying levels of engagement. Some participants saw lower levels of engagement as problematic at times.

I really think a [TBCC] staff member needs to take way more of a lead. Like, we have no one from TBCC right now … No one from TBCC [staff] is in the middle of the hub of what we’re doing. I think that’s hurting us, and so I think we need someone, a staff member, or a volunteer, someone down there, who’s taking way more leadership in the development of it.

### Figure 4.3: Key Events in Step 1 - Form Partnerships

- Hastings Sunrise CPC partners
- TBCC partners
- Skeena Terrace Tenants Association partners
- VPD partners
- Vancouver Parks & Recreation partners
- Vancouver Police Victim Services partners
- Proposal submitted to BC Housing for partnership

#### 4.1.2 Analysis of Step 1

**A. Partnerships lead to ownership**

I found that partnerships with local organizations, service providers, and community members are key to developing a sustainable program because they create shared ownership and accountability. From the beginning, Evelyn recognized that in order for a restorative
justice-based community development project to be sustainable, ownership must lie within the community. “It was wonderful,” one participant remarked, “because all along we were not only setting up a program, but building relationships, which ultimately is how you set up a program, I believe”. Each time a new organization was approached for inclusion, it was always done in terms of collaboration and partnership. This was intentional; it created a sense of shared ownership early. For example, in May, 2009, TRJ prepared a proposal to formally invite BC Housing to partner with the project. The language of this proposal emphasized that BC Housing would be held mutually accountable for the success of the program, it would not be a simple fee-for-service arrangement, in which BC Housing would have no ownership or stake.

B. Structures and personnel may create challenges

One of the challenges TRJ experienced associated with forming partnerships is managing the many different organizational structures of the partnering agencies. For example, it was quite clear what was involved in order to give the VPD a voice on the steering committee because of the VPD’s rigid structure and hierarchy; but it was much less clear in determining who, if anyone, would be best to represent Vancouver Parks and Recreation, which had a stake in TRJ, but which is structured more informally. These different structures also meant that determining proper protocol for communicating with the staff of partnering organizations was different for each organization. While it may have been appropriate to speak directly to the staff of one partnering organization, it was important in some other situations to approach the person at the top of the hierarchy first, and ask her or him to communicate on TRJ’s behalf.
We feel uncomfortable to a point, going directly to staff. What do we do in a case… of an organization that’s a key partner, and … [it] is not as active… as we would like. Do we go directly to staff? Is that undermining [the executive director’s] authority and the hierarchy?

The above issue was complicated by changes in personnel within partnering organizations. The nature of TRJ’s partnerships changed over the course of the project when there were staff changes in the partnering agencies. For example, between 2007-2009, the neighbourhood police officer at the CPC changed three times, and the sergeant in charge of community policing changed nearly as many times. Meanwhile, the VPD youth referral coordinator, whose job it is to liaise with diversion programs and refer cases as appropriate, also changed three times, requiring TRJ to re-educate and rebuild relationships with the new referral coordinator each time. TRJ’s relationship with the VPD changed again in November, 2007, when two VPD officers officially joined the TRJ steering committee, one of whom replaced the neighbourhood police officer and joined as the officer formally assigned to the program. TRJ was fortunate that every time there were staff changes at the VPD, the new contact was supportive of the initiative, and for the most part, already informed about restorative justice. A participant reflected on the genuine spirit of collaboration with which the VPD engaged the initiative.

It was never the police running it or owning it. This is sometimes unusual … so I really want to say for the record, I am so impressed with the VPD. They’ve been incredibly supportive … At one point all of [my contacts within the VPD ranks] changed at once, and that could have been a moment of “oh my God! We’re about to lose the VPD!”, or it could have been very very challenging. They all were amazing.

This challenge is not unique to TRJ. In fact, in BC, most communities with RCMP detachments experience turnover every two years. One participant recalled hearing frequent
concerns from CAP programs along these lines; that relationships had to be rebuilt every
time the local detachment, most commonly RCMP, experienced turnover.

Another change in personnel at the partner level occurred with TBCC. When the executive
director returned from temporary leave and chose not to take an active role in the TRJ
steering committee, some participants perceived this partnership to be weakened. Although
the steering committee felt it did as much as possible to keep TBCC staff informed about the
project, some participants perceived that communication to TBCC staff was inconsistent.

We have experienced [communication to TBCC staff] is not impeccable; we have
experienced it has been less than ideal, and sometimes not at all. So that’s been
the diminishment of yes, we would have had more of the staff and volunteers,
and … come to think of it … [it] may have helped with our community
engagement involvement. … That would have been very helpful for us because
they’re in the heart of the community.

C. Open lines of communication are vital

TRJ made an effort to ameliorate the above issue by keeping the lines of communication
open with TBCC. There were conversations between TRJ and the appropriate TBCC staff
about how best to communicate updates on the program’s development to staff and
volunteers. These discussions were clearly helpful, as evidenced by TRJ advertisements in
the TBCC newsletter. Also helpful in this process was having a representative of the
Thunderbird Neighbourhood Association on the steering committee, who was able to bridge
the relationship between the TRJ steering committee and TBCC staff. On-going
communication with local actors and power holders is a valuable strategy for addressing this
issue, and will be discussed in more detail below. These open lines of communication also
helped ensure that new personnel in partnering organizations were up-to-date with TRJ’s
development.
D. Qualities of a good partner

There were certain qualities that Evelyn looked for while forming partnerships. In considering her first partnership, Evelyn looked for a CPC that, first and foremost, was willing and interested in collaborating to create a restorative justice initiative. Some participants reflected on the characteristics that made this CPC an ideal partner, including its reputation for being a high-functioning and collaborative organization, its healthy relationships with the communities it serves, and its capacity, such as human resources, to support a pilot project. In other words, when looking for a new partner in the community, participants suggested that partnering organizations need to have enthusiasm for the initiative, capacity to contribute to its development, and an open and collaborative attitude.

Balanced with the need for a partner with capacity is the need for flexibility. Several BC communities that employ the RCMP as their local police force use a scripted conference-style model for restorative practice. In some cases, the local RCMP won’t refer to restorative justice programs unless they use this one model, and follow the parameters set out by CAP guidelines, which among other things, limits the types of issues restorative justice programs may address (see Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General, 2004). One participant commented:

> Sometimes the RCMP, in terms of a small community, bring tremendous capacity: dollars, staff, training, that may not be present in the community. So, sure, maybe it’s not the best model, but it’s better than nothin’.

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14 The scripted Community Justice Forum (CJF), which is based on Australia’s Conferencing model, was adopted by the RCMP as the preferred model for RCMP-referred cases (Deukmedjian, 2008). The RCMP offer training on this restorative justice approach in many of the communities that employ RCMP as local police. The first CJF was held in Sparwood, BC, in 1995 (Deukmedjian, 2008).
It is possible many of those communities are satisfied with the CJF, however, it is unfortunate that in some cases, local programs are in the position of sacrificing flexible practice in order to attain the capacity they need to deliver their service.

Notably, in identifying potential partners, TRJ did not focus on formal political power or influential connections. This is a strategic decision that influenced the direction of the program. Evelyn was intentional about her ground-up approach to developing TRJ.

I guess that’s another thing I’m proud about, going back to your original question, is this has been not political at all. ... In fact, I very consciously ... work under the radar screen a lot. I don't politicize, and I only go up the ranks when it’s appropriate and necessary and ethical that I need to do that. ... I just went out and did a scan of the community. ... it was just going to meetings and meeting people... and being as open and as inclusive as possible.

A further analysis of this decision will be offered in the Discussion chapter. TRJ did target local residents with informal power and authority, which is described in more detail in Step 3.

In developing partnerships, what worked particularly well for TRJ was to have a leader who was familiar with restorative justice praxis, and at least one other leader who knew well the various systems in which the program operated. For example, it was integral to the success of the initiative to have a representative of the CPC on the TRJ steering committee. This volunteer understood the CPC structure in Vancouver and could offer insights and suggestions because of that specialized knowledge. Likewise, the local community leader had valuable knowledge about the internal operations of Skeena Terrace and BC Housing in general. She understood how the system worked, and in what ways TRJ might fit within

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To my knowledge, no research has been done evaluating community or program satisfaction with the CJF model in BC.
that system. Of course, Evelyn brought knowledge about restorative justice theory, and how to implement it in a good way. A participant with a background in restorative justice development agreed that this approach was helpful in her experience.

I think that’s a great combo in most cases: Someone who knows the system, and someone who knows restorative justice. That’s what would give you integrity in your program, because if you’re just one or the other, there’s more limitations you face. Restorative justice practitioners can be accused of this, and it’s sometimes true that they are naïve to the realities of certain contexts, and with all their enthusiasm for restorative justice they plough ahead without considering a particular context or getting the buy-in that might be required.

E. Find your champions

During this step, Form Partnerships, TRJ made a conscious decision to work with champions (Pranis, 1997b). When there was hesitation or disinterest from a potential partner, TRJ steering committee volunteers kept their hands extended, but moved forward. Not all groups that were approached were interested in partnering with the project. The first CPC that Evelyn approached turned down the opportunity. Thunderbird Elementary did not join the initiative, though elementary school staff members were always invited to participate and have their voices heard during Step 2. TRJ steering committee made a firm decision not to hold up the project just because this one institution was not on board. TRJ approached BC Housing for potential collaboration in the fall of 2008, and when initial contacts expressed interest in the initiative, the TRJ steering committee celebrated that a new champion may have been found. Unfortunately, as of October, 2009, no response had been made to TRJ’s formal proposal, which was submitted in May of that year. As Kay Pranis suggested during peacemaking circle training, “go where it’s open”; as such, the partnerships that were formed were with committed volunteers who had credibility within the community, authority within their organizations, and were willing to commit to the initiative.
Interestingly, one participant wondered if the initiative would have had more success with Thunderbird Elementary and the local high school if the steering committee had approached the Vancouver School Board directly. The participant's thinking was that a Superintendent or other high-ranking official may have been supportive of the project, and could have persuaded or compelled the elementary and high schools to collaborate with TRJ. However, not only would this approach have been contrary to the restorative justice principle of voluntary participation, but also it is unlikely that such a forced relationship would have produced the same fruits as a truly authentic relationship.

F. Be aware of context
In entering a community to propose a collaborative project like TRJ, a lesson that stands out from the data is the importance of being aware of, and exploring, existing relationships and collaborative pasts between local service providers and organizations. Evelyn had to be aware that TRJ was not developing in a vacuum, and in fact relied upon existing relationships in order to network and strengthen partnerships. For example, it was mentioned above that the CPC had an interest in strengthening its relationship with the Thunderbird community, although it had collaborated with TBCC and The Hut in the past. Meanwhile, TBCC and Thunderbird Elementary, which are physically joined on shared property, have a unique relationship because many of their individual decisions impact one another. In the case of TRJ, no specific animosities between these two organizations were offered during the course of data collection, but this may not always be the case, and being aware of these relationships is helpful to the person bringing together the partnering organizations: not in order to avoid potential conflict, but to be aware of relational context rather than work blindly or naively unaware of it. If local organizations hadn't collaborated
in the past, perhaps there was a reason. Not only do partnering organizations have a stake in
the initiative, but also they have their relationships with each other at stake. There is always
risk in participating in a collaborative venture such as a restorative community development
initiative. It is important to keep in mind the relationships that precede the program, and
those that may outlive the initiative as well.

4.1.3 Step 2: Educate & Outreach to Community

Once Evelyn formed partnerships with two lead organizations, the CPC and TBCC, she was
prepared to engage the community through workshops and information sessions. The
partnerships helped clarify where to begin the outreach and education step, and also meant
she already had some networks in which to begin fostering new relationships. In January
and February, 2007, TRJ held two workshops at TBCC; the first was targeted towards staff
and volunteers from the two established partner agencies (TBCC and the CPC), while the
second was open to all local residents and people who otherwise frequented the
Thunderbird neighbourhood. Each workshop was three and a half hours, during which
Evelyn worked with attendees to identify predominant issues and concerns faced by the
community (more on this in Step 4), and also introduced the philosophy of restorative
justice, informed attendees about the pilot project, and invited participation in and feedback
about the initiative. The steering committee considered these workshops successful, with
approximately sixty attendees between the two events. One participant reflected that
although there was plenty of interest in this restorative justice “thing”, there was less clarity
about what was being suggested.
The messaging was similar from everywhere we got: “yes, there was a need”; and “yes, this sounds really interesting”; and “yes we’re interested to move forward”; and … “it’s really vague and we’re not really quite sure what you guys are talking about”.

The reason for this lack of clarity was Evelyn’s insistence that TRJ be something co-created with the community, rather than a pre-determined program imposed on the community. This decision will be discussed in more detail in Step 5.

Another major effort was made to engage local residents and organizations serving the Thunderbird community when it came time to offer restorative justice training. In December, 2007, the steering committee organized a two-hour information session to reintroduce the concept of restorative justice, inform residents about the initiative, and announce the opportunity for restorative justice peacemaking circle training. TRJ hoped to train not only potential volunteers, but also other stakeholders who would benefit from being informed about how the program operates, such as community members, service providers, and people who work in the community. The TRJ steering committee promoted the opportunity “as widely as possible” in order to encourage broad participation, with key organizations and service providers being actively targeted. Those that were directly approached for participation, other than the existing partner organizations, include the following: the local seniors’ centre; administrators, teachers, and counsellors from Thunderbird Elementary and Vancouver Technical Secondary School; BC Housing; City Reach, a non-profit youth and family development organization operating just outside TRJ boundaries; and local politicians. A local leader and a local youth worker, who sat on the steering committee, were tasked with identifying and inviting local residents, especially youth. In order to limit barriers to participation for local residents, training was offered for
free to all participants, food was provided for each day of training, and free child care was offered by TBCC. In total, fifty people were invited to attend the training; sixteen people attended the December information session, and nineteen people attended all three days of training. Training participants included a couple of Skeena Terrace residents, a local youth, a few TBCC staff, some CPC volunteers, and all TRJ steering committee members.

In an effort to engage local youth, Evelyn recruited a colleague to initiate a youth circle in April, 2007. TRJ hoped that this person would have credibility with the youth because he is an ex-offender who spent time in prison. Although ten youths turned out for the event, it did not go as planned.

We did a circle that… was the hardest circle I’ve ever been in. That’s one mistake I’d do differently. The Community Centre brought pizza, so I wasn’t involved in the logistics of that, but it turned out that it arrived after we had started the circle. So we got the kids there, we got the kids in a circle, we did [an icebreaker] and they started to really get into it, and we started to build … the beginning of the ceremony, and just moving towards the relationships to get into the dialogue - and the pizza arrived. … We made a mistake, we should not have disengaged from the process, but it threw us all off and … we took a break so they could eat … Oh my god, they took the pizza and ran. Wow, okay then.

Evelyn’s colleague later made an effort to establish relationships with the youth by spending time in the community informally. Unfortunately, just as he began to make headway, the progress was interrupted when he was deported from Canada.

Creating relationships with local youth continued to be a challenge. In planning the youth engagement activities, there was an issue regarding whether TRJ volunteers should organize activities themselves, or focus on participating in existing opportunities in the community. Some participants felt that in order to be successful, TRJ volunteers would have to offer their own activities, in order to distinguish themselves from TBCC. On the other hand, one
participant commented that while the ideas for activities were welcome, he felt TRJ volunteers did not appreciate everything that was involved in executing such events.

For instance, they wanted to take the kids bowling, they wanted to take them out to wherever, and it’s going to be the Thunderbird Centre, we’re going to partner up, but we have things we have to do, and that includes: If we want to take someone out, one of us has to be there, we have to get consent forms filled out, we have to get risk management filled out, it’s like there are ten different forms we have to fill out, parental consent, all that, plus they need their own from the VPD, to take them out. The VPD have to get crim checks for the City of Vancouver, for us, it’s just a whole - I’m down to do it, but we have to get that done first. And we can do this, it’s a great idea.

A new approach to youth engagement was taken in October, 2008. Two TRJ volunteers, in cooperation with a local youth worker, committed to organizing activities for local youth on a weekly or bi-weekly basis. They managed to participate in a few activities, including a basketball game and a game of pool. Unfortunately, this initiative was not considered successful overall. “So it hasn’t been as successful in that sense as we’d want it to be. But at least our faces are recognizable or whatever, so it’s had that impact, which I guess is good.”

Although the volunteers met in the community several times, youth did not always turn out for the activities. Sometimes, there was miscommunication between the two volunteers and the youth worker who, from time to time, was offering programming at the same time as the intended TRJ activities. I seemed to be receiving mixed messages about this issue, because although TRJ volunteers were told when to attend events, those times did not always end up being convenient:

But the thing was, [the TRJ volunteer] was coming out on Tuesdays, that’s when we … are here and the kids are all here, but we do a lot of our volunteer stuff on that night, and the first couple of times it didn’t really work. …

[So is there a day during the week where you do a regular rec thing that would be really convenient for people to come in?]
Well every Friday we are playing basketball from 8-10. … I think definitely drop-in times where it’s specifically for that. **The Tuesdays was good too** …

The participant contradicts himself, first by saying that Tuesday was a bad day for the TRJ youth outreach volunteers to visit the community, and then by suggesting that Tuesdays would be a good choice for future initiatives. This is an example of the mixed messages TRJ youth outreach volunteers were encountering, and it suggests that there is more to the problem than just incompatible schedules. Participants did not offer insight into what else was interfering with those youth outreach efforts. It may have been that those who run local youth outreach programs felt defensive or offended by TRJ’s interest in offering its own youth engagement activities, or perhaps the local youth workers were simply more interested in focusing on their own work than collaborating with TRJ. It would have been consistent with restorative practice for the TRJ volunteers to hold a dialogue with local youth workers to figure out and resolve whatever the impediment was. Unfortunately, feeling disappointed by their perceived lack of success, the two volunteers had difficulty re-motivating themselves after the Christmas break, and the effort was not resumed in 2009.

In an effort to reach out to the community and foster relationships, TRJ volunteers also attended community events in Thunderbird. For example, in May, 2009, BC Housing unveiled a new park to honour the victims of the 2006 Etibako fire (see Illustration 4.3). TRJ volunteers also attended Thunderbird’s 2009 Canada Day celebration. Unfortunately, TRJ was not always aware of events taking place in the community, a challenge that would have been ameliorated by having a regular presence in the community, which will be discussed in more detail below.
By November, 2008, the steering committee decided it needed a person in the community on a consistent basis who could build relationships with residents informally, and be the “face” of TRJ. Unfortunately, in order to hire someone for this liaison position, core funding needed to be secured. This tension between fostering strong relationships and securing sustainable core funding became a regular challenge for TRJ during the later stages of its implementation (discussed further in Step 8).

Later in the program’s development, the steering committee began outreach at the political level for support and funding. On behalf of the steering committee, Evelyn met one-on-one with several politicians to inform them about the program and emphasize the need for funding. TRJ collected letters of support from federal politicians, including MPs Libby Davies and Shane Simpson. A small group of TRJ volunteers began working closely with
municipal politicians and staff in 2009 after the program was turned down for a municipal grant (more on this in Step 8). In addition to political figures, TRJ volunteers made an effort to form relationships with as many provincial funders as possible. Evelyn directly contacted several government employees to introduce herself personally, inform them about the project, learn more about funding opportunities, and initiate a connection whenever possible.

4.1.4 Analysis of Step 2

A. Stay open to possibilities
A valuable lesson to be gleaned from this step is the importance of remaining open-minded when offering restorative justice to a community. From the beginning, TRJ was not just
about “teaching a person to fish”, as one participant noted, but instead, “first of all, you would want to know, do they even want to fish?” In other words, the workshops were as much about education as they were about exploring what the community’s needs are, and how the community would like to see those needs addressed, with restorative justice being one tool available to them. It was mentioned above that some restorative justice practitioners see restorative justice as a panacea for all social issues (see page 15); during this Educate & Outreach to Community step, participants reflected that it is vital to remain open-minded and not enter a community with the assumption that restorative justice is the solution the community wants. A participant with experience in restorative justice development reflected on his experience in facilitating this dialogue with community.

I think [I] persuaded them that what would be helpful, would be to not jump to some solutions if you will, but to bring people together, to talk about restorative justice … start looking at what people were looking for. What I brought was maybe some ideas about planning, that’s vision-first, process not answers, … and … to bring people together and see if there’s a common vision for restorative justice … because if there isn’t - give up. Don’t push your vision on them.

B. Inclusiveness is a restorative principle

From the outset, TRJ was aware of the importance of inviting broad participation and being inclusive (Bright, 1997; Pranis, 1997b; Van Ness & Strong, 2002).

There was some targeting going on, on my part, it wasn’t just flapping around in the wind without caring. I was very conscious at many levels, drawing people in. But on the other hand, most of the time it was allowing it to unfold in a good way. Again, that’s the impeccability of it, it wasn’t about who knows who, or the politics, or who’s rich or who’s poor: it wasn’t about ethnicity or age or sex or - it wasn’t any of those factors. It was always, always, always, about creating a restorative justice program following the values and principles of the vision of restorative justice as a broader framework. We’ve always done that, and that’s why I’m so proud of this.
TRJ's strategy for promoting its workshops was described earlier; the steering committee did everything it could think of to invite broad participation, including targeting key leaders in the community, formal groups, TBCC patrons, and service providers accessed by local residents. Steering committee members varied their promotional strategies. They used flyers, word of mouth, and also identified key stakeholders and leaders within the community to be invited directly. TRJ also made use of free advertising options through its partnerships, such as the CPC and TBCC newsletters.

C. Connecting with locals was a recurring hurdle
Throughout the course of TRJ's development, it was clear to the steering committee that engaging community members, and youth in particular, was going to be a fundamental challenge. TRJ research volunteers experienced the same difficulty during a participant action research initiative in 2007 (to be discussed further in Step 4), and this was also a challenge I experienced with this study. This impediment was not unique to TRJ. Several participants commented that TBCC also struggles to reach local youth and their families. One participant felt that although alternative engagement strategies were offered to TRJ, these were not always pursued.

On the very first day I [attended a steering committee meeting], they were quite surprised by some of the answers I was giving them, just some of the things they didn't think of. … I think if they had more people going door-to-door and asking, like doing a little survey and finding out what people think, that might have been very beneficial because you might have gotten that answer beforehand.

One of the reasons that TRJ did not act on suggestions like the one offered above is the aforementioned tension between engaging locals and securing core funding. The TRJ steering committee felt that if it could obtain stable funding, then it would have the capacity
to engage locals in the proactive way suggested above. Until that funding became available, 
the steering committee did not have the volunteer resources to dedicate to such a thorough 
engagement approach.\textsuperscript{16} This was a strategic decision that the TRJ steering committee 
made, to prioritize the development of program details over ongoing community 
engagement once an initial engagement campaign was completed. While some steering 
committee members felt that engagement could happen with or without funding, these 
volunteers were not initiating engagement activities on their own (this issue will be 
addressed in further detail in \textit{Step 3}).

Although TRJ and TBCC managed to engage some local youth, several participants noted 
that those who turned up to social events and activities were not the ones who TRJ 
volunteers felt needed their services most.

\begin{quote}
The outreach we’ve been doing so far has just been sort of “playing”. The kids 
who are connected are basically all the, for lack of a better term, the “good kids” 
in the community. … The “good kids” are the ones doing well in school, they’re 
the ones volunteering out there; they’re involved with the community. … They’re 
probably going to graduate high school, they’re not involved in drugs or gangs or 
anything like that. Whereas the other kids … y’know, they’re out riding, like, 
motorcycles around the neighbourhood, and no one can figure out how they got 
these motorcycles because they’re $3,000 things and they’ve got no money, so 
they’re probably stolen or whatever. So there’s a pretty clear divide between 
“good” and “bad”.
\end{quote}

It is the at-risk youth population who are disengaged from the community that TRJ wanted 
to attract, and this population was not reached.

\texttt{[TBCC is] doing an awesome job with the kids. But we lose the kids around 12, 
13. Puberty kicks in, they have other interests. So it’s hard to hold them after 
that, and [the Youth Incentive Program] is our initiative for that direction. That}

\textsuperscript{16} It’s worth noting that the approach that research volunteers used during the participant action research was 
not dissimilar from the one described above, and yet those volunteers still reported little success engaging local residents.
holds them until about 17… we have a lot of success now with employment. [One particular youth worker] was involved directly with employing six of his guys.

D. Who are we targeting, and how often?

In hindsight, it is clear there was a need for additional and ongoing education in the community. The lacklustre participation of locals in the program, as well as the perception at times that the program was at a standstill, may have been improved if TRJ had strategically planned a frequent and consistent community education and engagement campaign. The approach to implementing TRJ was very organic and open.

It was an evolution of walking down a path. … There’s a general process that we’re aware of, but really when you’re walking along the path, … there’s many forks you come across and you don’t know in advance what each fork will be, or who will walk beside you, or for how long they’ll walk with you. … So we hit that fork, we had eight forks of eight CPCs, and it turned out through research and through conversations and through presentations … then we ended up down this one fork. I couldn’t have predicted that in advance. So now a whole path is opening up … It’s a co-creation, that’s the word. It was completely co-created at every step of the way, it was co-created with me, with the partners, and I would say with spirit… Most of the time it was allowing it to unfold in a good way.

The flexibility inherent in this approach is consistent with restorative values, and reflects the “go where it’s open” disposition. However, some, more concrete strategizing for on-going community engagement and education may have counteracted some of the challenges TRJ faced later on, such as having trouble receiving community referrals, and some people’s perception that TRJ was stalled during Step 7.

When the program ultimately received a referral from the community, those involved in the matter were not interested in participating in a circle because of some inaccurate information they received about restorative justice from a friend who was a lawyer:
The one time I tried to contact someone for you guys’ first project here, I never got a response from the mom. … I phoned probably two times … and I actually had a relationship with her. She still didn't phone me back.

“Yeah,” commented another participant, “educating the parents, of course, because they’re signing over everything for their child. You have to, you have to. I bet none of them know what restorative justice is.” It is unfortunate that TRJ did not have the opportunity to proceed with the above-mentioned referral, as the situation was ideal for a circle.

There was an incident already that we were trying to send over. … It was one night we were playing basketball, and then all of a sudden one kid’s coming from outside, saying … “Come quick! There's someone who got hit.” So we come outside and one of the boys is down and he’s bleeding on his face and stuff like that, and it turns out one of my players who had left and gone home, saw him and did it. I was confused and it was weird too, because the boy who did it never gets in trouble. He’s got a temper, but he takes it out in sports and stuff like that, but he was very - the police came and they arrested him, and he gave his story, and apparently the young one had threatened to set [the other one's] younger brother on fire or something like that. It was referred to restorative justice, and it was a local thing, too - I think something like that even … it doesn’t have to be a big case.

The TRJ steering committee may have had better results with its education campaign if it had focused on identifying informal groups of stakeholders, such as parents, when more formal groups and service providers proved unresponsive.

E. Overcoming the ghosts of past efforts

Not all stakeholders were optimistic about TRJ; one explanation for the hesitation or skepticism with which some participants approached the program is that other restorative justice initiatives failed to thrive in Vancouver in the past. One participant recalled a restorative justice initiative that had been attempted years ago in a neighbouring community's high school. She reflected that there had been lots of excitement about the project, but no follow-through or long-term funding, and the initiative had waned by the end
of the school year. This participant was skeptical that TRJ would perform better because, from her outsider perspective, the steering committee hadn't made enough effort to be inclusive, as evidenced by the lack of participation by Thunderbird Elementary, the local Parents’ Advisory Council, and the local high school. Whether or not this perception was accurate, at the very least it speaks to the need for TRJ to better promote the program and its activities to the community on a more regular basis. Unfortunately, this impression had a negative impact on the program’s chances of receiving community referrals.

F. Diversity is key to engagement success

Another lesson to learn from this step is varying the engagement approach. This important message was echoed by a participant with years of community-based restorative justice development experience who said, “Be relevant. Don't get hooked on a particular way of doing things. Use the values and figure out what the needs of your underlying community are, and figure it out.” It was clear to the TRJ volunteers that reaching the youth was imperative, and they took several different approaches to make that connection. TRJ invited youth to general information sessions, and when that did not work, they found someone with whom the youth might connect, and spoke through him. When that opportunity came to an end, they tried to offer activities to foster relationships with the youth. One participant reflected on how flexible TRJ had been in encouraging youth participation.

It was so difficult to get the youth involved, and I don't know how to change that … Maybe they’re not brought into the meetings, maybe they don't feel comfortable being there, maybe it's because they're there and it's all adults and they can't relate to what we're talking about. So I think we need to work more with the youth workers, with the Youth Leaders that we have in our facilities, and make presentations to the youth and get their feedback. … Maybe the time isn't right, maybe they're not ready to step into as an involved role as we might
want; then what is the role they’d be involved in? I think that has to come from them, with a little bit of guidance or direction from us.

New ideas for engaging the hard-to-reach youth arose later in the program’s development, such as arranging a RestART mural or Blackbook sessions. Unfortunately, it was again funding that prevented this idea from being fully explored.

The Thunderbird community has proven to be a challenging one to penetrate; attendance was not always high at outreach events, and there was little participation by community members outside of the three information sessions. It is possible that TRJ might have been more successful reaching community members if they had varied their engagement approaches as they did when trying to access local youth. Perhaps instead of an information session, some other event would have been more appealing to Thunderbird residents. For example, two local residents suggested that a community barbecue or block party would be an ideal way to introduce the program to the community and begin to build relationships with locals.

I told them in order to be successful in this area ... you have to make yourself a part of that community. The barbecue was an idea, to have a barbecue and just the whole, they had all these great ideas but they didn't follow-up on what you’re supposed to do to get there. ... Just some of that, make yourself familiar, like, sitting in The Hut is not going to - [the steering committee was] planning, but for a year and a half you didn't once go to the doors. That's one of the things. Just, meet people, meet people.

G. Accept that change takes time

At times, community members and TRJ volunteers felt frustrated with the fact that social change takes time. In particular, the restorative justice movement requires a cultural shift in

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17 Blackbook sessions are voluntary, weekly discussion and artwork sessions for youth involved in graffiti, generally led by artist-mentors and RestART facilitators. For more information, RestART was described on page 28.
how we understand and react to conflict in a fundamental way. One participant reflected on the experience of creating cultural change in the Thunderbird community: “It’s got to be sustainable, and you know it might take time before it works. It’s not part of the culture.” Spirits seemed to decline when TRJ did not take hold right away. For example, some people who initially supported TRJ became frustrated when the program was not operational within the first two years; their support dwindled and they seemed to lose faith in the initiative.

[Do you think Thunderbird Restorative Justice is going to be around in 5 years?]

The way it’s going now, no. From what I’ve seen so far, no. … It’s already been together for three years, and it should have been done already. Three years is a long time, a very long time. … I think for [TRJ], they have to make themselves known in order to be successful. It could be very successful because you’re starting with a very tight-knit group in this area, especially with Skeena Terrace.

TRJ’s expectation was that once the program was operational, the results would speak for themselves, and it would be able to demonstrate the strengths of restorative practice. However, getting the program up and running took longer than anticipated (as will be discussed in Step 7), and in the meantime, some people in the community perceived that little was happening. Regular educational and informative workshops, and program status updates to the community may have ameliorated this negative perception.

H. Learn from other programs

Throughout this implementation step, TRJ made sure to learn from other restorative justice programs (Bright, 1997; Van Ness & Strong, 2002). In preparation for the training information session, TRJ followed guidelines suggested by Roca, a non-profit organization in Chelsea, Massachusetts, that uses peacemaking circles to engage the most at-risk youth in
that community. Roca offered advice such as: sending out invitations six weeks in advance; remembering attrition when considering how many people to invite; encouraging youth to bring others, as they likely would not want to come alone; targeting key people; and focusing on building capacity within the community by encouraging local residents to participate. TRJ is fortunate to be a part of a broader restorative justice community that is supportive, collaborative, and open to other restorative justice practitioners. Several local restorative justice programs offered their participant evaluation forms (described in Step 9) for TRJ to learn from. Other programs in the region supported TRJ in identifying funding sources (discussed in Step 8), and offered support and advice throughout TRJ’s implementation.

4.1.5 Step 3: Identify Stakeholders & Foster Ownership

In order to safeguard community ownership of the project, a steering committee was formed early in the process that was responsible for making all fundamental decisions about the development of the initiative:

I was committed to those partnerships. I knew it can't work if it's just me making all these decisions. I could’ve … saved us months by saying “I want to go here”, draw a circle on the map and say “this is it”. But that makes no sense to me, and goes against the fundamental principles of restorative justice.

Representatives from the partner organizations formed the steering committee, and all major decisions were made by this committee. The first official steering committee meeting was held in March, 2007, and was comprised of Evelyn, a CPC representative, a CPC volunteer, the neighbourhood police officer, and representatives from both Thunderbird Neighbourhood Association and TBCC staff (the latter became an official representative of
Vancouver Parks & Recreation later in the development). Participation in the steering committee not only gave partnering agencies a voice in the development of the initiative, but also helped to create a sense of ownership and accountability for each volunteer and organization. Because each partnering organization took an active role in decision-making, each was equally responsible for the outcome of those decisions. From the beginning, the steering committee decided to strive for consensus in all of its decisions, thus strengthening the buy-in from each partnering organization and aligning the group process with the values of restorative justice. The steering committee established an initiative that was shared by the partners, rather than simply a program that served them.

I’ve noticed a really important moment that, when a new initiative is starting, in this case restorative justice or circles, it’s new for a community or an organization, and so there’s a lot of front-end work of doing the education and what I call the inspiration, and helping people vision this possibility. … Then there’s another part of what happens in the process of implementation, and this is, I think, a really hard one. … What must occur, in my perspective is, there has to be a transference, what I call a transference of ownership, or a development, or a creation, a building of ownership, for sustainability.

The VPD demonstrated its support and commitment to the program by providing two officers for the program. The sergeant in charge of community policing in TRJ’s district volunteered on the steering committee and provided insight from a police perspective, and a constable was assigned to the program. In addition to contributing time as a TRJ volunteer, the constable committed to sitting in on each circle process.

It is not enough to have buy-in and ownership from partnering organizations, that is just a first step. The hope is for this shared ownership to expand to local community members, so that residents of the Thunderbird community feel a connection to the program. Regarding local enthusiasm for the program, one participant felt that it could have been stronger:
There’s a difference between supporting something, and being passionate about something. So they may have been, “sure come on in, whatever”, but it’s not necessarily that they love the idea themselves or anything, which makes it more difficult.

This passivity in the community was also raised as a concern by other service providers during the initial research project (described in Step 4). Another participant remarked: “As I reflect back, our hope was that the Thunderbird community would take root of the idea a lot quicker than they did, and I think it’s still taking root.” In striving for this local ownership, TRJ was looking for active participation and engagement by community members. During the first year in particular, a great deal of effort was put towards identifying a local youth who would be interested in volunteering with the steering committee. Although a variety of methods were employed, a youth representative was never found.

The steering committee was concerned that the majority of its members lived and worked outside of the Thunderbird community. Interestingly, this is not unique to TRJ. Though many of the volunteers on Thunderbird Neighbourhood Association's Board of Directors have strong ties to the community, few of them actually live there. This, however, is not perceived by TBCC as a challenge. It is notable that the sense of community is strong enough that Thunderbird retains active volunteers even once they’ve moved from the neighbourhood.

TRJ celebrated when two locals officially joined the steering committee; an informal community leader joined the committee in April, 2007, and a youth worker joined in November, 2007. At the time, this felt like a major success for TRJ. After months of effort, the local community was finally getting actively involved in the program. These two locals
were considered gatekeepers for the community. The hope was that they would act as ambassadors for the program, and help engage more local volunteers. One participant noted: “Outreach in this community is hard unless you actually live here”. In particular, the steering committee was optimistic that the youth worker would help TRJ access the younger population. Of the nine steering committee members, four live, work, or volunteer in the Thunderbird community.

As time went on, the steering committee became more and more dependent on its two local volunteers to provide access to residents. Some participants expressed uncertainty about the youth worker’s commitment to the initiative. Unfortunately, when one became sick and the other became busier with work, TRJ lost its access to the Thunderbird community.

Earlier in the process we had connected with [the local leader] … and met with some parents … and discussed the program with them. But then [she] got sick and it kind of fell apart. We've been trying to reconnect with [her], but … [her] phone's been cut off, and we haven't been able to connect with [her].

Several participants expressed disappointment that the program continued to be so dependent on these two volunteers, who were already overstretched in the community. Unfortunately, the steering committee had little success recruiting others to share the responsibility.

TRJ volunteers recognized that it would be valuable to partner with as many service providers as possible, in order to bridge more resources into the community. As such, the steering committee frequently extended invitations to organizations and service providers who were outside the Thunderbird community, but who largely served Thunderbird residents. These organizations were repeatedly unresponsive.
We were trying to come up with who would be the best people or the best agencies to contact. Some of the [TBCC] staff had been there for a very, very long time, and knew people personally as well as by position, so they helped identify them. We sent out a lot of information, and honestly few people responded. So for the ones we thought might be very important, we made a concerted effort to involve them, and still some of them responded, and some of them didn't respond at all, not even to the point of saying, “sorry, I am not able to attend”. No response.

It is unclear whether this unresponsiveness was the result of service providers being uninterested or if it was the result of them being so busy, they could not even respond.

Unfortunately, this is a common experience. It was my experience when helping to develop VARJ (Vancouver Association for Restorative Justice, discussed on page 31).

As time went on, TRJ continued with its “go where it’s open” philosophy, and fortunately another service provider, Vancouver Police Victim Services, came on board in 2009. In

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**Figure 4.5: Key Events in Step 3 - Identify Stakeholders & Foster Ownership**

- Red: Form Partnerships
- Pink: Educate & Outreach to Community
- Blue: Identify Stakeholders, Foster Ownership

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addition to having a place on the steering committee, Victim Services agreed to refer cases to the program, attend future training sessions, and offer advocacy, support, and resources for victims TRJ encountered.

4.1.6 Analysis of Step 3

A. Meeting participants’ needs

When inviting community members to take an active role in a new initiative, it is important to consider what resources are necessary for addressing any needs that result from those volunteering their time. While some volunteers may be paid representatives and so may be reimbursed for their time (at least partially), others may be unemployed, underemployed, or otherwise on a restricted budget. One way to improve access to participating in the program may be to offer reimbursements for transportation costs, addressing childcare needs, and providing food at meetings. “We covered things like lunches for every steering committee, because I know that it was a generous offering that people made of their time when we met”.

B. Meeting the community “where it’s at”

During the first phase of implementation, TRJ had to work within the confines of the existing resources in the community, such as human capital. Human capital refers to the skill- and knowledge-based assets in the community (Ecoplan International, 2005). Specifically, I refer here to leadership and volunteerism within Thunderbird. Although capacity building is an important step in program implementation (Step 6), during the initial stages of program implementation the focus was on engagement, not capacity building. This
was a strategic decision that the steering committee made, to prioritize the development of the program before attending to local capacities.

At the beginning of the project’s development, each of the partner organizations identified one particular person as an informal leader within the community who would be crucial to the program’s successful implementation. This person has credibility with many residents, particularly youth, she is involved with the Skeena Terrace Tenants Association, and she has a record of being vocal and collaborative with the partner agencies. While the hope was that this volunteer would foster more enthusiasm and leadership within the community, that’s not what happened. The local leader seemed to be everything to everyone in Thunderbird; she’s overstretched. This meant that although her support for the initiative was strong, as time went on her active participation dwindled as her attention was divided. TRJ had a similar experience with the local youth worker. Because the Thunderbird community is served by only two youth workers, it was difficult to secure his attention, and he missed steering committee meetings now and then because of competing obligations. While having these two local leaders on the TRJ steering committee was valuable, the benefits were limited because of how overcommitted they were and how dependent TRJ was on them.

C. Find a balance of resources
An important aspect of building a steering committee, which can be taken away from TRJ’s experience, is balancing human capital with enthusiasm, time, and support for the initiative. One participant commented on the value of balancing these important components in a stakeholder group:
I think VERJ is a good example, where you have good intentions and you have, if you will, a vision, shared by a lot of people. ... I always sensed that it never moved beyond that because people didn't know - they knew restorative justice, they had a vision, they didn't know how to move the vision into reality, to something real.

In building the steering committee, it was mentioned above that volunteers were representatives of the partnering organizations who had credibility within the community, authority within their agencies, and were committed to the initiative. In addition to these attributes, each volunteer came to the table with experience, knowledge, and skills specific to her or his organization and background. For example, the CPC representative brought organizational and grant writing skills, while Evelyn brought facilitation skills. By virtue of their positions within their own organizations, some volunteers brought with them access to additional skill sets, such as accounting. Furthermore, some skill sets were targeted. One reason Evelyn recruited me into the initiative was her perception of my organizational, planning, and technological skills. Through discussion with participants, it became clear that are are some skill sets that are can contribute to the smooth implementation of a restorative justice program. Some valuable attributes that were identified by participants are: an understanding of strategic development; meeting facilitation skills; accounting knowledge; event planning; organizational skills; technological skills, such as website development; and grant writing skills.

D. A core team of workers may be a natural progression
A challenge TRJ began to encounter as steering committee activities became more detail-oriented was that more and more work was taken on by a small group of volunteers. This

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18 Vancouver East Restorative Justice (VERJ) is a defunct community-based restorative justice group that failed to thrive in the early-to-mid 2000s. VERJ is discussed in more detail on page 105.
evolution seems common to most group-work scenarios, and is not necessarily a problem in all cases. In TRJ’s case, it was a pragmatic approach to managing all the details and decisions that had to be addressed during Step 7. The complication came when other steering committee members became distanced from the initiative and some of the decisions that were being made.

It was always done by consensus, and then sometimes again, not to bog it down too much, sometimes it would be a decision for [the CPC representative] and I … to make. … So that was basically [the CPC representative] and I making that decision, and then the [steering committee] approving it. … And that’s where we evolved with the steering committee, because more, and more, and more, it was the administrative, technical pieces that required all our attention. Now, is that something that a group of nine volunteers of professionals need to work through, getting a filing cabinet, and how we’re going to organize the files[?] … I mean, it bogs down, it’s quite frankly boring, and it’s not good use of time, so that’s … when it sort of fell on [the administrative volunteer group]…

The intention here was not to isolate or exclude steering committee volunteers from decision making, but in fact to respect their time by not bogging down meetings with minutia.

However, it is possible that this shift had a negative impact on the sense of ownership that some steering committee felt towards the initiative none-the-less.19 While these necessary details were being addressed, the rest of the steering committee and newly trained volunteers patiently waited for the program’s first peacemaking circle. As time went on, few of the other volunteers initiated new activities on their own. Perhaps they felt they lacked direction, or perhaps they needed clarification about the status of the program.

While the shift to a core group of volunteers may have been a natural progression, more attention could have been paid to keeping the other volunteers engaged with the program,

19 This observation is not based on participants’ responses so much as my own hindsight and observations as an active member of the administrative volunteer group. As more work was done by this small group, steering committee meetings became less frequent and other volunteers were engaged less frequently. During several interviews, some steering committee members asked for updates on the program, a clear sign that they were disconnected from the program’s activities.
even simply through monthly check-in meetings. At the same time, responsibility for keeping volunteers engaged shouldn’t have lain solely with the core volunteers, but that was the perception of some participants. Instead, the committee, as a group, ought to have shared responsibility for ensuring that volunteers felt connected to, and supported by, the program.

A challenge TRJ faced in regards to the steering committee was being over-reliant on a small number of people. For accessing the community, the project was dependent on the two local gatekeepers. For engaging youth, the project was dependent on two volunteers who had the passion, skill, and commitment, to take the initiative and make time to organize events. For addressing many of the administrative details, the project was dependent on the three volunteers who had both the specific skills and the commitment to do so. The steering committee realized that although it had few alternatives, this was not a sustainable approach and a full-time employee who could coordinate these activities in an organized way and delegate work was necessary (this is discussed further in Step 7).

E. **Maintain connection with volunteers, partners**

A lesson that TRJ can take away from this stage is the value of on-going engagement and communication with partner organizations and steering committee volunteers. Throughout the first two phases of implementation, steering committee volunteers met on a regular basis as they built together the foundation and design of the project. However, as the implementation phase was initiated, a small group of steering committee members took the lead in addressing the many details associated with those steps. After the steering committee held a very valuable visioning and strategic planning session in April, 2008, meetings of the
whole committee became less frequent. Much of the small team’s work simply was not suitable for the whole committee to address. Maintaining regular meetings may have proved useful in several ways. At a basic level, steering committee volunteers would have had opportunities to reconnect with each other, and touch base with the developments of the initiative, as slow-coming as they were. On a deeper level, ongoing communication would have provided more opportunities for steering committee members to re-engage with the program, leading to a stronger sense of ownership, which may have created more enthusiasm for initiating new activities on their own.

At the last steering committee meeting before the summer break in 2009, I noticed an interesting phenomenon. Through my interviews I became aware that individual steering committee volunteers were thinking on their own about new ways to build relationships locally and foster ownership of the program, but they were not communicating these ideas to each other. For example, one participant thought that a local success story may help inspire local youth to become more involved in their community, but he did not know of any such person. Another participant volunteered a local success story during our interview, and had been wondering how best to get this person more involved in the community. Meanwhile, though new ideas for engaging youth seemed nonexistent, a brief brainstorming session at a steering committee meeting in May, 2009, resulted in several new ideas, such as organizing a breakfast club in the community for youth not in school. This steering committee meeting was the first in over six months because during that time, the administrative infrastructure was being developed and it seemed as if there was nothing substantive to talk about. Although on the surface it appeared to everyone involved that there was no need for a meeting, it seems clear in hindsight that regular meetings may have
produced more ideas and at the same time, encouraged the active participation of steering committee volunteers.

F. How to inspire initiative?
Another issue tied to the vignette above is how to inspire initiative in volunteers. As the consultant initially hired to develop the program, it made sense for volunteers to look to Evelyn for guidance when it came to contributing to the program. However, in order for TRJ to be sustainable, there needed to be a point at which individual volunteers took on responsibility for some things; a point at which volunteers would feel comfortable taking the initiative and putting into action their ideas. This did happen to some degree, for example, when the two steering committee volunteers organized local events for youth. Unfortunately, in this scenario they were not successful and it seems they felt too discouraged to try again. This problem doesn't seem to be unique to TRJ or to restorative justice organizations in general but in fact seems common to the realm of volunteerism. A participant related that in his organization, it can be very difficult for volunteers to move beyond being “members at large” and take on active roles in the organization.

From this issue the question arises: “What is a promising practice to address this impediment?” One strategy might have been to arrange a dialogue with the steering committee about these concerns to determine each member’s needs. For example, perhaps the two volunteers who tried to take the lead in the past felt unsupported by the rest of the steering committee and needed to know that the steering committee was there to encourage them. Perhaps it was an issue of time, and the committee needed to recruit volunteers with more time and interest to spearhead some new projects. On the other hand, perhaps the
other volunteers were unaware of this problem and all they needed was to be more conscious of leadership opportunities.

G. Whose support is essential?
During our training, practitioner Barry Stuart suggested that new restorative justice programs need to ask themselves two questions: “Who do we need to talk to?” and “Who can block the development of this program?” Throughout Phase I, the steering committee was focused on these two questions. While there were organizations that turned down invitations for collaboration, these organizations were not in a position to block its development. However, perhaps another way to think about this advice is to consider, “Who is essential for the program to thrive?” This question is distinct from “Who do we need to talk to?” because the latter refers simply to people who have a stake in the program, whereas the former implies a reliance on those key stakeholders for successful implementation. My question is distinct from Barry’s second question because his relates to the survival of a program, while mine relates to its success. After analyzing interview feedback, it seems that TRJ may not thrive if it does not have support from parents and staff at TBCC (this idea will be explored further in the Discussion chapter). If the steering committee had asked themselves this question earlier, they may have had greater success in fostering local ownership of the program. One possible reason that community ownership was not stronger may be the perception by some community members that TRJ was at a standstill in 2009. Those who knew of the program, which was admittedly a small part of the population, had few ways of knowing that the program was still functioning, particularly since the majority of steering committee members did not live or work in the community and therefore were not very accessible to local residents. As mentioned earlier, ongoing public communication
and status updates may have ameliorated this issue. The challenge of balancing engagement needs with administrative issues, such as funding, is discussed further on page 156.

H. A note about leadership

A particularly important lesson to take away from this step, Identify Stakeholders and Foster Ownership, is that strong leadership is key to the smooth implementation of a restorative community development program. As a strong leader with knowledge and experience in restorative justice, Evelyn guided the steering committee through these nine implementation steps, but did not retain ownership of the initiative. One participant reflected on the early stages of the initiative’s development.

The feedback I was getting from most people was … that Evelyn was so vague about what it was going to be, that people were really cautious getting into it. The reason why she was so vague was because … she wanted this community to create their own vision, and not come up with a vision for them. So, as it unravelled, I think a lot of people realized that it was really our opportunity to create something that would work for this community.

The community’s discomfort in response to the ambiguity with which the project was presented is worthy of comment. We are so used to being told what to do and how to solve our problems that sometimes we resist having to think about solutions ourselves. This phenomenon, which Barry Stuart calls the “911 mentality”, was outlined earlier (see page 47). Here is an example in which the community’s initial response was confusion that they were not just going to be told what the vision should look like. It takes a wise facilitator to recognize this tendency to expect quick answers, and not offer them.

Several participants emphasized that strong leadership and commitment to shared ownership through consensus are important components of a successful initiative. A few
years before the development of TRJ, there was a group of people interested in developing a community-based restorative justice program in another East Vancouver neighbourhood. The group was called Vancouver East Restorative Justice (VERJ). While reflecting on why VERJ failed to thrive, one participant noted:

I wanted it to be a consensus, I really, really was committed to the idea of consensus, and that we should all be in agreement, we should all be deciding these things together. I think that’s really what the downfall was, frankly. I know, it’s kind of surprising, but you need to have a very strong leader, and I think I was probably too burnt out to do that at that time. … People were looking to me to be the leader, and I was really intent on consensus and it just wasn’t fitting, I think that’s probably where things really fell, because … there wasn’t really … anyone else who was able or willing to take that leadership position, and that’s sort of what happened. It really needed that, and it wasn't there.

TRJ was fortunate not to experience the same challenge as VERJ. Participants agreed that while Evelyn was there to guide the process, it was the steering committee that shaped the outcome.

4.2 Phase II: Design

Phase II contains the implementation steps that commonly come to mind when thinking about how to create a restorative justice community development initiative:

Step 4: Assess Needs
Step 5: Create the Restorative Model
Step 6: Train & Build Local Capacity

This phase is directly focused on the concrete details of the program, which is why I chose to call it Design. Although it may have been possible to begin with this series of steps, TRJ took the time to build relationships first in order to create a strong
foundation to support this phase. *Design is equally important to the success of the initiative because it makes up the architectural blueprints of the program.

### 4.2.1 Step 4: Assess Needs

Before TRJ could address the needs of the Thunderbird community, the steering committee had to learn what those needs were. TRJ incorporated this important step into the engagement strategy by holding information workshops about the initiative that were also designed to solicit feedback about the types of challenges and conflicts experienced by residents. These workshops were held in January and February of 2007. The challenges that were identified by local residents and service providers during these sessions include:

- drug use and trafficking
- vandalism
- youth gang activity
- domestic violence
- child abuse
- poor family relationships
- fear of crime
- bullying
- poverty
- classism
- lack of respect from local youth
- a general sense of victimization by “the system”, that is, a sense of helplessness regarding the lack of support from the social safety net and criminal justice systems

The steering committee recruited two volunteer university students to undertake community action research to thoroughly evaluate the needs and challenges of the Thunderbird
community. These students, from the two largest universities in the lower mainland, collaborated to interview local residents, especially youth, informal organizations and groups, and people who work in the Thunderbird community. The researchers were also asked to identify strengths, resources, and human capacities within the community, basically an asset map (Mathie & Cunningham, 2002) of the community. The study was overseen by Evelyn, who has expertise in qualitative research methods. The students worked with the steering committee to develop a list of people and organizations to contact, including the following: the local elementary and high schools, the local seniors' centre, BC Housing, and the local Baptist church, which provides many local social services. Planning for the research project began in March, 2007, and interviews were conducted between April and June, 2007.

Accessing community members was a stumbling block for the researchers. TRJ volunteers supported them by providing contact information for potential participants and the local leader distributed a letter to community members to inform them about the research project and vouch for the study. The researchers reported that snowball sampling was the most effective way to reach participants. The two researchers ultimately interviewed eighteen people, including the following: local after-school child care workers, TBCC staff and board members, members of a local group, Chinese Seniors Group, the Thunderbird Elementary School principal, staff from the local high school, a probation officer, a former youth worker, a CPC volunteer, and four local youths.

According to the draft research report, many consider Skeena Terrace to be the source of most of the problems in the Thunderbird community. However, participants' remarks were
about the barriers that Skeena Terrace residents face - such as poverty, illiteracy, mental health, and substance abuse - rather than descriptions of how these issues negatively impact the neighbourhood. The researchers suggested that these factors affect the neighbourhood’s ability to develop social capital. Another theme in the report that had implications for TRJ was the anti-police sentiment in the community, highlighting a strong mistrust of the police, including the CPC’s neighbourhood police officer. Service providers presented a frustrated attitude, suggesting that community members are too passive in receiving help and are generally unwilling to help themselves. Through this research TRJ learned about multiple break-and-enters experienced by Thunderbird Elementary, as well as criminal attacks that involved vandalism and arson targeted toward one of the local youth workers. Finally, a significant issue in the research report is the trauma community members experienced as a result of the Etibako fire in 2006. Respondents were disappointed with the lack of post-trauma support for both the victims' families as well as for community members who witnessed the fire. More significantly, participants seemed to hold TBCC responsible for providing these services for victims, which is not a service community centres conventionally provide. One participant in the current study, who for the record does not work for Vancouver Parks & Recreation, offered his perspective on the idea of community centres providing social services:

Park Board, over the last, let’s say, eight years, has been trying to distance itself from that aspect of community … They’re involved in parks and recreation, and that’s where they want to go. I totally understand it from an administration point of view, because the social side of it just gobbles up dollars, and you look at it, and often you can’t see where the hell did that money go?

The researchers identified poor relationships and communication to be at the heart of the community’s inability to address some of the challenges it faces, such as fear of crime and
mischief, while other problems, such as poverty and addiction, seemed completely insurmountable to respondents.

Unfortunately, a final report was never completed because both volunteers left the region after completing their degrees. The research report ended with a list of remaining headings to be addressed, including *Current Responses* and *Recommendations*. Notably, the researchers also failed to include any positive elements of the Thunderbird community, such as resources, strengths, or an asset map.

In order to better understand the needs in Thunderbird, the steering committee developed a database of resources that serve Thunderbird residents. Included in the database are resources such as detox centres, recovery houses, housing societies, resources for gaining access to social welfare benefits, and mental health information. One participant commented that while “thousands” of resources were identified, few of them were accessible to Thunderbird residents (also see Illustration 4.2).

[Thunderbird] is a really isolated area. It’s surprising, actually, how isolated it is. It’s on a hill, right? It’s like a magic hill that stops everything from coming up. So all the resources are around, like they’re on Hastings, in Hastings Sunrise [neighbourhood], or they’re at the Commercial/Broadway [area], or those types of areas, but there’s nothing really that’s actually there. There’s the Family Services, that’s, it’s not that far away, it’s at like Grandview [Highway] and Renfrew or Rupert [streets]. It’s the closest thing, but it’s down the hill too, but at least it’s nearby. But everything else, no there’s not really a lot of services, which is funny when you think about it. So everything’s at the TBCC, all the resources they have are for them.

The isolation Thunderbird residents experience is not just in relation to external resources and services. Another participant referred to the physical barriers within the community that prevent access to services.
[The seniors’ centre] is very nice, and they have their own small recreation facility there, and they have a programmer, and … our seniors coordinator works with them. We would like to foster closer connections with them, with programming and stuff, although one of the challenges we have with the seniors is, we’re up the hill, so it’s a bit of a chug for them to get up here.

One participant opined that Thunderbird specifically lacks resources for youth, noting that the closest youth resource centre, Broadway Youth Resource Centre, is:

a couple of buses away, and young people often don't have the money, and they’re just not going to go that far to get those resources that… in their perception they’re not that helpful, so why go through all that effort to find resources that are not helpful?

Another participant reflected on the community’s lack of resources specifically pertaining to youth crime.
One of the things that I noticed is, they have resources, they’re just not aware of them, and they’re not in their neighbourhood. Like, last year, I was working with staff and community members around addressing youth crime, and one of the things that they were wanting was for the police to come and deal with this youth crime. Well the police can come and arrest the youth, they can maybe try to build relationship while they’re down there, but there’s not really a lot else the police can do, and yet they’re always getting tainted for not doing what they needed to do. … So I went and spoke with them… [Some criminal justice associates] came out with a couple of their team members, a social worker and a probation officer, and met with the staff and some of the community members to explain how the system works, how to access resources and services, and to use them: to help them access resources, especially around youth-related problems, and especially for youth that are on probation. There’s a lot of resources for young people that are on probation, and unfortunately for a lot of young people, they can’t access the same resources if they’re not on probation.

The resources that are not available to youth unless they are on probation include:

“counselling, possibly family counselling, and addiction services”.

At least in terms of quantity, there seems to be no lack of options for youth to get involved in their community, particularly through TBCC. There are two youth workers serving the community. One is dedicated to TBCC, and the other works part-time for TBCC and part-time in Skeena Terrace. A participant reported that there are about seven additional, casual youth workers who make up the Youth Team at TBCC.

Basicallly I do a lot of youth development. I run programs, such as a volunteer program. I do a teen girls group, which is more of a social life-skills group. I do Youth Council, which is youth developing programs in the community. I run the Teen Centre, I supervise other youth stuff, that do more pre-teen programs, because my focus is 13-18. And then there’s more, but that’s I guess the general gist of it. … Oh yeah that’s the other thing I’m doing. So it’s a teen pre-employment program. … It acts as a pre-employment/fundraiser. Youth 15 and up, just before they get real jobs they can come into the cafe and we have a cash register and everything, and they can learn cash handling, inventory taking, customer service, and shopping.
There was some inconsistency regarding how TBCC's role as a resource for the community was perceived among participants. According to one, TBCC is there primarily to serve Skeena Terrace.

My understanding of the history of it, is Thunderbird Community Centre was put here to service “the projects”, as they were known back in the day. And it’s here all by itself. We have no other resources.

On the other hand, another participant opined that while TBCC serves the broader Thunderbird community, it does not serve Skeena Terrace.

The troubles are all, like, they make it “Thunderbird” Community [Centre], but the kids going to the TBCC aren’t really from Skeena Terrace, right? They’re from the houses and all that sort of thing. So all the, the parking lot’s usually full, so you’ve got people driving there and that sort of stuff. I shouldn’t say that none are from Skeena Terrace, but the majority, I think are from more the housing around there. ...Like if you just go to TBCC, and you just put on a blindfold, walked into there, and sat down there and that was your experience of Thunderbird, you’d just think it’s a good community, right? There’s no problems, there’s no - it’s fine, because in there it’s fine.

TBCC sees itself as a resource “facilitator”. Rather than offering every possible service to the community, they focus on supporting local residents through referrals. This is also how the steering committee saw TRJ, as a bridge to connect more resources to the high-needs Thunderbird community. Exploring the resources accessible to the Thunderbird community reinforced to TRJ the need to recruit more partners from these vital service providers. TRJ was successful in this way, for example, when it partnered with Vancouver Police Victim Services, which agreed to provide services and resources to TRJ clients.

Although crime frequently appeared as a local concern during TRJ’s initial workshops, and the VPD call volume was apparently high from the Thunderbird neighbourhood, crime statistics do not reflect a high crime rate. According to a VPD crime analyst, in a six-month
period, 21 people were charged within the TRJ jurisdiction, only three of whom were young offenders (under nineteen). According to one informed participant, this discrepancy has to do with both fear of crime and underreporting in the Thunderbird community, as a result of a strong mistrust of police.

Down in Thunderbird that's still something we're working through, I think a lot of people think the only time, y’know if you’re ever really desperate you need a police officer to fix it, and if the police officer didn't come in time, that means the police officer failed.
4.2.2 Analysis of Step 4

A. Maintaining integrity as well-meaning outsiders

One participant reflected that high-needs communities like Thunderbird are used to well-meaning people and organizations swooping into their communities and hearing a lot of talk about fixing their problems, not to mention all sorts of researchers interested in “studying” them. What they rarely see is follow-through, so why would they trust TRJ? This was one of the main reasons that the steering committee was hesitant to continue relationship building and outreach in the community without securing sustainable funding: for fear that the program would not be able to follow through on its promises.

Unfortunately, in some ways TRJ had such a relationship with the community, despite its best efforts. For example, Evelyn’s colleague was deported just as he was beginning to develop trust with local youth. Of course, this was out of TRJ’s control. This issue emphasizes the need for a restorative justice community development initiative to partner with strong, stable, and lasting community-based organizations. For example, although TRJ is not active in the Thunderbird community today, TBCC and the CPC are still there and engaged at the community level, and so the potentially harmful effects of TRJ’s disengagement are lessened.

B. Learn about the whole community, not just its needs

Perhaps a better name for Step 4 would be “Learn about Community”. The above efforts to identify needs in the Thunderbird community provided the steering committee with a thorough overview of local concerns. However, had the research project been completed, and an asset map created that reflected the strengths and resources of the Thunderbird community, TRJ would have been better prepared to develop the initiative. The
community’s needs illustrate only one part of the overall picture. Mathie & Cunningham (2002) suggest that asset-based community development is a more positive, strengths-based alternative to the traditional deficits-based approach to social work. Such an approach would have offered a more complete picture of the Thunderbird community, and also would have been more consistent with the humanistic values of restorative practice. An asset map might have revealed new resources to fill the gaps mentioned earlier, such as more local leaders and other examples of human capital; additional organizations, service providers, or informal groups interested in supporting the initiative could have been identified.

It is worth considering in what ways TRJ might have unfolded differently if a strengths-based approach to assessing the community were taken. The development of TRJ was very organic, as discussed earlier. It is possible that a more strengths-based approach may have resulted in a very different future for TRJ, given the assets that might have been revealed. At the very least, developing an asset map and exploring positive attributes in the community would have taken more time, which would have been more time spent primarily engaging the community at the individual level, as described earlier in a participant quote. Such an effort could have possibly increased awareness of the program in the community, and may have contributed positively to the education and ownership development efforts of Phase I.

C. Community values may be worth exploring

Another approach that might have proved beneficial for the program’s development is a pre-test of the attitudes and values present in the community before the program was developed, as was described in the Doble & Greene (1999) and Holtquist (1999) studies, discussed earlier (see pages 41 and 42, respectively). Such a pre-test of the Thunderbird community
would have helped inform outreach and education strategies. For example, if the pre-test suggested an inclination towards more restorative values, then the steering committee could anticipate an easier time introducing and gaining support for the initiative, and could jump right into information sessions exploring the possibility of a restorative justice program. On the other hand, if the pre-test suggested more punitive attitudes in the community, the steering committee would need to take a different approach; perhaps they would start with dialogues about values and the criminal justice system, and determine after those sessions whether a restorative justice program was appropriate. Of course, such a pre-test would take additional time and resources at the front-end of the program’s development, but the benefits seem like a valuable trade-off.

4.2.3 Step 5: Create the Restorative Model

With a strong foundation well underway, and with a better understanding of the challenges experienced by local residents, TRJ was ready to design its restorative model. Barry Stuart has said something to this effect: “You need to talk about how you’re going to talk, before you talk”. This step not only involved making decisions about how the program was going to function, but also it was about the steering committee members deciding how they were going to be with each other. At the international conference I heard several restorative justice practitioners note that restorative justice is about process, not outcome. Henry David Thoreau said: “If one takes care of the means, the end will take care of itself,” (quoted in McCold, 2004). The time the steering committee took to develop its process, and the care and deliberateness with which it was approached created a strong structure for the program’s design.
During the first several months, the steering committee dealt with organizational
development issues, such as deciding how members were going to communicate and make
decisions and creating a “code of honour” in order to stay grounded in their values. In
short, the steering committee members took the time to make sure they could walk their
talk. Early in the initiative, the steering committee volunteers agreed that all decisions would
be made by consensus and they had a clear discussion about what that meant to each
member. Consensus meant that a dissenting member could abide by the decision and would
actively support it, and also that the committee would work towards addressing any
concerns about the decision the dissenting member held. They also decided early on that
they would use the circle process in each of their meetings, clarifying that this included the
following: they would sit in circle with no tables between them; they would use a talking
piece and talking rounds as appropriate; they would not limit the number of rounds for
discussion, stopping only when the issue was completely addressed; they would respect the
pre-agreed meeting time and work within that time limit (which was usually two hours); and
they would continually reflect on the circle process and its implications both personally and
for TRJ. Reflecting on the manner in which the steering committee volunteers worked
together, one participant commented:

We formed a steering committee, as you know, and we began with two of us,
then three of us, and then it expanded to nine of us, and we sat in circle. We,
ourselves, learned more and more about restorative justice, and we practiced
what we were implementing, so there was no discord or incongruence. In other
words, we had congruence about what we were creating and what we, ourselves,
were doing, and how we were with one another. … We talked a lot about the
process, we didn't just make decisions, we were always mindful that there’s
always two things parallel that are happening simultaneously: the process, and
the decisions and the outcome. … I’m very happy and proud that we walked our
talk to the best of our ability. Again, that took longer because when you sit in a
circle and you work by consensus things don't happen as quick as by other processes.

This step is also about solidifying the more concrete details about the program and its operations. Early in the program’s development, it was decided that TRJ would focus on one neighbourhood within the jurisdiction of the CPC. In March, 2007, the program’s jurisdiction was established by the steering committee, creating its boundaries of Renfrew to Boundary and Broadway/Lougheed Highway to 1st Avenue, echoing the jurisdictional boundaries of TBCC (see Illustration 4.3).
There were several opportunities to reconsider jurisdiction throughout TRJ’s implementation, usually tied to new funding sources. There were times in 2009 when TRJ volunteers were eagerly awaiting their first referral, but while the program was receiving referrals, none of them were from within the established boundaries. In an effort to increase the possibility of local referrals, TRJ considered expanding its jurisdiction to include the area around the local high school (near the intersection of Broadway and Nanaimo Street, in Illustration 4.3), and another time, to even include the entire CPC jurisdiction. The steering committee decided to stay true to its original boundaries and remain patient. After all, the goal of TRJ was not simply to offer restorative processes, it was also to transform the Thunderbird community, and TRJ volunteers’ commitment to the Thunderbird community was strong.

By October, 2007, the steering committee decided to adopt peacemaking circles as the program’s primary restorative practice model, though it remained flexible and open to the idea that the model may change as the program matured in order to meet the unique needs of the Thunderbird community. It was decided early on that the focus of the project would not be to develop a straightforward restorative justice-based diversion program, but to create a holistic community development initiative that would build and strengthen community, and transform Thunderbird. In February, 2008, the steering committee volunteers discussed these multiple goals and decided upon a three-pronged approach.

- they would accept direct criminal and conflict-based referrals from individual community members, as well as from service providers and organizations such as TBCC, with no age limitations and regardless of VPD involvement;
they would accept referrals from the VPD in cases involving youth aged 12 to 18, eventually including young adults up to 24, in honour of Aboriginal definitions of youth;

and they would organize activities and events, to foster social capital and strengthen the sense of community in the neighbourhood.

During this step, TRJ had to decide whether to limit the kinds of cases TRJ would accept. This is an important part of developing the restorative model and is seemingly common for many restorative justice programs.

[CAP funders] wanted to make sure, by the way, that both our Aboriginal justice programs and CAP programs did not do really serious crime like, and especially, family and sexual violence. It was inappropriate to not be dealt with by government. I still feel strongly about that because I think you can use restorative justice for the sentencing part, but I think you’ve got to get it on the books.

Shortly after TRJ’s three-pronged approach was decided upon, the steering committee underwent a guided visioning process with a trained facilitator. This valuable, full-day session captured the excitement and energy the steering committee was feeling after undergoing the first stage of training. The facilitator walked the group through a series of stages: clarifying TRJ’s higher purpose, mission, and vision; exploring key factors in achieving success; developing a plan; and then identifying key actions. During this meeting, the steering committee members grew as a team, and reached consensus on TRJ’s higher purpose: “To create a safe, thriving community”. A mission statement was also drafted: “Thunderbird Restorative Justice builds healthy, thriving community by engaging the community and by providing opportunities for resolving conflict for people living or working in Thunderbird neighbourhood.” Although a vision statement was not generated

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20 One participant reported that the VPD agreed to refer cases involving summary conviction offences only, which are offences punishable by up to six months imprisonment and/or a maximum fine of $5000 (Criminal Code, 1985). This is consistent with practice across BC, according to both the guidelines set out by CAP (Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General, 2004), and the Extra Judicial Measures (EJMs) principles set out in the YCJA, which state that EJMs are appropriate for non-violent offences (YCJA, 2002).
from this meeting, a great deal of time was spent discussing its elements, including the following:

- low crime
- safe neighbourhood
- high literacy rate
- people are proud to live in Skeena Terrace
- Thunderbird is considered a model community
- more role models in the community
- people have enough food
- basic needs are met for everyone
- restorative justice [program] is no longer necessary

One participant related an anecdote from his experience to illustrate how he imagined TRJ would help nurture the sense of community in Thunderbird:

I can remember being at a block watch party where two neighbours that lived about five houses apart went to high school together, and found out at that block party. Both had lived on that block for like eight years. … Not only did they kind of check-in, they started talking about things they wanted to do together, and things they wanted to create in their block. … And they started communicating, they started identifying things that were important to them, and they started resolving them. That’s what I think we need to try and help create down in that area. So, if that’s peace circles, or doing events, or a police officer going out and playing basketball with the kids, those are all, for me, heading in that direction.

Another major accomplishment during that meeting was the development of a strategic plan for the organization. After identifying several factors that would be key to the program’s success, such as funding and community participation, the team focused on two top priorities: community buy-in and clarity about organizational structure, governance, and roles. From there, the steering committee identified issues that needed to be addressed in the next twelve months in order to advance as an organization. From these, it chose five on
which to focus: clarifying governance & roles; developing the process to arrange TRJ’s first circle; planning community events; creating a business plan; and identifying funding. The remainder of the meeting was spent addressing the first two priorities.

4.2.4  Analysis of Step 5

A.  Strategic planning was profoundly effective

One of the best decisions the steering committee made was to undergo a visioning process and develop a strategic plan. Although it took a great deal of time, the visioning process provided the opportunity for the group to get clear on what it was working towards, and to grow as a team, by confirming that each member was still working towards the same goal.
The strategic plan then helped the steering committee get practical about what it could accomplish in the next year and helped it to prioritize what needed to be done. Finally, these processes resulted in a practical guide that volunteers could reflect back on: concrete ideas that could inform future employees or volunteers, should TRJ eventually experience a change in representatives or volunteers. In 2009, when some volunteers were overwhelmed with administrative details (to be discussed in Step 7), and others were less engaged in the program, a meeting to revisit that vision and strategic plan may have helped re-energize and refocus the team. Creating a broadly shared vision that can be reflected on throughout a program's implementation are important to a successful program (Bright, 1997; Pranis, 1997b; Van Ness & Strong, 2002).

B. Go slow to go long
One of the most important lessons the steering committee learned during this step is, as Barry Stuart puts it: “Go slow to go long”. In Phase I, steering committee members took the time to form partnerships and initiate relationships in the community to create a strong foundation for the program. Likewise, in constructing the model underlying the project, the steering committee took the time to discuss their group values and guidelines, to “talk about how they would talk”, before addressing the work that needed to be done. The higher purpose and vision TRJ created was enormous, but the steering committee recognized that such a vision was not achievable overnight.

In a way, the TRJ vision is so holistic, so colossal, it seems like the steering committee started off running, rather than walking, and perhaps the steering committee bit off more than it could chew. It is worth noting that TRJ's approach to restorative community
development is quite different from other programs in the region. Some programs in the lower mainland began as diversion programs, receiving referrals primarily from the local police, and over time they have grown to offer more complex services, such as school-based programs, accepting direct community referrals and Crown referrals, and offering mentorship programs. Likewise, in part due to the influence of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), some local restorative justice programs began by using the scripted conferencing model and then evolved to other restorative justice models, such as circles, or in some cases, offering a diverse range of restorative options that includes no face-to-face meetings at all.

C. Take small steps to achieve a large goal

From the TRJ strategic plan, a clear lesson can be learned: the importance of taking small steps to achieve a large goal. Although TRJ may have been ambitious, their plans for the program were in line with what the literature recommends: always working towards transformation (Bright, 1997; Van Ness & Strong, 2002) and keeping the program within a context of broad social change (Pranis, 1997b). On the whole, the steering committee was attuned to this valuable lesson about taking small steps. For example, rather than offering a City-wide restorative justice program, the steering committee recognized that it needed to start off in one neighbourhood in the City and let the restorative justice movement grow from there. One participant, who helped develop a restorative justice program in a small BC community outside of the lower mainland attributes her program’s success to its small beginnings. In 1997, it started with only five people and worked simpler cases. This program began with the scripted RCMP model, but as the program matured it developed into a more holistic initiative that uses peacemaking circles. Three years ago it began accepting Crown
referrals and only in January, 2009, did it hire a coordinator. This small-steps approach can cause difficulty for some partnering organizations and funders who require more immediate results in order to stay committed to the initiative.

It’s sort of a cost-benefit, how much effort do we put into that strategy for what kind of an output. It’s hard for a reactive police department that goes by year-by-year stats, to have a long-term look at “we’re going to drive down our stats fifteen years from now” by paying attention to kids now.

One participant heard from a program in the Okanagan that lost its funding so that more police officers could be hired.

She told me that when she spoke with the RCMP, they said - well they were put in a position of, well, do I get a new police officer or do I get restorative justice, and they would look at the immediate crisis need instead of the long-term viability of, you know, you’re going to have less work if you do restorative justice in your community. I think it was putting the RCMP in a tough place.

A quandary associated with this lesson is being able to recognize the small steps that will help achieve the larger goal. At times the larger goal felt overwhelming for some participants and it was hard to “see the forest, for the trees”. As I was working through the data, I noted some instances in steering committee minutes and in discussions with participants in which new resources were identified that may have potentially served the initiative well. For example, shortly after I joined the steering committee I suggested the idea of taking on a BSW practicum student at some point who could learn about community development while supporting the program with the many administrative tasks that lay ahead. Unfortunately, we did not followed up on the idea when TRJ was more developed because the administrative volunteers who would have been responsible for supervising the practicum student were overwhelmed with other work. Even when a new resource could
lighten the load of those encumbered with too much to manage, taking that step forward remained a challenge.

D. **Keep dialogue alive**

Another lesson that can be gleaned from this step is the value of revisiting past conversations. Interestingly, although a group process was developed for the steering committee in order to help it operate smoothly, such a conversation would have been equally useful later on in the program’s implementation for the team of volunteers who eventually formed to address administrative details. Unfortunately, the idea to revisit that conversation was overlooked by all three volunteers, including myself. In hindsight, such a conversation may have better prepared the administrative team for dealing with some of the many frustrations the volunteers encountered during *Step 7*.

E. **Ongoing education and learning from others will guide the program**

Self-directed education played a major role in TRJ’s restorative model development. When it came time to discuss which approach to restorative practice the initiative would adopt, the steering committee made an effort to be educated on the variety of models currently in use. There was not the sense that a cookie-cutter model would be used for TRJ but, rather, the steering committee wanted to learn about several models and then choose elements from a variety of approaches, if necessary. In June, 2007, Evelyn provided an overview of the various models currently practiced, including conferences, peacemaking circles, community justice panels, and mediation. In the fall of 2007, Evelyn gifted each steering committee member a copy of Howard Zehr’s *Little Book of Restorative Justice*, both to foster a deeper
understanding of restorative justice and also to facilitate discussion of what TRJ’s restorative approach would look like.

An important lesson that participants raised, which has already been touched on, is learning from existing programs. In October, 2007, TRJ paid for four steering committee members to attended a full day workshop by Molly Baldwin of Roca. The attendees reflect on this experience positively, and often referred back to it during discussions about TRJ’s operations; for example, considering: “Well, Roca does … I wonder if that would work for us?”, and: “You know, Molly said in her presentation … I wonder how that applies to us?”

Also in October, 2007, TRJ volunteers had the opportunity to attend the 2007 CAP Conference, a biennial province-wide gathering for all programs that receive funding under the CAP program, which are almost exclusively restorative justice initiatives (discussed earlier, refer to page 30). The CAP conference was a chance for the steering committee to learn about other programs’ practices. Evelyn gave a presentation at the conference on TRJ’s progress, which increased the program’s credibility and validated the steering committee’s work to date.

During this step, Evelyn met one-on-one with program coordinators of restorative justice programs throughout Metro Vancouver.

I did go to Fraser Burrard, what it was called at the time,21 and North Shore, and I was drawing upon programs I knew in other jurisdictions like the United States. But I was conscious of not imposing what had been done elsewhere. You can speed things up if you just [say], “okay, this is what we’re going to do”, but I was very conscious not to do that, and I am happy that we did that.

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21 This program is now known as Communities Embracing Restorative Action (CERA) Society.
From these meetings Evelyn received many tips, such as advice about developing a client database (described in Step 7). Evelyn was also reminded of the importance of giving victim advocates a place in the program’s development, which led to TRJ’s contact with Vancouver Police Victim Services. A participant commented that, in considering funding applications, CAP was concerned with whether the program offered a balanced approach to crime and conflict by providing support for victims. Clearly victim advocacy plays an important part in a holistic restorative justice community development program.

4.2.5 Step 6: Train & Build Capacity

During each implementation step, the steering committee was aware of the importance of developing local capacities in the community rather than continually relying on external resources. For example, the local leader attended the 2007 CAP Conference in order to learn more about the restorative justice movement. In, 2008, Evelyn received a cold-call from a local resident asking advice about dealing with a difficult family issue. The caller did not think her family would be willing to participate in any kind of intervention and declined Evelyn’s offer to speak with the other family members, so instead, Evelyn referred her to some communication resources, including Rosenberg’s *Nonviolent Communication*. The caller commented that if TRJ were to offer communication skills workshops she would be interested in attending. Furthermore, both training opportunities, as well as the information workshops, were offered for free to the community. Although wages could not be offered for the training, free child care was available, courtesy of TBCC, and the steering committee encouraged all potential attendees to share with them any barriers that would prevent them from attending so these might be addressed. To ensure accessibility to local residents the
training was offered in the community, and food was provided for all attendees. These examples illustrate the variety of opportunities TRJ had to develop local capacities.

The 2007 workshop that some TRJ volunteers participated in with Molly Baldwin provided a taste of peacemaking circles. Roca is considered by many TRJ volunteers to be an excellent example of successful, urban peacemaking circle practice. When it came time to decide what kind of training to offer TRJ volunteers, the steering committee opted to hire the most credible, respected, and experienced trainers it could. Ultimately, TRJ attained the services of Kay Pranis and Barry Stuart.

I brought in who I judged to be the best trainers in the world, Kay and Barry. I was conscious about making sure that we had high credentials. Because we were community-based and because it was a new program in Vancouver, I didn't want any question about who we were, and the training and what we were doing, so that the powers that be, including the police and the justice system and definitely the community, would have confidence in who we are and what we do.

The first training was offered in January, 2008, over three full days, including two weekdays. Nineteen people participated in the initial peacemaking circle training. During the training, participants explored restorative justice theory, discussed a values-based approach to conflict, and Barry and Kay walked attendees through a typical peacemaking circle experience.

A second training was held in October, 2008. This training was specifically for those from the first training who were interested in volunteering with TRJ as facilitators or peacemaking circle “keepers”. Barry returned for this round of training, offered for two days over a weekend. Having now an understanding of the values, principles, and concepts underlying a peacemaking circle, this training gave volunteers an opportunity to develop
facilitation skills, learn the stages and steps to a circle process, role-play, and discuss “what if” scenarios. TRJ had nine keepers, and some other people attended the training but opted not to be keepers. Participants left the training eager to participate in their first circle, though some volunteers felt they would like to experience a “real” circle before they facilitated one.

4.2.6 Analysis of Step 6

A. A note about empowerment

Underlying the goal of capacity building is the concept of empowerment, which is worth exploring. Interestingly, one participant felt uncomfortable with this word, remarking:

You know, there’s a word that I’ve always really struggled with and that’s “empowerment”. I don’t think it’s a useful word. To empower someone means
you have their authority and power to give them, so that they’ll all of a sudden have it, and it’s false, we don’t. Power comes from within. … It’s a fairly harmless word in itself, but I think there’s this perception, especially new people in the system, they think “great, I get to empower people”. You’re giving them something, and it’s not something you can give them, it’s something that they find within themselves, I believe.

This raises the question: “What is the best way to support people to find their own power?”

One participant reflected that one valuable way is to help people learn to network.

Some people don’t understand the doors they can open. … That aspect is really, really important. I think all too often we do the formal route, thinking that we’re going to really change the world that way, and it’s just not done that way.

According to this participant, one way of empowering is to help a person understand their power as citizens and to teach them how to use that power to “open doors” they did not know were accessible to them. Throughout TRJ’s implementation, the steering committee made an effort to engage resources and service providers in order to bridge these networking relationships to local residents; TRJ volunteers attempted to model the behaviour described above. A participant commented in another context, but I think it applies here: “I’m not shy to meet people I’ve not met before, and have meetings and do cold-calling and show up and just ask. I’m a great believer in ‘ask’, and they can always say no.” Modelling this attitude is one approach TRJ volunteers took to developing capacity at the local level. Another idea that was raised during my interviews was for TRJ to identify a local success story that would inspire, particularly youth; someone who had “made it big”, who could act as a role-model for local youth: “You have to give kids something to be proud about”.

B. Navigating the tension between being reactive and proactive

TRJ volunteers had to find the balance between two strategies for addressing the community’s human capacity issues: reacting to issues in the community by identifying
external resources to better serve the neighbourhood; and being proactive by building up local capacity to address the issues. The easiest way for TRJ to address the problems identified in Step 4 would be to create relationships and partnerships with external organizations that exist to meet those needs, such as Vancouver Coastal Health, family service organizations, and so on. For example, there are no social workers and only two regular youth workers in the Thunderbird community; certainly one way TRJ could contribute to the community would be to advocate for more social services. However, TRJ was committed to fostering these resources within Thunderbird. Although TRJ received lots of calls from “outsiders” eager to train and volunteer with the program, TRJ prioritized working with internal volunteers rather than continually bringing in outsiders; the easy fix described above was not appropriate, at least not in the long-term. Unfortunately, such capacity building takes time, and so many of the issues raised in Step 4 require more immediate intervention. A participant commented:

I think this is something that we could actually do more of: I don't think we offer much parenting support, and this community needs a lot of help in that direction…. However, the community is not really in that mind space. That’s what I have heard. … People reach out only when they’re absolutely at their whit’s end, and by that time it’s usually the Ministry [of Children and Family Development] that’s involved, or the police…

A long-term capacity building strategy was certainly on the radar for TRJ, but in the short-term, volunteers committed their limited time to getting the restorative justice program up and running.

C. Over-dependance on “experts”

Associated with this challenge is the very real problem of “experts”, or as Barry Stuart refers to it, the “911 Mentality” (this concept was described on page 47). It would have been easy
for TRJ to fall into this trap by always bringing in external resources to meet the
neighbourhood’s needs. An important part of the restorative justice movement is to put
problems back into the hands of those experiencing them; to empower people to resolve
their own conflicts. TRJ did not want to nurture the perception that the challenges faced by
the community could only be addressed by more social workers, more police officers, and
other professionals.22

4.3 Phase III: Implementation

By this phase of TRJ’s implementation, a strong foundation was created, the design was
fleshed out, and the program was ready to be implemented. The final three steps are:

Step 7: Create Administrative Infrastructure
Step 8: Identify Sustainable Funding
Step 9: Evaluate & Reflect

4.3.1 Step 7: Create an Administrative Infrastructure

The strategic planning session and visioning process that the steering committee underwent in April, 2008, generated several “next steps” that needed to be addressed before the program could be operational. Most of these involved the development of an administrative infrastructure for the program. Although TRJ is formally a program of the Hastings Sunrise Community Policing Centre (CPC), because of its unique and collaborative structure the

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22 This ties into a wider concern in the restorative justice movement about professionalization and co-optation, which was discussed on page 38.
program could not simply be managed like any other CPC initiative. Some of the many details that were addressed in this step are the following: creating a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the VPD and agreements with other partner and referral organizations; creating referral forms; outlining referral protocols; setting up a database of funding opportunities; deciding upon a method of recording client and case information; sorting out insurance and liability; and developing confidentiality and privacy policies.

One of the main outcomes of TRJ’s strategic planning session was the decision to make TRJ a program of the CPC. At the strategic planning session, TRJ was faced with several options: maintain TRJ’s status as a collaborative, but informal, initiative between existing organizations; centralize operations within one lead organization; or form a new non-profit society to govern the initiative. It made sense to formalize TRJ’s structure through one of the latter two choices; doing so made funding and other activities much simpler. The decision to house the program within the CPC was largely a matter of convenience; the CPC has an existing operating agreement with the VPD, so housing the program there saved the steering committee a great deal of time and energy, administratively. Further, TRJ did not have to create a new society, including a charter, by-laws, charity status, and so forth. Although the decision was consistent with the initial plan (according to the original intent of the start-up funds), there was never a sense that one organization had more ownership than another.

There were now many issues to address, primarily, what the relationship would be between the CPC, its board of directors, and TRJ and its steering committee. No other CPC program has a steering committee, so this was new territory for all organizations involved.
Ultimately, it was decided that although TRJ is formally a CPC program, and therefore under the jurisdiction of the CPC’s Board of Directors, the TRJ steering committee would retain input in significant decisions, such as the hiring of a full-time coordinator (see Illustration 4.4).

One of the first administrative details to be addressed following the strategic planning session was the development of TRJ’s first memorandum of understanding (MOU). TRJ wouldn’t be able to receive referrals from the VPD without an MOU, regardless of the fact that there was already an operating agreement in place through the CPC. The MOU solidified the VPD’s referral relationship with TRJ, safeguarding it against future personnel changes within either organization. It took nearly ten months for the MOU to be completed because of several delays along the way, and because many of the people involved were volunteering their time, and working off the side of their desks. For example, it took three months to obtain from the City a copy of the CPC’s liability coverage, a necessary component of the MOU.

Significant conversations took place during the development of the MOU, such as whether TRJ would be required to share information with the VPD. After hearing from other...
restorative justice programs about their privacy policies, it was decided that information TRJ obtained through the course of a referral would remain confidential; the VPD wouldn’t have access to it. The MOU only outlines that the VPD would retain access to TRJ case files involving VPD-referred youth, which means community-referred cases would remain confidential. Since TRJ case files were not to contain “protected information”, the data that the police would have access to (again, in regards to VPD-referred cases) would be details such as the nature of the crime, if and when a circle was held, and what the outcome was. Other, more sensitive information that may arise during a circle process wouldn’t be contained in these files.

A unique feature of TRJ’s three-pronged approach was that it included police-referred cases for people aged 19-24, in recognition of Aboriginal definitions of youth. Ultimately, it was determined that TRJ needed to develop two separate MOUs: one with the VPD for referrals involving young persons, and one for referrals involving adults from 19-24. This latter category of referrals was new ground for the VPD, and the MOU was put on hold until the first referral process was established. These referrals would always be pre-charge; one participant noted that after the program was in operation for several years, TRJ could begin talks with Crown to negotiate referrals for cases involving offenders who have already been charged.

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23 According to the MOU, “protected information” refers to both personal information pertaining to the young offender, and information pertaining to any offence or investigation of any offence.

24 “‘Young person’ means a person who is or, in the absence of evidence to the contrary, appears to be twelve years old or older, but less than eighteen years old and, if the context requires, includes any person who is charged under this Act with having committed an offence while he or she was a young person or who is found guilty of an offence under this Act.” (YCJA, 2002, c.1.2(1)).
Security clearances need to be in place before TRJ could receive referrals from the VPD. Criminal record checks are a requirement stipulated in the VPD operating agreement for all CPC volunteers, including TRJ volunteers. The steering committee agreed that criminal records checks would be necessary, although an existing criminal record would not necessarily preclude a person from volunteering (though it may affect what type of position the volunteer could have within the program). This process began in April, 2008, and most criminal record checks were completed by April, 2009. This important detail took over a year to process because of the time required by each party; first, each volunteer needed to complete the form and submit it, in person, to the downtown VPD station. This took some time, as not all volunteers lived near downtown Vancouver; further, the office is only open at certain times of the day, and some TRJ volunteers worked unusual hours, and travelled extensively for business. The CPC’s neighbourhood police officer volunteered to process each of the applications, but since this was not a regular duty for him, it could only be addressed when he had the time. Further, the officer in charge of community policing in the CPC’s district offered to sign-off on all criminal records checks, so there were several stages to obtain the clearances.

It took months to get security clearance, and that was surprising to me. But again, we’re relying on people who are doing this on the side of their desk. They’re already full up with what they need to get done…

In April, 2008, Evelyn learned from another restorative justice program about a local software engineer who had generously donated her time to develop a personalized client database to meet the needs of the program. This database allowed the program to record

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25 At least one steering committee volunteer still hadn’t completed the criminal record check application, as of October, 2009.
client information and track statistical data for each case it processed. Such a database would not only help TRJ keep track of its cases, but also it would prove valuable for generating statistical reports for funders. The TRJ administrative volunteers intended to explore the possibility further, but as more pertinent administrative issues arose, the client database was de-prioritized.

As a self-employed student, I was the volunteer best situated to take on many of the tasks generated from the strategic planning session. I became a paid administrative assistant to Evelyn the following month. The referral forms were developed in June, 2008, and after discussion between the administrative team and the referral organizations, the final referral forms were sent to CPC lawyers for approval in December, 2008. During this negotiation, the referral process and protocols were established; if someone had a case to refer, who would they call, and what would happen from there? It was decided that Evelyn would be the main contact person, but all confidential case details would remain in a locked cabinet at the CPC, which was consistent with the VPD MOU. Together with the CPC steering committee volunteer, Evelyn would assign two keepers to the case, and these keepers would be responsible for initiating contact with the parties, organizing the peacemaking circle, following up with all parties afterwards, and evaluating the circle process.

By October, 2008, we were swamped with to-do items that needed to be addressed. Evelyn had already moved to part-time work in the rest of her life, to focus on the many details arising on the TRJ front. That month, the steering committee decided to hire a temporary support person to help with some of the more major and pertinent administrative details we had committed to take on. From October to December, 2008, this support person identified
all major granting opportunities available to TRJ. I took over the project in January, 2009, and for the next four months, a spreadsheet was developed and organized according to the type of activity the funding could be used for and the contact information was confirmed and updated (this grants spreadsheet will be described in more detail in Step 8).

In addition to myself and Evelyn, there was one other steering committee volunteer who had the skills and commitment to address these administrative tasks. The three of us were quickly overwhelmed by the details that needed to be addressed before the program could receive a referral. It seemed that every time we sat down to think about it, more details came up. In order to ease our minds, I created a “living document” to record all that TRJ had done to date, administratively, and all that would eventually need to be addressed in the next two years. By “living document”, I mean it was an interactive organizational tool that was updated regularly and that reflected the current activities of the three administrative volunteers. It was “interactive” in that it made use of bookmarks and hyperlinks in order to organize the document according to the following fourteen sections:

- Grants due this month
- Grants due next month
- Upcoming grants to investigate
- Program evaluation
- Client database
- Referral forms & processes
- Communications
- Public relations & partnership development
- Case management
- Human resources/People management
- Tracking in-kind resources
- To do lists: by individual and month
- Archive: Past grants applied for, by month
- Archive: Past to-do items, by individual and month
This living document helped the three of us keep focused on what we were doing, and gave us a place to make note when a new idea occurred to us. For example, at one point we realized that a strategy for managing TRJ volunteers was going to be an important part of volunteer communication and retention; however, it could not be addressed in that moment so it was added to the living document so the idea was not lost. Not all of the fourteen sections contained information; some of them simply had notes for future development, others had more detailed headings and ideas, while other sections were updated on a more regular basis. We were hesitant to delete tasks that had been accomplished for fear that we would forget what had been done, and because we hoped to record our implementation process, so all of our to-do items were, instead, archived at the end of the document for reference. This became a source of pride for the three of us because we could easily look back and celebrate what had been accomplished so far.

A very good decision we made was to get organized around that. When we hit that enormous, what felt like a flood of things, we created a system. One of the highest recommendations is create systems. … The best thing we could have done was get very organized and have regular meetings with the administrative team.

The three of us met on a monthly basis, and at the end of each meeting the document was updated and redistributed for reference until the next meeting.

TRJ volunteers realized that working off the sides of their desks was not sustainable. It was clear that TRJ needed a full-time coordinator, if not two paid employees: “I believe for implementation we need somebody who is, especially somebody but ideally a couple of people, who can really anchor a program and do all the work that is needed every single week.” Both Evelyn and I were dedicated to the initiative and were eager to see it succeed,
but neither of us was interested in coordinating the program on a full-time, long-term basis. The other administrative volunteer had a full-time job and was already overstretched. One participant, who was skeptical about the program’s survival, commented that if TRJ was to thrive, a stable presence in the community was crucial for developing trust and building relationships. Another participant echoed this need:

"We didn't have the staffing to actually go down there and meet and greet people on a daily basis, and I think that’s what needs to happen, I think, for people to really tie into it. My experience with volunteer things is that they’re excellent, and they’ll involve people, but the time that it takes is a lot longer. It’s very methodical, and your timelines are probably ten times greater than when it’s a paid position."

The tension TRJ was experiencing regarding human resources was not unique:

"You need more people with more time, but where do you find them? … But then you just overwhelm that person until they stop being effective too, right? That’s generally what we do in life. I know we find resources, and then everybody’s like, “aw, this is the greatest resource”. And what do we do? We send a thousand people until the resource says, “Holy shit! We can't do our work anymore!” and they’re not effective anymore. And we tend to do that. You need more people who can do it."

In order to stay true to TRJ’s goal of local capacity building all the steering committee volunteers agreed that ideally, the TRJ coordinator would come from the Thunderbird community. There was hesitation to bring in yet another external resource to coordinate the program and so the hope was to find a local resident who could be mentored by me and Evelyn, in order to prepare her or him for the job. Unfortunately, over the three years that TRJ had been developing, few candidates seemed available. Some volunteers privately hoped the local youth worker, who sat on the TRJ steering committee, could be mentored to become the coordinator. He already had relationships in the community, he was supportive
of the initiative, and he clearly had the skills necessary to work collaboratively with the community.

We didn't have a conversation about it because at that point it was way too early because we didn't have a program, we didn't have any money … I was really disappointed that [he] didn't do the keeper training. … That is one thing I have to let go of is … when I see what is possible, but if somebody is not ready or does not want it, or it’s not connecting with them, then I need to just respect their choices.

To date, no coordinator has been hired because of funding issues (to be discussed in Step 8).

Interestingly, during the course of my study, I learned of only one program that, surprisingly, has managed to operate solely by volunteers since 1997, having only recently hired a coordinator in January, 2009. When asked how the organization managed to function so well despite not having a paid coordinator, the participant noted that within
their pool of twenty-four volunteers are a variety of skills and assets. Most importantly, several of their volunteers can commit time because they are retired, and many have professional backgrounds, such as forensic nursing, education, counselling, accounting, and social work. Their volunteer team, in other words, is well resourced, well connected, and has several people who have the time to share the workload, which helps the program operate more smoothly.

4.3.2 Analysis of Step 7

A. Get ready! This will take much longer than you expect

Of all the implementation steps, this one was the most time-intensive. TRJ embarked upon this step after developing the three-pronged approach and working through a very inspiring and energetic visioning and strategic planning session. It is no wonder that enthusiasm waned when the steering committee then turned to these very important, but frustratingly time-consuming, details.

We got going roughly February-ish, as a steering committee, I think in 2008, and I say this naively, I was sort of projecting that, not having any idea of the hoops we’d have to go through as an organization, to get off the ground … I would have liked to see us do at least one facilitation, a simple one, in 2008. However, I had no idea of the admin component to this. You know, I took Molly Baldwin’s course … and I guess I got the mistaken impression that it just happened, that Roca just happened. People got pissed off, and “I can't take it anymore” … So I didn't appreciate the administration piece in that, it seemed to be much more spontaneous.

In fact, at a training session provided by Molly Baldwin that followed the 2nd International Restorative Practices Conference in June, 2009, I learned that Roca took years to develop, to become the organization it is today. Another participant commented that although he
doesn't regret becoming involved with TRJ, if he had known at the outset that the program would take three years to implement, he probably wouldn't have gotten involved.

If I knew [then] what I know now, I probably wouldn't have done it, to be honest. … I also know the other side … and I’m kind of glad we’re doing it, because we’ve gotten a lot out of it. But if you had told me it was going to take two years, like in two years we wouldn't have taken on any cases … So that one year stretched into three years, and if she had told me … you know, we may not get anything done for three years, we may have no funding for three years but you’re going to have to put in resources, I would have said, “we can't do it”. … Knowing what I know now … absolutely we’re happy to be here.

B. Address the loss of momentum

This step resulted in a significant loss of momentum for the wider steering committee. As time went on, and steering committee meetings became less frequent, TRJ became centralized on the three administrative volunteers, and although the other steering committee volunteers continued to express their support, interest, and commitment to the initiative, these feelings may have been negatively affected by the wait.

If you had asked me [if TRJ would be around in five years] a year ago, I would have said “definitely, I can't see any reason why it wouldn't.” Because of the amount of time it's taking to get beyond the administrative set-up of it, my perception is the majority of the people on the committee - and I haven't talked to them, I’ve never had this feedback from them - is that, well this has been a long time, and their interest has probably waned, and their commitment has probably waned. … The training was a long time ago and there's been no opportunity to use any of it. And I think a lot of that is lost. … It's just taken a lot longer to kick in, and in hind-sight, it wasn't realistic to think it would have happened any faster.

C. Get organized early to prevent burn-out

One particular hurdle that TRJ volunteers experienced during this step is not unique to restorative practice, but in fact is likely common to all fields of practice: burn-out. Burn-out is the experience of exhausting yourself - physically, mentally, emotionally, or spiritually -
until you are unable to function effectively in your work. One participant reflected: “Some things I have to do because no one else is going to do [them], but the sheer enormity of this is a huge responsibility, and quite frankly I’m really tired. I love this, but you can feel that.” It was mentioned earlier that sometimes feeling overwhelmed by workload can lead to the inability to see the small things that might make a big difference to lighten the load, which then reinforces the situation. Interestingly, one participant expressed little sympathy for this problem.

I don't accept [burnout] as a valid excuse, I really don't, because the repercussions of not taking the time to do the first steps because you save endless amounts of time later on, and if you take tiny little steps in the beginning, you don't have the problems later to address.

One volunteer risked burn-out when she felt protective of other volunteers. Because she was concerned about other volunteers experiencing burn-out early in the initiative, she attempted to “protect” them by taking on more work herself. This self-sacrifice, though well-meaning, was not particularly proactive in the long-run. However, because as she began to take on more and more work, she felt more and more overwhelmed. At the same time this decision resulted in fewer opportunities for other volunteers to actively participate in the program.

D. **Figure out your safest approach to work**

TRJ volunteers made an effort to avoid burn-out by practicing self care. Self care means taking personal steps that will help sustain the work in the long-run. For example, the three administrative volunteers felt overwhelmed by all that needed to be addressed in order for the initiative to be up and running. Although the living document was a significant help in this regard, it could not ameliorate all of the stress associated with program implementation. The volunteers came to realize that pacing themselves was a useful way to
sustain themselves. A few frank discussions emphasized that the steering committee had to be realistic about what could be accomplished with the available human resources. One person reflected:

[In the beginning of the initiative, there were] two professionals with full-time jobs - and I had more than one - doing this initiative. Ideally it would have been nice to have somebody who perhaps was retired, or a part-time student, or a stay-at-home mom, somebody who had an enormous amount of time, and complete dedication for this one initiative. … Because it wasn't that we had to miss anything: I think we had to do the workshops, we had to do the outreach, the youth outreach. But I know that months had gone by sometimes where we just couldn't get everything done that we needed to get done.

Another participant offered their suggestion for how to avoid burn-out in the workplace.

The key is having a life outside work, and then making your supervisors understand that, how important it is. … Also you need to learn key things, boundaries, you need to be right in the head [and seek help if you need it] … and learning how to leave the stuff at work. And just constantly educating yourself. … I don't burn out anymore. I know how to say no, I know how to be assertive.

What caused the greatest tension were the time-intensive grant applications that were ultimately rejected time and time again (to be discussed in Step 8). Developing a healthy approach to self-care was important, particularly in regards to dealing with rejection. “I think it took a toll on us individually, but also [on] our small group. It was hard for us to get through that.” At the group-level, self care in this case took the form of a talking circle with the administrative volunteer team to clarify expectations from each volunteer, to vent frustrations about the disappointing results they’d received so far, and to clarify each volunteer’s needs from the other group members.
4.3.3 Step 8: Identify Sustainable Funding

TRJ was in the unique and fortunate position to have substantial start-up funding at the beginning of the initiative, and managed to spread out the initial grant money over the course of its three years of implementation. That start-up funding went to costs associated with organizing community information workshops, paid for the two trainings so that participants could attend without cost, and contributed to food for the steering committee meetings in 2006 and 2007. Sharing food is an important part of building community. The steering committee felt this was a valid and important way to use the money. The start-up funds also paid for Evelyn's professional time as a consultant in 2006 and 2007, though much of the rest of her contributions, such as when she coordinated the program, was unpaid, volunteer time. As a sub-contractor, I was paid by Evelyn. The TRJ steering committee was clear from the beginning that core funding would ultimately be needed to keep the initiative going. However, neither the steering committee members, partnering organizations, nor Evelyn, realized how challenging it would be to find a sustainable source of core funding in the City of Vancouver.

The administrative team looked first to the grant spreadsheet that was created at the end of 2008. This database included private grants, foundational and institutional grants, and public grants. Although it may not have been an exhaustive list of all the funding opportunities in existence (though we felt we were very thorough), it became clear that grants from private funds and foundations are meant for events, one-time projects, and pilot projects, not for core funding, such as wages. This was a frustrating moment for TRJ. The steering committee could use the grants to put on activities for local youth, but could not employ someone to coordinate the events. Most importantly, TRJ could not use these
funding sources to hire someone to do the on-going community engagement and education that was necessary for TRJ’s success.

While searching for sustainable, core funding, TRJ applied for the more well-known provincial grant opportunities for crime-prevention and restorative justice-based initiatives: CAP; and the Civil Forfeiture, Crime Remediation & Crime Prevention Grant. Although TRJ received CAP funding in both 2008 and 2009, this was not enough on which to operate ($2,500 each year), and the program was turned down both years for the other grant, being told informally that restorative justice was not a priority that year.26 One participant reflected on the problems associated with CAP.

People were being expected to report a lot, there was a lot of paper work, and it was still very little concrete support. It was developed as a grant program, I think with the idea that it would be two or three years and then communities would be up and running and would be self-sufficient. As you know, that’s never - there are a few [CAP programs] that are doing well. The idea was that the support then would come through other means, and that really wasn’t based on, necessarily, on evidence.

[So they were just kind of hoping for the best?]

Yeah … As far as I’m concerned, programs said the same thing: We’ve got good volunteers but we need some help, we need some money to have at least half-time staff, or somebody to keep it going. That’s certainly been my experience as a volunteer, not with CAP but with other things in the community, you’ve still got to have somebody who can photocopy minutes for the next meeting, or, you know? That volunteers just don’t - you have to have an infrastructure, they told us that again and again. …

They had a really hard time contacting some of the programs, because they were all volunteering. They would leave a message on a machine, and it would be a week later before somebody got back. From that they speculated, well how are the police going to find this useful? No wonder they’re not getting any referrals. So the lack of referrals was a reflection of the paid staff question.

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26 We were told, informally, that funding priorities for those years were Aboriginal programs and anti-gang initiatives. Annual funding priorities potentially create significant challenges for non-profit organizations that depend on public grants. This issue is discussed further in the Discussion chapter, on page 183.
In Metro Vancouver there are a number of restorative justice programs, several of which have been in operation for over ten years. The assumption was that if these programs can find core funding, so would TRJ. When I began attending steering committee meetings in April, 2008, I came with detailed knowledge about the local programs’ funding as the result of a research project I had initiated the previous year. As such, I was aware that the majority of the local programs received their core operating funds from their municipalities.

TRJ turned to the municipality to investigate the local options and learned that Vancouver offers three grant opportunities under the umbrella of Community Service Grants. One of these, called the Direct Social Services Grant, seemed applicable to TRJ. The grant was designed for local programs that were facilitating social change, improving access to social services, and strengthening the connection between local services, social policy, and municipal priorities. However, programs that fall under the mandate of other levels of government were not eligible. In December, 2008, TRJ applied for this grant, emphasizing the program’s community development goals. In early 2009, TRJ was denied the grant on the basis that as a justice-based program, TRJ clearly falls under a provincial mandate. This was perceived as another instance of the provincial government “downloading” responsibilities onto municipalities. The TRJ administrative team appealed the rejection, on the grounds that it was a community development initiative, and that there were no appropriate provincial funds available.

In the meantime, through collaboration with other restorative justice organizations, TRJ confirmed that almost all other local restorative justice programs are funded through their municipalities and the majority of these cities use Traffic Fine Revenue as the source for this
funding (Vancouver Association for Restorative Justice, n.d.). Traffic Fine Revenue is provincial money that is given to BC municipalities, which is intended for “helping municipalities to enhance their policing and community-based public safety programs” (Ministry of Community Development, 2009, para. 1). Unfortunately, although this is the intended purpose of the funds, municipalities are permitted to use the revenue as they see fit.

In terms of downloading, I would hear it every year from the UBCM - the Union of BC Municipalities - there would often be something. Now, there’s been less since this government has said to use the Traffic Fine Revenues, but that’s been … kind of up and down and inconsistent. So some groups have said, “can’t you make it that they SHALL use it for?” But I don’t think we’ll see that.

[No? How come?]

Because I think there’s more political capital from having, to say that municipalities are using it to have more policing. I think … they’re leaving the decision up to municipalities and I think it’s taking pressure off in other ways. So it is too bad, they can use it however they want, and I have seen no interest at all in changing that.

Armed with this new information, in May, 2009, TRJ stood before city council to appeal the grant decision. Evelyn was given five minutes to speak before Vancouver’s mayor and council, after which the council agreed that restorative justice is important and valuable to the Vancouver community. Council decided that restorative justice doesn’t fit within the existing municipal funding opportunities, such as the Direct Services Grant for which TRJ had applied, and that a different funding source should be identified. The city manager offered to look into a more suitable funding source. Furthermore, city council pointed out that TRJ was receiving in-kind support from the municipality through VPD resources, such as the two officers who sat on the steering committee. In the following months,

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In 2007, Vancouver received $14.1 million in Traffic Fine Revenue; in 2008, it received $14.8; and in 2009, $15.4 million. The City anticipates $13.8 million for the 2010 budget (City of Vancouver, 2009).
representatives of TRJ and the local restorative justice advocacy group, VARJ (described on page 31), met with local councillors and city staff to work towards a solution, but unfortunately a sustainable source of funding has not been identified to date. VARJ continues to pursue the issue with city staff on behalf of Vancouver restorative justice-based initiatives.

Late in the spring of 2009, a new funding opportunity arose. Evelyn met with a BC Housing community development worker whose portfolio includes Skeena Terrace, who was impressed by the program. After a follow-up meeting with several higher-ranking BC Housing representatives, TRJ was encouraged to prepare a proposal for BC Housing describing the initiative, outlining the necessary funding, how it would be used, and how the program would benefit them. Included in this proposal, which was completed in May 2009,
was a significant decision made by the steering committee: TRJ would be centralized in Skeena Terrace, focusing the majority of its efforts in this smaller jurisdiction.

Unfortunately, as of October, 2009, there had been no response from BC Housing and informal discussions suggest that restorative justice does not have a place currently within their operating budget.

4.3.4 Analysis of Step 8

A. The challenges of being a trailblazer

The inability to find core funding is, in part, unique to a program that is the first of its kind in a municipality or jurisdiction. TRJ is paving the way for restorative justice programs in the City of Vancouver, where no similar programs have ever successfully developed.

I think … where we’ve been challenged is because restorative justice is more a theory than a practice, there’s not really any funding sources for restorative justice. Because not having restorative justice doesn’t hurt anyone, because we haven’t had it to begin with, there’s no funding for it. If we had it there and we took it away, that would be different, but it was never there. So it’s one of those things where you need some people that are going to spearhead it, and be trailblazers, and do all the pain and all the suffering, so it gets on the books and it is something. Once you do that, then there’s going to be resources and a commitment from people to fund it.

B. Juggling mandates and jurisdictions

The problem of overlapping mandates or jurisdictions is not uncommon in restorative practice, and it is an issue that has hindered restorative justice development in Vancouver for nearly a decade. The issue of mandate is like a “hot potato” that goes back and forth between the three levels of government and the community (discussed in more detail on page 29), and unfortunately there is no easy or readily available solution. While legally, the provinces are responsible for administration of justice, much of the benefits of restorative
justice initiatives like TRJ are focused at the local level: a more civil society; less work for
the municipal police force; less work for City staff through services such as graffiti removal
(Vancouver Association for Restorative Justice, n.d.). Clearly, the province’s current method
of funding restorative justice programs is inadequate. CAP funding is too minimal to sustain
a program, and the use of Traffic Fine Revenue for community-based crime prevention
initiatives is not mandatory.

C. What comes first, funding or evidence?
A conundrum TRJ faced during this step is a “chicken-and-egg” issue. The program needed
funding in order to employ a person to build relationships, which would lead to referrals,
which would lead to tangible results. Unfortunately, it was difficult to obtain funding with
no results to use as evidence of the program’s effectiveness. The question became, what
comes first: funding, or results?

Some participants felt that if they had more opportunities to practice their restorative justice
skills, they would feel more confident in engaging the community on a smaller scale,
through talking circles, for example, rather than by dealing with specific conflicts or harms.28
These participants suspected that if they began engaging with the community in this way,
funding would be easier to obtain. Other participants felt that money would come if the
program could be proven.

We need to actually act on referrals. We seem to be locked in at the moment. I’m
sure we can come up with local referrals, between [the local gatekeepers]. We
need to do that in advance of more money, we just have to go and do it. Once we
get a couple of those under our belts, that will facilitate getting money.

28 In June, 2009, I volunteered to coordinate a mock circle training session for TRJ volunteers, but as the
administrative team felt more weary and funding opportunities seemed less promising, we opted to break for
the summer instead.
What was less clear to participants, however, is what was needed in order to actually receive those local referrals. Several participants had the impression that local champions were waiting for a crime or conflict to occur so that they could offer a referral. In reality, Evelyn received very few. Some participants in this study, who were potential referrers, felt prepared to refer a case to TRJ, but were waiting for the opportunity. Others felt they were not yet clear enough on the referral and circle processes, but had confidence in the use of restorative practice to address a conflict. One participant expressed disappointment that the earlier-mentioned referral did not go to circle (described on page 90) and commented that she wouldn’t be prepared to refer a case until the program had proven itself with a test case.

D. What comes first, social capital or restorative justice?
This challenge reflects another “chicken-and-egg” problem that TRJ was faced with throughout implementation. On the one hand, in order to receive referrals the program needed to develop a certain amount of social capital (relationships) within the community, and on the other hand, TRJ recognized that by providing peacemaking circles it would foster and strengthen its social capital in the community. Unfortunately, it seemed that without one, TRJ would have difficulty obtaining the other.²⁹ Some participants felt that if TRJ could just connect with locals, they would come to see the value of the program, and TRJ could strengthen its relationships and trust in the community.

We received feedback from the staff and volunteers from the different partners that attended the training with Judge Barry Stuart ... I think, from the beginning of the weekend, how some people didn't want to be there, some people weren't sure what they got themselves into, some people thought they knew what it was,.

²⁹ Interestingly, one participant commented that if he had been involved from the beginning, he would have advocated for locating the initiative in an area with more social capital to begin with, such as the Broadway/Fraser corridor where a Broadway Youth Resource Centre has already had success engaging local at-risk youth.
and at the end of the weekend, you could feel that the group was resonating with a similar experience, and were sharing information that they weren't at the beginning. My sense is that that would happen more, on a larger level in the community, once we start rolling with the circles.

E. Lesson revisited: Maintain connection with partners

In order to ensure local referrals, the volunteer administrative team felt it was important to keep TRJ “on the radar” by being in regular contact with local gatekeepers. This sentiment was echoed by several participants who emphasized that a physical presence in the community would likely have a positive influence on TRJ’s community integration. Unfortunately, this in itself could have been a full-time job, and simply reinforced the need to hire a full-time coordinator. Conversely, another participant was cautious about processing too many referrals without securing core funding.

My concern, I do think we need one or two cases, and they need to be successful, but what do we do after that? We can't run endless cases without any funding. So we want one or two, but that’ll be as far as it goes until we get funding.

It was important to all the volunteers that TRJ’s relationship with the community be one of integrity and reliability. No one wanted TRJ to be just another program that could not deliver on its promises. This concern is reflected in the issue of how many referrals to process and how much relationship building could be done without guaranteed funding.

F. Be prepared for frustration, disappointment

All three TRJ administrative volunteers, including myself, found the funding step to be painful, frustrating, and disappointing. TRJ volunteers were affected by the repeated rejections they experienced after spending hours on grant applications.

One thing that was challenging… The time and the funding. We spent - I spent months trying to get funding this year. So I have not been able to do a lot of the
other things that needed to be done. As you know, it takes weeks to do these
grants, they're awful, these proposals. It's frustrating, and it takes something out
of you when it's all these rejections. You know, we spend two weeks on one
proposal and we get rejected, so: gone. And then we spend another two weeks on
another - So okay that's a month of our work, of hours and hours, like ten hours
a day on that stupid proposal. It takes a toll on us. I think it took a toll on us
individually, but also our small group. It was hard for us to get through that. It's
been a hard go these last few months, I would say.

Another source of frustration for volunteers was the frequent glad-handing and “best
wishes”, followed by “… but we can't fund you”. While in-kind support was available (for
example, city council’s emphasis that they were supporting TRJ through the allocation of
two police officers to the TRJ steering committee), such in-kind support was not going to
help TRJ do all the things for which it needed a full-time coordinator. Nearly everyone who
TRJ volunteers came into contact with were supportive of the initiative, and recognized its
value to the community, but no one was able to follow through with funding to keep the
program going.

G. Lesson revisited: Maintain connection with volunteers

An important lesson that TRJ volunteers learned from Step 8 is the importance of all
volunteers staying engaged with the program while the administrative and funding details
are being addressed. While the administrative volunteers were creating referral forms,
negotiating MOUs and searching for funding, the remaining steering committee members
were not actively involved in the program. Although the administrative team attempted to
update the steering committee whenever there was news to share, in between the updates
and meetings there was little contact. It became apparent that more contact was necessary
when, through my interviews, I noticed some steering committee members were far more
conscious of the challenges and accomplishments TRJ was facing than other volunteers.
Fortunately, another consistency throughout the interviews was that nearly all steering committee members interviewed seemed interested in how the program was doing and what the administrative team was doing. This suggests that although not all steering committee members were actively engaged for a period, their relationships with the program were not harmed.

4.3.5 Step 9: Evaluate & Reflect

Although it is situated at the end of the implementation process, in fact the TRJ steering committee was reflecting and evaluating its progress throughout the program’s implementation. Reflecting on what was done well and learning from mistakes is arguably the best way to grow, both as individual practitioners and as an organization. Whenever a decision had to be made, or the next step determined, the steering committee reflected on the values and principles underlying the program and considered the decision in light of those values.

One of the things I’m extremely happy that we did is … a lot of outreach, and right from the very beginning, it was really following principles and values of restorative justice, for example being inclusive.

Each time TRJ was faced with the possibility of changing its jurisdiction in order to increase referrals or obtain new funding sources, the steering committee reflected on how the outcome of that decision would reflect the values and principles of restorative justice as well as the vision and goals established in April, 2008. On one occasion, the steering committee decided not to expand the jurisdiction to include the local high school because it wanted to stay focused on the Thunderbird community. In 2009, the steering committee offered to BC
Housing that it would focus just on Skeena Terrace because the volunteers felt that this would still work towards TRJ’s vision.

One participant commented on the importance of regular reflection.

It is really, really important at regular intervals to set aside a time to say, okay, what is going on here, what are our principles, are we sticking to our principles, are we going to have to maybe reduce this kind of work so that we can actually get on the right track and maintain our commitment to our principles. What are the different ways we can do this, and how can we look at it, and what can we do? I think that is essential because otherwise you just become part of the machine. …

I think developing, looking at strategic planning and going through that process, which can be a right pain in the ass, but is really important - vision, mission, values, goals. All of those are really important because then, it’s there. Okay, what are we here for? And come back to it, because you have to keep coming back to it, because you can get totally drowned in the minutia and lose sight of what you’re there for. It is, it’s an extremely important thing to do I think.

TRJ administrative team recognized the importance of developing evaluation tools for circle processes. Participant evaluation forms were developed in early 2009. These were influenced by sample participation forms from neighbouring restorative justice programs. The opportunity arose to test the evaluation forms in April 2009, when TRJ received a referral from a local institution.30 The administrative team felt that evaluating circle keepers was also an important part of program development. Although a concrete keeper evaluation tool was not created, a strategy was discussed. After each circle, keepers would debrief the event by completing a self-evaluation that would be kept on file and then periodically the TRJ coordinator would review these self-evaluations as well as relevant participant evaluations in order to engage in reflection with, and offer feedback to, the keepers. Talking circles would be held with keepers in order to provide support for each keeper, to help them debrief and

30 Unfortunately, the case had no relation to the TRJ jurisdiction, so Evelyn and I co-facilitated the circle as private practitioners, rather than as representatives of TRJ.
reflect on the circle, and for the keepers to learn from each other. An evaluation protocol was also discussed for each of the program's activities, including community outreach events and conflict intervention efforts, but a concrete evaluation plan was not developed. Of course, quantitative measures would also be used, which is why the custom-designed client database mentioned earlier would have been helpful. It was important to the administration team that a thorough and reflexive evaluation process be developed that would give the organization the opportunity to reflect on its accomplishments and consider its activities on a regular basis.

Figure 4.13: Key Events in Step 9 - Evaluate & Reflect

- Form Partnerships
- Educate & Outreach to Community
- Identify Stakeholders, Foster Ownership
- Assess Needs
- Create the Restorative Model
- Identify Sustainable Funding
- Create Administrative Infrastructure
- Train & Build Capacity
- Evaluate & Reflect
4.3.6 Analysis of Step 9

A. Don’t forget to celebrate achievements!

It is important to remember that this step provides the opportunity not only to reflect on how to improve the program, but also to celebrate the program’s accomplishments. Too often, we are so motivated by progress and improvement that we forget to look back and see how far we’ve come. One of the benefits to creating the living document was the archive of everything that had been accomplished to date. In reviewing this document at each of the administrative meetings, we were able to acknowledge the work we had done and be proud of that.

B. Take the time to do it right

Another lesson to be taken away from this step is the value of being thorough when planning an evaluation strategy. The evaluation strategy that was discussed by the administrative team was elaborate and intensive, but the volunteers felt committed to taking the time to “doing it right”. It was not enough simply to have a participant evaluation form and client database. We also wanted to make sure we reflected on the performance of ourselves as coordinators and keepers, whether the program was achieving its community development goals and reflecting the organization’s values and vision, whether our volunteers felt effective, confident and valuable, and whether or not we were doing what we told our funders we would do. Through my work with TRJ I have learned the importance of taking time to be reflective in my work, and to always look for opportunities to improve my practice.
4.4 TRJ: Epilogue

In October, 2009, the steering committee met after a long summer break. The administrative team hoped to share positive news with the steering committee at this meeting; that funding had been found through the City or BC Housing. Unfortunately, no such news was available. TRJ steering committee members agreed that the next step for the initiative was to engage the Thunderbird community and further develop relationships with local referral sources by having a regular and consistent presence there, building relationships and participating in local events. However, it was clear that this could not be accomplished without a full-time coordinator, who could not be hired without securing sustainable, core funding. After thorough discussion the steering committee decided to put TRJ on hiatus until sustainable funding becomes available. The steering committee was clear that TRJ is not terminated, and each steering committee member in attendance still supports the initiative. However, the committee recognized that it could no longer continue as it had done for the last year, particularly with the administrative team contributing so much largely-unpaid work trying to find funding. Meanwhile, some people outside of the committee expressed interest in starting another program in a neighbouring CPC, based on TRJ. We all agreed that without a viable source of funding, initiating a new restorative justice project anywhere in the City would be unethical, and a poor use of time and resources.
Chapter 5: Discussion

Out of the previous chapter follow a few broader, and some more abstract issues that deserve further discussion. Although each of the topics below deserve their own forums for exploration, I will briefly touch on the following issues: First, TRJ has offered one way of approaching the nine steps to implementation, but how else might this process have unfolded? Following that I turn to the next steps for TRJ, if sustainable funding for the program were to be found tomorrow. Looking at the larger context of restorative practice, I briefly reflect on how TRJ fits into the ongoing debate about the scope of restorative justice. This issue leads into a brief review of what relationship, if any, there is between communitarianism and what some practitioners might call “restorativism”.

5.1 Alternative Order of Implementation Steps

The purpose of this thesis is not to determine “the” way to develop a restorative justice program, because no one way does, or ought to exist. Restorative justice programs must remain dynamic to meet the unique needs of the community they are designed to serve. On the other hand, these reasonable concerns about maintaining flexibility in restorative practice has led to some practitioners resisting the establishment of any kind of standards or models, which can lead would-be program developers such as myself to feel at a loss when inspired to develop a program. If there’s no common threads to restorative practice, where do you start? As such, my hope is that someone who finds her- or him-self in a situation like mine will feel informed enough about implementation, through TRJ’s experiences, to take action. For those people, I offer the following reflection about feedback I received from participants regarding the order in which TRJ approached the nine steps to implementation.
Assuming the list of nine steps is inclusive, there are a many ways in which those steps could be implemented (technically speaking, there are 362 880 different ways in which those nine steps could be ordered!).

Throughout the *Results* chapter I attempted to address the rationale behind the order in which TRJ approached implementation. I highlighted key strategic decisions the steering committee made that influenced the direction of the program, decisions that led to a new “fork” in the road that may have led elsewhere. For example, from the beginning of the program’s development Evelyn made a conscious decision to build the program from the community upwards, rather than starting at the political level (see page 76 for this discussion). An alternative approach might have been to target formal political power in order to benefit from powerful relationships and connections, as some participants with experience developing restorative justice programs reflected.

Some groups, consciously, will have a blue ribbon board, and they’ll reach out to people … who are just influential, who know people, who have had senior roles, and are interested in your topic, because they will open doors; they’ll open conversations.

While this approach has its merits, Evelyn intentionally employed the former strategy because she prioritized grass-roots development and community ownership over starting off with political power. This is not to suggest TRJ did not recognize the usefulness of political influence and powerful connections. It is possible that having stronger political ties at the outset, for example, with Vancouver’s social planning department, may have had a positive effect on TRJ’s later struggle to find sustainable funding.
Early in the development the steering committee had to decide at what point it would move on from *Phase I* and focus on creating the structure of the program (see page 88 for this discussion). Had the steering committee decided to spend more time on *Phase I*, the program may have turned out differently. On the other hand, it is important to keep in mind a lesson we can all learn from the experience of VERJ, which one participant reflected on.

I’ve seen that happen - and that was VERJ. Where you’d have somebody who was leading it, … but not making the decisions. Wanting it to be, and I’m not sure what [was] the magic number they were waiting for, the magic group to come up.

Being overly concerned about inclusivity and local ownership, VERJ never got off the ground. While TRJ could’ve spent more time developing this aspect, VERJ demonstrates that a new initiative will not survive if those leading the way do not move forward eventually. Clearly, there is a delicate tension between securing local support for the initiative and moving forward.

There came a point when the steering committee decided to proceed with the development of the restorative model rather than focus its energies strictly on building local capacities and human capital (see page 100). In a sense, this was a decision to focus on creating the restorative justice component of the program rather than jumping right into the community development component. This decision made sense for those involved in TRJ because the majority of their skills and interests were, in my opinion, more inclined towards the former component. In another scenario, with a different group of volunteers leading the initiative, a different decision might have been made that would have dramatically affected the direction of the program’s development.
Several participants offered their perspectives on how the implementation steps might have unfolded differently. One participant suggested that fundraising (Step 8) could have taken place before the restorative model was developed (Step 5). By capitalizing on the enthusiasm from the community engagement process, and having a concrete idea of the needs of the community, this participant suggested that the community may have been inspired by this point to advocate collectively for funding. In a way, he was talking about generating a sense of urgency for the program, much like that which led to the creation of Roca in Boston, MA (as was reported by one participant who attended Molly Baldwin's workshop, see quotation on page 146). Another participant felt strongly that once the restorative model was started and the strategic plan developed (Step 5), a coordinator ought to have been identified and hired to coordinate and manage the remainder of the implementation steps (Step 7), with the support of volunteers. In order for this to have happened, funding would need to have been identified already (Step 8). It is clear from interview feedback that the start-up funding was not an appropriate funding source for hiring a coordinator for two main reasons. First, it was not sustainable. There was a clear end to the funding with no supplementary funding source in sight. Secondly, because an organic and open-ended process was used, it was not until later when much of the grant had been spent, that it became clear that a program was, in fact, going to be developed and a coordinator was needed.

Yes, I suppose it was [possible to use the funds to hire a full time coordinator earlier], because we had the [start-up] grant. I was protective of the grant, for better or for worse. … Looking back, now that you mention it, maybe it would have been helpful to identify a coordinator earlier and have them do a lot of the start-up. There’s always that question, again, like, is this going to go? … At that point there’s a few things that happen. Sometimes people will say I’m not interested, or it’s just not a fit, or they don’t want to put [in] the resources, or whatever the case may be for that community organization - and then we’re done. So there was no guarantee at the beginning… that this would fly; it was a
pilot project. ... So, could I have hired a coordinator? I’m sort of thinking, yes, that would have made sense ... but every step we were wondering, okay, are we actually going to create a program?

Interestingly, one participant offered a completely different approach to implementation, suggesting that the restorative justice consultant should have caught the community’s attention by providing a test case to demonstrate the effectiveness of restorative justice process, then sought out funding (Step 8), and only once the funding was in place, form a steering committee (Step 3) and begin to offer training (Step 6). This suggestion is dramatically different from how TRJ unfolded. One concern with this approach is that by beginning with a demonstration of restorative justice, Evelyn may have inadvertently implied the superiority of one particular approach to restorative practice, which may have turned some locals off, not to mention influencing the direction of the initiative. Instead, the community was presented with the theory, values and principles that underlie restorative practice. This is a much clearer way to convey the fundamental elements of restorative justice without limiting it to a specific practice or model. That being said, this participant knows the Thunderbird community well, and her comments suggest that offering a more concrete or tangible vision of restorative practice might have enabled the community to better grasp the project. Some participants expressed concern that the way restorative justice was presented was inaccessible to some community members. There is another problem with this suggested order of steps. From my experience as a TRJ co-coordinator, I’m not confident that TRJ would have been any more successful finding sustainable funding earlier in the initiative than later. Without being able to say what the program is, what it does, or who it serves, a funder wouldn’t likely be interested in providing funding. It is possible this participant was emphasizing that TRJ shouldn’t have been initiated if core funding is non-
existent. This is a very good reason to consider identifying funding sources earlier, at least through a preliminary search. Furthermore, this participant also commented that she would have taken more time during Phase I to explain restorative justice theory in a simplified and non-academic way in order to better foster ownership in the community.

If I were to initiate a new restorative justice program in my own community, I would generally follow the steps that TRJ took, while being open and flexible to the way it was unfolding. Once I had some local support (Step 1), I would use a community values pre-test similar to the one Holtquist (1999) used (see page 42), which means that Step 4 would take place earlier in the process. I expect that such a preliminary research initiative would inform the education and community outreach step (Step 2) in a valuable way. I also agree with the participant earlier who expressed concerns about developing the project without a plan for sustainable funding. If I were to implement a program I would investigate this possibility early (Step 8), although I would mirror TRJ’s approach and only turn my attention to securing funding once I had developed partners, local support, and together we had created a holistic model to achieve our goals. Furthermore, if I were to do this again, I would advocate for planning, from the outset, a regular and ongoing communication and education campaign strategy, while remaining conscious of the importance of moving forward, as discussed above.

No matter what order is used to work through the implementation steps, one wise participant offered this reflection on the theory that should be at the heart of implementation.
I think there’s a constant tension that needs to be balanced between putting good policy and good procedure in place, balanced with having to do the work right away to get people involved and inspired. So there’s those two opposites. You need to take time to design and plan, but you also just need to get going so people can see what you’re doing, get inspired, get on-board, thereby creating momentum to do more designing and development.

In other words, it is important to have a balance between concrete activities and policy or organizational development. This is one way in which TRJ’s implementation might have unfolded differently. It is not that the order of the steps necessarily needs to be changed, but greater attention might have been given to this balance, which may have eased some of the challenges that arose regarding volunteer engagement and community outreach and ownership. Developing an on-going education and engagement strategy, and creating a strategy for regular activities to maintain contact with key stakeholders, partners, and volunteers, are two ways that a new program might meet this balance.

5.2 If TRJ Received Funding Today, What Would Be the Next Steps?

At the end of Chapter 4 I explained that TRJ is officially on hiatus until sustainable funding is found to hire a full-time coordinator. In analyzing the data, it is clear that once funding is secured, there are certain steps that the steering committee will need to take in order for the program to thrive.

First of all, the steering committee will need to hire a coordinator, if not two.31 Through this study it is clear that there are certain attributes for which the TRJ steering committee ought to look when hiring their new employees. It would make sense to hire two people who are strong in one or the other of two very different skill sets. On the one hand, TRJ needs an

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31 At one point it was discussed hiring the equivalent of an Executive Director and Program Coordinator, though the titles would need to be consistent with the existing CPC organizational structure.
administrative support person with the organizational and practical skills described earlier, such as grant writing, technological, organizational, accounting, event planning, and strategic business development skills (the full discussion is on page 101). On the other hand, TRJ also needs an employee who can be a regular face in the community, someone with the interpersonal skills necessary to form strong, authentic relationships in the Thunderbird community.

As Step 9 reflects, once TRJ returns from hiatus the steering committee will need to return to the strategic plan and vision and reflect on how to proceed. Reconnecting as a team will be an important part of TRJ’s healthy return to operation, and a team retreat, including the new employees, that is centred around rebuilding momentum and revisiting the organization’s mission, vision and values would be a helpful step in this direction.

A clear “next step” that stands out from the data is for TRJ to develop an overarching communication strategy that includes: regular engagement of local residents and informal local groups, such as the Parents’ Advisory Council; attention to relationships with partner organizations; attention to relationships with volunteers, including supporting their skills development and recognition needs; and consistent promotion of TRJ’s activities to the wider public through newsletters, a website and other communication tools.

Staff will particularly need to refocus the program’s attention on Phase I. They will need to have a consistent presence in the community. In particular, a common message from participants is that TRJ needs to connect with and educate local parents about restorative approaches to youth. This engagement strategy may take the form of regular presentations to the local Parents’ Advisory Council, or communications workshops like the one
requested by the cold-caller TRJ received (discussed on page 131), or some other form of engagement that TRJ learns from locals would be more valuable and appropriate ways to facilitate dialogue. In addition to using restorative methods to deal with conflict or crime in which their children may be involved, as time progresses parents may also become open to dialogue about what restorative justice means in other contexts, such as parenting or education.

5.3 How Big Should the Restorative Justice Tent Be?

The idea that restorative justice may apply to community development practice, a setting outside the field of conflict intervention, raises an important question on which all restorative practitioners ought to reflect, “What is the scope of restorative practice?” Is there, for example, such a thing as “restorative living”, or is that simply living according to a value system? Really, what does “restorative living” have to do with justice, or restoration? This is an enormous topic that can't possibly be thoroughly addressed here. However, the notion of a restorative community development program raises the question, does community development fall under the scope of restorative practice?

I described above a shift taking place in the restorative justice field, in which more and more practitioners are coming from areas other than criminal justice (see page 27). These changes have led to a question of terminology within the field. While we used to talk about restorative justice, we now use more general terms, such as restorative practice or restorative action. This, in turn, has caused some practitioners to question the usefulness of the term “restorative” and has facilitated ongoing critical reflection about whether “justice” still fits into restorative practice, and if so, in what way.
After analyzing TRJ’s development and implementation, including its vision for the Thunderbird community, my current contention is that what TRJ is doing can be considered restorative practice for two main reasons. Obviously, the first two components of TRJ’s three-pronged approach (described on page 122) are clearly designed to provide the kind of conflict intervention services that are traditionally associated with restorative justice. TRJ aims to support people in retaking ownership of their conflicts, restoring justice, and repairing relationships between the parties and within the wider community. TRJ’s community development component can also be understood in terms of restorative practice because its goals involve strengthening relationships and nurturing the sense of community in Thunderbird, in order to facilitate local residents supporting each other through injustice. One of the reasons Thunderbird community was chosen as the location for this pilot project was because it is a high-need community whose residents experience multiple barriers. No participants suggested that TRJ would help Thunderbird residents solve the problems of poverty or mental illness or any of the other social injustices that plague that community. Rather, it is that TRJ aims to foster a sense of collaboration in the community so that residents may support each other in their ongoing battle against injustice. The way in which TRJ planned to achieve these goals was through the values and principles of restorative justice. In that sense, TRJ’s approach to community development does fall under the restorative justice “tent”.

5.4 Communitarianism

In preparation for this study I came upon some literature on communitarianism that affected the way I think about restorative practice and civic engagement (refer to page 45 for
a brief overview). One of the questions I asked myself after reading Etzioni's *The Spirit of Community* (1993) was about the relationship between restorative community development, like TRJ, and democracy. Is it asking or expecting too much from community members to take an active role in the lives of their neighbours? Does our obligation to community end with the democratic vote? Furthermore, upon reviewing some critical perspectives on communitarianism, I questioned what the appropriate balance is between civic engagement and state responsibility for social welfare. These questions are far too significant to adequately address here, however I offer some initial reflections that will hopefully pique interest in the social work field for continued investigation into this compelling political movement.

By virtue of participating in the same community, whether that community is geographically, interest, culturally, or anything else-based, I would argue that we implicitly have (at least) passive relationships with other community members. From my perspective, both communitarianism and restorative justice philosophy call on us to become active in those relationships. In other words, civic participation is not enough. As community members, and therefore as duty-bound partners in relationship, our obligations are to take an active role in those relationships. Unfortunately, not everyone shares this perspective, which tends to result in the same people stepping forward to answer calls for volunteerism and support, leading to the reliance on a few people for many things. This was, of course, a frequent source of frustration for TRJ. Though frequent invitations were distributed for participation in information sessions and the like, few responses were received. Those who did respond were the overburdened few who are always the ones to step forward, as their answers, “sorry, but we’re too busy” reflected.
One participant in the study recalled on her experience exploring restorative justice philosophy with people from less individualistic countries.

When I was in grad school … it was a very intercultural program with lots of folks from countries all over the world, not just with those backgrounds, but actually from those countries. Many of them that would come from what you would call communitarian, if you consider individualistic and communitarian societies, those that came from communitarian societies just did not get restorative justice at all. They were just like, “what is that?” They didn't get the term, it’s like, “so you’re saying … [it's] some kind of way of being in the world where you care about each other and you’re interconnected and you watch out for each other and you give people second chances - that’s what we do.”

Although some authors seem to suggest that there is an inconsistency between the concepts of more engaged and responsible communities on the one hand and a strong public welfare state on the other (for example, McNutt, 1997), I see restorative community development as an opportunity to unite these two notions. Throughout this thesis I have demonstrated that creating stronger, more engaged communities through restorative practice is an ideal way to address and prevent crime and conflict, while giving community members the capacity - through new and stronger relationships, as well as through new tools of communication and conflict intervention - to take on greater challenges such as crimogenic social issues.

However, never have I intended to suggest that restorative justice or community development can be used as a panacea for such social problems. This is where the state comes in. I maintain that the state is responsible for ensuring the welfare of citizens, and that all human beings are entitled to a minimum standard of living. What has become more clear through this research is citizens’ reciprocal responsibilities - to community, and to the state - to take an active role in ensuring these minimum standards are delivered. Such actions include, but are not limited to, paying taxes, participating in democratic elections, and ensuring that all community members have access to such civic participation. In
addition to these, it seems clear to me that as a community member, I am also obligated to take an active role in my community by contributing time, money, or energy (whichever in combination I am in a position to provide), to making my community a better place.

It seems that there is a good fit between restorative justice (and the social justice movement in general) and communitarianism, although there are several important differences that deserve attention (Crawford, 1996; McNutt, 1997). At the least, this relationship is worth studying. Within the restorative justice field there is ongoing discourse about the scope of restorative practice. Through this study I’ve come to wonder if what some practitioners call “restorative living”; that is, putting the values and principles of restorative justice into action in every aspect of your life, not just in relation to conflict, is, in fact, what others might call communitarianism. The problem with the term “restorative living” is that in most cases it is a challenge to find anything that is being “restored” *per se*; by using the term “restorative” haphazardly in this way, it threatens to diminish the value, meaning and integrity of restorative justice in the conventional sense. Communitarianism offers a different language for “restorativists” to use in reference to this values-based approach to life that is consistent with restorative justice, while offering a more accurate reflection of the philosophy. One participant reflected on the effect this term, “restorativism” has on the broader contextual movement.

I question why is it even called restorativism as opposed to something else? … Why would you call it restorativism, it’s “right-relationship-ism”, or something. I’d say it’s more around having right relations. I mean, I don’t care, if people want to use the term restorativism, but I’m going to probably keep asking people … you’re taking restorative justice, which is one expression of this emerging consciousness around we need to do things differently. … I’m happy to ride it out as long as possible, but restorative justice didn't invent that way of being in the world.
It is important for restorative justice advocates to remember that this movement in which we are taking active roles doesn’t begin and end with restorative practice. In fact, the restorative justice movement is part of a much greater movement.

It’s an emerging consciousness around we need to do things differently, we have to stop trashing each other, we have to stop trashing the earth, we have to stop treating the justice system and our relationships and the earth like they’re disposable, and we need to start investing in them, and cultivating interconnectedness, and acknowledging our dependence on one another, and that’s deep philosophy.

The relationship between communitarianism and restorative justice deserves further study. For starters, exploring the connections between these two philosophies may help advocates better understand the movements in which they find themselves. Hopefully, such a discourse would unveil new opportunities to promote and expand the movements, revealing new opportunities for collaboration, research, and implementation.

5.5 Reflection: TRJ’s Success, & Process versus Outcome

A final reflection on the outcome of TRJ’s implementation is in order. Did TRJ succeed in its efforts to implement a program, or has it failed because it is officially on hiatus? Things are not as black and white as “success” or “failure”. A more useful way of understanding the situation is an evaluation of the process that was used, rather than the outcome. At the International Restorative Practices Conference the keynote speaker offered an allegorical children’s story, *Flight of the Hummingbird*, to illustrate that in restorative practice, what ought to be important and valued is the process through which we work, the outcome is secondary (Yahgulanaas, 2008). In evaluating TRJ’s success, what matters is that the volunteers committed themselves to the project, they were intentional in developing a
holistic model, all the while being attentive to the values and principles of restorative justice.

That the program is currently on hiatus is secondary, because as the allegory tells us, what matters most is that a concerned group of community members recognized a need and refused to stand by and watch it continue: they did something about it.

For those who are more interested in a reflection on the outcome I offer the following analysis. What were the main barriers to the completion of TRJ’s implementation? After analyzing and reflecting on all the data above, it seems there were four basic issues: First, while there was initial local support for the program, as evidenced by the attendance and contributions at the initial information sessions, these people seemed to disappear during TRJ’s implementation. Where did they go? Without widespread enthusiasm for the project at the local level, evidenced through greater concrete support, it is reasonable to question whether the TRJ steering committee ought to have continued working towards implementation. Perhaps despite the initial enthusiasm, the community was not ready for a restorative justice program. This issue is worth exploring further through additional local engagement. Secondly, throughout the program’s implementation is a recurring chorus of insufficient capacity within TRJ, whether it was having enough time to contribute to new engagement strategies, or having enough volunteers to address the details of implementation. Another issue that affected TRJ’s successful implementation was idealism. Within social work practice, and within restorative justice, there is a recurring notion that we want others to help themselves. Our job as helpers is to encourage and support that initiative. TRJ’s experience raises the question, was it appropriate to expect local residents to take on the leadership roles TRJ was hoping for? Perhaps a slightly more structured or directed approach was in order until more local assets were nurtured. Finally, the last issue
that clearly prevented TRJ from fully implementing was the lack of funding. This was the only barrier that was out of TRJ’s control. While all the other issues could have been addressed by TRJ volunteers through more time and effort, this final issue has proven insurmountable, at least for the time being. However, the TRJ steering committee remains committed to the initiative and there is every reason to believe that once this barrier is addressed and funding becomes available, the other issues can be tackled.

5.6 Limitations & Direction for Future Research

An obvious limitation of this study is the weak participation of Thunderbird residents. Due to this underrepresentation, throughout the analysis I offered suggestions about how the program may have been perceived by the community. Obviously, it would have been more insightful if local residents had a more direct role in the research project. Another limitation of this study is that many of the interview questions were negatively-focused and problem-oriented. Upon reflection, I would have liked to begin the interviews with more strengths-based questions. For example, rather than asking what could’ve been done better, asking what was done well? It is possible I may have inadvertently influenced my findings by wording questions in the way I did. In most cases, participants were interviewed only once. After interviews were analyzed collectively, more questions were raised about participants’ responses. I made the conscious decision not to do a second round of questions because I saw this phenomenon as a natural and expected outcome of data analysis, and one that would simply reoccur if I pursued another round of interviews; I would always have more questions and find new avenues to explore. However, the drawback of this decision was that I was not able to thoroughly explore every participant’s responses and perspectives.
As one participant aptly commented:

At the end of a research project … you would do things a little differently, and now you’re ready to begin…. I say that with all projects; at the end, you know where to start, and you’re ready to go.

If I were to undertake a follow-up study of TRJ, I would begin by interviewing participants to learn their perspectives on this study. I would work harder to stay on the “radar” of local gatekeepers in order to encourage more local participation.

More research is needed to explore the relationship between restorative justice and community development praxis. Such studies might include an analysis of Roca, in Boston MA, to learn more about how they implemented their restorative community development program (for example, see Boyes-Watson, 2008). Furthermore, there may be other community development initiatives that are rooted in the values and principles of restorative justice. A more thorough account of restorative community development initiatives would offer valuable insight into new ways to approach restorative practice. It is worth exploring whether these same steps would be used in developing a community-based restorative justice program in other contexts, such as in a school community rather than a geographic community and, if so, whether the order presented here is appropriate for those other contexts.

The relationship between restorative justice theory and communitarianism deserves further investigation, particularly in terms of these philosophies’ implications for social work practice and the pursuit of social justice. There were some concepts that could not be explored in this study but that may unite these two philosophies through practical application. These concepts include Developmental Assets Tools for working with at-risk
youth (Search Institute, 2008), and author Alfie Kohn’s concepts of “progressive education” and “unconditional parenting” (Kohn, n.d.). The Developmental Assets Tools offer a new strengths-based approach to working with youth, who are all considered “at-risk”, while the other two concepts developed by Kohn reflect restorative justice values and principles in the classroom setting and in the parent-child relationship, respectively. These practical applications ought to be explored further, particularly for social workers in education and family settings.

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32 During this study, a colleague introduced me to this approach to youth work. This philosophy of youth engagement is similar to strengths-based practice, in that it encourages the development of a person’s positive attributes rather than taking a negative, problem-oriented approach. Further study of this area was outside the scope of this thesis.
Chapter 6: Conclusion & Implications

6.1 Conclusion

Nine key steps were taken to develop and implement Thunderbird Restorative Justice (TRJ). These nine steps have been organized into three main phases: Foundation; Design; and Implementation. Importantly, TRJ’s development was not linear, rather the process is better understood as a spiral. As the process progressed, TRJ returned to each step from a new, more developed perspective. In the first phase, the restorative justice consultant began by identifying partners in the community. Working with these partners, they engaged local residents, organizations, groups, and people who work in the neighbourhood to create connections, educate, and increase awareness of restorative justice. When there was local support and interest in the initiative, they worked towards fostering local ownership of the program by encouraging more direct participation. Each of these steps created a solid foundation of relationships and understanding that would support the next phase of implementation: Design. During Phase II, TRJ worked with the community to identify local challenges and conflicts about which they were concerned, TRJ created a model of practice and strategic plan that would help it address these issues and achieve a broader vision for community transformation, and TRJ put this plan into action by offering training and working to nurture local capacities, including social and human capital. This phase involved creating the structure of the initiative, the outline for what TRJ would look like, what would be its function, and how it would operate. Finally, the third phase, Implementation, involved creating the administrative infrastructure to carry out the program’s design, identifying sustainable funding to keep the program running, and evaluating the program’s development against TRJ’s vision, mission, and values.
Like any new program, TRJ encountered several challenges throughout its implementation. These challenges include the following: limited engagement and participation from local residents; insufficient time and volunteer capacity to address implementation details; loss of momentum during Phase III; and a lack of core funding available to safeguard the sustainability of the initiative. None of these barriers were insuperable except the last, which was largely out of the hands of TRJ volunteers. Further, if sustainable funding had been found, TRJ would have been capable of addressing all the other challenges.

Would-be program developers can take from TRJ’s experience several key lessons for future restorative justice-based community development initiatives. Existing literature offers several important lessons that TRJ learned from during its implementation, including emphasizing inclusivity and broad participation (Bright, 1997; Pranis, 1997b; Van Ness & Strong, 2002), working from a broadly shared vision (Bright, 1997; Pranis, 1997b; Van Ness & Strong, 2002), working with champions (Pranis, 1997b), learning from other programs (Bright, 1997; Van Ness & Strong, 2002), and reflecting frequently on underlying values ((Bright, 1997; Pranis, 1997b; Van Ness & Strong, 2002). TRJ learned several lessons that were not prevalent in existing literature, such as: planning for regular and open communication with partners, volunteers, and community; taking the time to do it right, and “go slow to go long”; varying community engagement strategies; using holistic approaches to get a full picture of the community; using strategic planning to map out the program’s vision; getting organized early; taking small steps to achieve a large goal; aiming for diversity in volunteer skill sets, in order to distribute workload; being prepared for the time it takes to address administrative details; checking-in with team members regularly in order to avoid burn-out; and striking the balance between planning and action.
6.2 Implications for Social Work Field

Several implications for the field of social work arise from this study. As one of the core administrative volunteers undertaking this community development initiative, I felt my social work education did not adequately prepare me for the practical realities of community development, specifically in the area of grant writing and strategic planning. One of the most valuable skills that the other two administrative volunteers brought to the table for this step was creative grant writing. This is particularly crucial in this dour economic climate, but also because the way that non-profit organizations retain funding is changing, as one participant illustrated.

Non-profits are getting really smart, and they just follow the money. So when the federal government identifies a problem, it’s either a political problem and we need to look like we’re doing something about it, or an actual problem that they’ve identified and … they’ll start putting money towards that problem. If it’s, for example, a crime and safety problem, you’ll have crime prevention dollars, but they’ll stop funding everything else. So if you’re a non-profit that’s an art company, and you’re working with kids, then that’s the one way that’s available, you somehow have to tie it into crime prevention because it’s the only way you’re going to get money. … Everyone’s doing that now. So for the people that actually run crime prevention, you have a lot of people that you’re competing with, and I’m sure in every other sect it’s the same…

Without these valuable grant-writing skills I felt dependent on other volunteers to contribute in this crucial way. Because much social work practice is done through non-profit organizations, it seems reasonable to expect a School of Social Work to offer such skills to its students. Grant-writing workshops were available through the Graduate Student Society, but these were specifically designed for research grants. After attending such a workshop, I did not find it particularly applicable to this area of my work. It is difficult to go out into the world as a trained social worker and not have in my pocket this exceptionally valuable skill.
Likewise, an area of opportunity for schools of social work is to offer broader skills development beyond individual, group work and community development theory. A knowledge of strategic development seems to be vital to non-profit societies thriving, and much of the community development work I see other social workers undertaking is based on strategic organizational or business-case development. Having now participated in two different strategic organizational development processes, I understand that there are several approaches to this kind of activity. However, understanding how to undergo a visioning process, and how to facilitate a guided strategic planning session would be an integral component to good social work practice, especially at the community-level.

In calling for schools of social work to offer these more diverse skill sets, in effect I am advocating for more interdisciplinary opportunities. Collaboration with other disciplines ought to be a focus, rather than an afterthought, of the school’s activities. As an MSW candidate with a BA rather than a BSW, I have a somewhat unique perspective. I noticed a tendency for students not to be able to see past the limited realm of social work education. I do not suggest that the scope of social work education needs to be broadened. There is only so much that a school can offer. Rather, I suggest that students be encouraged to expand their educational realms, perhaps by the school offering more opportunities for interdisciplinary education. Some such opportunities were available during my time at school, but unfortunately since my focus lies outside the traditional social work fields of child and family welfare and health, the opportunities were not for me. An example of an interdisciplinary educational opportunity that would have broad appeal is Simon Fraser University’s upcoming Semester in Dialogue course on land use in Metro Vancouver (Simon Fraser University, 2009). This course would appeal to a variety of students, whether their
backgrounds are in social work (homelessness, food security), urban studies (social and city planning), earth sciences (food security, sustainability), or other arts degrees (sociology, criminology, women's studies). Just as many universities require undergraduate students to participate in multidisciplinary education through diverse breadth requirements, so too should schools of social work encourage students, at both the BSW and MSW level, to vary their fields of learning. By intentionally broadening the educational horizon of social work students, schools of social work would also be diversifying future social workers' understandings about complex social issues by exposing them to new perspectives and responses to these issues from other disciplines.

My hope is that this study will inspire other social workers to learn more about the restorative justice movement and take an active role in its development. As one part of a larger social justice movement that aims to improve the social experience for people in isolation or inequitable living or social conditions, the restorative justice movement ought to be an important part of social work education. Social work education is narrowly focused on the main five “isms”: heterosexism, racism, sexism, classism, and ageism. These issues are important to understand, but they do not represent an inclusive list of injustices experienced in contemporary society. By teaching social work education through the lens of these five isms, other social injustices aren't given the attention they deserve. The movement for a more just world involves so much more than these five isms; it includes how we are with each other interpersonally, nationally, and globally, and how we are with the earth. As collaborators in the social justice movement, social workers strive to take an active role in the fight against injustice: it is our mandate (Canadian Association for Social Workers, 2009). We champion the problems created by the five isms, but what are we doing about the
other problems? Many offenders are permanently excluded from society even when their sentence is completed. Many victims experience isolation because no one takes the time to ask them what they need. Many communities are enveloped in fear because they aren’t given a chance to actively participate in justice in a meaningful way. It is time for social workers to step up and champion these social injustices too. The values and principles of restorative justice are a good fit with social work practice. A good start for exploring this relationship would be for schools of social work to give more attention to social workers who have been promoting this area of social work practice for years, if not decades, such as Mark Umbreit (see, for example, Umbreit, 1994; Umbreit & Carey, 1999; Umbreit, Coates, & Vos, 2004), or Carolyn Boyes-Watson (see, for example, Boyes-Watson, 2005, 2008). Social workers need to take on a leadership role within the social justice movement by uniting all social justice advocates, facilitating connections, and encouraging collaboration.
Bibliography


Kretzmann, J., & McKnight, J. (1993). *Building communities from the inside out: A path toward finding and mobilizing a community’s assets.* Chicago: Institute for Policy Research, 1-11.


Vancouver Association for Restorative Justice (n.d.). *A whole approach to programming: Reconnecting a civil society through a restorative justice hub in Vancouver*. Working document, not published. (see Appendix G)


Vancouver, BC.
Appendices

Appendix A: Certificate of Approval: UBC Ethics Board

The University of British Columbia
Office of Research Services
Behavioural Research Ethics Board
Suite 102, 6190 Agronomy Road, Vancouver, B.C. V6T 1Z3

CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL - FULL BOARD

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<td>UBC/Arts/Social Work</td>
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Other locations where the research will be conducted:
I will be interviewing individuals associated with a restorative justice program in the Thunderbird Community in East Vancouver. The program is a cooperative initiative between Thunderbird Community Centre, Vancouver Police Department, Thunderbird Residents’ Association, BC Housing Complex “Skeena Terrace”, and Hastings Sunrise Community Policing Centre. I will also be interviewing residents of the Thunderbird community, as well as people who work for other restorative justice programs in the lower mainland. Interview locations will be varied, but will be at public locations (e.g. A coffee shop) or at the individuals’ places of business (e.g. The local community centre), depending on the preference and convenience of the participant.

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<tr>
<th>CO-INVESTIGATOR(S):</th>
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<tr>
<td>Caitlin Elizabeth Adam</td>
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The application for ethical review and the document(s) listed above have been reviewed and the procedures were found to be acceptable on ethical grounds for research involving human subjects.

Approval is issued on behalf of the Behavioural Research Ethics Board and signed electronically by one of the following:

Dr. M. Judith Lynam, Chair
Dr. Ken Craig, Chair
Dr. Jim Rupert, Associate Chair
Dr. Laurie Ford, Associate Chair
Dr. Anita Ho, Associate Chair
February 18, 2009

Dear [First and Last Name],

My name is Caitlin Adam, and I am working on a Masters degree in Social Work. As part of my degree, I am doing research on how to develop a restorative justice program in the City of Vancouver. I am using the Thunderbird Restorative Justice Program as a case study.

I am interested in interviewing you for my thesis research, because I think your perspective and insight would be valuable to my study. Our interview would be 30-60 minutes in length, though I am willing to be flexible to meet your schedule.

I have a full information sheet for you to read which explains fully the study parameters, risks and benefits to participating, and confidentiality details. If you are interested in participating in my study, please contact me (details below) and I will send you this information sheet, as well as a consent form.

I know your time is valuable, and so if you are not able to participate in my study, I understand. Thank you for taking time to consider my invitation.

Cheers,

Caitlin Adam
Appendix C: Adult Participant Consent Form

Consent Form: Adult Participants

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

School of Social Work and Family Studies
2080 West Mall
Vancouver, B.C. Canada V6T 1Z2
Tel: (604) 822-2255 Fax: (604) 822-8656
www.swfs.ubc.ca

Developing a restorative justice program in the City of Vancouver

INFORMATION & CONSENT FORM

Principal Investigator: Co-Investigator:
Faculty Advisor: Student Researcher:
Dr. Frank Tester, School of Caitlin Adam, BA Criminology;
Social Work, UBC Masters degree in Social Work

Note: This research project is being conducted as part of a thesis, which is a public document.

Sponsor:
Thunderbird Restorative Justice has agreed to help this research project by facilitating access to documents relating to the program’s development. This study is being conducted independently from Thunderbird Restorative Justice, and employees of the program will not have access to data gathered through the research project. The program will receive a final copy of the thesis at the completion of the project.

Purpose:
The purpose of this research project is to better understand how to implement a restorative justice program in a city like Vancouver. We are using Thunderbird Restorative Justice as a case study, in order to identify best practices in developing and delivering a restorative justice program, as well as to identify challenges or barriers to overcome when implementing such a program.

You are being invited to take part in this research study because we think you would be able to provide valuable insight on this topic. You are being approached for an interview because you are either associated with the development of Thunderbird Restorative Justice, because you are a resident of the Thunderbird community, or because you have some experience associated with restorative justice development.
Please note that your decision whether to participate in this study will have no affect on your relationship with Thunderbird Restorative Justice. Although Thunderbird Restorative Justice has agreed to this study and supports it, this research project is independent from the program, and no data will be shared with those associated with the program.

**Study Procedures:**

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary, and you can withdraw from the study at any time. The student researcher plans to interview people associated with the development of Thunderbird Restorative Justice, as well as residents in the Thunderbird community. The conditions of your consent will remain confidential; other participants will not be informed as to who has, or has not, consented to participation in the study.

Generally, interviews will be 30-45 minutes, and no longer than 1 hour, although the student researcher will be flexible to meet your scheduling needs. In addition to this one interview, the student researcher may seek to contact you for a follow-up interview, which will not be longer than 30 minutes, in case she has any additional questions.

Interviews of people involved in Thunderbird Restorative Justice’s development will focus on your observations and opinions about the program, its development, and its potential as a sustainable and valuable tool for the community. Interviews of local residents not directly involved in the program’s development will focus on your opinions about Thunderbird Restorative Justice, such as your awareness of and confidence in the program. The student researcher will also ask you about your observations and opinions about the Thunderbird community in general. Those with experience in developing restorative justice programs will be interviewed about their experiences, in order to add to the study’s findings. At all times during the interview, you will always have the option of not answering any question.

The location of your interview is a matter of your preference. The student researcher is willing to meet you at a public location, such as a coffee shop, or at your office. However, the student researcher will not conduct interviews in private homes.

During all of the interviews, the student researcher will use a pen and paper to record notes. Additionally, the student researcher will seek your permission to use a digital audio recorder. Recording the interview is completely optional. The audio recordings will be used to help the student researcher transcribe and reflect on your words. Only the two investigators listed on page one of this consent form will have access to these recordings, and transcriptions will not contain identifying information, such as names. The recordings will be kept separate from any identifying information and stored on an encrypted USB key. More information about the safeguarding of this data is below, under **Confidentiality**.

**Potential Risks:**

It is not expected that participation in this study will cause you any discomfort or negative effects. However, if at any time during the interview you feel uncomfortable about a question, or about anything you may have said, you may stop the interview.
Your participation is completely voluntary. If you withdraw from the study, you may contact the student researcher within two weeks to renew your participation. If you feel uncomfortable with anything you may have said during your interview, you may contact the student researcher within two weeks of your interview, in order to review the transcripts and revise your comments. Finally, there is no foreseeable risk to your relationship with Thunderbird Restorative Justice by participating in this study.

**Potential Benefits:**

By participating in the study, you have the opportunity to contribute to the field of restorative justice in a significant way, because there is little research on the topic of implementation. We hope that this study will benefit those associated with the development of Thunderbird Restorative Justice by acknowledging and honouring the many volunteer hours they have contributed to the program. Additionally, we hope this research study will bring more and positive attention to the Thunderbird community, which would benefit all local residents by increasing awareness of Thunderbird Restorative Justice. Finally, if you are interested in reading the thesis once it is completed, you may request a copy at any time during the study.

**Confidentiality:**

The student researcher can only guarantee limited confidentiality because of the nature of the your unique role in the development of the program. Because you may have a specific position, such as “coordinator” or “community resident”, the student researcher cannot guarantee confidentiality or anonymity when she reports her findings. The student researcher will do her best to ensure that what you say is kept private and your identity protected by using a pseudonym, unless you request in writing for your name to be used. The use of a pseudonym, however, will not guarantee that some informed readers (such as other people connected to the program) will not be able to identify you in the report.

You can tell the student researcher if there is something you shared with her that you do not want included. You may request to review transcripts from your interview by contacting the student researcher up to two weeks after your last meeting.

The student researcher will do her best to safeguard your privacy by ensuring that recordings of your interviews will be stored safely and separately from any identifying information. The recordings will be the property of the student researcher, and only the two investigators listed on the first page of this form will have access to the information or recordings from this project. Any electronic information will be encrypted on a USB key. Digital audio recordings will be encrypted on a separate USB key from other data. The student researcher will never collect or discuss confidential information over email. Once the project is complete, it is the policy of UBC that all data collected, including audio recordings, will be securely stored at UBC for five years in a locked filing cabinet, to ensure the data remains protected. After the five-year period all data will be destroyed.

Finally, you are also advised that should you disclose information related to past or current child abuse, or intentions to harm yourself or others, the researcher is obligated, by law, to report this to appropriate authorities.
Remuneration/Compensation:

There will be no financial compensation provided for participation in this study. Refreshments, such as coffee, tea and snacks, will be provided during the interviews.

Contact for information about the study:

If you have any questions or concerns about the study and would like more information, you may contact any of the following:

Faculty Advisor:
Dr. Frank Tester, School of Social Work, UBC

Student Researcher:
Caitlin Adam, BA Criminology; Masters degree in Social Work candidate, UBC

Contact for concerns about the rights of research subjects:

If you have any concerns about your treatment or rights as a research subject, you may contact the Research Subject Information Line in the UBC Office of Research Services at 604-822-8598 or if long distance e-mail to RSIL@ors.ubc.ca.
Developing a restorative justice program in the City of Vancouver

CONSENT FORM: Adult Participants

Consent:
Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary and you may refuse to participate or withdraw from the study at any time without jeopardy to your current or future relationship with Thunderbird Restorative Justice.

Your signature below indicates that you have received a copy of the information sheet outlining the procedures, risks, benefits, issues of confidentiality, and other details associated with this project. You may withdraw consent for this study at any time. Consent may be renewed within two weeks of your last meeting with the student researcher.

Your signature below indicates that you have received a copy of this consent form for your own records, and that you consent to participate in this study in the manner described below:

Participant Signature: ___________________________ Date: _____________

Printed Name of the Participant signed above

You consent to participate in the following ways (check all that apply):

☐ You agree to participate in an interview with the student researcher

☐ You authorize the student researcher to contact you for a follow-up interview, if necessary

☐ You agree to the student researcher using an audio recording device

OR

☐ You prefer the student researcher only take written notes
Appendix D: Parental Consent Form for Youth Participants

Consent Form: Parents/Guardians

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

School of Social Work and Family Studies
2080 West Mall
Vancouver, B.C, Canada V6T 1Z2
Tel: (604) 822-2255 Fax: (604) 822-8656
www.swfs.ubc.ca

Developing a restorative justice program
In the City of Vancouver

INFORMATION & CONSENT FORM

Principal Investigator:
Faculty Advisor:
Dr. Frank Tester, School of
Social Work, UBC

Co-Investigator:
Student Researcher:
Caitlin Adam, BA Criminology;
Masters degree in Social Work
candidate, UBC

Note: This research project is being conducted as part of a thesis, which is a public
document.

Sponsor:
Thunderbird Restorative Justice has agreed to help this research project by facilitating
access to documents relating to the program’s development. This study is being
conducted independently from Thunderbird Restorative Justice, and employees of the
program will not have access to data gathered through the research project. The
program will receive a final copy of the thesis at the completion of the project.

Purpose:
The purpose of this research project is to better understand how to implement a
restorative justice program in a city like Vancouver. We are using Thunderbird
Restorative Justice as a case study, in order to identify best practices in developing and
delivering a restorative justice program, as well as to identify challenges or barriers to
overcome when implementing such a program.

Your child is being invited to take part in this research study because we think he or
she would be able to provide valuable insight on this topic. Your child is being
approached for an interview because he or she is a resident of the Thunderbird
community, and/or was involved with Thunderbird Restorative Justice’s development.

Last Updated: March 12, 2009
Please note that your decision whether to allow your child to participate in this study will have no effect on your child’s, or your, relationship with Thunderbird Restorative Justice. Although Thunderbird Restorative Justice has agreed to this study and supports it, this research project is independent from the program, and no data will be shared with those associated with the program.

**Study Procedures:**

Your child’s participation in this study is completely voluntary, and you or your child can withdraw from the study at any time. The student researcher plans to interview people associated with the development of Thunderbird Restorative Justice, as well as residents in the Thunderbird community. The conditions of your consent will remain confidential; other participants will not be informed as to who has, or has not, consented to participation in the study.

Generally, interviews will be 30-45 minutes, and no longer than 1 hour, although the student researcher will be flexible to meet the scheduling needs of you and your child. In addition to this one interview, the student researcher may seek to contact your child for a follow-up interview, which will not be longer than 30 minutes, in case she has any additional questions.

If your child was involved in the development of Thunderbird Restorative Justice, our interview will focus on your child’s observations and opinions about the program, its development, and its usefulness to the community. I may be interviewing your child because he or she is a resident of the Thunderbird community, in which case our interviews will focus on your child’s opinions about Thunderbird Restorative Justice, such as his or her awareness of and confidence in the program. The student researcher will also ask your child about his or her observations of and opinions about the Thunderbird community in general. At all times during the interview, your child will always have the option of not answering any question.

The location of your child’s interview is a matter of his or her preference. The student researcher is willing to meet your child at a public location, such as a coffee shop. However, the student researcher will not conduct interviews in private homes.

During all of the interviews, the student researcher will use a pen and paper to record notes. Additionally, the student researcher will seek permission from you and your child to use a digital audio recorder. **Recording the interview is completely optional.** The audio recordings will be used to help the student researcher transcribe and reflect on your child’s words. Only the two investigators listed on page one of this consent form will have access to these recordings, and transcriptions will not contain identifying information, such as names. The recordings will be kept separate from any identifying information and stored on an encrypted USB key. More information about the safeguarding of this data is below, under **Confidentiality.**

**Potential Risks:**

It is not expected that participation in this study will cause your child any discomfort or negative effects. However, if at any time during the interview your child feels uncomfortable about a question, or about anything he or she may have said, your child may stop the interview. Your child’s participation is completely voluntary. If you or
your child withdraw from the study, you or your child may contact the student researcher within two weeks to renew your child’s participation. If your child feels uncomfortable with anything he or she may have said during the interview, your child may contact the student researcher within two weeks of the interview, in order to review the transcripts and revise his or her comments. Finally, participation in this study has no foreseeable risk to either your relationship with Thunderbird Restorative Justice, or that of your child.

**Potential Benefits:**

By participating in the study, your child has the opportunity to contribute to the field of restorative justice in a significant way, because there is little research on the topic of implementation. We hope that this study will benefit those associated with the development of Thunderbird Restorative Justice by acknowledging and honouring the many volunteer hours they have contributed to the program. Additionally, we hope this research study will bring more and positive attention to the Thunderbird community, which would benefit all local residents by increasing awareness of Thunderbird Restorative Justice. Finally, if you or your child are interested in reading the thesis once it is completed, either of you may request a copy at any time during the study.

**Confidentiality:**

The student researcher can only guarantee limited confidentiality because of the nature of the your child’s unique role in the study. For example, because your child may be referred to in the study as a “community resident” or “youth volunteer”, the student researcher cannot guarantee confidentiality or anonymity when she reports her findings. The student researcher will do her best to ensure that what your child says is kept private and your child’s identity protected by using a pseudonym, unless you or your child request in writing for his or her name to be used. The use of a pseudonym, however, will not guarantee that some informed readers (such as other people connected to the program) will not be able to identify your child in the report.

Your child can tell the student researcher if there is something he or she shared that he or she does not want included in the final report. Your child may request to review transcripts from his or her interview by contacting the student researcher up to two weeks after the interview.

The student researcher will do her best to safeguard your child’s privacy by ensuring that recordings of the interviews will be stored safely and separately from any identifying information. The recordings will be the property of the student researcher, and only the two investigators listed on the first page of this form will have access to the information or recordings from this project. Any electronic information will be encrypted on a USB key. Digital audio recordings will be encrypted on a separate USB key from other data. The student researcher will never collect or discuss confidential information over email. Once the project is complete, it is the policy of UBC that all data collected, including audio recordings, will be securely stored at UBC for five years in a locked filing cabinet, to ensure the data remains protected. After the five-year period all data will be destroyed.

Finally, you are also advised that should your child disclose information related to past or current child abuse, or intentions to harm themselves or others, the researcher is obligated, by law, to report this to appropriate authorities.
**Remuneration/Compensation:**
There will be no financial compensation provided for participation in this study. Refreshments, such as coffee, tea and snacks, will be provided during the interviews.

Contact for information about the study:
If you have any questions or concerns about the study and would like more information, you may contact any of the following:

**Faculty Advisor:**
Dr. Frank Tester, School of Social Work, UBC.

**Student Researcher:**
Caitlin Adam, BA Criminology; Masters degree in Social Work candidate, UBC

**Contact for concerns about the rights of research subjects:**
If you have any concerns about your treatment or rights as a research subject, you may contact the Research Subject Information Line in the UBC Office of Research Services at 604-822-8598 or if long distance e-mail to RSIL@ors.ubc.ca.
Developing a restorative justice program
In the City of Vancouver

CONSENT FORM: For Parents/Guardians

Consent:
Your child’s participation in this study is entirely voluntary, and your or your child may refuse to participate or withdraw from the study at any time without jeopardy to your or your child’s current or future relationship with Thunderbird Restorative Justice.

Your signature below indicates that you have received a copy of the information sheet outlining the procedures, risks, benefits, issues of confidentiality, and other details associated with this project. You may withdraw consent for this study at any time. Consent may be renewed within two weeks of your child’s last meeting with the student researcher.

Your signature below indicates that you have received a copy of this consent form for your own records, and that you consent to your child’s participation in this study in the manner described below:

Parent/Guardian Signature Date

Printed Name of the Parent/Guardian signed above

You consent to your child participating in the following ways (check all that apply):

☐ You agree to your child’s participation in an interview with the student researcher

☐ You authorize the student researcher to contact your child for a follow-up interview, if necessary

☐ You agree to the student researcher using an audio recording device

OR

☐ You prefer the student researcher only take written notes
Appendix E: Youth Participant Assent Form

ASSENT FORM: YOUTH PARTICIPANTS

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

School of Social Work and Family Studies
2080 West Mall
Vancouver, B.C. Canada V6T 1Z2
Tel: (604) 822-2255 Fax: (604) 822-8656
www.swfs.ubc.ca

Developing a restorative justice program
In the City of Vancouver

INFORMATION & CONSENT FORM

Principal Investigator:
Faculty Advisor:
Dr. Frank Tester, School of
Social Work, UBC

Co-Investigator:
Student Researcher:
Caitlin Adam, BA Criminology;
Masters degree in Social Work
candidate, UBC

Note: This research project is being conducted as part of a thesis, which is a public
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overcome when implementing such a program.

You are being invited to take part in this research study because we think you would
be able to provide valuable insight on this topic. You are being approached for an
interview because you are either associated with the development of Thunderbird
Restorative Justice, because you are a resident of the Thunderbird community, or
because you have some experience associated with restorative justice development.
Assent Form: Youth Participants

Please note that your decision whether to participate in this study will have no affect on your relationship with Thunderbird Restorative Justice. Although Thunderbird Restorative Justice has agreed to this study and supports it, this research project is independent from the program, and no data will be shared with those associated with the program.

Study Procedures:

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary, and you can withdraw from the study at any time. The student researcher plans to interview people associated with the development of Thunderbird Restorative Justice, as well as residents in the Thunderbird community. The conditions of your consent will remain confidential; other participants will not be informed as to who has, or has not, consented to participation in the study.

Generally, interviews will be 30-45 minutes, and no longer than 1 hour, although the student researcher will be flexible to meet your scheduling needs. In addition to this one interview, the student researcher may seek to contact you for a follow-up interview, which will not be longer than 30 minutes, in case she has any additional questions.

Interviews of people involved in Thunderbird Restorative Justice’s development will focus on your observations and opinions about the program, its development, and its potential as a sustainable and valuable tool for the community. Interviews of local residents not directly involved in the program’s development will focus on your opinions about Thunderbird Restorative Justice, such as your awareness of and confidence in the program. The student researcher will also ask you about your observations and opinions about the Thunderbird community in general. Those with experience in developing restorative justice programs will be interviewed about their experiences, in order to add to the study’s findings. At all times during the interview, you will always have the option of not answering any question.

The location of your interview is a matter of your preference. The student researcher is willing to meet you at a public location, such as a coffee shop, or at your office. However, the student researcher will not conduct interviews in private homes.

During all of the interviews, the student researcher will use a pen and paper to record notes. Additionally, the student researcher will seek your permission to use a digital audio recorder. Recording the interview is completely optional. The audio recordings will be used to help the student researcher transcribe and reflect on your words. Only the two investigators listed on page one of this consent form will have access to these recordings, and transcriptions will not contain identifying information, such as names. The recordings will be kept separate from any identifying information and stored on an encrypted USB key. More information about the safeguarding of this data is below, under Confidentiality.

Potential Risks:

It is not expected that participation in this study will cause you any discomfort or negative effects. However, if at any time during the interview you feel uncomfortable about a question, or about anything you may have said, you may stop the interview.
Your participation is completely voluntary. If you withdraw from the study, you may contact the student researcher within two weeks to renew your participation. If you feel uncomfortable with anything you may have said during your interview, you may contact the student researcher within two weeks of your interview, in order to review the transcripts and revise your comments. Finally, there is no foreseeable risk to your relationship with Thunderbird Restorative Justice by participating in this study.

**Potential Benefits:**

By participating in the study, you have the opportunity to contribute to the field of restorative justice in a significant way, because there is little research on the topic of implementation. We hope that this study will benefit those associated with the development of Thunderbird Restorative Justice by acknowledging and honouring the many volunteer hours they have contributed to the program. Additionally, we hope this research study will bring more and positive attention to the Thunderbird community, which would benefit all local residents by increasing awareness of Thunderbird Restorative Justice. Finally, if you are interested in reading the thesis once it is completed, you may request a copy at any time during the study.

**Confidentiality:**

The student researcher can only guarantee limited confidentiality because of the nature of the your unique role in the development of the program. Because you may have a specific position, such as “coordinator” or “community resident”, the student researcher cannot guarantee confidentiality or anonymity when she reports her findings. The student researcher will do her best to ensure that what you say is kept private and your identity protected by using a pseudonym, unless you request in writing for your name to be used. The use of a pseudonym, however, will not guarantee that some informed readers (such as other people connected to the program) will not be able to identify you in the report.

You can tell the student researcher if there is something you shared with her that you do not want included. You may request to review transcripts from your interview by contacting the student researcher up to two weeks after your last meeting.

The student researcher will do her best to safeguard your privacy by ensuring that recordings of your interviews will be stored safely and separately from any identifying information. The recordings will be the property of the student researcher, and only the two investigators listed on the first page of this form will have access to the information or recordings from this project. Any electronic information will be encrypted on a USB key. Digital audio recordings will be encrypted on a separate USB key from other data. The student researcher will never collect or discuss confidential information over email. Once the project is complete, it is the policy of UBC that all data collected, including audio recordings, will be securely stored at UBC for five years in a locked filing cabinet, to ensure the data remains protected. After the five-year period all data will be destroyed.

Finally, you are also advised that should you disclose information related to past or current child abuse, or intentions to harm yourself or others, the researcher is obligated, by law, to report this to appropriate authorities.
Remuneration/Compensation:
There will be no financial compensation provided for participation in this study. Refreshments, such as coffee, tea and snacks, will be provided during the interviews.

Contact for information about the study:
If you have any questions or concerns about the study and would like more information, you may contact any of the following:

Faculty Advisor:
Dr. Frank Tester, School of Social Work, UBC.

Student Researcher:
Caitlin Adam, BA Criminology; Masters degree in Social Work candidate, UBC

Contact for concerns about the rights of research subjects:
If you have any concerns about your treatment or rights as a research subject, you may contact the Research Subject Information Line in the UBC Office of Research Services at 604-822-8598 or if long distance e-mail to RSIL@ors.ubc.ca.
Developing a restorative justice program
In the City of Vancouver

ASSENT FORM: Youth Participants

Consent:
Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary, and you may refuse to participate or withdraw from the study at any time without jeopardy to your current or future relationship with Thunderbird Restorative Justice.

Your signature below indicates that you have received a copy of the information sheet outlining the procedures, risks, benefits, issues of confidentiality, and other details associated with this project. You may withdraw assent for this study at any time. Assent may be renewed within two weeks of your last meeting with the student researcher.

Your signature below indicates that you have received a copy of this assent form for your own records, and that you agree to participate in this study in the manner described below:

Participant Signature __________________________ Date __________

Printed Name of the Participant signed above

You agree to participate in the following ways (check all that apply):

☐ You agree to participate in an interview with the student researcher

☐ You authorize the student researcher to contact you for a follow-up interview, if necessary

☐ You agree to the student researcher using an audio recording device

OR

☐ You prefer the student researcher only take written notes
Appendix F: Interview Questions

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

School of Social Work and Family Studies
2080 West Mall
Vancouver, B.C. Canada V6T 1Z2
Tel: (604) 822-2255
Fax: (604) 822-8656
www.swfs.ubc.ca

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS: For Those with Experience
Developing Restorative Justice Programs
(including those involved with the Thunderbird Program)

Tell me about your experience developing your restorative justice program.

How was the need for the program established?

How did you go about identifying key stakeholders? Upon reflection, are there any
people, groups or organizations you wish you had approached earlier?

What do you think about the sustainability of your program? Will it be around 5
years from now? What makes you feel that way?

From your perspective, what is your program's biggest barrier to being
sustainable?

Upon reflection, is there anything you would have done differently in developing
your program?

What steps, if any, do you plan to take in the future towards supporting your
program's success?

Is there anything you would like to add or talk about before we end this
interview?

Version: February 18, 2009
Appendix G: VARJ Document: A Whole Approach to Programming

A Whole Approach to Programming: Reconnecting a Civil Society through a Restorative Justice Hub in Vancouver

Submitted by:

Vancouver Association for Restorative Justice
Executive Summary

A civil city is one in which people wish to restore relationships and repair community ties in a timely and engaged manner when conflict or harm occurs.

Justice processes that restore civility need to be rooted in our neighbourhoods, schools and offence resolution systems.

Research shows that properly managed restorative justice programs are highly effective and efficient, both socially and economically. As a large urban centre, the City of Vancouver has struggled to get a footing in the restorative justice paradigm. With the funding appeal from Thunderbird Restorative Justice, Vancouver’s first community-based grass-roots restorative initiative, the City is now at a crossroads in establishing effective and affordable alternatives to the traditional and less effective responses to community conflict and crime.

This report will present the model developed by the Vancouver community for a restorative justice hub in the City.

Starting in 2005, the Vancouver Family Court Youth Justice Committee held three community forums with restorative justice (RJ) practitioners, service providers, advocates and supporters regarding the role of restorative justice in the city. The RJ model that grew out of this was that of localized programs, supported by a ‘hub’. Vancouver Association for Restorative Justice (VARJ) was created because of this recognized need to co-ordinate and maximize the benefits of a diversity of alternatives to the criminal justice system (CJS). As the hub agency, the following strategic directions will be taken by VARJ:

- Fostering, connecting and enabling RJ providers and programs
- Educating about and raising awareness of RJ in Vancouver
- Creating highly organized and functioning operational structure for all RJ programs in Vancouver
- Forging and maintaining effective political relationships
- Creating and implementing productive research projects
- Training and providing consultation services to service providers and RJ programs
Currently, the City of Vancouver does not fund any RJ programming, although it does provide some financial support for the RestART Program, which is an anti-graffiti program delivered with the principles and values of RJ. VARJ presents the opportunity to expand and excel in the area of RJ programming. Implementation will lead to the following proven measurable outcomes:

- Decreased recidivism amongst offender participants
- Increased victim satisfaction
- Increased community cohesion
- Increased benefit-cost ratio

Vancouver Association for Restorative Justice leading as a strong hub agency will assist organizations and communities in Vancouver in dealing with and solving conflict and harm, as well as dealing with appropriate criminal offences. This proven and cost-effective RJ programming model will present itself as the recommended choice for the City of Vancouver and restorative justice programming.

**Definition of Restorative Justice**

Restorative justice is a process whereby all parties with a stake in a particular conflict or criminal offence come together to resolve collectively how to deal with the aftermath and its implications for the future. The fundamental premise of the restorative justice paradigm is that community conflict, victimization and crime are violations of people and relationships rather than merely violations of law. The most appropriate response to these, therefore, is to repair the harm caused by the wrongful behavior.

**Empirical Success of Restorative Justice**

There has been growing recognition in Vancouver over the past ten years that the traditional criminal justice system and other mechanisms of conflict resolution often fail to engage community, assist the victim and change the future behaviour of the offender. The following data represents a sample of the empirical results from successful RJ programs:

- The evaluation of the Restorative Resolutions project in Manitoba used matched comparison groups and found statistically significant reductions in the recidivism rates of project participants.

- A police led family group conference project with young offenders was evaluated using random assignment and found that the recidivism rates of project participants after 12 months was 20% while those who refused to participate demonstrated a 48% recidivism rate.
• Researchers found that 79% of mediated victims were satisfied with the processing of their case compared to 57% of the victims within the court sample. The mediated victims were also more likely to perceive their case to be handled fairly by the justice system (83% vs. 62%).

• An evaluation of victim satisfaction and perceptions of fairness at twelve different family group conferencing sites in Minnesota found satisfaction levels with the process and outcome between 93% and 95%.

• A number of studies have found that the vast majority of victims would repeat the restorative justice process again and would recommend it to others.

• An evaluation of the Hull U.K. Restorative City Program indicates at one school between spring 2007 – July 2008 there were 50% fewer verbal abuse incidents; 60% fewer physical abuse incidents; 50% fewer theft incidents; 100% fewer drug use incidents and 45% fewer disruptive behaviour incidents. Lastly, there were 63% fewer days of staff absence due to the above situations occurring prior to the RJ implementation. This saved the school over $120,000 in 8 months alone.

• These statistics were echoed in three of U.K.’s other high problem schools and the government plans to implement this style of programming in the creation of a “Restorative City” in all schools throughout the city. The Hull Police Department has been fully supportive, participating in one-day intensive training. The opinion from an Inspector with the HPD: “I’m more than sold on the practices, it holds people accountable, they can’t hide behind the system or a solicitor”.

Restorative justice programs have been proven to be successful in:

- decreasing recidivism of the offenders who participate.
- increasing victim engagement and in turn satisfaction with the process of harm and conflict resolution.
- creating an atmosphere of programming where the offender and the community are included in all aspects of the process and an outcome resolution that is accepted by all.

RJ programming thus meets all of the intended goals it has set for itself.
Current State of Conflict Resolution and RJ in Vancouver and B.C – Support/need for RJ Hub

Following is a summary of the key findings regarding the need for support for a restorative justice hub in Vancouver;

- There are currently two programs operating in the City of Vancouver, one funded by the Federal government, and the other has ceased operations due to lack of funding and support. Unlike the successful programs in many of our neighbouring cities, which receive their core funding from their municipalities, the City of Vancouver does not currently fund any RJ program.

- There is a lack of public awareness of RJ in Vancouver. RJ concepts and programs are generally not well known outside those currently actively involved and not generally known or understood by the general public.

- Among those who have heard of RJ, there is a lack of clarity regarding the term – is it a program, a set of principles, or a process?

- RJ needs a stronger presence with the municipal government in Vancouver, the following programs have been selected from all provincial RJ programs as the most successful and cost-effective because of the support they receive from their City Councils;
  - Chilliwack RJ Action and Youth Advocacy Association: Municipal government provides $1800/month annually operating budget ($40,000 less necessary for full functioning programming). All other monies are garnered by outside grants which are not guaranteed annually. To date they have offered services to more than 2000 people.
  - Nanaimo RJ Program: City government provides $50,000 of an annual operating cost of $65,000/year. This program has had 1500 referrals between 1998 – 2005, and very low recidivism rate of 4.5% to date.
  - Communities Embracing Restorative Action (previously known as Fraser-Burrard Community Justice Society): In 2006 they had 51 referrals which is an increase of almost half since 2003, 96% success rate of participants going through
programming in completion and not re-offending. Cost is shared cross-municipally with annual operating costs.

This current state in Vancouver is what leads Council into the decision making process. Below are three options for Council regarding the outcome for the future of RJ programming in the City of Vancouver.

Problem in Vancouver
If the City of Vancouver leaves the lack of RJ programming unaddressed the gradual and consistent deterioration of civility in Vancouver will continue:

- Increased tensions with marginalized populations, specifically with the drastically growing young urban Aboriginal population
- Increased gang recruitment, crime and violence
- Increased problems in the entertainment district
- Increased community and business conflict with economic downturns
- Increased conflict in relation to the 2010 Olympics
- Inevitable harm due to these and more arising and continuing issues

Opportunity – Council’s Options
The following are three opportunities to address the above problems in Vancouver, the third being the most cost effective and efficient - socially and economically - support for VARJ as an RJ hub in Vancouver.

1) No Support for VARJ or RJ Programming

Table 1: Costs of the Traditional CJS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cost Item</th>
<th>Total Cost</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2001 Prosecution Costs for BC</td>
<td>$54 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001 Total Court Expenditures</td>
<td>$147,826</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Per capita increase from 1998 - 2001</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002 City of Vancouver expenditures per capita on public safety</td>
<td>$317</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008 City of Vancouver expenditures per capita on public safety</td>
<td>$556</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of Vancouver Police Protection costs 2000 (year end $000’s)</td>
<td>$135,687</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of Vancouver Police Protection costs 2007 (year end $000’s)</td>
<td>$189,268</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Property crime was reported at its highest levels in 2005 in the Western Provinces with the majority being young offenders.

Statistics Canada presents that the Western Provinces also have the youngest populations in Canada, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, increasing the criminal justice system loads and costs – it is estimated that these population levels will continue to increase dramatically, especially within the Urban Aboriginal Community.

In British Columbia 50% of non-Aboriginal offenders and 57% of Aboriginal offenders recidivated after released from custody (2002). This rate has remained constant for the past 20 years, regardless of any changes in correctional programming implemented.

Continued increase in prison population for both males and females, specifically the young male population.

Continued and projected dramatic increase in prison population for Aboriginal population, specifically the youth population.

Increase in enforcement costs, specifically for chronic violent offenders and recidivators.

Continued rising costs for the operation of integrated gang task forces.

Continued increase in fear of crime and becoming a victim of crime.

Continued disconnect and social disorder within Vancouver communities.

Table 2: Comparison of Costs for Youth Interventions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cost Item/Youth</th>
<th>Total Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Residential Treatment</td>
<td>$75,300</td>
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<tr>
<td>Group Home</td>
<td>$56,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Juvenile Corrections Facility</td>
<td>$40,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Per Court Case</td>
<td>$3500</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.) Independent Program Funding - Support without a Restorative Justice Hub

At present the City of Vancouver is in the decision making process of whether to fund independent RJ programs in Vancouver, specifically the Thunderbird Restorative Justice Program (collaborative programming through the Hastings CPC and the Thunderbird Community Centre). It is critical for the City to continue funding independent RJ programming as they will assist in remediating the effects of crimes and community conflicts for victims of these situations, as well as for offenders and the
community as a whole. These independent programs do not focus on addressing specific crimes only; rather, the collaborative nature and inclusivity of restorative justice programs address all of the areas presented above, while taking a capacity building and community development approach to crime prevention and relationship strengthening. With continued and long-standing support, RJ programs like Thunderbird Restorative Justice will assist with the decreasing of crime and conflict within communities. Moreover, restorative justice programs remediate the harms done to all parties linked to conflicts, delinquent acts or certain criminal offences, which the traditional system does not, and when done properly can build positive assets for young people participating in these programs.

However, the result of the City of Vancouver only funding small, independent enterprises, without a managing structure such as VARJ, is that they may not function at their highest capacity, making them less efficient and cost effective. Issues that would arise for these programs if they do not have support and direction from VARJ are:

- Meagre and unstable funding from governments and private agencies
- Lack of direction and guidance regarding how to maximize and optimize their strategies and outputs
- Lack of training, education and awareness structures including direction on executing such aspects
- Issues with implementing operational policy as it relates to staff and volunteers
- Lack of human resource management practices
- Lack of time and money to execute detailed and useful evaluations thus showing measurable outcomes
- Maximizing case service to increase client satisfaction thus decreasing problems in the specific institutions (schools, criminal justice system (CJS), businesses, communities)
- Disjointed relationships with their communities when providing haphazard programming
- Disjointed relationships with partners (police, crown)

By increasing the knowledge, awareness and ultimately the capacity of Vancouver agencies through VARJ, organizations and community service providers are able to implement and execute restorative justice programs that are successful in meeting their goals and objectives – remediating the
harm of crime and community conflict, decreasing recidivism of the offenders who participate, increasing victim engagement and in turn satisfaction with the process of harm and conflict resolution, creating an atmosphere of programming where the offender and the community are included in all aspects of the process and an outcome resolution that is accepted by all.

3.) Support for VARJ as a Restorative Justice Hub
a) The Vancouver Association for Restorative Justice:

Based on consultations with key stakeholders in the community – Vancouver Police Department, youth service providers, City Social Planners, Vancouver School Board staff and many others - a strong call has been placed for an entity such as VARJ to operationally oversee and manage, as the hub association, all RJ programming implemented and run in the City of Vancouver. VARJ's mission ultimately would be to help the people of Vancouver come together to use the philosophy and approaches of restorative justice to heal the wounds caused by crime and social conflict. In a practical sense, VARJ takes the approach that those who have done wrong and those who have been harmed should, if they wish, have an opportunity to come together in a safe setting to talk about what happened, to work out how amends may be made and to work out how steps can be taken to see that similar harm does not happen again. VARJ’s goal is to advance the knowledge and application of restorative justice practices in the City of Vancouver. Their core values are:

- Collaborative and cooperative
- Inclusive and diverse
- Integrative
- Involving and empowering community
- Effective and efficient
- Transparent and efficient
- Competent
- Inclusive of youth and elders
## Opportunities for RJ Hub:

### For public awareness and education
- Connecting individuals, groups, service providers, and justice organizations with each other
- Providing a restorative justice library and resource centre
- Conducting research into restorative justice issues and topics of interest
- Conducting community outreach
- Conference presentation and development

### For Service Providers
- Coordinated volunteer training
- Supporting collar program creation and set-up (e.g. mentoring programs that support offenders after completion of RJ programs)
- Developing an accreditation program for restorative justice service providers

### For networking and strengthen then restorative justice sector
- Providing regular communication tools to inform and network providers (e.g. monthly email bulletins, quarterly newsletter)
- Participating in national initiatives
- Supporting formation of regional, provincial and national restorative justice organizations
- Becoming a representative voice for restorative justice in the City of Vancouver

### For new program creation
- Piloting workplace programs
- Piloting new neighbourhood based programs (graffiti reduction, pound and neighbourhood disputes)
- Working with the DTES Community Court for diversion programs
History of VARJ:

In 2005 the Vancouver Family Court Youth Justice subcommittee saw a need for extrajudicial measures for youth that could be an alternative to the criminal justice system. Knowing that RJ intervention actions affect communities positively, the FCYJC held a workshop for 175 people in Vancouver to educate the public on RJ practices and the many forms it can take. As a result of this workshop the FCYJC planned three forums that targeted Vancouver youth service providers, the Vancouver Police Department and the Vancouver School Board. The consensus from the first two forums was to form a new non-profit restorative justice society which would act as a governing body for the development and implementation of a framework or hub for restorative justice practices and programs in Vancouver. This hub, entitled VARJ, would provide the following:

- Resources
- Networking
- Education
- Training
- Keeping statistics
- Monitoring referrals
- Facilitating communication between collaborative stakeholders

b) Cost Effectiveness:

- As displayed in table 2 above, the cost/youth being funnelled through the CJS is tens of thousands of dollars more than diverting a youth through an RJ program - Juvenile facility at $40,000 and $2000/youth for RJ programming.

- Successful programs in BC funded by their local governments even at minimum capacity are hundreds of thousands of dollars cheaper than solving conflict through the traditional means of the CJS (see page 5).

- An Association being run out of Minnesota that VARJ mimics closely documents large cost benefits savings in running their programs as opposed to the traditional means of dealing with youth criminal justice issues.
The Minnesota Partnership Association provides a social return on investment $4.89 for every dollar used for programming costs. There is a $1.87 public cost savings and increased tax revenue with every dollar used for programming.

The benefit-cost ratio for an RJ hub such as VARJ has proven to be far higher than any cost for traditional criminal justice responses. Out of three possible choices, the value of an RJ hub as the manager/director of RJ programs outweighs the other choices available to the City. Results are clear;

- Decreased recidivism amongst offender participants
- Increased victim engagement and satisfaction
- Increased community cohesion
- Inclusion of victim and offender in the process
- Outcome resolutions that everyone accepts
- Decrease of harm and conflict in communities
- Increased benefit-cost ratio making
- Community civility is restored

RJ programming is not only more cost effective for governments to fund, but more successful overall in meeting the objectives they set forth.

Project Outcome/Evaluation

With the outcome goals of empowering the community and assisting in increasing local ownership VARJ will foster, facilitate and create uniformity with the outcomes of:

- Increasing use of police diversion
○ Responding to city-wide and local need for programming
○ Assisting community business in reducing crime
○ Preventing future harm through proactive and preventative programs
○ Increasing public awareness, training and education needs
○ Responding to identified or emerging local crime, violence or victimization issues
○ Contributing to integration of services and agency collaboration to support victims

OUTPUTS:
○ Agencies/organizations are chosen to take part in education/awareness forums
○ Education and awareness forums are conducted
○ Separate evaluation for the forum is conducted by VARJ regarding awareness and understanding of restorative justice, and program implementation
○ Agencies who are chosen to take part in programming are assisted by VARJ in this process
○ Tools are created to ensure programs can be evaluated to produce measurable outcomes
○ Programs are finalized and facilitators trained if necessary
○ Once programs are operational, members of VARJ assist in diverting cases through this process
○ Agency and members utilize restorative justice programming rather than traditional measures once used

OUTCOMES (Initial, Intermediate, Long-term):
○ Agency/Organization or community populations increase their awareness and knowledge around restorative justice initiatives and programming
○ Populations within agencies and organizations are made aware of programming and become motivated to participate
Offenders and victims of crime/delinquent acts participate in programming

Individuals participating in programs demonstrate positive reactions to the experience

Fear and perception of fear and safety in community decreases

CJS is seen working with victims to have impact on perpetrators of crime

Increases confidence in the government and the CJS to effectively deal with criminal and community conflict issues

Intermediate

Chronic offenders/delinquents decrease this behaviour based on restorative justice program

Victims are satisfied with the process on all levels

Agencies continue to implement programs with continued guidance and steering of VARJ

There is an increase in the number of agencies that implement restorative justice programming

There is an increase in the number of citizens participating in this form of programming

There is an increase in the diversion of youth through this form of programming

A decrease in criminal and delinquent acts being committed within and around agency/organization and community

Best practices and standards are created for future programming

Long-term

Recidivism of offenders decreases

Social fabric of communities becomes more cohesive

Individuals and communities become empowered to implement more programming of this type

The effects of crime are remediated for all players in the program, including the agency/organization implementing them
○ Reduction of criminal offences as a whole within the agency/organization and community
○ Victims continue to be satisfied with their experience of the restorative justice process

Baseline data collection for restorative justice program implementation

○ In-depth interviews, surveys and quantitative questionnaires will be conducted with those participating in the programming. This will include offenders, victims and any community members who participate. These will be conducted by the agency with the assistance of the VARJ facilitators to capture baseline information on the participants, the crime that has been committed or committed against them, and their impressions of the program.

○ Post in-depth interviews will also be conducted at the completion of the program for the same populations as discussed above, asking the same questions done prior to their program participation.

○ Counts will also be kept on the numbers of participants going through the program and as well interviews with a control group of those who have not participated in the restorative justice program and rather a punitive measure instead.

This evaluation will track all participant information, as well as quantifiable data and as a result, best practices will be created and standards for success determined. Benefit – cost ratio analysis will also be undertaken to ensure tax payers are receiving a higher return on their invested monies than they do with traditional approaches to these issues.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the City of Vancouver accept and support VARJ as the community sought model for a Restorative Justice Program Hub. It is proven there is a strong need for an agency to lead and assist organizations and communities in implementing alternative methods of dealing with community conflict, victimization and certain criminal cases. In compliance with the Youth Criminal Justice Act and the diversion of young offenders away from the traditional system of justice, this association will help youth take responsibility for their actions and teach them consequences in their behaviour. Victims will be supported where traditionally they have not been and communities can focus more on a harm reduction approach to conflict rather then a punitive one.
The benefit-cost ratio for supporting VARJ indicates a high return through decreased recidivism in offenders, increased satisfaction amongst victims, increased cost savings to City Council in reducing police response to calls, and overall policing costs which leads to a decrease in costs to Vancouver tax payers. The choice is clear that the future of restoring community cohesion, decreasing harm against our communities and changing the face of offender behaviour permanently lies with the Vancouver Association for Restorative Justice for programming in the City of Vancouver.

**Budget 2009 - 2010**

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<td><strong>Total estimated expenditures for project</strong></td>
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**Revenue In-Kind**

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<tr>
<td>Vancouver School Board</td>
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<td>Ministry of Child &amp; Family Development</td>
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<td>Total Estimated In-Kind Revenue for Project</td>
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Appendix H: Conference Presentation Summary

Implementing Restorative Justice: Lessons from a New Program
Evelyn Zellerer & Caitlin Adam

“We may know it takes a village to raise a child, but if professionals are expecting to connect families with the churches, parent-teacher associations, or bowling leagues of yesteryear; they may search in vain. Over the last 20 to 30 years, community-based activity has significantly atrophied… professionals may not only need to find the village for each child, but also, somehow, take part in building the village in the first place. The question is, how?” (Boyes-Watson, 2005:192).

Our Questions, Our Journey

• How do we implement restorative practice?
• What steps need to be taken to successfully develop a sustainable, community-based restorative program?

In this presentation, we will take you on our journey of developing Thunderbird Restorative Justice, while weaving in wisdom from available literature, discussing both challenges and best practices.

Program Creation as a Series of Spiraling Steps

We have created a model to describe the development and implementation process we used for Thunderbird Restorative Justice. There are three main phases of implementation, and each phase is comprised of three steps. Although there are clear steps to take towards implementation, this progression is not linear. No step is ever “complete” - it is always revisited throughout the implementation process. To reflect this, we’ve chosen the visual of a spiral to demonstrate that even when a step is accomplished, we always come back to it later on.

Phase I: Engagement

Step 1: Form Partnerships
Step 2: Community Outreach & Education
Step 3: Stakeholder Identification & Ownership
**Lessons from Phase I**

- Work with a strong leader who can guide the process, facilitate the steps, but not own it. There needs to be collective ownership. Consensus-based decision making is a valuable tool for achieving shared ownership.

- Create a diverse and inclusive coalition of stakeholders to guide the program’s development.

- Work with champions! Don’t get discouraged when an ideal partner doesn’t come on board. Keep your hand extended, but move forward until they’re ready to join you.

- Developing relationships and partnerships is key for sustainable development.

- Provide community outreach and education opportunities about restorative justice. Invite broad participation! Remember: People can’t be involved and supportive if they don’t know what you’re doing!

**Phase 2: Development**

*Step 4: Needs Assessment*

*Step 5: Restorative Model*

*Step 6: Training & Capacity Development*

**Lessons from Phase II**

- Spend time determining how your group will work together according to the values and principles of restorative justice.

- Don’t forget to talk about how you’re going to talk! Restorative practitioners need to walk the talk. This is an on-going personal, professional, and group development process.

- Don’t assume you know what your community’s needs are. Learn about your community and its needs; dialogue and engagement are your best tools.

- Make use of visioning and strategic planning resources and approaches to guide the development of your restorative model.

- Network with other restorative programs, learn from their successes and challenges. You don’t always have to reinvent the wheel - but remember that your program should to be unique to meet the needs of your community!

- Credible, respected trainers are an important and worthwhile investment.

- Always work towards transformation: restorative programs are part of a broader social justice/social change movement. Keep your vision broad, and remember to take small steps towards a big outcome.
Phase 3: Implementation

Step 7: Administrative Infrastructure

Step 8: Funding

Step 9: Evaluation & Reflection

Lessons from Phase III

- Be prepared: The administrative details take a lot longer than you expect, especially if your program is the first in your area. Creating your infrastructure includes, for example:
  - Memorandum of understandings
  - Referral forms & protocols
  - Databases
  - Insurance & liability
  - Confidentiality & privacy policies
  - Volunteer training & coordination

- Get organized early: A tool we found helpful was a living document to track all the details that need to be addressed over the next year, organized by priority, and frequently updated. Not only is this a great guide for where you’re going, but it’s also a great record of where you’ve been and how far you’ve come!

- It’s worth the investment to hire someone to manage the administrative details. Don’t let a few key volunteers get bogged down and burned out.

- Remember to engage your volunteers while the administrative details are being addressed.

- Seek out core funding opportunities early. Access to sustainable core funding is an ongoing challenge for restorative programs. Grant applications take an enormous amount of time and require a particular skill set.

- Don’t forget to build in an evaluation strategy. Evaluation should involve continued self-reflection and qualitative assessments of program activities, in addition to quantitative data measurement.

- Always come back to your values and vision- is what you’re doing reflective of your values?

- Take care of yourself and your team. Dealing with challenges, especially around funding, can be draining - take time for self-care and regular debriefing.

- Celebrate your successes, big and small!
Select Bibliography

Social Participation & Citizenship Theory


On Community


Policy & Social Change


Community Development Theory


Restorative Justice Theory


Evaluation Studies


Implementation


Restorative Practice Models


