

Communications Strategy

Overview of project

Shaping Futures: Housing Policies for the 21st Century is an international partnership of housing practitioners, policy makers, academics and social justice groups all interested in achieving better housing outcomes. The means used are knowledge exchange and public discourse. This includes international face to face and internet meetings, stakeholder consultations, meetings with policy staff in the three countries, small conferences, a public and partner only website, speaking engagements and press coverage.

The partners want to learn from each other and have a space to talk about the Big Issues that affect their work. Their stakeholders are tenants, local politicians, businesses, non-profits, planners and so forth who they are regularly in contact with around housing and community issues.

These stakeholders have made progress towards a language that can be understood that covers the housing system and its connection to local and national agendas. This is an ongoing process but increasingly it is spreading across national boundaries. This is fueled by the desire to create new and lasting solutions around housing.

Key dates

Canadian Consultations- 2nd round, January 25, 2017, Ottawa

Canada Pressured Cities Meeting, January 26, 2017, Ottawa

UK Consultations- 2nd round: London, February 27, 2017, Edinburgh/Glasgow, February

UK Pressured Cities Meeting, February 27, 2017

Australia Consultations- 2nd round, Sydney, March, 2017, Melbourne, March 2017

Partners 2nd Face-to-Face Meetings, May 22-23, Toronto

City of Toronto Workshop on easing housing pressures in Toronto, May 23, 2017, Toronto Metro Hall

One Day Conference on Shaping Futures: Housing Policies for the 21st Century, May 24, 2017, Toronto

Project objectives

Communications objectives

Create a stronger network of partners and their stakeholders. Look to increase membership of network to 1000 by May.

Ensure that all members hear about, read and share the final report. Aim to achieve 2000 downloads of report from website.

Place one story in Australia, UK and Canada - either print or online

Increase traffic to Shaping Futures website by XXXX

To decide upon areas where most progress can be made in terms of policy and practice in the 3 countries, these then form the themes for further investigation

Project aims

To reach a wider range of stakeholders including non-profits, the PRS, experts in finance, business and others whose work connects to access to secure housing.

Shift the public perception of government housing programs away from simply being welfare programmes

Communicate and promote an understanding of the essential economic and environments aspects of housing

To shift the housing policy discussion to a fuller consideration of the housing system and how various components affect each other

To help the partners have a greater impact on housing policy in their countries, by raising the dialogue around modern housing policies and creating networks of continued exchange and support.

To improve communications, information sharing in the 3 countries involved and beyond

To establish a new housing narrative that includes an economic narrative

Vision (what does success look like?)

Shaping Futures provides a voice for stakeholders from diverse community-based backgrounds to work together and communicate effectively with policy makers around housing strategies for their community

Those involved in seeking solutions for pressured housing markets have new ideas, a network of knowledgeable colleagues that will continue beyond the project.

Policy makers are convinced to take a housing system approach, and see that housing is closely linked to productivity and economic performance

Better financing models are in place which support longer term planning for housing

Target audiences

Primary

Partners – non-profit housing providers, universities, cities, social justice groups,

Secondary

Treasuries, government policy makers, investors, funders

Engaged communities, the wider public in the countries involved

Key Messages

It is critical to understand the full housing system

Local and national economies depend on ease of access to housing

The location of housing and building techniques can have a huge impact on GHG

Housing policies are not just about welfare programs to build housing for poor people. There is an increasing need to provide supports and programs for housing for the younger workforce.

Pressured cities are at risk of losing business, families and diversity if action to make housing accessible is not taken.

Expected Outcomes

Continued dialogue speaking engagements of SF21 partners to talk about Shaping Futures

Support for a continued dialogue of housing experts from pressured cities

Progress towards a common international language for housing policy

A richer palette of ideas and best practices for policy makers and practitioners

A guide to help existing social housing groups to consider their futures. We hope that the book will be used by those groups considering new strategic directions

Improved dialogue and understanding of new roles among housing sectors

Comms activity planner

Key messages – develop consistent key messages to explain what Shaping Futures is and does; why it's important and useful, and tell people how they can get involved

Social media - ask partners to share links to blogs/ reports on their social media accounts. Create hashtag - #ShapingFutures (not been used yet!) Include newsletter sign up URL (bitly)

Marketing pack – create email signature/ graphic to embed on websites which links to shaping future website/ copy for partners to share on their intranets which features key messaging and includes newsletter sign up URL

Website – add key messages to home page/ add a prominent newsletter sign up link/ unlock hidden content/ add more photos of events/ encourage partners to comment on existing reports to start conversations

Media - identify stories from the summit/ publications and sell in to media contacts. Offer key partners up for interview.

- February – focus on homelessness (some interesting info in the Scotland/ Vancouver housing stories). When it's cold, there is lots of interest/ sympathy for these stories.
- March/April – PRS ; spring as a time of change and renewal

- May/ June – could we compile a top ten outcomes from the summit, relating each back to peoples' lives. For outlets like BuzzFeed/ Huffington Post etc

Potential UK outlets

- The Guardian (Dave Hill/ Dawn Foster)
- Financial Times
- Evening Standard
- City AM
- CBC, nationally and regionally
- The Globe and Mail
- The Toronto Star
- The Hill Times
- The Vancouver Star

I have asked for more info on Australia

TBC – Australia/ Canada media outlets