

THIR\$TY Community Outreach Report

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When I joined Headlines, over a year ago now, THIR\$TY was a vision on paper. I jumped headfirst into the project, very excited to be contributing my energies to this creative and innovative undertaking. I was strongly drawn to the (all too unique) opportunity to engage in social and environmental justice work, long the focus of my own energies, through the positive and powerful vehicle of cultural work.

Looking back, the project now complete, I feel prompted to begin this report by articulating what a privilege it has been to be involved in THIR\$TY. It has been a rich experience, full of learning, inspiring collaboration, and space for creativity. As the Community Outreach person for the project, I was presented with the opportunity to involve myself, simultaneously as an activist, community organizer, and project manager, in a dynamic initiative addressing issues I feel personally very strongly about. It left me exhausted, but inspired, with a stronger than ever commitment to water issues and critical/creative work of this kind.

The goal of this report is to document and evaluate the various non-performance elements of THIR\$TY that I was responsible for coordinating: post-performance discussion sessions, community events, displays, etc. As well, it seeks to summarize and reflect upon the level and nature of community involvement in the project.

I. The THIR\$TY Project

Vision and Goals for the project

THIR\$TY -- the play and the multi-faceted project surrounding it -- sought to "raise public awareness, and encourage critical discussion and active citizen engagement around water issues".

Believing this goal to be one most effectively tackled in collaboration with others in the community, THIR\$TY was very consciously designed to "pull together the efforts of a broad variety of groups focused on issues of water (drinking water quality, watershed protection, water and trade, etc.)". By inviting collaboration between groups with a diversity of focuses and experience, THIR\$TY was very consciously looking to: "foster a richly interdisciplinary exploration of the topic, support cross-sectoral network building in this issue area, and create a space in which critical education/discussion and creative action could be linked." It was our hope that THIR\$TY would present groups in the community with "unique and creative opportunities for public outreach, education, and organizing" in relation to their own, ongoing, work around water issues.*

Notwithstanding mistakes made and frustrations experienced (from which hindsight now allows us to distill important insights, learning, and questions for future project development), from my perspective as Outreach Coordinator, I feel that we were largely successful in pursuing the goals we articulated for the THIR\$TY project.

* All text in quotations taken from our original funding proposals.

Reactions to THIR\$TY indicate that it was largely effective at reaching its audiences - managing to raise critical flags around water issues, through a performance piece that people found artistically beautiful and moving. Many members of the public who had clearly thought little or never about water as an issue for critical concern walked away with new awareness and questions.

In terms of community involvement, a large number of groups contributed time and energy to this project (see "Community Involvement" matrix in the appendix section). New relationships were built (some of these groups never having collaborated with one another before) and existing relationships were strengthened. For many of the social and environmental justice activists and organizers who were involved, the opportunity to work in tandem with a theatre production focused on their key issues was a wonderful, and completely unique experience. In the current climate of so much bad news, many expressed experiencing THIR\$TY as a refreshing (and timely) infusion of creative energy to their work. In general, community partners and participants alike expressed a great deal of appreciation for Headlines, initiative in making a project like this happen.

A Description of the Project

The THIR\$TY performance, described in David's report, was the centrepiece around which a broad range of other project elements were developed: post-performance discussion sessions; a range of community events; visual displays and educational materials. The variety in these elements offered the public a range of possible avenues (in form and content) for interaction with the issues.

In this section, I describe these different project elements, and offer some thoughts of evaluation on each.

A note on evaluating THIR\$TY's impact...

A full assessment of the THIR\$TY project's effectiveness, as a vehicle for promoting education and action around critical water issues, will require a longer timeframe to gain. In the short term, looking at attendance figures for the performances and events allows us to measure how many people the project reached during its three week run. A logical next step will be to track how this participation does or does not translate into increased levels of awareness and involvement with water issues among those who attended / participated. The best mechanism for this longer-term evaluation will be to assess whether there is an increase in levels of participation with WaterWatch, and the water-related initiatives this coalition group spearheads (collectively and individually).

By way of initial indications, there were sign in books in the theatre lobby area, where people could sign up to receive more information from WaterWatch Vancouver (a local coalition of groups working on water issues) about water issues and actions. Over the run of the show, over 220 people signed on to this list. Some of these folks will respond to a call (coming soon) to attend a WaterWatch planning meeting. Others on the list will likely not attend meetings, or get involved as organizers, but may respond to calls for action that come to them by email through this list. (e.g. one such message, asking for letters to be written to the Bechtel corporation, went out about 10 days after the show closed, and appeared to have had a good response).

Project elements

Discussion sessions

Each of the THIR\$TY performances was followed by an “Act II” audience discussion. These hour-long sessions were designed to encourage a personal and collective engagement with the critical issues presented in the play. They were guided by a facilitator, and resourced by individuals knowledgeable on a range of different water issues (usually one person, at times two or three). (See appendix: full list of discussion session topics / resource people).

Over the run of THIR\$TY, 1, 706 people saw the performance. (discussed in Artistic Director's report) Though exact numbers were not counted, I would estimate that the proportion of audience members who stayed for the discussion session portion of the show averaged around 75%. While the numbers and dynamics varied from night to night, the level of participation in the dialogue was largely good. From the perspective of the facilitation team, the sessions definitely got better as the run progressed, and we were able to experiment with and share strategies for working with the play's content, and in the space itself (challenging acoustics, row seating, etc.).

Feedback on the discussion sessions was good, people responding positively to the opportunity these sessions presented for further engagement with the information and issues contained in the play. There was also an appreciation expressed of the high calibre of resource people who supported these sessions. The line-up of resource people represented a diverse cross-section of the water-involved community in Vancouver, and was complimented by various international water activists who contributed global perspectives to the mixture.

Generally, there was one resource person per show. In a few cases, however, there were two or three present at once. While this was very interesting in terms of hearing multiple perspectives and experiences, it notably took talk-time away from audience members, which compromised our principle goal of promoting an audience-driven discussion.

Decreased audience talk-time was also a challenge in the case of resource people who required translation. In these circumstances, however, the sense I got was that audience members felt it was worth it, given the unique experience and insights these individuals had to offer. In this case, too, I view the question of embracing the challenge of working with and across language (and so many other) barriers as relating clearly to questions of accessibility, participation and representation, which must be engaged within decision making for any project that (like this one) sets itself goals of encouraging diverse participation.

Special Events

During the three week run of THIR\$TY, there were a range of special events. (See appendix: List and descriptions of events) These were initiated and organized by a different community groups and individuals. (more on this process in community involvement section). Some were organized by a one or two individuals, while others had wonderfully organic journeys of creation, with folks organizing together with others they had not known before - linking through a shared interest in developing a certain type of event, or in focusing on a particular water issue or theme.

In evaluating the THIR\$TY community events, I feel we did a good job of creating a calendar of activities that catered to all ages, offered a variety of 'interest entry points', and appealed to different communities. This diversity translated to events drawing in notably different groups of people. I attended all the events and saw an almost entirely different group of people at each one.

There were notable strengths to the events that were co-sponsored by groups connected to different communities. These events offered interesting variety in their content, and generated very engaged discussion. They also forged new relationships, and strengthened existing ones, between different groups and community organizers and activists. e.g:

- **Water and Conflict panel:** brought together activists from the Israeli, Palestinian, Latino, and Filipino communities;
- **Indigenous Forum:** brought together Oscar Olivera (Bolivia), Tony Clarke (Polaris Institute) and First Nations peoples from the BC Interior and Scandinavia.
- **Protecting our Water:** brought together folks from environment, labour, social justice and academic sectors.

Given that organizing events is inevitably time-consuming, initiatives that merged our energies with others, like in the case of the Open the Borders! Conference, benefited both groups with relatively little extra effort on either side. (They held a water panel at their conference in which Oscar (from Bolivia) participated, and supplied resource people to a THIR\$TY discussion session out of their line-up of international participants).

In creating this calendar of events, there were critical moments of re-assessment along the way, where ideas were let go of (e.g. a participatory mural project, other workshop ideas, etc.) This was important in terms of being realistic about what we could do. The events that went ahead did so because the groups committed to them followed through.

Attendance at THIR\$TY special events:

Date/event	<i>Approximate numbers</i>
March 22: World Water Day Celebrations	60
March 23: False Creek Boat Tours	45
March 23: Family Water Day	100
March 24: Indigenous Water Forum	70 (panel); 40 (workshop)
March 25: The Journey: (music/slide show)	60
March 30: Water Wars of the World panel	40 (full room)
March 30: Water Storytelling for kids	50
April 7: Protecting our Water	30 (full room)

In most cases, I felt that the attendance at these events warranted the effort that went in to organizing them. At the same time, it was clear that in most cases organizers had hoped for higher attendance than we got (e.g. the final, action-focused event on April 7).

A few of the factors that I feel challenged us were:

- **Location of the Roundhouse:** This venue is not an easy one to draw non-Yaletown residents to. There are no buses to the area. In general many people struggled to find it (this indicates to me that they had never tried to get there before, nor really visited the area a lot).
- **Timing of the project:** (see full comments on timing on in community involvement section). There is no question that THIR\$TY fell at a time when people were busy reeling at, or

responding to, the Campbell cuts. Energy for coming out to get educated and active on water were limited when competing against all else that was going on.

- **Lack of detail in the key promotional tool:** Details for some of the events came together too late in the game, which meant that initial promotional materials (the 8-page program) were lacking in specific information, which may have sparked greater interest in attending.

Visual displays and information

The THIR\$TY lobby was decorated by a number of visual elements. The displays and materials in this area were an important element of the overall project. This collection of information and questions about water, expressed in a variety of different forms, offered a wonderful physical context with and in which audience members could engage before the show and during intermission.

Elements in the lobby area included:

Water poem/stories wall: a beautiful display of water stories from around the world was built around a capturing poem on water, which had been enlarged to fill the length of the display wall. The water stories were removable, allowing people to take them down to read.

Global water issues map: a world map, highlighting water realities and struggles around the world decorated a main lobby wall, offering an engaging and easy to read taste of just how global the issues raised in the play are.

'Remember the Water' wall: this community map invited people to add their own memories of, and connections to water.

Resource tables: There were three full tables of information on water issues. This included material provided by local groups working on water issues, and a (steadily replenished) series of articles I had gathered exploring the main water issues raised by the play. These materials were very popular, and went home with many who came to the play.

* CUPE provided cases of their Waterwatch 'public tap water' water bottles, which people were invited to take away with them.

Take Action!: In this area Water Declaration postcards (addressed to the federal government) could be signed and posted up. By the end of the three weeks, these covered an entire wall, spilling over onto the adjacent ones! These were collected after the project and sent en masse to the federal government.

Displays: Other items on display included photos, banners, text declarations, and computer images related to struggles in defense of water.

Videos: a TV and VCR were set up for viewing anytime, from a choice of 8 water videos.

free flow (adjacent Roundhouse exhibit on water)

We were extremely fortunate that Elizabeth, Roundhouse Arts Programmer, decided to make WATER the theme of her visual arts programming for the time period of THIR\$TY. It was a wonderful contribution to the overall THIR\$TY project that audiences had the opportunity to wander through this varied, engaging, and educational visual arts exhibit.

The theatre being adjacent to the Roundhouse exhibition hall meant that there was a seamless connection between the free flow exhibition and our own lobby area visual displays. Feedback from THIR\$TY audience members on the parallel nature of these two initiatives was very positive.

II. Community Involvement/Collaboration

As described above, THIR\$TY was very consciously designed to offer space and opportunity for water-involved groups within community to participate in visioning and creating aspects of the project. This approach is typical of Headlines, which focuses as an organization on offering support in a range of social and environmental issue areas, rather than engaging in ongoing advocacy in any one area in particular. Recognizing this reality, and given the goals we set for the project (e.g. promoting education and action on the issues), it follows logically that we viewed nurturing community involvement in THIR\$TY as one of the most important aspects to developing this project.

Water being an issue that cuts across many sectors and focus areas, the scope of the logical outreach for THIR\$TY was very broad. This reality was both rich and challenging from my perspective at Outreach Coordinator for the project. It was easy to feel there were always a hundred avenues I had not explored!

All too prone to being left feeling that I could have done more to generate even greater levels of community participation in THIR\$TY, it has been a great exercise for me to actually sit and create a list of all the people/organizations that were involved in the project, and the contributions they made. (See appendix for matrix of "community involvement") It is really quite inspiring and heartening to read through. And I do feel proud of the amount I was able to achieve in terms of outreach in relation to this project, especially given our limited staff size, and the resulting scope of each of our THIR\$TY-related job descriptions.

This long list of community involvement also speaks strongly to the fact that THIR\$TY was an appealingly unique and creative project; most folks (almost all, in fact) who were approached to get involved in aspects of THIR\$TY responded positively to doing so, the majority following through in some way on their interest (e.g. only one resource person I approached declined).

At the same time, it is important to read this same list critically, as it also serves to highlight where the shortcomings were in terms of outreach and involvement (e.g. reaching a diversity of communities). Recognizing these shortcomings opens up the possibility to ask questions about the reasons behind them, and analyze how they might have been better approached.

THIR\$TY Community Committee

Given that the success, continuity, and long-term value of the work we at Headlines do is (very appropriately) dependant on how well we build processes of relationship building and outreach into our projects, a key element to developing this project was the formation of the THIR\$TY Community Committee. Plans for this committee were built into the design of THIR\$TY from the very start, the idea being to bring together a group of individuals/ organizations who are working on water issues in Vancouver, from a diversity of angles. The intention was that this committee serve as a vehicle for establishing a mutually beneficial relationship between the water-active community and the project, with the collective knowledge and experience of these groups contributing to the development of the project, thus developing it in a way that would in turn prove useful to their ongoing work on the issues. In other words, the role of this body was to answer the central question: "How do we make THIR\$TY as effective and useful as possible to our

ongoing work around water issues?", and to translate the answer into concrete project elements (events, displays, etc).

□The THIR\$TY Committee was pulled together over the fall, and had its first meeting in mid-November. To offer a sense of how (as facilitator) I approached the tasks ahead of us as a committee, I share below a brief summary of the process steps we followed in our initial meetings:

Committee Process

** The goal of this process design was to begin our collaborative planning by first establishing a collective sense of our understanding of the issues, and the current point in time re: those issues.*

NAMING THE 'ISSUE' : collectivizing our understandings of the many different themes and issues that connect to water and the question of who owns / controls / makes decisions around it.

NAMING THE MOMENT: mapping out (on a timeline) where things are at currently with various water issues, as well as events relating to water, as a way of placing the project in context.

GOALS and CONCEPTS:

What are the opportunities THIR\$TY presents us with?

What would we like to see happen within the context of this project? (education / action / etc. goals)

CONCRETE IDEAS: How might this look? (Putting out concrete ideas, proposals)

This will include:

* Imagining form and content for discussion sessions (and brainstorming potential resource people for them)

* Visioning possible workshops, visual elements, etc.

* Outreach: who should be contacted and told about this as an invitation to participate in making it happen?

* Considering what we want folks to 'walk away' with... e.g. creating critical analysis and action oriented print materials?

ACTION PLANS: What needs to happen next? Who is able / willing to take on what?

How will we function as a Committee? When will we meet next? What outreach needs to happen before the next meeting? (questions, questions...)

Goals for the overall THIR\$TY project were articulated early on in the process, and revisited frequently as our process of visioning and planning events, displays, etc. progressed. I include these here, recognizing they provide good markers against which to evaluate where we were successful or not successful in reaching the goals set for THIR\$TY by the community who got involved.

Goals set by the THIR\$TY Committee for the project

- Create political awareness.
- Create political pressure.
- Creating opportunities for action.
- Building in mechanisms for continuity.
- Gathering/generating resources for use beyond the project.
- Opportunities for networking/linking action.
- Encourage a connection of the local/personal to the global/bigger picture (seeing ourselves as part of the same story...)
- Making information available / creating opportunities for knowledge sharing.
- Engage the media.
- BE the media!
- Outreach... creating space and entry points into the project for a diversity of folks....
- Making the project accessible.
- Inviting a diversity of people into dialogue with one another (designing events/discussions with this goal in mind)
- Outreach to schools.

Once our collective foundations had been laid, and questions about goals, audience, accessibility, outreach etc. raised and tackled, if not fully answered, later meetings of the Committee focused on translating all of this into concrete plans. From this point on, the process decentralized, as folks moved into their individual and (smaller-group) collaborative efforts to get events, visual displays, etc. resources, organized and created. This shift away from full-group meetings was a necessary response to people's limited time availability for meetings, and the need to move from visioning into more focused planning of events, etc. With this decentralization, ongoing decisions related to the shape of the overall project fell to me in my role as coordinator.

In this role, I played a logistical/organizing function (to varying degrees) in all of the non-performance elements of THIR\$TY: offering outreach and organizing ideas/support as needed, coordinating logistics (room bookings and equipment needs) with the Roundhouse, allocating budget resources to different initiatives, and generally hounding folks to meet organizing deadlines, so that events promotion could be done properly.

I question how it might have been possible to maintain a greater level of direct connection between committee members, rather than what happened, which was that the majority of information (and to a large degree, process too) began to flow through me. This was interesting, and wonderful from a relationship perspective, but was also very time consuming. There are ways in which I feel I could address this better in future, with more internal and external clarification around my role.

Among my lessons learned is that the initial meeting of the Committee should have happened at least a month earlier (in mid-October), to allow time for us to collectively articulate a vision for the project before Xmas break hit (for the kind of process we were following to happen democratically, and with the necessary depth of analysis, a good 2-3 meetings were required). This would have allowed for a clear picture to be formed of exactly what the opportunities for involvement with the project were, in time for this to be outreached broadly BEFORE Xmas, so folks could have had that time to think / plan the contributions they wanted to make (workshops, displays, etc). Only getting that 'call out' happening in the new year meant we were rushed.

In general, forming and working with a THIR\$TY Committee was an excellent idea. It provided the foundation for a relationship between the community and the project, while managing to not close the process at all (many groups and individuals who got involved did not participate in, or even know of, the work of the committee). This group of individuals did an excellent job of articulating a set of goals and a vision for the non-performance elements of the project that responded to the hopes and desires of those working actively on the issues. This work answered questions that were key to the success of the project.

The biggest challenge I experienced in the process of working with this committee related to time: scheduling and later, deadlines. Attendance at meetings was often sporadic, and scheduling them a major feat of logistics! This was not surprising, given the number of things to which the individuals who made up the committee contribute their time. Well understanding this, any frustration I may have experienced was also further put in context by a clear recognition of the pressures that the global and provincial events of this past year have put on folks active in social and environmental justice work.

Timing of the project

In general, we experienced both good and bad luck with the timing of THIR\$TY in terms of where public awareness and activist energies were at with regard to water issues. In the preparatory phase of the project, there is no doubt that we benefited from the energy and awareness mobilized through the fight against GVRD plans to privatize the Seymour filtration plant (April-June, 2001). Most notably, the water privatization issue rearing up so close to home, and the strong and cross-sectoral public outcry it caused, helped to put water privatization on the issue radar --for the general public, for groups who's work logically connected to the issue from various angles (from environmental protection to trade issues), and for potential financial supporters of the project.

The water fight also facilitated some key relationship building (namely the consolidation of the Vancouver WaterWatch Coalition) between groups who, on the heels of it, threw their individual and collective support behind the THIR\$TY project in a variety of ways. From another angle, the local GVRD struggle highlighted parallels between our need to fight against water privatization here, and the same fight undertaken by the people of Cochabamba, Bolivia. I believe that in some cases this helped potential supporters to understand better Headlines' decision to highlight this Canada-Bolivia connection within the THIR\$TY piece itself.

The GVRD victory (we stopped the privatization!) was followed closely by a huge international conference at UBC on water, hosted by the Council of Canadians. It was on the heels of these events that we secured the last of the money needed to make THIR\$TY a reality, and began the

process of getting folks involved with the THIR\$TY project (started pulling together the THIR\$TY committee). Like the GVRD fight, this well-attended conference contributed to heightening local public awareness around the issues, and offered us (Headlines) great opportunities for outreach.

And then... the BC Liberals came to power. Over the following months, as the Liberals began their systematic dismantling of the province, almost every sector was hit with cuts **except water** (likely due to the prominence of water quality issues raised by Walkerton, etc.). The need to respond to the cuts, and other changes, were soon coupled with the events of September 11th hit, which called, in a most immediate (and emotionally and physically overwhelming) way, upon local activist energies.

In my role as outreach coordinator, I (unsurprisingly) saw the time and energy that others had to offer to THIR\$TY steadily decline over the months leading up to the project, as the Liberal cuts picked up strength and the need to fight in so many areas at once logically drew people's immediate attention.

What was frustrating was the knowledge that the water issues being raised by THIR\$TY became no less relevant in a real sense, only in a relative one. The media perception that water 'had not been touched' was not accurate, our water clearly even more at risk of privatization than ever as a result of many aspects of the liberal agenda (e.g. aggressive promotion of public-private partnerships for infrastructure projects). But in the moment, other things definitely eclipsed it.

Given all this, I believe it is a testament to the uniqueness of the project that we achieved the level of success we did with regards to community involvement and attendance. And it is, in my opinion, a testament as well to the level of commitment and cooperation of local groups working on water that, in the midst of so much else on their plates, they did not back down on their commitments to the water issue, or the THIR\$TY project.

Relationship to Bolivia

A very special aspect to this project was the relationship we at Headlines developed with the 'Coordinadora' (Alliance in Defense of Water and Life) office in Cochabamba, Bolivia. Beyond their work and struggle offering so much inspiration generally to the theatre piece and overall project, the individuals in this office generously and enthusiastically supported this project in a very real way, all the way through. Marcela sent us information, photos, music, videos. Marcela and Oscar answered countless questions over email. Gabriel listened to the script at the Vancouver water conference and offered feedback/fact verification. And finally, Oscar traveled to Vancouver for the first week of THIR\$TY, acting as a resource person to post-performance discussion sessions, attending and presenting at events, speaking to media.

For me personally, Oscar's presence during the opening week of the show was a huge gift - quickly, despite my extremely tired state, all the weeks and months of crazy work made sense again. For many beyond just myself, Oscar's presence and words reinforced, and offered rich insight and perspective to, the connection THIR\$TY was making between the water situation in Canada and global water realities elsewhere around the world. Oscar is an inspiringly wise, committed and humble individual. I, and many others learned a tremendous amount through his in-person participation in the project.

It was a difficult time for Oscar to be away from Bolivia. His decision to come and support the project was clearly a very carefully weighed out one. He was very touched by what he witnessed, and the choice Headlines made to develop the connections we did to Bolivia. The struggle there is not over, and this project was taken as a strong (and excitingly unique) sign of solidarity by he and his colleagues.

Now they are just waiting to see the show translated into Spanish and toured to South America!!

III. Outreaching and Promoting THIR\$TY to the Community

A key goal of THIR\$TY, articulated by both the Headlines staff and the Community Committee, was to draw as broad and diverse an audience to the show (and thus the issues) as possible. Rich and (importantly) challenging conversations were had, in both settings, related to various aspects to tackling this goal (e.g. accessibility, messaging, representation, etc.)

While I will not get into the content of the Committee's discussions at length, I feel it is important to at least identify some of the points raised, these complex, but key questions all too often backgrounded. It was clear that valuable and important learning that went on for many, likely all of us, when these questions were raised in the context of our Committee meetings.

In particular, the group was challenged to grapple on a deeper level with the question of 'outreach'. Not only "Who are we looking to outreach to? Why? and How?", but even more fundamentally: "Does this project speak to and value/validate the experiences and concerns of this community with regard to water, as articulated by them?" For example, the question was raised: "Is there space to link water privatization to colonialism?" "To use that term, and raise that debate?". Interest was expressed by many Committee members in better understanding the content of the play (as the central piece around which we were building programming and encouraging involvement). The question was asked as to whether certain communities we were talking about outreaching to would see themselves represented in the play or not (i.e. be able to find some appropriate entry points for relating to / seeing themselves within the piece).

As these questions were raised, we were challenged to address them as a committee. Speaking personally, these conversations, and others like them that happened in the process of THIR\$TY were among the most valuable learning experiences of the whole journey for me. They reflect the richness of embracing the challenges of working in collaboration, and across difference.

Accessibility

In terms of other accessibility issues, THIR\$TY had both strengths and weaknesses.

In an effort to make events more accessible to parents, especially single parents, free child care was offered for all non-child-focused events. This service was only utilized by a few individuals, but was an important one to offer regardless. This was budgeted in from the start, the decision to do so well supported by the Committee.

All of the THIR\$TY special events were free or by donation, the goal being to make them financially accessible to any and all wanting to attend. While there are other financial issues related to attending (e.g. lack of public transport in the Roundhouse area), this was, again, an important decision to make. This was made possible by funds being allocated in the main THIR\$TY budget toward these events (i.e. money was fundraised to cover the costs).

Accessibility questions related to the ticket price for the show itself were raised by Committee members from the start. Discussion of this issue among the Headlines staff (who were also engaging the question already) led to the designation of Tuesdays as 2-for-1. There was discussion around a pay-what-you-can option (for the preview), which would have increased the accessibility for those for whom \$8 was still prohibitively expensive. For a number of reasons, the decision was not go this route for THIR\$TY; still the idea/question is important to revisit for every project, ideally at the initial budget creation phase (as this was a constraint in looking at making changes later on). It would be good to ask for some feedback from funders on this issue of ticket price and accessibility, to see what their opinions are around reducing our projected ticket revenues line to a lower percentage of the overall budget.

Complimentary tickets

There were a good number of complimentary tickets given away over the course of the show, some of these responding to the question of limited finances. As well, there were 2-for-1 promotions offered to groups later in the run, etc. (described in Publicity report). We decided against repeating the form of ticket give-away done for Corpoptate U, feeling it had not been that successful in reaching people (many tickets were not used). While there is a clear will within the Headlines team to offer tickets in this kind of way to the community, an effective strategy for doing so is still not clear. This too, is a question to carry forward with us.

Diversity in relationship building

In terms of diversity and outreach, as mentioned earlier, there were recognizable successes. In particular, some good relationship building happened between collaborating groups and communities, predominantly through the process of groups organizing and hosting events together. Likewise, the same cross-community relationship building happened in the context of these events, organizers drawing participants from different communities.

At the same time, there is no doubt that more outreach could have been done to other communities, many of whom have very logical and identifiable connections to water issues. I was well aware during THIR\$TY that there is still (always) lots of work to be done on the outreach- and relationship building-fronts for Headlines (and many others involved in the broader project too).

I was reminded yet again of the importance of allowing adequate time for proper relationship building, well in advance of the planning process getting under way, so that people can be involved from the onset in creating a vision in which they represent their own perspectives. Time becomes the main factor in pursuing this (necessarily long-term) goal. Effective outreach requires prioritization and an investment of time (as well as many other elements of structure and organizational culture).

Prior to embarking on THIR\$TY, Headlines moved in a positive direction with regards to its commitment to community relationship building, shifting the Community Outreach from a contract position to full-time permanent (taking the Publicist position in the opposite direction). I believe the benefits of this were evidenced in THIR\$TY.

The question of translation

This discussion point was raised early on by the committee -- one of so many related to accessibility and the goal of reaching other communities. Plans were discussed to pursue translating some materials into other languages. This was, however, largely let go of when our workloads did not at all allow for it. There was also debate over the merits of translating materials for a show being performed in English. These questions should be revisited in future (in the specific context of each project), as translation is one critical element in diversifying outreach.

A few limited efforts were made:

- One spanish flyer was created, and distributed at a number of events/venues.
- I spoke about THIR\$TY on spanish language radio on three occasions, and at one Latino community meeting.
- Notices about THIR\$TY and some events were translated into Mandarin by SPEC, posted to their website and sent out to various Mandarin-speaking media and lists.

Events Promotion

In addition to the already huge task of promoting the THIR\$TY show, Irwin (our Communications Coordinator) also poured lots of energy into promoting THIR\$TY's program of special events. While there is always a logical degree of cross-over between Outreach and Publicity, the multiple components of the THIR\$TY project dictated that there was a closer collaboration required between Irwin and myself. As an added bonus, it was undeniably beneficial to me that Irwin, though charged predominantly with the mainstream publicity work, had a very strong background in grassroots events development and promotion. He was an excellent sounding board and support for me throughout the process.

Print materials

In large part, events were promoted through the creation and distribution of flyers for each event. In the case of the Sacred Living Water show, we also created a poster and paid to have it distributed. Email notices were circulated to local lists in advance of each individual event. (staggered throughout the run)

At each performance of THIR\$TY, we made a request to audience members to assist us in promoting the show and getting folks from all walks out to see it. Flyers and bookmarks were made available to people as they exited the theatre, to use in spreading the word. Flyers for upcoming events were also made available at this time. Part way into the run, I also began inserting a flyer for the next event happening into the program for the show.

In advance of the final, action-focused community event on April 7, I inputted all the email addresses on the Waterwatch signup sheets, and emailed a notice out about the event, unfortunately a little too close to the date I fear, but some folks got it in time to attend.

Print materials sendout

A variety of materials were mailed out to community groups, in both the social justice and environmental sectors. (detailed in Publicity report).

Outreach at special events:

In addition to these mailouts, we did the following outreach at events:

Jan. 26	Think City event at Roundhouse (flyers).
Feb. 14	Latino Coalition meeting (flyers, in spanish).
Feb. 16	BC Regional Meeting of the Council of Canadians (all chapter heads present given flyers to pass on to members)
Feb. 16-17	CoDev Film Festival (info. table)
Feb. 21	SFU public water lecture (flyers).
March 10	Hans Schrier's talk on water at UBC (flyers).
March 15	BCTF Retired Teachers Association (1200 flyers inserted into newsletter)
March 17	BC Teachers Federation AGM. (info. table)
March 18	Hydro anti-privatization event (info. table).
March 22	UNESCO Conference (flyers into conference packages).
March 22	Open the Borders! (flyers into conference packages).
March 12	CoC event: Maude Barlow on Health Care. (600 8-page programs)
March 12	David Schindler water lecture at the Roundhouse (600 8-page programs).
March 21	SFU public water lecture (flyers).
March 23	Vancouver anti-Campbell rally (2,000 flyers).
March 27	Think City's Jack Layton event (info. table)
April 2	GVRD public meeting on water quality (special flyer design: flyer + article)

* In the case of many of the later dates, THIR\$TY flyers were photocopied back to back with a notice about whatever the next special event was.

There were ways in which we did not maximize on using our major project supporters as outreach vehicles. For example, while we had discussed CUPE doing a mail out to all their members, this did not happen. Identifying in hindsight a number of ways in which we did not maximize our networking outreach potential, I realize that I should have had my own strategy better mapped out in advance, so that necessary preparatory work (conversations, contact info. lists, etc.) could have been done in advance rather than struggling to fit them in when we were already under intense time pressures.

Electronic outreach

Though we employed many forms in our strategy, a good portion of outreach was done electronically, with groups sending notices out about the show, events, and later the webcast over their email networks. This mode was overwhelmingly preferred by organizations we contacted. (we made calls early on, to ask groups about what methods they were best set up to employ in helping with outreach. Overwhelmingly, they requested text email messages (no attachments).

In hindsight, we could have started networking both the show and webcast a bit earlier than we did. This was a timing issue; we should have had email text messages ready earlier for these.

List-serves

In addition to NGO and activist listserves we typically access, a Headlines volunteer tackled the task of making phone calls to university and college departments potentially connected to water issues, and creating an email group of academic listserves to which we also sent notices about the show and other events.

Schools outreach (promoting the Wednesday matinees)

Information about THIR\$TY went out by fax to all of the Lower Mainland Secondary and Alternative schools, in the final week of February, and first week of March. The response was very positive, with a good number of schools calling to book. Timing was a problem, as the first matinee fell on the Wednesday directly following Spring Break (March 27), which most teachers were not inclined to book for. This performance had 36 students in attendance. In comparison, we had a full house for the second Wednesday (April 3) (135 students), and had to turn away bookings for another 75 students.

Even though the response was good, the reality is that the schools material went out too late. To maximize on the educational potential of the experience, teachers need at least six weeks notice to be able to plan curriculum around seeing the show. (This could have led to some schools adding to the visual displays in the lobby too, which would have been great). More advance notice also allows teachers the time needed to organize permissions (from school and parents).

Webcast outreach

Sara Grusky of the International Water Working Group of Public Citizen (Washington D.C.) helped get the word out internationally about the THIR\$TY webcast, by getting us space for an ad in a water publication being produced in the US for distribution at the World Social Forum in Porto Alegre in February 2002. This was distributed to hundreds of activists from around the world, in three languages.

The Council of Canadians also created a link to our THIR\$TY pages from the Blue Planet site, which is one of the principle water sites, getting hits from all over the world. The folks at Indymedia (through whom we were streaming the webcast) also created a reciprocal weblink to our pages from their own.

The main strategy for outreaching the webcast was, again, networking through email. A notice of the webcast was sent to a list of key international water activists in 20+ countries around the world, encouraging them to circulate them to their national contacts.

As David's report mentions, I too feel the reality is that viewing a full length show on the web is not something many are inclined to do, nor something the majority of folks are able to do (technologically). This will change. In the meantime, the reaction to our making the effort to put this show onto the web was widely appreciated by many individuals I communicated with.

Obviously, it would also be great to not be limited to only streaming live, as the broadcast hours were definitely a deterrent for those who it hit in the middle of the night!

With more time, and/or foresight, it would have helped webcast outreach if I had created earlier the list of international activists who I used as my national hubs to send information through. For many, the webcast notice itself was the first time they learned of the project, this (possibly) reducing the potential that they responded with a good effort to outreach at their end. More relationship building with these folks during the preparatory months (even just a quick note a couple of times) arguably would have laid some helpful groundwork. Where this did happen, the results were notable (e.g. a reply confirming that the message had been sent out, etc.)

In conclusion...

Returning, at the conclusion of this report, to the set of goals established by the THIR\$TY Committee, I feel satisfied that there were sincere and identifiable efforts made toward addressing and achieving each of them within the development of THIR\$TY.

As always, there were many areas in which we fell short of our desired outcomes, or made mistakes in the process. As always, there are important lessons to carry away. Still, I believe that we achieved a great deal within and through this project, and that those from the community who participated in it's creation are left feeling that our individual and collective efforts were worth it.

Ultimately, my hope is that the experience stays in some way with all who participated, as organizers, audience members, and supporters of the project in so many forms — that THIR\$TY succeeded in planting questions, raising issues, encouraging action, and nurturing connections...

My thanks go out to all who contributed, in so many ways.

Sheelagh Davis
Headlines Community Outreach Coordinator