

SSG

Solutions for a Better World

THE SUSTAINABILITY REPORT

N4
FREE

All the best
Jason in your
future endeavours!

Introducing
2 new minds:
welcome Rebecca
and Jeremy!

Melissa and
Geneva go on leave.
We hope to see you
again soon!

THE TEAM OF 2008

Victoria

Vancouver

Montreal

Tatamagouche

Illustrations by Steve Christian.

Steve is a designer by trade whose wit and skilled pen have also lent him to illustrate projects like this year's sustainability assessment. He is the sole proprietor of Second Nature Designs and has focused primarily on custom residential and commercial projects located on the Sunshine Coast of British Columbia. Steve enjoys the creative design process while helping to communicate, develop and implement shared ideas through drawing.

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that's just

swell

HOMES BUILT ON THE ENVIRONMENT

GROWING UP GREEN

But Now
I Can Afford
More!

HOME AT LAST

Modern
Homes
on a Large
Income

BEYOND GREEN GREENER THAN GREEN GREEN GREEN GREEN

(I think you get the idea)

DWELLING ON STUFF

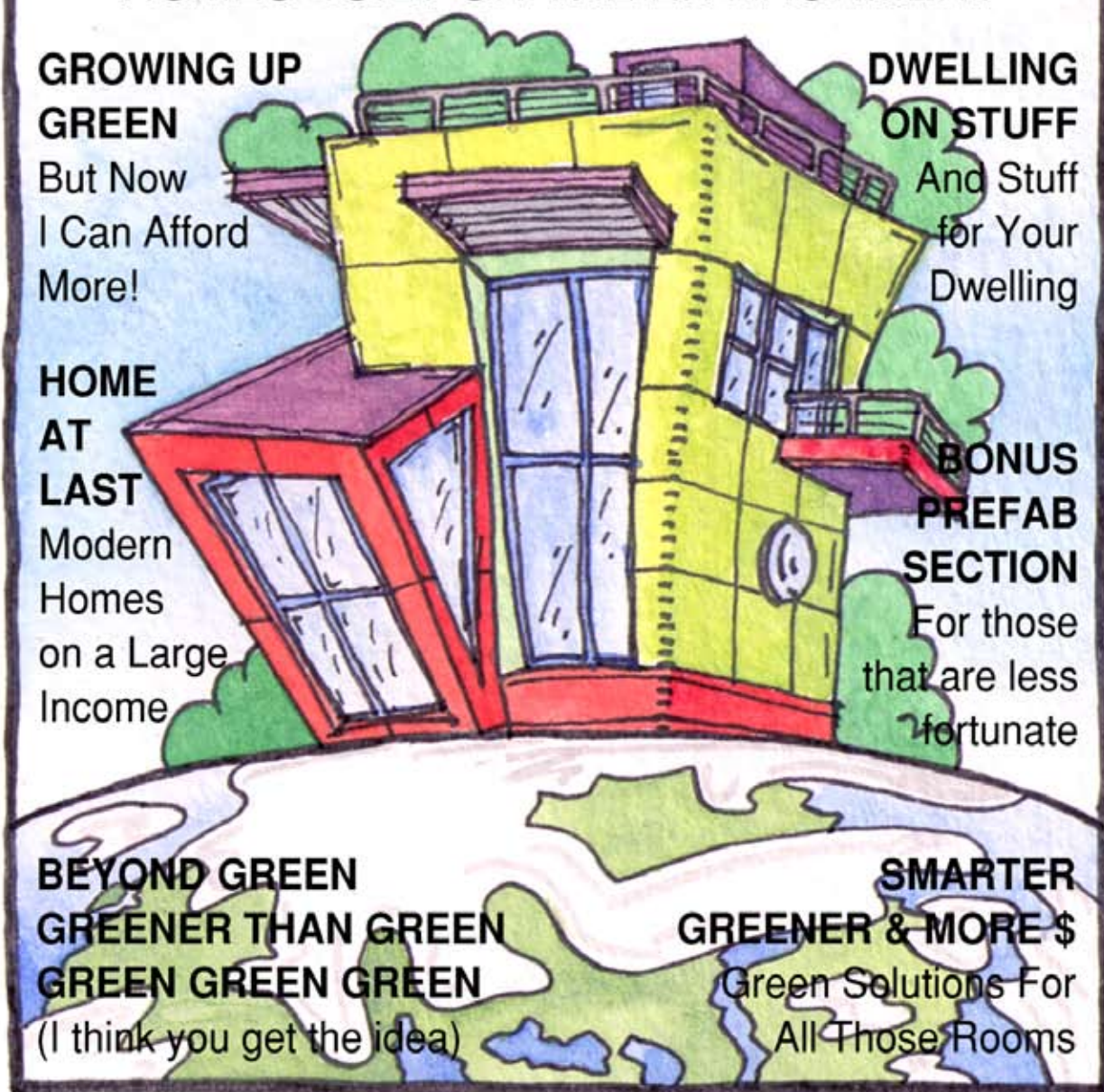
And Stuff
for Your
Dwelling

BONUS PREFAB SECTION

For those
that are less
fortunate

SMARTER GREENER & MORE \$

Green Solutions For
All Those Rooms



Executive Summary

Mission

Sustainability Solutions Group (SSG) is a worker co-operative that nurtures and embodies a holistic understanding of sustainability and works with clients and collaborators to meaningfully integrate social, ecological and economic practices in their organisations and work.

SSG believes that a transparent, comprehensive, integrated and far-sighted approach to planning and decision making is the best way to achieve its goals. By allowing SSG to reflect on its ecological, social and economical impacts, the annual sustainability assessment is an important tool that informs this process. Reporting on its activities and practices also allows SSG to share its successes and challenges with clients, partners, collaborators, and the broader community. A few highlights for the 2008 reporting period include:

- Full-time equivalents (FTE's) fell slightly from 3.97 in 2007 to 3.8 in 2008.
- Total revenues rose from \$272,041 in 2007 to \$274,296 in 2008.
- The number of projects involving SSG fell from 36 in 2007 to 26 in 2008, a decrease of over 25%.
- On a scale of one to ten, with ten being perfect, SSG worker members overall work-life balance increased from 5 in 2007 to 6.7 in 2008.
- On the same scale, overall happiness for SSG worker members also increased, going from 6.5 in 2007 to 7.9 in 2008.
- For the third year in a row, SSG's greenhouse gas emissions have been reduced; worker members traveled 17,100 km less in 2008 than in 2007 and tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalents per FTE's also decreased from 3.7 in 2007 to 3.3 in 2008.
- SSG did not meet their 10% donations target of total contract revenues to the Community Support Fund. Having achieved 4.05% in 2008, SSG plans on making the appropriate retroactive donations in 2009 so as to comply with its donations policy.

- Many changes took place in the lives of worker members: one founding worker member left SSG to pursue other endeavors, one benefited from SSG's new parental leave policy while two others have enrolled in European masters programs.
- Strategic directions established in 2007 that translated into action during 2008 include: worker members moving to salary pay, the completion of a human resources strategy and the establishment of clear communication channels with associate members. SSG now issues the Hot Dispatches to Associate Members (the Hot D.A.M. publication) on a quarterly basis as a way to provide organisational updates, feature ongoing projects and share ideas.
- As SSG continues to evolve, strategic directions for 2009 include: the establishment of a think tank, the creation of hubs (creative community workspaces) in the Victoria, Montreal and Vancouver areas and develop innovative relationships and strategies for greater impact in terms of financial contribution relating to SSG's donation policy.
- SSG has been initiating discussions on climate change in the cooperative sector. European cooperatives have articulated three steps: measure organisational emissions; engage membership and political advocacy. SSG members have been encouraging a similar approach in Canada. An initial meeting was held at the 2009 AGM of the Canadian Cooperative Association with representatives from the Cooperators, Vancity, Mountain Equipment Cooperative, Coop Atlantic, Federated Cooperative and a number of credit unions as a first step in developing an action plan.

At SSG, solutions for a better world start with us: Understanding the way we do business and the impacts we have in doing so is key to improving our performance in all aspects of our operations.

are you ...

MAD?

(Making A Difference?)

HARPER GOES GREEN!

The 50 Worst Things
That Get Our Goat

Stupid Solutions to
Serious Problems

Banking on a Smarter
Future Generation:
Is Carbon Sinking the Answer?

Plants Suck! (carbon that is)

Flying to Save the Planet:

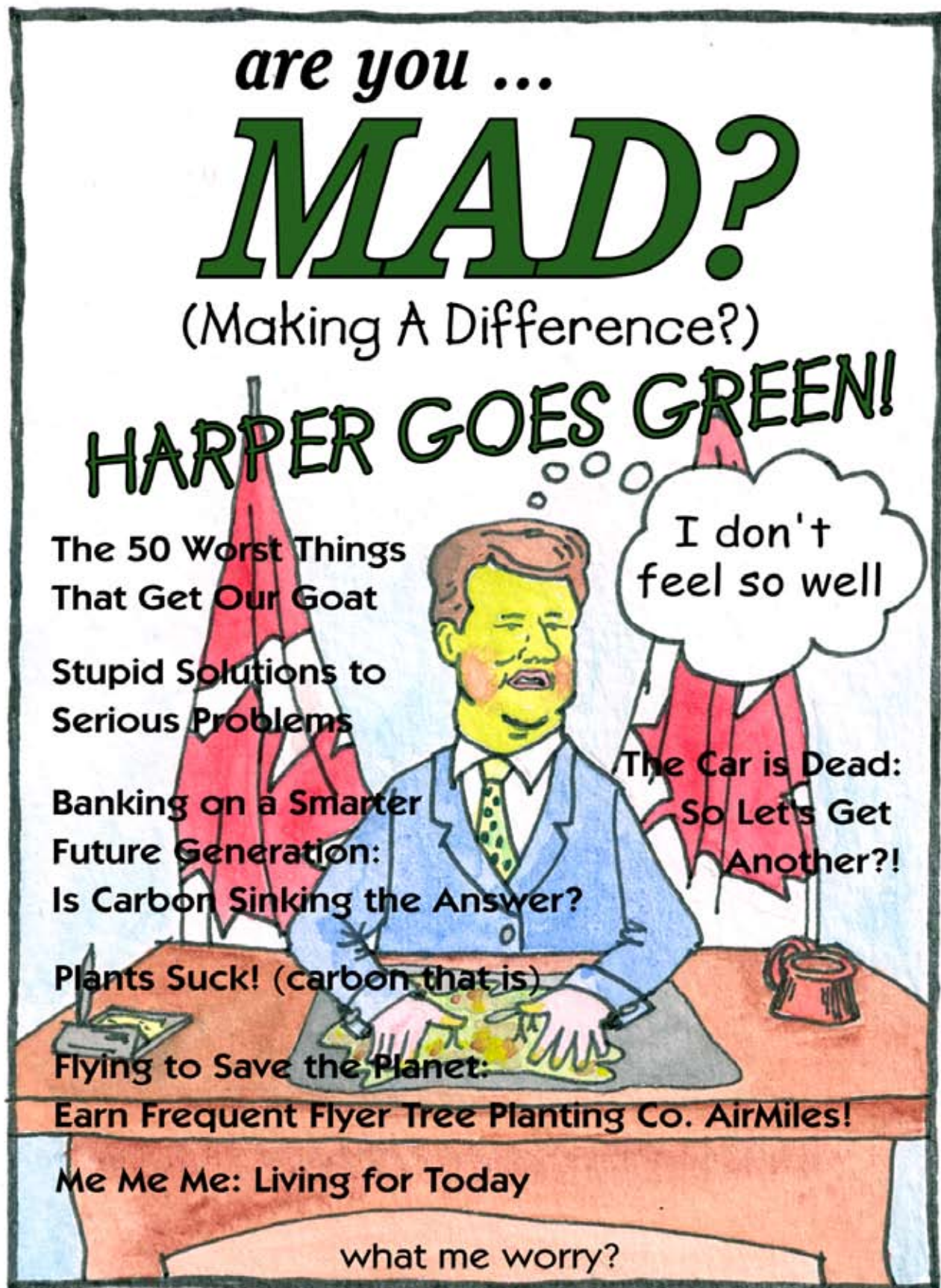
Earn Frequent Flyer Tree Planting Co. AirMiles!

Me Me Me: Living for Today

what me worry?

I don't
feel so well

The Car is Dead:
So Let's Get
Another?!



Methodology

“You can’t manage what you don’t measure.” -Peter Drucker

To assess progress towards its objectives, SSG reports on the ecological, social and economical dimensions of its operations. SSG considers these elements as the three interconnected pillars of sustainability; measuring and reporting on them enables SSG to evaluate, manage and improve its performance.

About this Report

This report covers the period from the 1st of January 2008 to the 31st of December 2008. When compared to previous reports, the 2008 report is meant to be a shorter, less intensive version of SSG’s annual sustainability assessment. This approach reflects SSG’s desire to allocate complete resources to this process every few years as opposed to every year. In doing so, SSG’s objective is to continue to report, on a yearly basis, the highlights of its operations while allowing its members to allocate more time and energy to consulting-related projects and contracts. In preparing for this “mini-assessment”, SSG worker members worked together to select the indicators included in this report.

Consequently, the 2008 report focuses largely on SSGs’ operations and its worker members, and puts less emphasis on clients and associate members. While you will find the specifics of this year’s omissions outlined below, it is important to point out that although SSG considers this sustainability assessment report to be a “scaled-down” version, it is no less valuable to SSG. As with previous assessments, SSG is committed to using these results to guide future decision-making and strategic planning.

Who’s Included

At the very beginning of 2008, one of the associate members took on close to a full-time workload with SSG; in September 2008, another associate member joined SSG and quickly became similarly involved with the co-op. Because the considerable contribution of these two associate members included a range of tasks as diverse and involved as that of SSG worker members, and out of the desire to best reflect the activities of the co-op, these two associate members are accounted, in this report,

as worker members. In this 2008 Sustainability Assessment, the term “worker member” therefore designates four worker members (Yuill Herbert, Lindsay Cole, Melissa Garcia-Lamarca, and Geneva Guerin) and the two associate members mentioned above (Jeremy Murphy and Rebecca Foon). The term “associate member” refers to the other associate members involved with SSG for the reporting period.

Assessment Framework and Indicators

In this fourth report, three quarters of the 2007 assessment framework categories were retained: Section three “Toward diversity, equity and justice” was not included. In contrast to previous assessments, no client and partner feedback surveys were distributed, and therefore, the two related indicators are excluded. Appendix I provides a list of all the indicators used by SSG in previous years for its sustainability reports.

Data

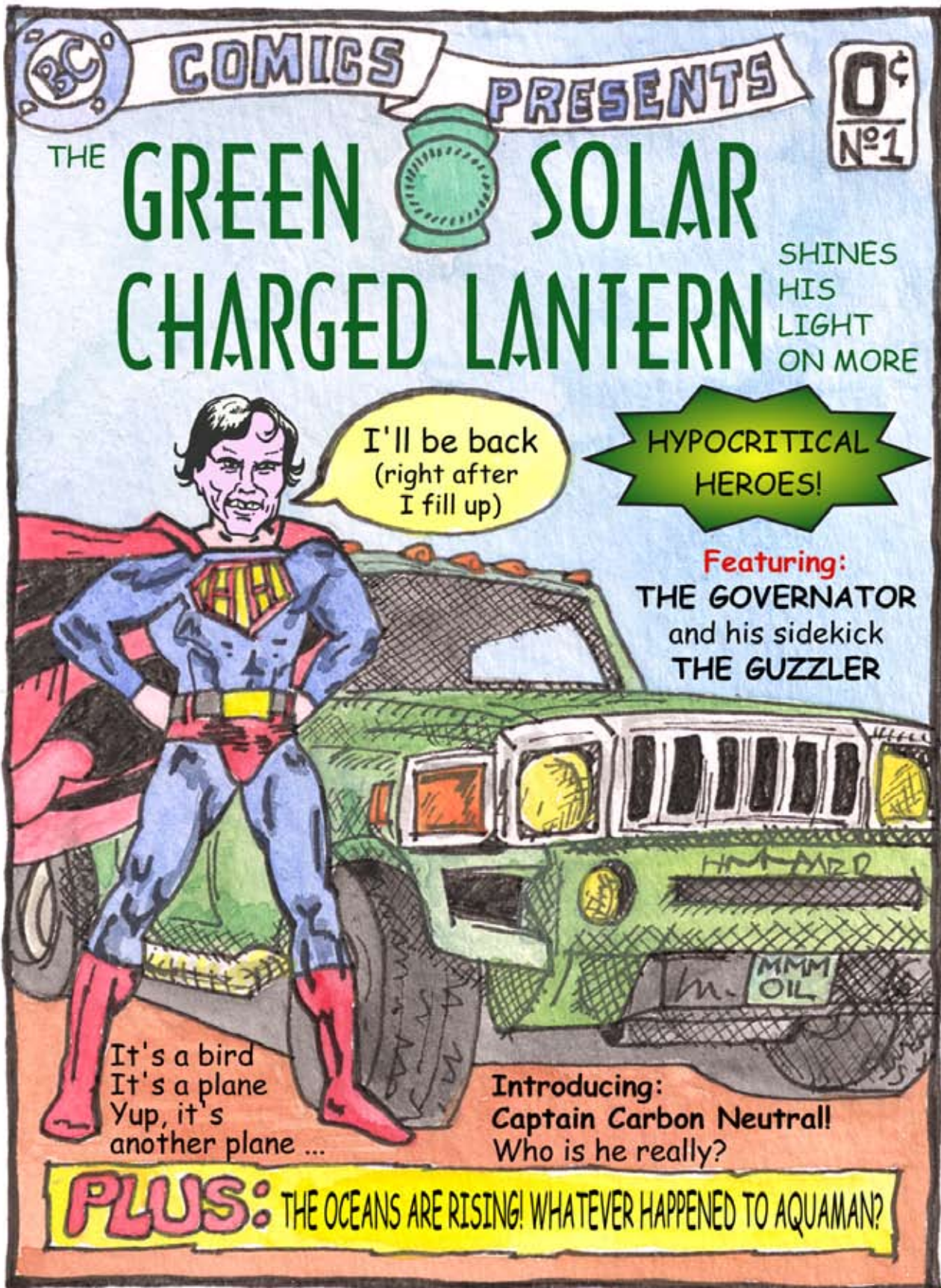
To obtain worker-member input, qualitative data for this report was collected from two on-line surveys. Quantitative data was obtained by reviewing internal records.

Sources of Error

Ongoing, uncontrollable and unquantifiable issues may include lack of consistency in how each worker member tracks data and data processing errors.

Hours Management System

In October 2008, SSG introduced a new payroll and hours management system. This new system has helped facilitate record keeping by, for example, further standardizing the time tracking process. To further increase its tracking efficiency, SSG is currently working towards integrating work related travel and greenhouse gas emissions into this customizable management tool.



COMICS

PRESENTS

0¢
No. 1

THE

GREEN SOLAR CHARGED LANTERN

SHINES
HIS
LIGHT
ON MORE

I'll be back
(right after
I fill up)

HYPOCRITICAL
HEROES!

Featuring:
THE GOVERNATOR
and his sidekick
THE GUZZLER

It's a bird
It's a plane
Yup, it's
another plane ...

Introducing:
Captain Carbon Neutrall
Who is he really?

PLUS: THE OCEANS ARE RISING! WHATEVER HAPPENED TO AQUAMAN?

Organisational Profile

Vision

SSG envisions a just, happy and healthy world where the well-being of one is connected to and reliant upon the well-being of all.

Mission

SSG is an innovative Canadian worker co-operative that nurtures and embodies a holistic understanding of sustainability and works with clients and collaborators to meaningfully integrate social, ecological and economic practices in their organisations and work.

SSG's work is guided by three elements:

- Ensuring work has integrity, is leading edge, and is of high quality;
- Building capacity within the organisations with which we work; and
- Creating tools and processes that are inclusive and innovative.

Service Offerings

Green and Sustainable Buildings: Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) consulting and project management, integrated design process (IDP) facilitation and training and operations planning.

Organisational Sustainability: Multistakeholder approaches, indicator development, measurement and assessment of impacts, strategy development and implementation planning, sustainability reporting, green and sustainable operations planning, policy development and creation of sustainability management systems.

Climate Change Research and Mitigation: Policy research, micro-generation, carbon offsetting, land use planning, organisational greenhouse gas (GHG) impacts, energy planning, and building related energy use.

Food Security: Policy development, land use planning, facilitation and networking, alternative models of land tenure, business planning and market development, indicator development and reporting on food and health issues.

Sustainable Communities: Integrated community sustainability planning (ICSP), community energy planning, co-op and social enterprise development, affordable housing research and development, community economic development, facilitation, research and policy development, and sustainability indicator development and reporting.

Incorporation Classification

SSG is federally incorporated as a worker's co-operative

Associations

Canadian Workers Co-operative Federation (CWCF)

British Columbia Co-operative Association

Canada Green Building Council

Climate Action Network (Can-net)

Organisation and Decision-Making

SSG has a flat, horizontal structure, meaning that all worker members earn the same salary and share the responsibility of running the co-op. Consensus based decision-making is used for governance and operations.

SSG Members' Values

- We want to make a difference.
- We believe that society needs better ways to do business.
- We want meaningful lives and work.
- We believe in fairness and respect to those present today and to future generations.
- We want to increase the sustainability of communities, to make the world more sustainable and equitable.
- We believe that we have a responsibility to do our very best.
- We want to have a positive impact, to address the root causes of societal problems.

WASTED: Who Really Has An Addiction?

DIME

Can You Spare One?

(no ... really ... I am hungry)



THE BEST PLACE ON EARTH
BC: Where Poverty Flourishes
CONDOS CONDOS EVERYWHERE
But Not a Place To Sleep

	2005	2006	2007	2008
Organisational Indicators				
1. Total number of projects	7	30	36	26
2. Number of clients	3	19	23	24
3. Number of associate members	0	3	8	5
4. Total full-time equivalents (FTE's)	0.3	2.72	2.97	3.8
Financial Indicators				
1. Total revenue	\$66,410.00	\$203,341.00	\$272,041.00	\$274,296.06
2. Total expenses	\$58,514.00	\$163,185.00	\$194,497.00	\$271,296.64
3. Net Income	-\$7,896.00	\$33,081.00	\$27,272.00	-\$7,836.90
4. Grants	\$26,225.00	\$45,705.00	\$5,579.00	\$10,344.00

Members

In the lives of most SSG worker members, 2008 was a year of change. While 2007 ended with 5 active worker members, 2008 began with 4 active worker members as one worker member left SSG to pursue other endeavors. Another worker member took parental leave from June to September while two others scaled back their work loads in the fall as they were each beginning masters programs in Europe. As mentioned previously in the Methodology Section, one associate member took on a full workload in January 2008, with another associate member doing so in the fall.

On average, SSG had 3.8 full-time equivalents (FTE's), a small decrease compared to 2007 (3.97 FTE's). The simultaneous scaling back of WM hours and the increase in hours for AM's partly explains why the number of FTE's essentially stayed the same.

Associate Members

SSG aims to be an inclusive organisation with impacts that reach beyond the capacity of our worker members. The associate member arrangement allows individuals to work with SSG on a part-time basis, and gives SSG a pool of colleagues that can be drawn upon with the ebb and flow of work. Associated Members are chosen for their skills, location, capacity, diversity and co-operative ethic.

5: # of Associate Members (AM's)

7664.25: hrs worked by all SSG members

370: hrs worked by AM's

4.8: % of hours contributed by AM's

Thoughts from an overseas worker member:
 "I still marvel at how excited I am about SSG, even from France. In late 2007, I decided that it was time for a little gear shifting in my life and I was keen to further develop my technical competencies in sustainable construction. After finding an aptly titled Masters in Architecture and Sustainable Development split between Switzerland and France, the wheels were set in motion for my professional (and personal) development break, which was to last seven months. The plan was to return and write my thesis in Montreal at the end of classes in December of 2008, then resume work part time with SSG while I wrote my thesis in the first half of 2009. As life tends to do, a change of plans got in the way. I decided to continue in France for my thesis research and writing while working part time in the newly developing sustainable construction industry. Though my intent is to return to Canada once my thesis has been successfully defended in the fall of 2009, there may also be interesting professional opportunities that involve knowledge transfer from what I have learned with SSG, over to France. As of yet, still unclear but the story is fast unraveling.

Throughout all of this, my ideas, needs and plans were always accepted as starting points for discussions with my SSG colleagues. SSG is relentlessly adapting to the needs of its members, even during times when they are very challenging. I am now on the appreciative end of this, having thrown a few curveballs that require some significant adapting to. Though it is not easy to adapt to changing member needs, it is what we do and I can't help but feel incredibly lucky and grateful to be part of such an open minded and nurturing organisation. Big and sincere thanks to all of my colleagues."

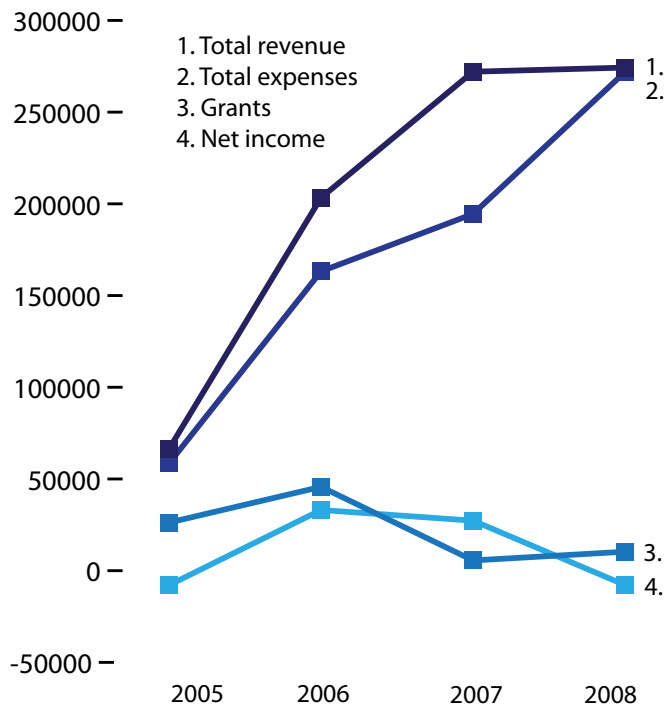


Chart 1: Financial indicators

Wa\$ted (Discovery Channel)

On behalf of Bioregional and working with the Global Footprint Network, SSG developed the methodology, completed the audits and reviewed the scripts for the first and second seasons of Wa\$ted (PlanetGreen, Discovery Channel). Here is the description of the show:

"Think that in order to go green, the changes to your lifestyle must be extreme? Think again! This eye-opening half-hour reality series makes shrinking your ecological footprint appealing and virtually effortless. What's an ecological footprint? It's a way of describing the scope of the damage that each household does to the planet, and energetic environmentalist Annabelle Gurwitch (from TBS's "Dinner and a Movie") and her charming conservationist co-host Holter Graham are out to shrink the ecological shoe size of every man, woman and child in America.

Featured households are incentivized with a challenge to adhere to simple earth-saving suggestions as strictly as possible for three weeks. In a follow-up meeting with Annabelle and Holter, the households (who range from festive frat boys to doting doggy daddies) are again audited and asked to review their successes and failures. Each household's 21 days of results are then tabulated into the estimated savings that going green for the entire year would bring, which is awarded as a cash prize."

Finances

Chart 1 shows SSG's financial indicators for 2008, including total revenue, total expenses, revenue generated from grants and net income (what remains after subtracting the costs—namely business depreciation, interest and taxes from SSG's revenues).

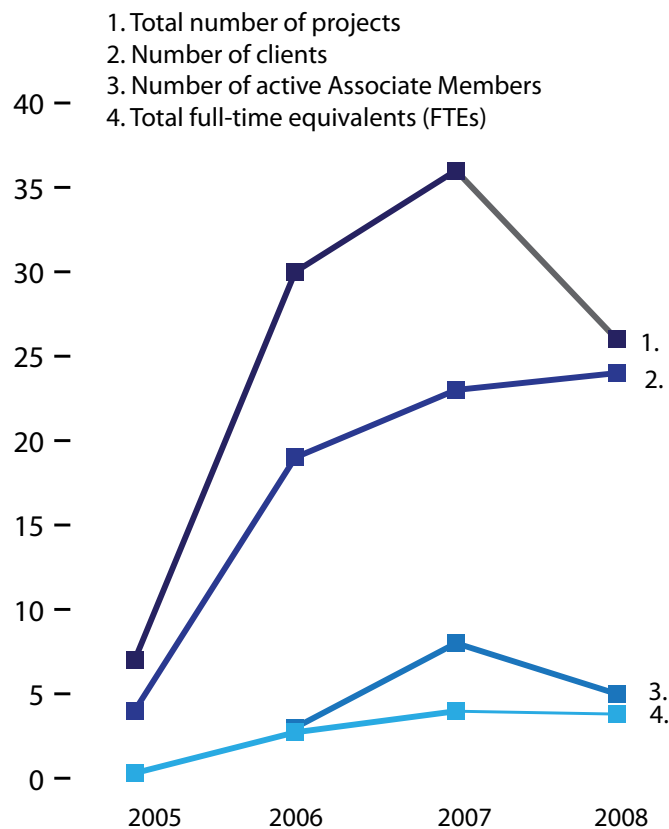


Chart 2: Organizational indicators

SSG Clients and Projects

The number of clients rose from 23 in 2007 to 24 in 2008. Billable contracts decreased by 27.8%, from 36 in 2007 to 26 in 2008. Organizational indicators are shown in Chart 2. To make its services available to a variety of organisations, SSG continued to offer sliding scale rates to clients in 2008.

Tales of a Commuter: My Red Tricycle!

MOTOR^{less}TREND

Riders' Choice:

The Red Ryder!

*not so fast &
not so furious*

*sweet tassles:
accessorise
your
ride*

Fast Helmets

MODELS RATED
and REVIEWED

*fixies are
back!*



One bike
Two bike

Red trike
Blue trike

**FREESTYLE - HALLWAY RACING - CIRCLES IN THE KITCHEN
and MUCH MUCH MORE!**

Section One: Toward co-operation, collaboration & community

SSG actively seeks opportunities to work with, support or inspire action and progress by other like-minded individuals and organisations. SSG therefore contributes its expertise to various collaborative projects and advocacy initiatives. SSG also supports grassroots community groups through reduced consulting rates and financial donations. Chart 3 summarizes SSG's internal and external collaboration. Each surveyed indicator is outlined in further detail below and the last sub-section provides discussion and analysis of section 1.

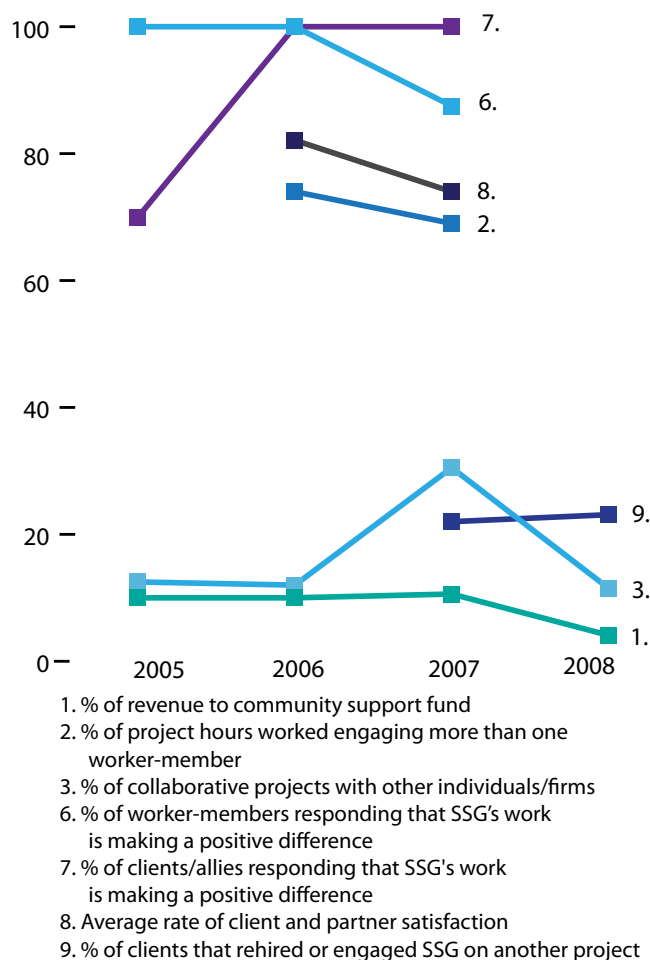
In order to be more strategic in its approach to donations, SSG has further developed its donation process: in 2008, one Worker Member for each quarter was responsible for selecting a donation theme to be submitted to other worker members for approval. This allows each member, on a rotational basis, to dedicate more time to researching donations opportunities that fit his or her personal interests. Because the discussion of how to best support community activism is ongoing, this new format provides a more formal opportunity for members to manifest their diverse views regarding donation strategies and priorities.

Community Support Fund

In 2008, SSG contributed \$11,100, or 4.05% of its total contract revenue to the Community Support Fund, consequently not achieving, for the first year, its 10% donations policy.

Donations were made only for the first two 2008 quarters due to limited cash-flow caused by the temporary shortage of full-time worker members. SSG does intend to make donations totaling the 2008 10% target and is currently in the process of developing a strategy to do so.

Chart 3: Toward co-operation, collaboration and community



9500: \$ donation contributed by Worker Members
1600: \$ donation by Associate Members

Chart 4: Co-operation, collaboration and community indicators

	2005	2006	2007	2008
1. % of dollar amount of revenue to community support fund	10%	10%	10.6%, \$28,335	4.05%, \$11,100
2. % of project hours worked engaging more than one worker-member	0	74%	69%	Internal collaboration on 15 projects, actual hours are N/A
3. % of collaborative projects with other individuals/firms	12.50%	12%	30.50%	11.54%
4. Number of research projects initiated	-	1	1	0
5. Number of SSG presentations per full-time equivalent	0.2	2.6	3	3.95
6. % of worker members responding that SSG's work is making a positive difference	100%	100%	87.5%	Not Surveyed
7. % of clients/allies responding that SSG's work is making a positive difference	70%	100%	100%	Not surveyed
8. Average rate of clients and partner satisfaction	-	82%	74%	Not surveyed

Grassroots Donations

SSG defines “grassroots organisations” as: connected to the community they are working with and/or in; participatory and have open decision-making; address roots causes of issues; and primarily volunteer-based organisations. SSG targets initiatives where the investments will have a noticeable impact on the group and its activities; and/or where synergies with other donors for larger investments can be pursued.

SSG Worker Members donated to:

1st Quarter (January to March):

“It’s said that the measure of a society is how it treats it’s most vulnerable...”

- Ontario Coalition Against Poverty
- Downtown Eastside Abilities Link Society
- Romero House
- Saint Chiara Community
- Centre des Travailleurs et Travailleuses Immigrants/Immigrant Workers Centre (CTI-IWC)

2nd Quarter (April to June):

“Organizations that offer services and/or skills training in conflict management, facilitation and resolution”

- Peacemakers Trust
- Tri-county Restorative Justice

SSG Associate Members donated to:

- Lifecycles
- Storytellers Foundation
- Gabriola Commons

Donation Teamwork: Tides Foundation

In 2007, SSG partnered with the Social Justice Fund of the Tides Foundation for some of its charitable donations, whereby the Tides Foundation provided matching funding to some of SSGs’ donations recipients. This relationship is currently on hold as the Tides Foundation is suffering from the economic crisis and is currently not issuing any new grants. SSG will work on developing a new relationship with Tides in the future to find innovative ways to leverage their donations for greater impact.

Projects engaging more than one SSG member

SSG worker members seek to work together on billable contracts; this allows them to enrich the quality of the services offered by SSG and results in a dynamic approach, increased learning, and fun. In 2008, 58% of projects engaged more than one worker member, the same percentage that was recorded in 2007.

Collaborative Work

Collaboration with other companies or organisations on given projects decreased from 30.5 % in 2007 to 11.54% in 2008. In 2008, SSG worked with ten contractors on a total of five projects.

SSG Presentations

SSG worker members gave the equivalent of 3.95 presentations per FTE, which corresponds to a 16.5% increase from 2007.

Presentations included:

- Sustainable Business Conference at Concordia University, where one member moderated a panel
- McGill Sustainable Business Conference
- Ontario Co-op Conference in Hamilton

Percentage of clients in the assessment year that have rehired or engaged SSG on another project

In 2008, 23.08% of clients rehired or engaged SSG on another project, which is a slight increase from 22% in 2007.

Discussion and analysis

When it comes to networking and sharing strengths, ideas and philosophy, SSG recognizes the value in conducting presentations; worker members therefore continuously make efforts to deliver an increasing number of presentations.

Because 2008 was a year of transition for SSG and its worker members, no new research projects were initiated. The number of internally collaborative projects remained the same from 2007 to 2008. A slight increase in the number of clients that rehired SSG in 2008 was also observed.

As in previous years, meeting the 10% donations policy continues to be a challenge for SSG. The co-op’s proactive approach to reach the 10% donation for 2008 will consist in retroactive allocations throughout 2009. SSG continues to work towards improving this process.

SSG has gained sufficient expertise and experience to be able to seek projects on our own. SSG’s efforts to partner have focused primarily in the area of community planning in which our success rate has been limited.

WIRED TO BE SAFE AND SOUND!

MiPod

★ BUILDER

STRAW BALE ULTIMATE GUIDE

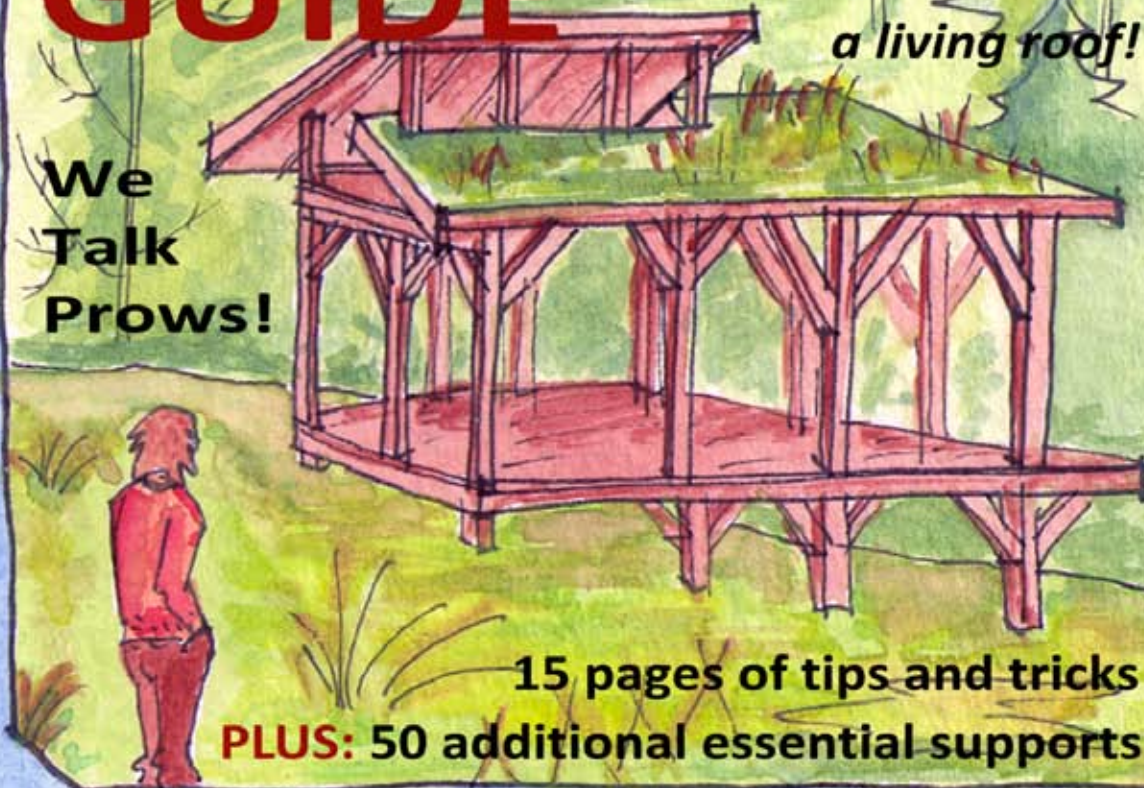
We
Talk
Prows!

TUTORIALS

- Build on a budget
- Geometry basics
- Decks & loads
- Recycled timbers

Special Features:

*Structural battens,
the Yuill tree &
a living roof!*



15 pages of tips and tricks

PLUS: 50 additional essential supports

**Still Under Construction
Stay Tuned!**

Section Two: Toward healthy workplace, healthy lives

	2005	2006	2007	2008
10. Percentage of hours dedicated to:				
- Training	-	1.4%	0.8%;	3.5%;
- Learning	-	7.4%	7.7%;	5.2%;
- Advocacy	-	-	0.8%;	0.3%;
- Overtime (over 40 hours per week)	-	-	2.7%;	2.4%;
- Volunteering	-	-	0%	0.2%
11. Work-personal life balance	55%	73.3%	5	6.7
12. Overall worker happiness, on a scale of 1 (poor) to 10 (excellent)	-	79.2%	6.5	7.9
13. Percent of workers with extended health benefits	0%	0%	0%	0%

SSGs' objective is to provide meaningful and stable employment for its members. While further developing the co-op and conducting contracts, SSG continues to work towards achieving balanced work loads. Indicators included in this section are discussed below.

Health Care Benefits

In 2008, as in previous years, SSG members were not covered by extended health care benefits. However, the interim health insurance policy that came into effect in January 2007 is still in effect; SSG therefore continues to provide a monthly contribution of 25\$ to their member's personal well-being fund.

Percentage of hours dedicated to training, learning, advocacy, overtime (over 40 hours per week) and volunteering

Billable hours decreased from 43% in 2007 to 35.4% in 2008. Inversely, non-billable hours increased from 57% in 2007 to 64.55% in 2008. SSG members dedicated 3.5% of their hours to training (understood as teaching one another), an increase from 0.8% in 2007. The percentage of hours dedicated to learning (understood as to include research) decreased from 7.7% in 2007 to 5.2% in 2008. Hours spent on advocacy also slightly decreased from 0.8% in 2007 to 0.3% in 2008 and so did overtime hours, which went from 2.7% in 2007 to 2.4% in 2008. Finally, hours spent volunteering increased from 0% in 2007 to 0.2% in 2008, an indication that SSG's approach to supporting worker member volunteering is beginning to improve. Chart 4 outlines SSG's allocations of hours.

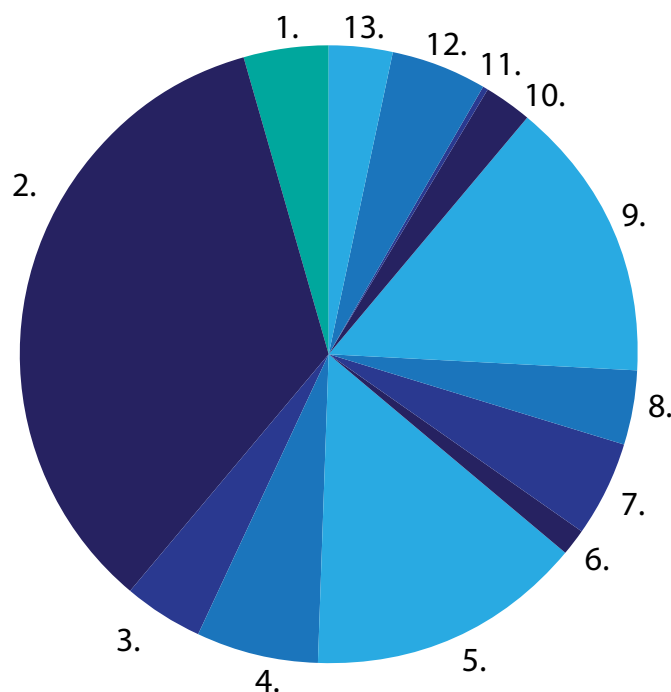


Chart 4: Allocation of hours

2577.65: total # of WM billable hours
 4716.6: total # of WM non-billable hours
 254.5: # of hours dedicated to training
 379.3: # of hours dedicated to learning
 18.25: # of hours dedicated to advocacy
 174.1: # of overtime hours
 12.5: # of hours dedicated to volunteering

1. Other 6. Presentations 11. Advocacy
 2. Billable 7. Finances 12. Learning
 3. Travel 8. Networking 13. Training
 4. Communications 9. Seeking work
 5. SSG Coordination 10. Overtime

Work-personal life balance

On a scale of 1 to 10, with one being poor and ten being perfect, SSG worker members rated their overall work-life balance at 6.7, a significant increase from 5 in 2007. Chart 5 (see below) illustrates the 2007 and 2008 scores obtained for each question.

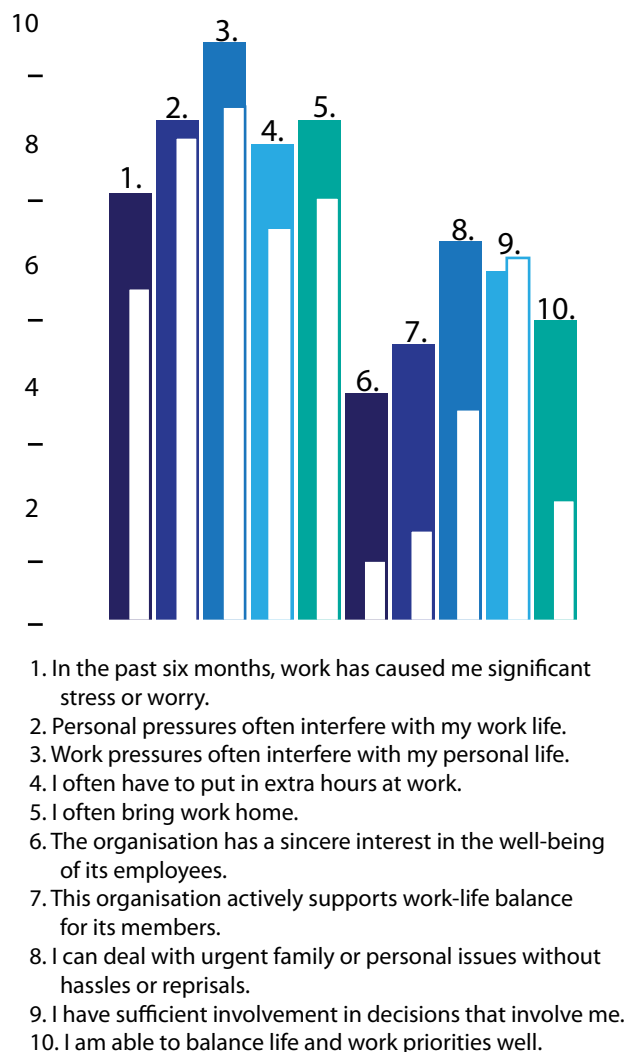


Chart 5: Work-personal life balance

Overall worker happiness

Again on a scale of 1 to 10, SSG worker member overall happiness rose from 6.5 in 2007 to 7.9 in 2008. Chart 6 compares the 2007 and 2008 results for each question.

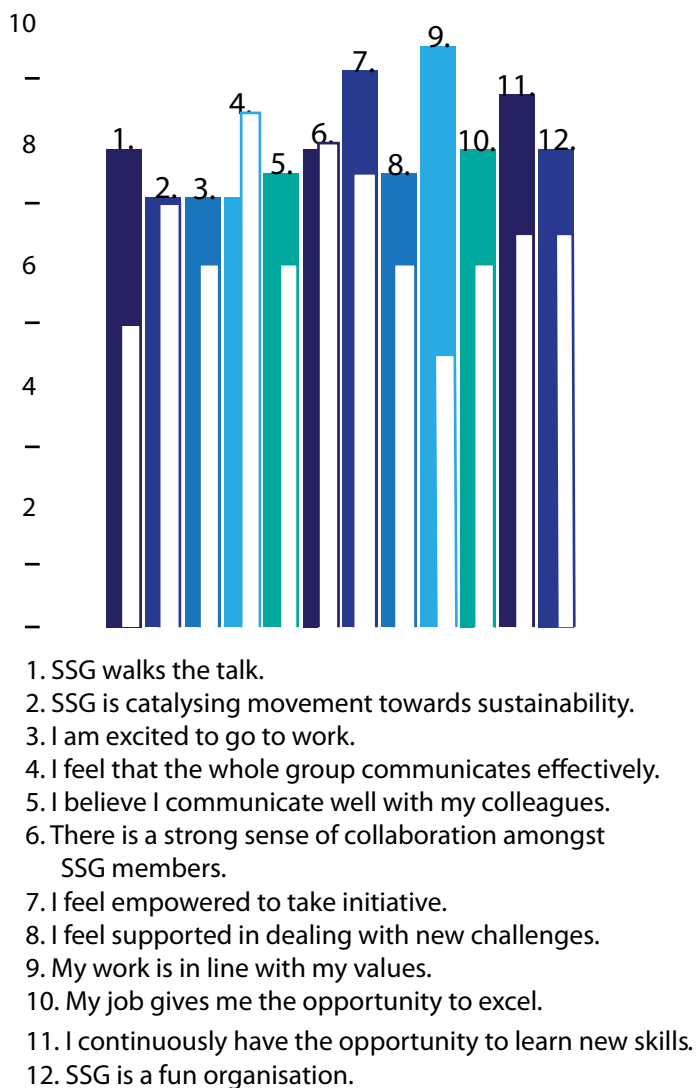


Chart 6: Overall worker happiness

SSG: Meaningful, Stable Employment

SSG is an ongoing experiment in realizing what it means to provide “meaningful, stable employment for our members.” Since we started the co-op all of our members have worked as contractors in order to allow for flexibility in work schedules and to help the co-op keep the costs and time required to deal with salary issues at a minimum. In 2008 one of our members decided to have a child, which threw our best laid plans for a bit of a loop. When people work as contractors, they don’t pay into employment insurance and are thus ineligible to claim EI - which is the source of funding for many new parents taking some leave to spend time with their babies. SSG responded to the issue of a member facing the potential for unpaid parental leave by creating a new policy: all members are eligible for taking 6 months of paid parental leave when having kids. Our first experiment with supporting parenthood was a success, with Lindsay taking 4 months of full-time leave and 4 months of half-time leave. SSG has since decided to put all members on salary so as to provide better support for our members, and a more stable work environment.

Discussion and analysis

The decrease in billable hours from 2007 is due to 2008 being a year of transition: as previously described, there was a temporary decrease in worker members capable of taking on the equivalent of a full-time workload. The general state of transition also explains the decrease in hours dedicated to advocacy and learning, as well as the increase in training hours.

On the other hand, the increase observed in the overall worker happiness and work-life balance indexes, and the slight decrease in overtime hours, is an indication that SSG's ongoing efforts to improve the well-being of its members are bearing fruit. SSG continues to work towards meeting the individual needs of its members and to be a supportive work environment.

Sharing Burdens and Benefits

A balanced job complex is a way of organising a workplace or group that is both directly democratic and also creates relative equal empowerment among all people involved. Specifically a balanced job complex is a collection of tasks within a given workplace that is balanced for its equity and empowerment implications against all other job complexes in that workplace. It was developed as an alternative to the corporate division of labor. In order for balanced job complexes to function there can be no owners or managers involved in the workplace, as all tasks are balanced for empowerment. Each worker must undertake some unpleasant disempowering task for some time each workday or each week. All workers also share the more pleasant and empowering tasks in the workplace. In this way workers share the burdens and benefits of work that impact each person's ability to participate in directly democratic decision making within the workplace.

Human Resources at SSG

The SSG Human Resources document is a living entity. It began as an attempt to initiate new members with our organization as well as to organize our at times disparate approaches. Its construction gave us the impetus to solidify our intentions, policies and internal systems, which often required some debate. It now covers the gamut, describing our balanced job complexes, diversity strategy, donations policy, pay equity and decision-making principles. More important than these details, however, is the content clarifying how SSG differs from conventional organizational structures. Our purpose, control structure and allocation of profit are strikingly different from those of traditional businesses. These elements infuse every aspect of our operations and business culture. We're used to operating in this way and sometimes it isn't until we task ourselves with updating a document like the HR strategy that we are consciously reminded of our most important base intentions.

Section Three: Toward diversity, equity, justice

	2005	2006	2007	2008
14. Ratio of female to male to other active worker members	3:2:0	2:2:0	3:2:0	Not Included
15. Percent of worker members self-identifying as a minority	0	0	0	Not Included
16. Ratio of female to male to other associate members	0	1:2:0	2:4:0	Not Included
17. Percent of associate members self-identifying as a minority	0	0	83.3% no: 16.7% don't know	Not Included

As explained in Methodology, section three indicators were not included to the 2008 SSG sustainability assessment.

Section Four: Toward ecological sustainability

SSG strives to nurture and embody sustainability in all aspects of its operations, which includes measuring and working towards reducing the co-ops ecological footprint. The trends inherent to the indicators included in this section are detailed in Chart 7, 8 and 9 and each indicator is discussed and analyzed below.

Total square meters of new LEED and green/sustainable building consulting projects

In an attempt to provide a measure of SSG's positive effect on the Canadian building industry, the co-op reports on the square meters involved in SSG's Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) related projects. In 2008, SSG almost doubled the value for this indicator from 2007.

	2005	2006	2007	2008
18. Total square metres of new LEED and green/sustainable building consulting projects		558,810 (total 05-06)	14,010	32,620
19. Total kilometres traveled, by mode				
1. Train		5,001	13,398	13,200
2. Airplane		55,594	44,208	38,369
3. Bus		1,569	21,225	10,391.50
4. Car		4,526	3,687	3699.26
5. Ferry		698	1,157	762.8
TOTAL	14,413	67,389	83,675	66,422.56
20. GHG travel emissions per FTE, in kilograms (kgs) of carbon equivalents (CO ₂ e)				
1. Train		53	91	66
2. Airplane		6,038	3,291	2998.8
3. Bus		27	178	107.2
4. Car		168	105	123.1
5. Ferry		36	38	7.5
TOTAL	9,759			
TOTAL per FTE	2,927	6321	3,703	3,302.6
21. Percentage of GHG emissions that have been carbon taxed	0%	0%	0%	0%

Chart 16, Indicator 22: Individual worker member ecological footprint in global hectares

Number of planets (2007) / hectares (2008) per person the earth can support	-	1.8	15.7
Melissa	-	4.8	18.84
Yuill	-	3.5	36.47
Geneva	-	3.8gha, 2.1 planet	9.32
Lindsay	-	2.7	17.43
Jeremy	-	-	18.63
Rebecca	-	-	17.4

Total kilometers traveled, by mode of transportation

In 2008, as in previous years travel related greenhouse gas emissions are the source of the co-op's most damaging ecological impacts. However, there is a positive trend since 2006; SSG worker members traveled over 66,400 km in 2008, a decrease from over 83, 500 km in 2007 and 67, 389 km in 2006. However, 35.5% of the 2008 kilometers were traveled on low carbon alternatives (i.e. by train or bus), a decrease from 41% in 2007.

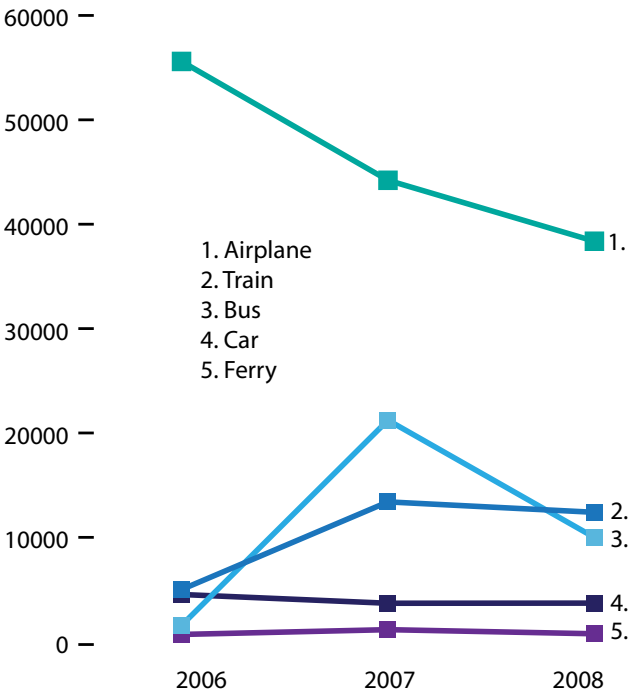


Chart 7: Total km traveled, by mode

Greenhouse gas emissions by mode of transportation

A total of 12.5 tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalents (CO2e) were produced in 2008, a decrease from the 14.5 tonnes reported in 2007, and 17.1 tonnes in 2006. Therefore, SSG emitted 3.3 tonnes of CO2e per full-time equivalent. The significant differences in this reporting period are a slight increase in car travel and a slight decrease in travel by bus, ferry, air and train.

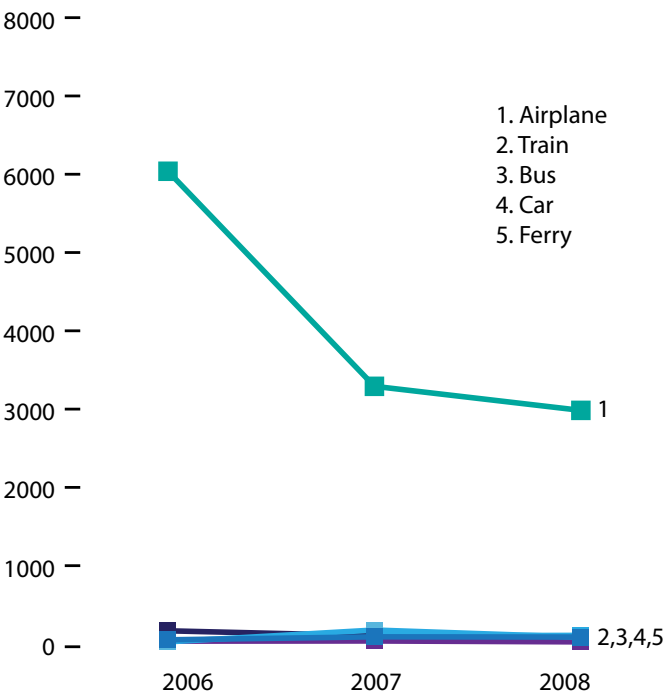


Chart 8: Total GHG emitted, by mode

Percentage of GHG emissions that have been carbon taxed

As in previous years, SSG has not carbon taxed its carbon emissions. SSG is still working to develop a carbon emissions strategy.

Worker members’ ecological footprint

This is the second year that SSG worker members report on their individual ecological footprint. It has become clear, in 2008, that there is room for improvement in terms of consistency. In preparing this assessment, there was some confusion as to which calculator was used in 2007 and disagreement as to what online calculator would be most appropriate to reflect the 2008 context of worker members scattered across Canada and Europe. After some debate, the 2008 report used the on-line calculator available from Redefining Progress at <http://www.myfootprint.org/>. In the future, SSG can improve the value of this indicator by consistently using the same on-line calculator.

For the reasons outlined above, these 2008 results cannot be compared accurately to the results from the 2007 reporting period. However, when taken on their own and as seen in Chart 9, they do provide an indication of the ecological footprints related to each worker member’s lifestyle and activities in 2008.

Discussion and analysis

Reducing the ecological footprint of its operations continues to be a priority for SSG. For a third year in a row, ghg emissions induced by work-related travel decreased. This positive trend is largely due to the conscious attempt made by SSG members to reduce-work related travel.

When it comes to their ecological footprints, SSG members are striving to walk the talk; they seek to remain aware of the impact of their lifestyles and will continue to report on their individual ecological footprint.

In 2008, SSG almost doubled the total square meters of new LEED and green/sustainable building consulting projects from 2007, which points to ongoing growth in activities related to green/sustainable building consultation services.

SSG is still working toward developing a system to carbon tax travel-related greenhouse gas emissions.



Chart 9: Ecological footprint diagram

Conclusions

Significant transitions occurred during SSG's fourth year of operations. By highlighting the various challenges and positive developments, this assessment process continues to serve as a valuable resource for SSG. Looking forward to 2009, SSG members are committed to work toward:

- Establishing a think tank;
- Creating hubs in the Victoria, Montreal and Vancouver areas;
- Developing innovative relationships and strategies for greater impact in terms of financial contribution relating to SSG's donation policy;
- Reducing work related travel and individual footprints;
- Initiating discussions on climate change in the cooperative sector

Thank you for reading SSG's fourth annual sustainability report! Questions, comments and ideas are most welcome; please share your feedback by writing to us at info@sustainabilitysolutions.ca

Appendix 1: Indicator Overview

Section 1: Toward cooperation, collaboration and community	2005	2006	2007	2008
1. % of dollar amount of revenue to community support fund	10%	10%	10.6%, \$28,335	4.05%, \$11,100
2. % of project hours worked engaging more than one worker-member	0	74%	69%	Internal collaboration on 15 projects, actual hours are N/A
3. % of collaborative projects with other individuals/firms	12.50%	12%	30.50%	11.54%
4. Number of research project initiated	-	1	1	0
5. Number of SSG presentations per full-time equivalent	0.2	2.6	3	3.95
6. % of worker members responding that SSG's work is making a positive difference	100%	100%	87.5%	Not Surveyed
7. % of clients/allies responding that SSG's work is making a positive difference	70%	100%	100%	Not surveyed
8. Average rate of clients and partner satisfaction	-	82.1%	7.4	Not surveyed
9. % of clients that rehired or engaged SSG on another project	-	-	22%	6 projects, 23.08%
Section two: Toward healthy workplace, healthy lives	2005	2006	2007	2008
10. Percentage of hours to training, learning, advocacy, overtime(over 40 hours per week), volunteering	-			3.5%;5.2%;0.3%; 2.4%; 0.2%
11. Work-personal life balance	55%	73.3%	5	6.7
12. Overall worker happiness, on a scale of 1(poor) to 10(excellent)	-	79.2%	6.5	7.9
13. Percent of workers with extended health benefits	0%	0%	0%	0%
Section three: Toward diversity, equity, justice	2005	2006	2007	2008
14. Ratio of female to male to other active worker members	3:2:0	2:2:0	3:2:0	Not Included
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Lindsay	-	2.7	17.43	
Jeremy	-	-	18.63	
Rebecca	-	-	17.4	
Organisational Indicators	2005	2006	2007	2008
1. Total numbers of project	7	30	36	26
2. Number of clients	3	19	23	24
3. Number of Associate Members	0	3	8	5
Total full-time equivalents (FTE's)	0.3	2.72	3.97	3.8
Financial Indicators	2005	2006	2007	2008
1. Total revenue				\$274,296.06
2. Total expenses				\$271,919.64

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