

Ithaca

As you set out on your journey to Ithaca,
pray that the road is long,
full of adventure, full of knowledge,
The Lestrygonians and the Cyclops,
the angry Poseidon – do not fear them:
You will never find such as these on your path,
if your thoughts remain lofty, if a fine
emotion touches your spirit and your body.
The Lestrygonians and the Cyclops,
the fierce Poseidon you will never encounter,
if you do not carry them within your soul,
if your soul does not set them up before you.

Pray that the road is long,
That the summer mornings are many, when,
with such pleasure, with such joy
you will enter ports seen for the first time;
stop at Phoenician markets,
and purchase fine merchandise,
mother-of-pearl and coral, amber and ebony,
and sensual perfumes of all kinds,
as many sensual perfumes as you can;
visit many Egyptian cities,
to learn and learn from scholars.

Always keep Ithaca in your mind.
To arrive there is your ultimate goal.
But do not hurry the voyage at all.
It is better to let it last for many years;
and to anchor at the island when you are old,
rich with all you have gained on the way,
not expecting that Ithaca will offer you riches.
Ithaca has given you the beautiful voyage.
Without her you would have never set out on the
road.
She has nothing more to give you.

And if you find her poor, Ithaca has not deceived
you.
Wise as you have become, with so much
experience,
you must already have understood what Ithacas
mean.

Constantine P. Cavafy (1911)

The Beautiful Voyage

De-brief for the Sport Matters Group

September 2007

On the Sport Matters Group:

- Leaders with leaders (pizza and beer on Friday afternoons)
- Voluntary participation
- Peer level relationships
- Relational culture (see *Going Public* by Michael Gecan)

On the SMG:

- First applied to leadership support for each other (community of practice), late 90s - 2000
- Then the Group applied that leadership capital to collective efforts related to public policy capability (community of policy practitioners - VSI, CSP etc.), 2000 to present
- Now stepping into collective efforts related to innovation in and through sport (community of public innovators), 2007...

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What it isn't?

- No board
- No overhead
- No structure
- No contribution agreements
- No members
- No organizational trappings (nor some of the benefits)
- No representative framework

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What we do have?

- All sorts of contributions and contributors
- An agreed upon approach for doing shared work, together
- Ways to learn and to create change
- Ideas and solutions
- A hub for collective policy work and shared practices

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What we do have?

- The long view
- Networks and viral capacity
- Online community
- Pooled resources (time, \$, in kind, networks, trust, values)
- Fun

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What matters today?

- Four main efforts:
 - **Converting policy priorities** – front burner opportunities
 - **Building policy capacity** - policy capacity groups
 - **New territory for collaboration**– Innovation project coming on stream
 - **Shared leadership and capacity**– paying attention to how we work together

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Converting policy priorities:

- Context:
 - Canada in the world
 - Canada and our environment
 - Safe communities
 - ...
 - Entrenched minority politics
 - Prominence of the provinces
 - Mixed municipal signals:
 - fiscal barriers but sport policy progress

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Converting policy priorities:

- **Priorities:**
 - Budget 2008 – Political Strategy re: Summer Sport Excellence
 - Interdepartmental Initiative – Government Relations Strategy re: Sport and Physical Activity's broader contribution to public policy
 - Leveraging 2010 – Sector Strategy re: maximizing the opportunity and consolidating the gains; new / re-new BHD

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Building policy capacity:

- Convening Leaders (i.e. today)
- Knowledge Mobilization (i.e. email / website / one on one / activities)
- Policy Options (i.e. briefing notes / submissions / tracking)
- Platform for Cooperation (i.e. within sport and in relation to other sectors, such as voluntary sector)
- Hub for Policy Capacity Groups...of which there are many!

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New territory for collaboration and contribution: innovation project

- 4 year window for capacity building on innovation: *McConnell Foundation* support
- Sport leaders develop their capacity to innovate (an end) and effectively apply such innovations (the means) for broader societal purposes and their own direct corporate goals.
- Focus on social & economic innovation; technologies of cooperation
- Issues: applied dissemination, social venture practices, economic policy initiatives, social inclusion, productivity and the skills agenda, new economics etc

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Shared leadership and capacity

- **SMG method:**
 - Innovation unto itself
 - An ethic of contribution built on early leaders principle; open platform for engagement and participation
- **SMG capacity:**
 - Commitment
 - Time
 - Ideas and inputs
 - \$ and Value in Kind
 - Endorsing policy positions / letters of support
