



**ANNUAL  
REPORT  
2020**

**Social  
Planning  
Cowichan**

---

## **REFLECTIONS OF A PANDEMIC YEAR**

Working primarily from home through COVID has been... interesting. I would say it has been a net-neutral for me, with ups and downs along the way. I somehow both miss the routine of getting ready for work and commuting 30 minutes to the office, and also do not miss spending my time in that way. I somehow both miss being somewhere else while I'm trying to work, but also enjoy the comfort of being at home. Each day tends to feel the same, and I can't decide whether that is a good thing or a bad thing. I can't discern whether my productivity has increased or decreased. I can't decide if I feel lonely, or if I enjoy the solitude. Ultimately, I suppose I'm of the mind that "it is what it is" for the time being. If nothing else, the pandemic has shown me that I am resilient and adaptable enough to ride out a time of crisis, which are traits that I will not ever take for granted again. I feel ready to roll with whatever changes in the situation come our way next.

-SPC Staff member,  
Working Reflections in 2020

---



**DON'T  
GIVE UP**

**YOU ARE  
NOT ALONE**

**YOU  
MATTER**

**COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT DURING A PANDEMIC -  
THE COMMUNITY TOGETHER TO END POVERTY  
HW-NUTS'-ULWUM (AS ONE)  
AND MOVIN' ON UP COWICHAN LAKE POVERTY REDUCTION PROJECTS**

What does poverty look like for residents in our community? How does it impact us as individuals, families, neighbours? The Town of Ladysmith and the Town of Lake Cowichan have both set out to hear what their community has to say and develop local plans to end poverty based on their responses. Funding comes from the provincial government through the Union of BC Municipalities to specifically focus on engaging communities to develop local poverty reduction plans.

Both projects are guided by a Working Group with members from local community organizations and engage peers with lived experience to conduct interviews and community champions to promote the project. The Ladysmith/Stz'uminus project name includes the Hul'q'umi'num word – Hw-Nuts'-Ulwum meaning 'As One' to highlight the collaborative nature of the project in that area.

Social Planning Cowichan has the role of facilitating community engagement activities. But how do you engage the public around such complex issues at a time when we can't get together face to face to talk? Both communities have gotten creative, using tools such as an online questionnaire and one on one interviews. In the Ladysmith and Stz'uminus area, residents were challenged to take part in one or more poverty challenges to give them a small glimpse into what life is like living on a limited food allowance for 3 days, getting around using only public transportation for 3 days or spending 12 hours with nowhere to go. The Cowichan Lake area project hosted a series of Virtual Community Conversations and developed a TikTok poverty awareness campaign starring local celebrity elk.

The poverty reduction plans will be completed in July 2021 and will incorporate actions big and small that have been proposed by each community. Eliminating poverty will only be possible if everyone in the community is involved. Each of us can make a difference in the lives of our neighbours.



**MOVIN' ON UP  
COWICHAN LAKE  
POVERTY REDUCTION**



As the COVID-19 pandemic temporarily closed our communities and people rushed to purchase whatever sanitizers, cleaners, masks and toilet paper they could find, front line workers were in a tough spot sourcing personal protective equipment for their safety on the job. We went to work asking the public to share whatever supplies they could and passed them along to where they were needed. Everything was happening fast with information changing on a minute-to-minute basis at times. But what was most incredible was the way people stepped up to cover service gaps where needed and helped others out where they could.

The early months of 2021 saw Social Planning release our second round of COVID-19 Community Surveys. Focused on the time period between September 2020 through to "Phase 3" of BC's reopening plan, the surveys captured the thoughts, insights, and experiences of Cowichan residents through a rapidly changing pandemic situation through the fall and winter months. Many survey respondents, perhaps unsurprisingly, expressed uncertainty, anxiety, frustration and fatigue at the toll the pandemic was continuing to take on our community.

Our second set of snapshots to present our findings from this latest set of four surveys (Food Security and Household Activities, Work and Money, Personal and Family Well-being, Family Challenges and Dynamics) are nearly complete, and should be available for viewing, alongside the raw survey data, in the coming days. We thank everyone for participating, and having a hand in shaping what the future will look like for our community as we look forward to the end of the pandemic.

**WINTER COVID-19 CHECK-IN  
SURVEY FINDINGS**

THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC CONTINUES TO ALTER OUR DAY TO DAY LIVES IN UNPRECEDENTED WAYS.



Daily Cases on Vancouver Island

We conducted 4 surveys from September 2020 - March 2021:

- Food Security and Household Activities
- Work and Household Income
- Personal and Family Well-being
- Family Dynamics and Challenges

With the increase in cases and restrictions throughout the winter, we asked community members how their lives have been affected.

Stay tuned for upcoming results!



**WINTER COVID-19 CHECK-IN  
KEY FINDING #4**

Family Dynamics and Challenges

**57%** ... of survey respondents are concerned about aging family members health

How do you stay connected with family?

- talk over the phone
- social distanced visits
- connect through the help of caregivers



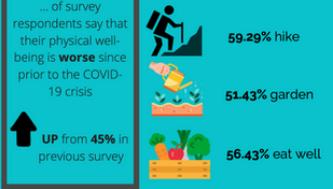
**WINTER COVID-19 CHECK-IN  
KEY FINDING #3**

Personal and Family Well-being

**66%** ... of survey respondents say that their physical well-being is worse since prior to the COVID-19 crisis

How do you care for your health?

- 59.29% hike
- 51.43% garden
- 56.43% eat well



A highlight this year has been the establishment of the Quw'utsun' Cultural Connections Society, a long-standing vision of Cultural Connections Elders to have an indigenous-lead organization governed and guided by Snuw'uy'ulh, the sacred laws that guide all aspects of life.

This pandemic year has found Cultural Connections programs pivoting and adapting. At the start of the year, Journey of Our Generation workshops and Cowichan 101 activities were cancelled, but by fall, had been adapted and offered as workshops and learnings via zoom.



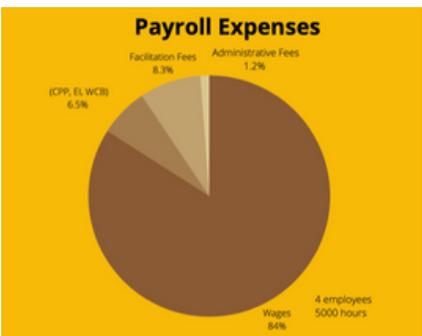
Work has begun on a Legacy Project that will offer an immersive, interactive, multimedia experience that people can move through independently or in groups. The project will capture the legacy of the Elders' while at the same time expanding their reach and testing of this design structure are set to begin by the end of 2021.



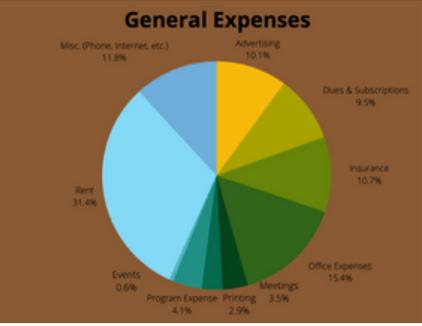
SPC identifies community priorities for action, based on research and community consultation through community dialogues, and community based research projects. One of our ongoing roles in the community is to provide a series of Community Snapshots that track the health and well-being of our community and measure social foundations of health including; economy, employment, education, health services, culture, youth, transportation, community involvement, food security, housing, climate change and environment. We update these annually and every five years to coincide with Stats Canada, new reports are completed. In 2022 we will be publishing a new set of Community Snapshot Reports with the first report released in late February.



Since 2014, SPC has published an annual Regional Living Wage Calculation and report. Due to Covid in 2020, no Living Wage calculations were made in BC however these will resume in 2021.



Like many organizations, some of our planned project funding for the year was postponed or cancelled impacting the work we had planned while bringing new opportunities we never could have imagined.



In 2020, SPC had four employees and a number of contract positions based on the types of work we are funded to complete. Contact positions are temporary and/or under 10 hours per month. Our contract positions for 2020 included, bookkeeping, project facilitators, graphic designer/communications, and videographers to support preparations for 2022 projects once things begin to open up and there is confidence we are able to begin planning. This includes research, planning and documentation of a number of large long-term projects (Visions, Post-Covid, Cultural Connections Legacy, Poverty Reduction as examples.

Our general expenses in 2020 were a bit out of the ordinary due to the closure of our office, storage rental, providing work from home requirements, space rental for meetings and providing Cultural Connections workshops and other project deliverables via zoom in person hybrids. .

## **A NEW LOOK FOR A POST PANDEMIC WORLD**

After the year we have all gone through, 2021 felt like a good time for a major refresh in our look and branding as an organization. We have taken the daunting but exciting step of completely redesigning our website. We have moved to a completely different hosting platform, one that offers a much more user friendly experience. This project remains a work in progress and we have many exciting plans as far as what will eventually be included on our new site.

We made a move at the beginning of COVID too! With our lease ending, and a pandemic beginning, we settled into our make-shift home offices and put everything else in storage. In the early months of 2021, we started looking for our new home and found a place to spread our wings and even, store all of our boxes!!

While we were at it we realized our logo was part of a project long since passed and with the help of our amazing board, staff and a graphic artist we present, the new SPC logo.



### **FREE HUGS: HOW WE HOPE TO START EVERY DAY AT THE OFFICE SOMETIME IN 2021**

After the year we have all gone through, the start of 2021 felt like a good time for a major refresh in our look and branding as an organization. We took the daunting but exciting step of completely redesigning our website and logo. We have moved to a completely different hosting platform, which we have found to offer a much more user-friendly experience as we have been g\

