

Officer responsible Children's Advocate	Author Lyn Campbell - Children's Advocate
Corporate Plan Output: Children's Advocacy	

The purpose of this report is to update the committee on developments in the Bertelsmann Cities of Tomorrow international network.

BACKGROUND

The international network "Cities of Tomorrow" was brought into being by the Bertelsmann Foundation in 1995. Besides the Bertelsmann Foundation as the central steering unit, its members are the ten cities and districts in Europe, the USA, Canada, New Zealand, and Japan that were nominated for the Carl Bertelsmann Prize of 1993. These cities are among the world's most efficient local governments. The goals of the network are the international exchange of experiences, transfer of know-how and mutual learning.

Since its beginnings "New Public Management" has become a global movement. Hence, the cities of the "International Network for Better Local Government" see themselves as national and international mediators in the reform process in local governments. The strictly practice-oriented work of the network makes it particularly appealing and useful for the participants.

METHODS

The ten network cities contribute their own achievements and know-how from leading local associations and business consultants, as well as from other well-managed cities of their nations, to the work of the international network. At the beginning of a three-year work cycle they, together with the Bertelsmann Foundation, decide what topics and working groups are formed, with members from each city to compile successful examples of reform from all over the world and discuss their research within the entire network. Administration practitioners jointly draw up innovative solutions for practitioners. The Foundation is responsible for publishing their results, initiating working discussions, holding conferences and advising the network members in the working groups.

TOPICS

The topics of the first work cycle were:

Quality Management, Strategic Planning, Alternative Service Delivery Strategies, Staff Development, Citizen Participation and Competition. During the second work cycle the network dealt with the following topics:

Change Management - Building Trust in Local Governments, Strategic use of Information and Communications Technologies, Multi-ethnic Society at the Local Level and Local Economic Development.

The current work cycle that runs from 1998 to 2000 is concentrating on improving the living conditions of children, teenagers and senior citizens in the city, and on local government employment promotion. The common focus of the work is the aspect of "Strategic Management"; strategic control of a local government was recognised as a key factor for successful city management. The goal is to examine the success factors for strategic management and new steering with the city as "guarantor" (keyword "smart networking"). These success factors will be studied based on examples of the three topics cited.

DEVELOPMENTS

The participating cities are now midway through the project. All cities in the Children & Youth cluster have completed mapping exercises to ascertain 'who' is doing 'what' in their cities. In addition they have completed a SWOT analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats). This information has formed the basis for their strategic planning and policy development. All cities report the value this has added to their projects. At this point all cities report:

1. Measurable progress in getting 'buy-in' and ownership by both elected members and staff.
2. A new emphasis upon needs of children, young people and their families in their local government decision-making process.
3. The formation of new partnerships, networking opportunities and community consultation practices.
4. New interest and commitment to strategic management and community governance. In September 1999, the Bertelsmann Cities of tomorrow network of cities met in Quebec City. Christchurch was represented by the Mayor, Garry Moore; Director of Policy, Jonathan Fletcher; and Children's Advocate, Lyn Campbell. Representatives shared many key learning points in the strategic management process. These will serve as a solid foundation for the on-going developments in our cities. These substantial results focus on the issues of vision and mission building, networking and co-operative partnerships and evaluation techniques.

In March 2000 the Children & Youth cluster will meet in Christchurch. In addition to this meeting, a two-day forum on Community Governance is planned, to take advantage of the international expertise which will be present. The focus of this forum will be extended to include best practice in employment and housing in local government.

Recommendation: That the report be received.

Chairman's

Recommendation: That the information be received and the staff team be congratulated on their continuing work in this area.