Kathy Moulton, Board Member and member of the Policy Committee, began the presentation on the Code of Ethics with some background information. At the 2007 Annual General Meeting held in St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador, there was a request from members for a Code of Ethics. At the last AGM in Debert, Nova Scotia, this was reiterated. Overall, the purpose for the creation of a Code of Ethics has been seen as a guiding tool for members.

**Goal:**
- To create a Code of Ethics specifically for ACIC and its members
- To have members use the Code as a guiding tool as they start projects, creating programs, hire new staff, develop communications materials, etc.

**Guides and Members:**
- CCIC’s Code of Ethics: It was explained that the Policy Committee in conjunction with the board and staff at the September 2008 retreat used CCIC’s Code of Ethics as a starting point.
- Nova Scotia Environmental Network Policy: In order to enhance what was seen as a deficit in the CCIC policy concerning environmental practices, the NSEN policy was also consulted.
- Committee: Linda Snyder, Ashley Pinsent, Jennifer Morningstar, Maureen MacLean, Kathy Moulton and ACIC staff

**Process:**
- Board of Directors reviewed, edited, and augmented CCIC’s Code to identify principles important to ACIC
- Policy committee met regularly to develop, review, and revise a working copy

**Committee:**
- Meetings held in all four Atlantic provinces with members to discuss the draft created by the Committee
- Committee meeting in Halifax to synthesize member input and finalize the Code

**2.0 Guiding Principles**
- Core development principles to be upheld by ACIC members

**3.1 Partnerships**
- Identifies process for initiating, maintaining and ending partnerships
- Stresses importance of respect and equality

**3.2 Governance**
- Establishes ideal governance for organization
- Highlights important policies to develop

**3.3 Organizational Integrity**
- Focuses on transparency, conflict resolution and improper organizational behaviour

**3.4 Finances**
- Relays the need for financial audits and proper records
- Requires that all ACIC member organizations have some form of financial accounting

3.5 Communications
- Media and public engagement guidelines
- Ensures that all members are focusing on the same objectives when relaying messages to the public

3.6 Fundraising
- Separates fundraising initiatives from public engagement projects
- Outlines preferred methods and messages for soliciting funds for projects

Question: Given that certain images are used...who enforces the policy?
Response: To be clarified later in presentation. Tools such as The South Through the Northern Eye exhibit have helped educate and promote the use of ethical images in our work.

3.7 Management Practice and Human Resources
- Highlights important factors to consider in dealing with employees and volunteers
- Provides guidelines for hiring and maintaining staff and volunteers in an ethical manner

3.8 Environmental Practices
- General choices to help make member organizations earth-friendly
- Relates to everyday activities as well as travel and special events

3.9 Abilities
- Highlights the importance of considering the different abilities of all staff, volunteers and partners in programming, planning events, choosing office space, and holding meetings

3.10 Evaluation
- Highlights importance of periodic evaluations/reviews of projects and policies

Question:
Given the range and diversity of ACIC member organizations, how might this be applied to organizations as well as individual members?
Response: The committee recognizes this and the differing abilities that inherently exist. The thing to keep in mind is that the Code is something to strive towards, a role model of what can be achieved; if an individual or organization is unable to apply all policies, this can be reflected upon during the evaluative process. Every organization has differing capacities.

As for individuals, obviously some policies will not apply, but guiding principles do. The Code of Conduct will not apply to individual members; Guiding Principles, however, are required by individual members to sign on to.

Question:
Was there consideration to Conflict Resolution in the drafting of the COE?
Response:
This is a document that will grow and expand. Conflict Resolution is a section that could be put in; Have some ideas of new sections that could be included (eg. Fair trade purchasing).
Comment from Jean Arnold:
Congratulations- a good starting point. Consideration: Don't add too many detailed points so that you are not later bound as things change; this adds flexibility.

Comment:
With the CCIC, every 3 years a self assessment is done; we are going to suggest that we proceed by doing a self assessment on a portion of the code every 3 years.

Question: Can you give an example of when you would use the COE to refuse a member?
Response: The COE is something you need to sign on to and adhere to. If someone is unwilling to sign on, this would be problematic. However, no organization is going to be perfect. We are looking towards a willingness to adhere; we have membership criteria which will continue to be used, and new members agree to aspire to the COE. At all workshops in the provinces questions were raised in this regard. We would like to reiterate that this is an ideal, and as we go through the process of self assessment, we will have future targets to aspire to. We are not expecting people to make drastic changes if they are unable.

Comments: Thank you to all who worked on this; it is useful to members. When contentious issues have arisen, the CCIC's COE provided a useful tool; having this for the Atlantic is very good as a reference point- thanks for that.

As someone on the membership committee, the COE is helpful. Especially in terms of ethical images, what will be helpful is to review the points, and know that there will be ones we have to work at. If the membership committee is aware of these, organizations will need to aspire to and make certain changes.

The COE should be seen as an educational tool, not something to be feared. For example, we all have partners and the COE can be referred to as things come up. We can use it as a working document, do a workshop at the next AGM. It is something that will benefit us all.

In reference to conflict resolution- Could easily add a point concerning this that would involve a process of negotiation and engagement to encourage better behaviour.

Final Draft
• The Code has been revised to meet the comments made by members
• The Code today is a collaboration of committee work, member feedback and staff input

Implementation
• All new members to ACIC (organizational and individual) will need to sign on to the Guiding Principles of the Code of Ethics when they apply for membership
• Current members will be asked to sign on, but not mandatory (members will be grandfathered in)
• The Ethics Committee will review the Reflective Ethical Assessments and use them to improve ethical practices amongst the membership
• Ethical practice capacity building could occur through: organizing workshops or roundtables, facilitating mentorship, or sharing of best practices and resources

Clarification: The Guiding Principles are covered in our membership and are referred to when deciding if an organization is eligible for membership in ACIC.
**Question:**
Hypothetically, what happens if an organization is in contravention of the COD? Then to be fair, all existing members should sign. It should be considered mandatory that existing member organizations should need to sign on as well.

**Response:**
We are open to ongoing feedback and new perspectives.

**Jennifer:** what we want to be ratified is the Code; what is being presented in terms of implementation is still open to discussion and feedback. How as a coalition do we want to move this forward? ACIC has done everything possible to gather feedback, all feedback that was received was reviewed and incorporated. The intent is that this is a living document that will be improved over the years. We are setting up a new committee and encourage anyone interested to be involved.

**Comment:**
In the World Cafe, a lot of what came up was integrity and solidarity- don't see where this is in the code; are there discussions in the COE?

**Response:**
Believe that this is seen throughout in partnerships, maintaining and strengthening, communications with public (North-South relations).

**Comment:**
Don't see wording that reflects a sense of solidarity, an approach to our work. This should be reflected in the Guiding Principles.

**Response:**
Jennifer reviewed process of how points were developed; 2.7 perhaps best reflects the idea of working in solidarity. Point to consider in terms of how the document may evolve.

Point raised that some organizations may have 2 Codes of Ethics to be guided by.

**Comment:**
Section 3.11c can be improved; leaves it very open. Could add that partners will follow non-violent methods of conflict resolution and management, implying a win-win situation. Leaving things too open means that they can be interpreted in a wide variety of ways (from experience working in a coalition).

Don't see much openness in committee to include changes in the document; Fallsbrook Centre would like to move that the document be adopted as a living, evolving document.

**Response:**
We are open to re-drafting, but are bound by the process of member notification, etc. The idea of this presentation is to outline what happened in the process of developing the current Code of Ethics, take comments, and review at a later date. What is up for discussion is the implementation process, how are we going to operationalize it. We want feedback on how to make this real.

Each year one third of ACIC organizational members will complete the Reflective Ethical Assessment (REA) where they self-assess how they are measuring up. The ethics Committee will review the REA and use them to improve ethical practices amongst the membership. Ethical practice capacity building could occur through processes such as roundtables facilitated by members and sharing of best practices.
Jessica:
Some organizations may already have stronger policies. For example, in reviewing the Code of Ethics, UNICEF might be able to share a best practice from their self-assessment process and share it with the membership, thus improving the capacity of other organizations. When AICC when through the process for CCIC, it put us in a position where we could reflect and take a step back in order to improve, 'rise up'.

Comment by Ifo:
There are variables to mess things up, for example if an organization is not doing things intentionally, or is in denial. Hope organizations are honest, look at steps being taken to improve the situation, not in a policing forum, hope that everyone is doing positive, honest work. But no way to ensure.
Response:
Members have ability to come forward to address concerns, come forth if there is a complaint concerning other organizations. An organization's Board of Directors would have to approve the assessment. One would think that an organization with an ethical Board of Directors would not conspire to deceive.

Question:
Would there be a process to amend the way implementation is carried out?
Response:
As any bylaw, this would need to come up at an AGM.

Comment by Ruth Schneider: CCIC ethics committee exists, is broad based; ACIC not alone on this.

Question from Carolyn VanGurp:
How is it anticipated to involve our partners in this as well? For example, we referred to the document when different views on images that were being used came up. I think this process is great. Possibilities exist when organizations are having a dialogue with partners on the Code of Ethics.
Response:
It is encouraged and welcomed that partners be involved in the code of conduct. Involve every facet of the organization that you can.

Question:
What has CCIC discovered in the development and implementation of their Code of Ethics?
Response from Gerry Barr:
1) When CCIC first developed their Code of Ethics, there were extensive discussions between CCIC and their partners, counterparts, and aggregated networks. Feedback was good, and generally the code is regarded as a very progressive expression of a solidarity sensibility. A vision that informed the development of the code was the inclusion of North-South discussions.
2) CCIC does find that they are always fussing with it. Disaggregating principles from practices, kinds of ways we look for compliance, and signals of compliance are always part of the process. We do find there are practice changes, tweaks and shifts that happen over time that are carried back to annual meetings for formalization and ratification.

Clarification: In the implementation of the Code of Ethics new members will have a one year grace period.

Adoption by members
- Request for motion by members to adopt the final draft of the Code of Ethics for use by ACIC
Ethics Committee
- Interested in joining the Ethics Committee?
- Contact Jennifer Sloot or Kathy Moulton

Jennifer:
Thank you to committeee members