

## Research News

### Doing it Right!

A Needs Assessment Workbook



edmonton  
SOCIAL PLANNING COUNCIL

### Are you Doing It Right?

We've refreshed our most popular publication. This workbook examines how to do community based research and needs assessments. After 16

years, it remains one of our most requested publications. This workbook is a useful and user-friendly tool for agencies or groups who want to better understand the needs of the communities they serve. The refreshed version includes a new design and added comments, examples and resources to ensure that this workbook continues to be a useful resource for years to come.

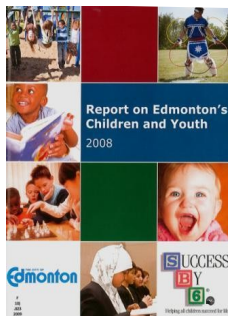
### A Plan for Alberta: Ending Homelessness in 10 Years

The very first provincial plan addressing homelessness has received a fair amount of attention. *A Plan for Alberta* utilizes the Housing First philosophy and focuses on 5 key priority strategies for ending homelessness: better information, aggressive assistance, coordinated systems, more housing options, and effective policies. Will this plan work to end homelessness by 2019? Now that the Alberta Budget for 2009 has been released, the promises in this report take on new meaning.



### New report on children and youth in Edmonton

Child Friendly Edmonton and Families First Edmonton have collaborated to produce the 2008 Report on Edmonton's Children and Youth. This document presents statistics and



indicators on Edmonton kids, examining the trends in demographics, health, early learning and care, education, risk behaviours, community supports and interventions, and leisure. The data present part of the picture of youth health and well-being in our

community. The document also includes two special health reports on healthy body weights and mental health.

### Culturally Responsive Pathways for Isolated Immigrant Seniors

The Edmonton Seniors Coordinating Council has recently released a new resource on immigrant seniors in our community. *Mobilizing for*



*Action: A Report to Help Create Culturally Responsive for Isolated Immigrant Seniors* presents a wealth of information. The report looks at how and why marginalization and isolation occurs, and presents seniors' ideas for solutions. The report also:

- summarizes current research literature and good practices;
- presents statistics and examines trends;
- reports on consultations with Edmonton immigrant and refugee seniors;
- discusses cultural and special issues relevant to immigrant and refugee seniors in Edmonton; and
- presents profiles of 14 cultural communities within Edmonton.

Most articles listed here are also available in PDF format by searching in the online catalogue.

The catalogue is available 24/7, and can be accessed by going to:

[socialresearchlibrary.ca](http://socialresearchlibrary.ca)

Or, drop by our Library to read materials or make copies during business hours.

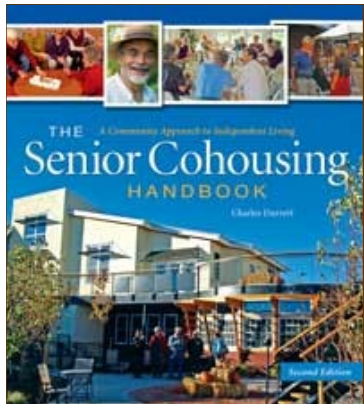
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**Reviews**

**The Senior Cohousing Handbook: A Community Approach to Independent Living**

**Book by Charles Durrett, 2009.  
Review by Erin Krekoski**



Senior cohousing is a model of independent-intrdependent living that is vastly different from assisted living facilities and retirement communities, and distinct from communes and intentional communities. The cohousing model incorporates both private dwellings and common facilities, designed specifically for a community of residents – in this case, seniors – interested in building a supportive community together.

Now, I’m only in my mid-20s, but this book actually made me want to move into a Senior Cohousing community! The book is full of interviews, pictures, design plans, and stories of successful (and a few unsuccessful) cohousing communities. What resonates most strongly is the contentment, satisfaction and fulfillment of actively participating in a community as an alternative to our independent, and often isolated, family households.

Cohousing for seniors takes the uniqueness of aging into account. Some communities, for example, incorporate an extra suite for a full-time caregiver to occupy, should one of the residents find themselves in need of that type of support. Mutual care and support seem to be the norm in the communities profiled in this book. As one resident explained, “In the house where I’m living now, if I fall off a ladder, who’s going to know? In cohousing, even if you’re in your own house, you’re going to know if you don’t see somebody.” Senior cohousing provides community supports in many different forms, such as shared meals, community activities and events, easy opportunities to informally visit and socialize, and the opportunity to help one another with chores and

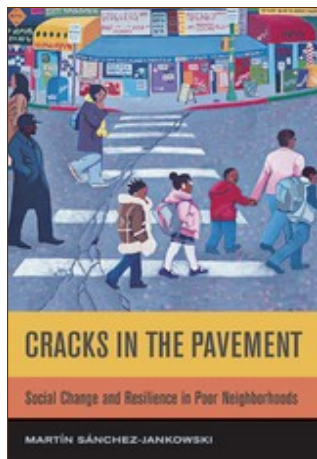
errands. The model provides the peace of mind of knowing that there is always somebody that you know and trust if you really need help, and because all community members will be in need of some supports at some point, providing care or help is not viewed as burdensome, but rather as a form of insurance.

These social features seem to be what make the cohousing model stand out from other models. In many of the examples, a group of potential community members engaged in a long process of visioning, designing, and building their community. Community principles, obligations, decision-making processes, and conflict resolution are discussed and agreed upon at the outset, meaning that residents come to cohousing with a commitment to one another, and an idea of the shared values of the community. Participating in the design process means that the community can be structured both to fit and to be flexible. Some communities have prioritized features like easy access to shopping and services, accessible floor plans and elevators, extra-quiet individual units, and energy efficiency and environmental sustainability. Communities can include both higher and lower income seniors, and the vast majority of cohousing communities are financially self-sustaining.

This book does a great job of illustrating the potential of the senior cohousing concept. It gives examples of what has worked and what has failed, and provides resources and answers questions for people looking to start or to join a senior cohousing community. The handbook contains examples from Denmark, the USA, and around the world. In addition to looking at some of the advantages and risks, the handbook answers common questions regarding the physical design, the social design, financial considerations, the planning process, and the day-to-day life in a cohousing community.

**Cracks in the Pavement: Social Change and Resilience in Poor Neighbourhoods**

**Book by Martin Sanchez-Jankowski, 2008.  
Review by Cheryl Melney**



Author Martin Sanchez-Jankowski took a very serious approach in his research of poor neighborhoods. He spent nine years immersed in fieldwork, where he studied five different poor neighborhoods, three in New York (the Bronx and Brooklyn, not NYC), and two in Los Angeles. He stayed with families who live in crowded social housing, and he spent his days interacting with people in a number of different social settings.

In Cracks in the Pavement, Sanchez-Jankowski focuses specifically on five different social institutions in poor neighborhoods, these being: social

housing complexes; ‘Mom and Pop’ grocery stores; barber shops and hair salons; gangs; and schools.

Sanchez-Jankowski’s work clarifies many misconceptions about the poor that previous researchers have made, such as the assumption that poor neighborhoods are naturally disorganized. He points out that many poor neighborhoods are in fact quite organized and have social rules and accepted behaviors that are generally understood within the neighborhood. He also points out how adaptable poor neighborhoods are to the many outside forces that affect them.

What is most interesting about this book is that Sanchez- Jankowski is able to immerse the reader into the neighborhoods he studies. There are many anecdotes and quotes from the residents, which help you “get to know” the people in

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this book, and give a sliver of understanding about their lives. This book is also very respectfully written. Sanchez-Jankowski himself grew up in a poor neighborhood, so he is better able to understand how to interact with people appropriately.

This book also explores power relations amongst social institutions and in the neighborhoods. For example, in one community, the housing board who runs the social housing sometimes allow people into the housing complex that do not actually qualify, such as new immigrants, because they are considered likely to pay their rents. This choice not only excludes people who actually do qualify for housing, in one neighborhood it also created con-

flict between recent Mexican immigrants and Mexican families who were born in the United States.

*Cracks in the Pavement* is interesting from a social policy perspective in that it helps us better understand how various policies can affect the delicate makeup of poor neighborhoods. This book is written about American neighborhoods, so of course some of the issues are not applicable in Canada. However, the characteristics of resilience and creativity cross over to all people who have had to survive in economic hardship and deprivation, and this book really gave me a sense of admiration for the people whose lives it depicts.

## Resources

### Aboriginal Issues

In Their Own Voices: Building Urban Aboriginal Communities. Book by Jim Silver et. al., 2006.

Aboriginal People's Survey, 2006: An Overview of the Health of the Metis Population. Report by Theresa Janz, Joyce Seto and Annie Turner, 2009.

First Nations Registration (Status) and Membership Research Report. Report by the AFN-INAC Joint Technical Working Group, July 2008.

From Poverty to Prosperity: Opportunities to Invest in First Nations. Report by the Assembly of First Nations, September 2007.

### Budget/Economy

The Red-Ink Budget. Report by Ken Battle, Sherri Torjman, and Michael Mendelson, Caledon Institute 2009.

Beneath the Budget of 2009: taxes and benefits. Report by Ken Battle, Caledon Institute, 2009.

Breaking the Cycle: Stimulus with responsibility, stewardship and sustainability. Report by Greg Flanagan and Diana Gibson, Parkland Institute, April 2009.

### Children/Childcare

Report on Edmonton's Children and Youth, 2008. Report by Success by 6 and the City of Edmonton, January 2009.

From Patchwork to Framework: A Child Care Strategy for Canada. Report by Child Care Advocacy Association of Canada, September 2004.

Making the Connections: Using Public Reporting to Track the Progress on Child Care Services in Canada. Report by the Child Care Advocacy Association of Canada, October 2007.

### Disability

Paved with Good Intentions: The Failure of Passive Disability Policy in Canada. Report by Rick August, Caledon Institute, April 2009.

Toward Inclusion of People with Disabilities in the

Workplace. Report by the Canadian Labour Congress, December 2008.

### Food Security

The Cost of Eating in Alberta, 2008. Report by Dietitians of Canada and the Alberta Community/Public Health Nutritionists Food Security Subcommittee, 2009.

A Comparison of Household Food Insecurity in Canada and the United States. Report by Mark Nord and Heather Hopwood, December 2008.

### Health

A Commentary on the National Pharmaceuticals Strategy: A Prescription Unfilled. Report by the Health Council of Canada, February 2009.

A Status Report on the National Pharmaceuticals Strategy: A Prescription Unfilled. Report by the Health Council of Canada, February 2009.

Sick and Tired: The Compromised Health of Social Assistance Recipients and the Working Poor in Ontario. Report by the Wellesley Institute, University of Toronto, and Community Social Planning Council of Toronto, 2009.

### Housing

"We got evicted...did I leave that out?" Stories of Housing and Mental Health. Report by Ian Skelton and Richard Mahe, Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, 2009.

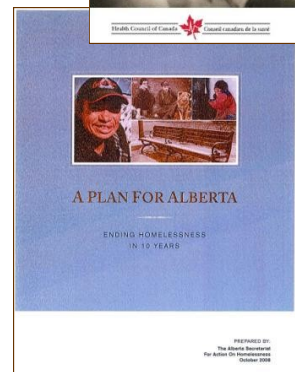
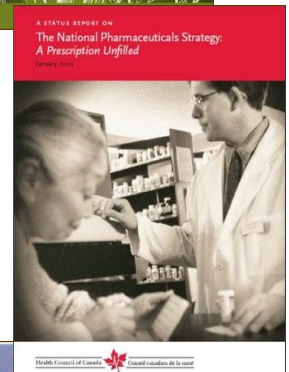
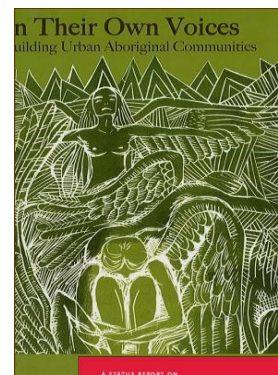
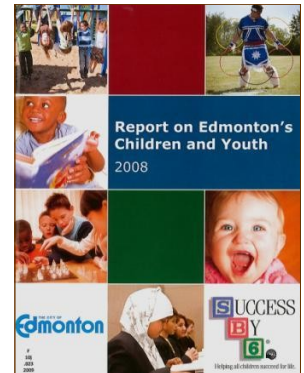
A Plan for Alberta: Ending Homelessness in 10 Years. Report by the Alberta Secretariat for Action on Homelessness, October 2008 (released March 2009).

Halifax Report Card on Homelessness. Report by Community Action on Homelessness, 2009.

Report of the Special Rapporteur on Adequate Housing - Mission to Canada. Report by Miloon Kothari, UN General Assembly, February 2009.

### Poverty/Poverty Reduction

A Blueprint for Economic Stimulus and Poverty Reduction in Ontario. Report by the 25 in 5 Network for Poverty Reduction, 2009.



## Resources, cont.

**Fighting Poverty: The Best Way to Beat the Recession.** Report by the Ontario Association of Food Banks, March 2009.

**Preventing Poverty. Promoting Prosperity.** Nova Scotia's Poverty Reduction Strategy. Report by Government of Nova Scotia, April 2009.

The federal role in poverty reduction. Presentation by Ken Battle and Sherri Torjman, Caledon Institute, March, 2009.

**Comprehensive Strategies for Deep and Durable Outcomes.** Report by Eric Leviten-Reid, Caledon Institute, April 2009.

**Cracks in the Pavement: Social Change and Resilience in Poor Neighbourhoods.** Book by Martin Sanchez-Jankowski, 2008.

**Target Practice: Lessons for Poverty Reduction.** Report by Jodie Levin-Epstein and Webb Lyons, Centre for Law and Policy, 2009.

**Growing Unequal: Income Distribution and Poverty in OECD Countries.** Book by OECD, 2008.

### Seniors

**The Senior Cohousing Handbook: A Community Approach to Independent Living.** Book by Charles Durrett, 2009.

**Mobilizing for Action: A Report to Help Create Culturally Responsive Pathways for Isolated Immigrant**

**Seniors.** Report by the Edmonton Seniors Coordinating Council, December 2008.

**Come On In!** Information video by the Edmonton Seniors Coordinating Council.

### Other Topics

**The Story that Brought Me Here: To Alberta from Everywhere.** Book edited by Linda Goyette, 2008

**2008 Survey of Canadian Attitudes Toward Learning: Results for learning through the lifespan.** Report by The Canadian Council on Learning, 2009.

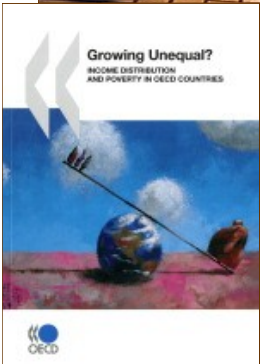
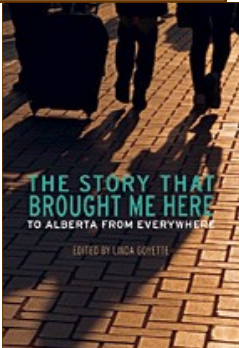
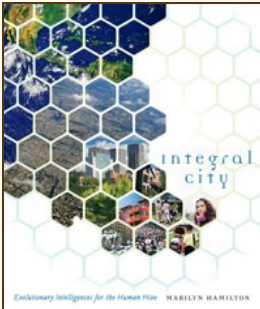
**Social Capital, Social Entrepreneurs and Safer Communities – Enabling Alberta's Communities to Work out Lasting Solutions.** Report by the John Howard Society of Alberta, 2008.

**Integral City: Evolutionary Intelligences for the Human Hive.** Book by Marilyn Hammond, 2008.

**Efficient Cities: The Interrelationship between Effective Rapid Transit Systems and the Optimal Utilization of Land Use Entitlements.** Report by Canada West Foundation, March 2009.

**Canadian Social Policy in the 2000s: Bringing Place In.** Report by Neil Bradford, Canadian Policy Research Networks, November 2008.

**Employer Investment in Workplace Learning: Report on the Edmonton Roundtable.** Report by Ron Saunders, Canadian Policy Research Networks, February 2009.



## Of Interest...

**The Edmonton Social Planning Council has a new PODCAST.**

**Ear On Social Issues** is produced approximately twice per month.

Our recent episodes feature segments such as:

- Top 5 Scary Social Policy Realities in Alberta
- Child and Family Poverty in Alberta
- The need for a provincial poverty reduction strategy
- A wish list for the 2009 Alberta Budget
- Review of an interview with Mayor Mandel

You can subscribe to our podcast by going to [www.earonsocialissues.mypodcast.com](http://www.earonsocialissues.mypodcast.com), or through iTunes. If you have ideas or want to participate in an upcoming episode, contact us!



**You still have time to read!**

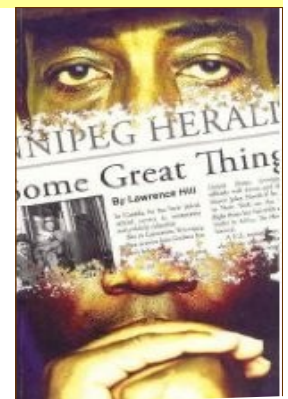
The ESPC Book Club is meeting on **Thursday, May 7, from 12-1 at the ESPC Library.**

Join us for a great discussion on a great Canadian book. Everybody is welcome!

**We're reading *Some Great Thing* by Lawrence Hill.**

This is a superb novel about a young journalist in Winnipeg. It's an exciting story, an easy read, and covers a wide variety of social themes, including racism, language, and the role of the media.

Get the book at most bookstores, Edmonton Public Library branches, or here at the ESPC Library.



I want your input! How can this Update be made more useful for you? Contact [Erin](mailto:erink@edmontonsocialplanning.ca) at:

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