

**LEARNING-BASED COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT:
LESSONS LEARNED FOR BRITISH COLUMBIA**

Submitted to the Ministry of Community Development,
Cooperatives and Volunteers
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	5
SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS	6
GLOSSARY	17
PART I WHY LEARNING COMMUNITIES ARE IMPORTANT	19
PART II BRITISH COLUMBIA IN BRIEF	22
A. SOCIO-ECONOMIC SITUATION	
1. A Brief Environmental Scan	
1.1 Changing Demographics	23
1.2 Economic/Labour Force Trends	
1.3 Social Trends	
B. CHALLENGES, OBSTACLES, OPPORTUNITIES & ASSETS	24
1. Challenges	
1.1 The Economy and Employment	
1.2 Social and Community Change	
1.3 Inequalities and Social Exclusion	25
1.4 The Learning Divide	
1.5 The Digital Divide	
1.6 Aspirations and Citizenship	26
2. Obstacles	
2.1 Attitudinal	
2.2 Financial	
2.3 Complexity, Incoherence and Lack of Coordination	27
2.4 Transportation	
3. Opportunities	
3.1 Learning Technologies	
3.2 Partnerships	
3.3 Participation	
4. Assets	28
4.1 Social, Intellectual and Human Capital in Communities	
4.2 Growing Support for Learning-Based Community Development	29
PART III BRITISH COLUMBIA: CASE STUDIES	
1	
1. Citizenship/Civic Education: Upper Skeena	30
2. Health Promotion	31
2.1 Lillooet	
2.2 Burns Lake	32
2.3 Kamloops	33
3. Economic Development	34
3.1 Valemount	

3.2 Salmon Arm	35
3.3 Prince Rupert	37
4. Ecological/Environmental	
4.1 Clayoquot	37
4.2 New Westminster/Coquitlam	38
4.3 Cranbrook	39
4.4 Prince Rupert	
5. Rural/Urban Development	40
5.1 Lumby	
5.2 The Fort Nelson First Nation	41
5.3 Surrey	43
5.4 Humanities 101: Vancouver East and Victoria	44
5.5 Cedar	
5.6 Bamfield	45
5.7 Britannia Community School	47
5.8 Sunshine Coast/Sea-to-Sky/North Shore	
6. Social Development	48
6.1 Greater Victoria	48
6.2 Comox	50
6.3 Chilliwack	51
6.4 Prince Rupert	
6.5 Cowichan/Lytton/Tache/Fort St. John/Mount Currie	52
APPENDICES	
I. LEARNING-BASED COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN THEORY AND PRACTICE	54
A. TOWARDS A WORKING DEFINITION	54
1. Interdisciplinary Nature	57
2. Common But Fragmented Community Development Objectives	
2.1 Some Common Issues of the Six Approaches	
B. HISTORIC ROOTS	58
1. An International Perspective	
2. A “Made-in-Canada” Approach	
2.1 The Foundation of Learning-Based Approaches in Canada	
2.2 British Columbia’s Heritage	60
II. RECENT TRENDS AND BEST PRACTICE	63
A. AN INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE	
1. Towards a New Political Economy: Social Capital	64
2. Community Capacity-Building: Service-Learning Legacy	69
2.1 Service-Learning Defined	70
2.2 Developments in British Columbia	71

B.	CANADA IN REVIEW	
1.	Newfoundland: Regional Social Development	72
2.	PEI: Local Development	73
3.	Nova Scotia: Regional Level Development	74
4.	New Brunswick: Learning Centre Networking	
5.	Quebec	76
	5.1 Social Economy Initiatives	
	5.2 Assistance Fund for Independent Community Action	
6.	Ontario: Sustainable Community Indicators	77
7.	Manitoba: Community Choices	77
8.	Saskatchewan: First Nations Initiatives	78
9.	Alberta: Community Initiatives	80
	9.1 Community Self-Reliance	
	9.2 Sustainable Calgary State of Our City	81
	9.3 St. Albert	82
10.	NorthWest Territories: School of Community Government	83
C.	FEDERAL INITIATIVES	
1.	Human Resources Development Canada	84
	1.1 Office of Learning Technologies	
	1.2 Labour Market Learning and Development Unit	
2.	Industry Canada	
	2.1 Community Access Program	85
	2.2 Smart Communities	
3.	Canadian Rural Partnership	86
III.	INTERNATIONAL CASE STUDIES	86
A.	OECD INITIATIVES	
B.	UNITED KINGDOM	89
C.	OTHER	
1.	Europe	91
	1.1 The European Lifelong Learning Initiative	
	1.2 The European Commission	92
2.	Australia	93
3.	The United States	95
IV.	LITERATURE REVIEW	97
IV.	LEARNING-BASED COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROCESS MODEL	114

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However the contributions of local leaders and community developers from over two dozen BC communities, including several learning community developmental projects, provided the most valuable information. They shared their experiences and expertise as they told of the challenges and responses of their local communities. Their experiences, and many of the lessons they learned, are shared in almost thirty case studies. Their contributions will enable a “Made-in-BC” approach that is essential to future growth of learning communities in British Columbia.

An invitational workshop was held June 15 and 16, 2000 in Vancouver to discuss a draft of the report and the recommendations to Government that it included. Almost fifty persons from rural and urban communities, educational and social development bodies, and federal and provincial Government departments attended. Many of the participant’s suggestions have been incorporated in the final report.

The authors are responsible for any errors, omissions, or misinterpretation of information, and all views expressed in this report are those of the writers and do not necessarily reflect those of the Ministry of Community Development, Cooperatives and Volunteers.

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

This document is about learning-based community development and how it can help all communities in British Columbia, but particularly those at risk, as they make the transition from a resource-based economy to that of knowledge-based 21st Century society.

It is based on a larger draft report, *Learning-based Community Development: Lessons Learned for British Columbia* (2000), that is in the final stages of a consultation process with communities and stakeholder groups. The draft report, informed by a five-month process of using written surveys, personal and telephone interviews, e-mail messages, and Web and literature searches draws upon:

- the experience of BC communities committed to developing their own learning community models;
- an investigation of other jurisdictions in Canada and abroad [see Appendix II – Recent Trends and Best Practice and Appendix III – International Case Studies];
- a review of initiatives in BC that, in varying degrees, are implicitly using learning-based approaches to community development, and
- a brief literature review related to the evolving concepts of learning-based community development and learning communities [see Appendix IV].

There are three inter-related drivers of fundamental and increasingly rapid socio-economic change:

- ✓ globalization;
- ✓ the rapid expansion of information and communications technologies; and
- ✓ the explosion of new knowledge, especially in the sciences and technologies.

All three of these forces, themselves results of learning and skilled intelligence, can only be managed and directed for human betterment if increasing numbers of people can acquire the information, knowledge, skills, attitudes and values that enable them and their communities to create sustainable futures.

One process that is gaining currency for creating sustainable futures is for communities to become learning communities in which formal and non-formal lifelong learning opportunities for individuals and groups enable sustainable economic development, promote social inclusion and cohesion, and foster full civic and social participation.

The definition of community development used in this document is that of “action by people locally to enhance the social, economic, cultural and environmental conditions of

their community.” [see Appendix I – Learning-based Community Development in Theory and Practice for a working definition and a brief historic view of the BC and Canadian heritage].

Community development based on a learning community approach fosters the acquisition of information, knowledge, skills, attitudes and values that together build a community’s capacity to successfully respond to, and direct, economic and social change. The six traditional purposes of community development are:

- Citizenship/civic education
- Health promotion
- Economic development
- Environmental/ecological sustainability
- Rural/urban development, and
- Social development/planning.

One or more of these purposes have been served in many communities over the past generation, but often with no explicit analysis of the learning needs or assets that exist. Fortunately these purposes are increasingly viewed holistically and all or each can be informed and infused by a learning-based approach. Thus prior or current local initiatives are not replaced by a learning community approach but rather are acknowledged and built upon – an approach supported by most community members.

This summary will illuminate the views of British Columbians in a number of communities explicitly developing learning community models, as well as people from other communities in which there is readiness for a more integrated and comprehensive learning-based community development initiative. It will focus on some of the core values, attitudes and intangible assets that form the foundation for a knowledge-based society, highlighting three determinants of successful learning-based community development - learning how to build partnerships, foster participation, and assess performance/progress. It will illustrate three international trends and developments that set world-class benchmarks, namely:

- ✓ Lifelong Learning as an organizing principle and social goal
- ✓ A new political economy based on social/intellectual capital, and
- ✓ Modern government dedicated to devolution of responsibilities at regional and community levels

It will also identify initiatives in three Canadian provinces, Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, and Quebec, which inform discussion of not only more integrated social-economic policy but also more regional/community devolution of responsibilities.

The summary will conclude with findings from the experience of learning communities in BC. It will then propose a 5-point action plan for mobilizing communities for local action based on these findings and best practice in Canada and abroad.

Views of British Columbians

Personal and telephone interviews, and visits to communities for public and private meetings have resulted in the following observations:

People:

- ✓ local people do care and know about their communities
- ✓ many are skeptical about further studies in their communities; they now want action
- ✓ local leadership is limited and too often there is a small cadre of volunteers who are becoming over-worked and exhausted
- ✓ there is considerable talent, know-how, trust, shared values and networking in most communities – the social and intellectual capital crucial to a learning community
- ✓ local people understand the importance of non-formal and informal learning, often more readily than some educators
- ✓ people care about the quality of their life and support efforts to develop a sustainable environment, and broadly defined cultural activities of bodies such as libraries, arts councils, museums, and recreation commissions
- ✓ people welcome outside, independent guidance/consultation but understand that they must take ownership for their communities' future

Partnerships:

- ✓ there is recognition that the learning resources of all sectors [civic, public (e.g. health, libraries, recreation and arts councils), economic (private and cooperative), educational, and voluntary/community] should be used, not just those of the education system
- ✓ cross-sectoral partnerships to achieve common objectives are strongly supported
- ✓ local civic leadership is crucial to success
- ✓ there is considerable frustration and anger because of the senior government silos, delays, and almost total lack of co-ordinated approach - even by the same level of government
- ✓ learning within governments as well as in communities must occur if true partnerships and sustainable change are to be realized
- ✓ the private sector leadership or financial commitment to building a sustainable learning community should be actively encouraged
- ✓ many First Nations leaders want to work in an equal and reciprocal partnership with the local non-native community
- ✓ Foundations, such as the VanCity and Vancouver, have provided exemplary support for community initiatives

Participation:

- ✓ local people recognize that they must learn effective ways of expanding and sustaining participation of all community members, including the disadvantaged
- ✓ there is interest in exploring how learning technologies can promote local networking and cross-community sharing of problems and solutions

Performance:

- ✓ local people want assessments that help improve service quality and indicate progress towards their objectives, but question obtrusive and seemingly irrelevant evaluation
- ✓ up-to-date and relevant socio-economic data is required for local people to make better informed decisions about their communities' future

International Trends and Developments

Valuable lessons can be learned from ideas, policies, and practices of learning-based community development and learning communities that are evolving around the world. International organizations such as the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), UNESCO and other United Nations' social agencies have played a leadership role in fostering new thinking about how people can respond to the knowledge-based economy and society that they and their communities are entering. In the European Union, Australia, and the United States valuable new initiatives to operationalize the concept of lifelong learning are underway. Important lessons to be learned range from emerging conceptual frameworks to the innovative policies and practices of building learning communities and regions.

Some of this pioneering thought and action of relevance to British Columbia include:

Lifelong Learning as an Organizing Principle and Social Goal:

- ✓ OECD and the European Union are supporting learning region projects in Europe, and learning cities and towns in the UK, to test the utility of life-span and life-wide dimensions of analysis and action in communities of different cultures and scale, and as a tool for economic development and social inclusion. It is the lifelong learning concept, in concert with empirical analysis of community best practice, that has led to the British emphasis on the 3 P's of learning how to build Partnerships, increase Participation and assess Performance.
- ✓ The University of Tasmania is exploring the concept of learning regions as part of the Regional Australian Summit initiative.
- ✓ The US has experimented with a Learning Initiative as part of its Empowerment Zone/Enterprise Communities Program. Its development of

local 'learning teams' for participatory action research helps de-mystify community-based research and leaves a legacy of learning in the community.

The New Economy

The OECD, the World Bank, and other international organizations involved in the global political economy have emphasized the importance of developing human capital to meet the challenges of the knowledge-based economy. A consensus appears to be developing that the dominant neo-classical model is not answering the needs of an increasingly economically polarized world. Over the past decade there has also been mounting international interest in the concept of social/intellectual capital – trust, networking, shared values, talent and know-how – that exists in communities. There is growing interest in its implications for both an emerging political economy and a new view of community assets. For example:

- ✓ In the United Kingdom there is a confluence of adult education and economic thought around social capital as the basis of a new political economy for the knowledge-based society of the 21st Century. British experts are among the leaders who see social capital as a largely unrecognized and untapped community asset that must be mobilized if communities are to respond to the challenges of globalization.
- ✓ The University of Tasmania has focused on the use and building of social capital as well as recognition of the importance of non-formal learning to economic and community development in rural Australia.
- ✓ France, among other European nations, has promoted the expansion of its social economy (not-for-profit sector) for purposes of economic and community development.
- ✓ The European Union, and virtually all its member nations, are rapidly expanding the use of telematics (information and communications technologies) for economic and community development. The Scandinavian nations and the UK are integrating learning technologies with their learning region/community initiatives in order to promote both economic development and social inclusion.

Modern Government

Several trends that provide challenges and opportunities for learning-based community development and learning communities are:

- ✓ Many European nations, including the UK, are commencing integration of their social and economic policies and practices. Thus, in Britain the learning communities initiative is a component of their broader national lifelong learning strategy with its twin goals of economic development and social inclusion. Both the European Social Fund and the UK Single Regeneration Budget are used to promote learning-based approaches to socio-economic developments in the UK.

- ✓ Devolution of greater responsibilities to regions, in the case of the UK - countries like Scotland and Wales - is occurring in Europe and Australia. Such decentralization could give greater autonomy and responsibility to emerging learning regions and their communities, however concern has been expressed that regional governments may not attend to the unique needs of their local communities.
- ✓ There is recognition in many nations that they have made little headway in diminishing the gap between the disadvantaged and the well-off. Greater involvement of local government, and associated neighbourhood or community, strategies is seen as essential to enabling equity groups to become partners and participants in learning-based community development and learning communities (e.g. UK).

A cross-Canada Review

Many of the most exciting initiatives that relate to learning-based community development or learning communities are taking place east of Ontario. For example:

- ✓ socio-economic problems are increasingly being dealt with by regional approaches in Newfoundland, Nova Scotia and Quebec
- ✓ social and economic policy is being systematically integrated in a major policy initiative in Newfoundland. The challenge of meaningfully involving and responding to local community needs is yet to be tested, but the challenge is recognized and the importance of actively involving formal and non-formal learning providers has been incorporated in the emerging policy and regional structures.
- ✓ Quebec continues to promote its social economy, with its inherent links to community development and learning.

Learning Communities in British Columbia

Three communities are engaged in different stages of building learning communities - Lumby, Upper Skeena, and Lillooet - as defined in terms of the structural/process model developed and tested by the OECD and over 40 UK communities. All three BC communities face some similar problems in that they have all relied on diminishing resource industry activities for many years. Over the past year they have learned a number of lessons, including:

- ✓ The need for coordinated and coherent senior government responses to their communities especially in terms of financial and technical assistance – delays; and isolated departmental initiatives have caused confusion and frustration.
- ✓ The importance of local leadership, civic and First Nations, to build the cross-cultural bridges they both desire;
- ✓ The need for gradual introduction of learning technologies to meet community identified needs and purposes;

- ✓ The wealth of social/intellectual capital that exists in communities and the value of using non-formal as well as formal learning sector resources;
- ✓ The wisdom of focusing on the 3 P's of learning to build Partnerships, foster Participation, and assess Performance and progress – there is no quick fix or easy answer to preparing for a knowledge-based society; and
- ✓ Community involvement and ownership of the development process is essential.

Learning Community Findings

The three learning community projects have revealed the specific historic, cultural and socio-economic nature of each community as well as the unique configuration of local assets and deficits. Every one of the communities is engaged in the process of viewing and analysing itself through the lens of lifelong learning. Currently they have identified similar experiential learning-based responses to five common challenges:

- ❖ The development of Parents as First Teachers approaches to strengthening pre-natal to pre-school learning of parents and infants;
- ❖ The use of quality community service-learning opportunities for at-risk youth whether in- or out-of-school so that they are enabled to both learn new skills while leaving a legacy of service in their communities;
- ❖ Preparing for the knowledge-based society by setting measurable and achievable local learning targets
- ❖ The exploration of new forms of enterprise, including social and economic cooperatives, in order to diversify the economy and provide opportunities for displaced workers; and
- ❖ Ways to strengthen intergenerational links by means such as youth service-learning with seniors or seniors' mentoring initiatives.

The action each community takes will have both an immediate impact and longer-term consequences. For example:

- ✓ Breaking the cycle of harmful parenting such as alcohol abuse/Fetal Alcohol Syndrome saves not only an infant victim but also over one million dollars in down-stream special education, health and other social costs normally expended during the life of each victim;
- ✓ Quality service-learning in Hazelton by school students, including several at-risk, resulted in a ski/hiking trail being built, the community celebrating the legacy, and several youth deciding to continue their education;
- ✓ Establishing a target of basic computer literacy by 2002 for 75% of all senior high school students and 40 % of the local workforce;
- ✓ A proposed Artisan's co-op will provide lower cost supplies and enable more revenue to remain in the local economy; and
- ✓ Computer science students in Lumby will assist seniors in an intermediate care facility learn how to "surf the Web" while First Nations groups in several

communities will link elders with youth to build stronger intergenerational and clan bonds.

Every learning community in British Columbia is building on the foundations laid by previous generations, earlier community initiatives (e.g. healthy community activities), and its commitment to learn how to build partnerships, foster participation, and assess its performance and progress towards learning targets and socio-economic objectives that the community has set. Gradually more community members are aware that they are engaged in a collective and transformative learning process. It is a process that shifts their community from a conventional individualistic model dominated by a traditional education approach to a new paradigm of community in which learning in all its forms is recognized, celebrated and invested in as a social and empowering process for all. Important distinctions are illustrated in the following table.

Learning Community	Conventional Community
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ uses both formal and non-formal sector learning resources ▪ economic and education partners share their training resources ▪ learning is seen as the common denominator of education/training ▪ social/intellectual capital is valued, added to, and used for comparative advantage ▪ learning is seen as investment ▪ learning is seen as a social process that results in a comparative community advantage for economic development ▪ community thrives on greater autonomy of decentralization ▪ innovations are supported by interactive learning among learning organizations within the community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ the education system has few links to the non-formal sectors, particularly the voluntary/community sector ▪ companies and education often compete: there is often limited community access to training resources of either ▪ academic education is viewed as prestigious and training is devalued ▪ social/intellectual capital is unrecognized and largely untapped ▪ education is seen as a cost ▪ learning is viewed as an individual activity for individual benefit ▪ community develops dependency upon centralized policies ▪ innovations are isolated and viewed as competitive threats by others in the community
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ local lifelong learning strategy developed including individual learning plans for economic enterprises and learner smart cards to promote learning for all ◆ universal local access to learning technologies for networking within and among communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ incoherent, sporadic, and unequal learning opportunities are provided with chief benefits to an educated elite ◆ limited access to learning technologies with little networking beyond the community
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • health determinants and brain research informs preventative learning strategies to save costly remedial education, health, criminal justice, and social programs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • access to quality early health and learning opportunities is either limited or non-existent
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ the development of a lifelong learning culture is a community goal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ some individuals promote lifelong learning values

The cost of not developing learning communities is high. The existence of a permanent under-class – under-educated, sporadically employed and socially excluded – in communities across the province is socially and economically unacceptable. All individuals and groups should be enabled to learn the skills necessary to contribute to society and to bear the responsibilities as well as to enjoy the rights of democratic citizenship.

Based on the lessons learned about how learning-based community development and learning communities are being fostered here and abroad, the following series of recommendations is made to the Government of British Columbia so that learning-based approaches will increasingly inform and infuse community development initiatives into British Columbia's communities:

“Mobilizing for Community Action: A 5-Point Action Plan”

Recommendation 1 – Commitment

Based on the profound nature of the socio-economic crises facing many resource-based BC communities, and their need to diversify their economies, and mobilize the full range of their learning resources in order to participate in the global economy, it is recommended that:

The Province of British Columbia develop a provincial Learning Communities Action Plan to renew provincial support for, and investment in, community initiatives that further the information, knowledge, skills, attitudes, values and partnerships to support transitions of communities to a knowledge-based economy.

Such a plan would state the rationale, overall goals and objectives, and the means of assessing performance and progress at provincial, regional and community levels. All associated monitoring processes will involve communities and have shared results. It is therefore recommended that:

The Province of British Columbia develop a policy lens/program evaluation framework to assist the development and direction of government initiatives, programs, and projects to maximise their contribution to community learning benefits, and evaluate outcomes of learning community initiatives on a long-term basis.

And to draw upon good practice elsewhere, it is further recommended that:

The Province of British Columbia pursue national and international opportunities for cooperation and for learning by BC communities, including:

- ✓ *the CIVICUS conference in Vancouver in 2001;*
- ✓ *events being sponsored by the UN as part of the International Year of the Volunteer in 2001; and*
- ✓ *joint projects with the Learning Cities Network of the UK.*

Recommendation 2 – Inter-Ministry Collaborative Structure

Based on the call by communities for faster, more integrated government response to their immediate and urgent needs it is recommended that:

The Province of British Columbia establish an Inter-Ministry Committee on Learning Communities to coordinate an action plan, and to develop an annual business plan and implementation schedule for action.

The Ministries of Education, Advanced Education, Social Development, Community Development, Children and Families, Health, Employment and Investment, Rural Development, Forests, Energy and Mines, Municipal Affairs, Finance and Women's Equality, and bodies such as the Information, Science and Technology Agency would be important participants in such a committee. The Committee should review policy and program barriers and opportunities to integrate school, college, university-college, university, community agency, First Nation and local government resources to support action to enhance community learning activities and outcomes.

Recommendation 3 – Acknowledging, Involving & Supporting Communities

There are many provincial and/or regional non-governmental organizations including private foundations, economic (private and cooperative), civic, public (e.g. libraries, social services, health, museums, and recreation), community/voluntary and educational sector associations that have significant links with communities across the province, and it is therefore recommended that:

The Province of British Columbia engage key stakeholders in economic, social and cultural development (including First Nations and multi-cultural initiatives), environmental stewardship, educational institutions, youth employment, training and community development in developing and implementing action.

Such mechanisms as a learning communities' clearinghouse (e.g. information and resources, case studies on community initiatives) to serve local communities should also be considered.

Recommendation 4 – Funding Mechanism & Developing Resources

In order to promote partnerships, target equity group needs, build communities' social/intellectual capital, and apply information technologies for socio-economic and cultural purposes it is therefore recommended that:

The Province of British Columbia develop an inter-ministry contribution fund to support activities that facilitate the coordination, networking and partnering of resources in communities to achieve enhanced outcomes in learning-based community development.

Examples include:

- creation of an ongoing learning communities network in BC for peer networking between communities, to share experience, expertise, information and policy advice amongst communities, institutions, and other stakeholders through annual meetings, seminars and a web-based resource.
- innovative approaches to building multi-sectoral partnerships in communities to manage transition from traditional resource industry to diversified knowledge-based economies;
- innovative partnerships between First Nations and non-aboriginal communities to address learning, knowledge and skills needs;
- improved access to information technology through training and mentoring in the potential uses of that technology as a learning and community economic development tool for rural and resource communities, forming inter-agency networks, building on the Provincial Learning Network and federal programs e.g. Community Learning Networks, Community Access Program, Canadian Health Network, and Heritage content;
- partnerships between colleges, schools, skills centres, and community organisations to promote outreach and extension opportunities for people in remote and rural communities to develop skills and qualifications to enhance their employment and self employment;
- community development initiatives involving local government, economic development, social development, schools, colleges and the private and cooperative sector that promote experiential learning and community service for young people, and others, that ladder them into jobs in the new economy; and
- skills development initiatives that promote collaborative community efforts to reduce disadvantage and exclusion of people with few assets and opportunities.

Recommendation 5 – British Columbia/Canada Collaboration

The federal HRDC is already committed to supporting a number of learning community pilot projects in British Columbia and with the active collaboration of the Government of British Columbia it is recommended that:

The Province of British Columbia and the Government of Canada develop a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Government of British Columbia and the Government of Canada to establish inter-governmental support and cooperation for learning communities, including federal participation in the strategy and initiatives.

It is further recommended that:

A short term Memorandum of Understanding between HRDC and MCDCV (with other government departments as possible and appropriate) be initiated to cost share Learning Communities pilot projects in communities that are experiencing evident stress from economic adjustment and transition (e.g. coastal and resource communities).

GLOSSARY

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Action by people locally to enhance the social, cultural, environmental and economic conditions of their community. The six major purposes of community development which are increasingly recognized as inter-related, are:

- Citizenship/civic education;
- Health promotion;
- Economic development;
- Environmental/ecological sustainability;
- Rural/urban development; and
- Social development/planning.

All six types (by purpose) of community development can be informed and infused by a learning-based approach.

Learning-based Community Development

Community development that is constructed around the principles of lifelong learning so that the development of individuals and groups, and the attainment of their economic development and social inclusion objectives are achieved through continuous acquisition and use of knowledge (traditional and new), skills, attitudes and values. This approach fosters a lifelong learning culture with preventative as well as remedial and sustainable features, shared by all who are thus enabled to contribute as:

- active global citizens and community members;
- productive workers;
- caring parents and family members; and
- creative learners.

Learning Communities

Any city, town or village, and surrounding area, that, using lifelong learning as an organizing principle and social goal, promotes collaboration of the civic, public, economic, educational and voluntary/community sectors in the process of achieving agreed upon objectives related to the twin goals of sustainable economic development and social inclusion.

LEARNING

Lifelong Learning

A conceptual framework and organizing principle for imagining, planning and implementing reform of both the formal and non-formal learning systems to enable individuals and groups to:

- ✓ participate in purposeful and systematic life-span learning opportunities;
- ✓ learn wherever, whenever, and in modes appropriate to their learning styles and needs; and

- ✓ use the total learning resources of their community and society.

It is also a social goal that envisages a learning society in which the pervasive culture values, fosters, and celebrates learning in all its forms (formal, non-formal and informal).

When the lens of lifelong learning is focused on community development substantial insights occur, including recognition that:

- the vertical or life-long dimension of learning is greatly influenced by the individual's environment throughout the life-span;
- the horizontal or life-wide dimension of learning values learning whether it has been acquired through formal education, non-formal workplace or community settings, or informal serendipitous learning; and
- learning is as much a social/community process as an individual activity.

Formal and Non-Formal Learning

Formal learning is the systematic, purposeful acquisition of knowledge, skills, attitudes and values through educational or training providers for credit or certification, while non-formal learning is the systematic, purposeful learning gained in the workplace, home, community or voluntary organization but not for credit or certification.

Informal Learning

Learning that is unsystematic, unplanned or serendipitous. It is learning that is most often acquired via the mass media or in social situations.

Learning Organization

A metaphor for any human collectivity, whether in the formal or non-formal sector, in which the lifelong learning of its members is systematically appreciated, encouraged, invested in, and used as a central organizational strategy.

Service-learning

The integration of student curricular activities with service in the voluntary/community or not-for-profit sectors for academic credit in the formal sector. In the non-formal sector it also entails service to the voluntary/community or not-for-profit sectors. However recognition of the learning may be delayed, e.g. through prior learning assessment, or it may be evaluated in terms of proxies like specific project outcomes such as the progression of the participants to further learning or employment.

SOCIAL/INTELLECTUAL CAPITAL

For purposes of this study the terms are used to describe the intangible assets of a community: the intellectual capacity, talent, know-how, trust, networks and shared values of its members.

PART I WHY LEARNING COMMUNITIES ARE IMPORTANT

No longer do we talk about the impending knowledge-based, global economy of the 21st Century. It is already here. Its effects are being felt increasingly by every community and every citizen. The worn out phrase, “The only thing constant is change”, needs to be altered to reflect the present reality; “Everything is changing faster than ever, especially change itself”. Where once we could anticipate change and prepare for it well in advance, we now have shorter and shorter notice to make yet another adjustment. This continuous change has personal, social and economic impacts of significant magnitude.

Three specific inter-related drivers of change are occurring simultaneously:

- ✓ globalization;
- ✓ rapid expansion of information and communications technology; and
- ✓ the explosion of new knowledge, especially in the sciences and technology.

These drivers of change are forcing substantial restructuring of whole economies, industries and the workplace – in sum, society. New knowledge, skills, attitudes and values must be learned by all to match the personal, social and economic challenges these changes bring. The learning communities model that this paper explores offers ways that individuals and whole communities can adapt and even profit from these changes.

In order to better appreciate the learning community model it is important to first define the “learning community”. A learning community is one that creates formal and non-formal lifelong learning opportunities for individuals and groups to acquire the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values that will enable sustainable economic development and build social inclusion and cohesion.

Community development based on a learning community approach fosters the acquisition of knowledge, skills, attitudes and values that together build a community’s capacity to successfully respond to, and direct, economic and social change.

Regardless of location, there are leaders in learning communities who see that by using lifelong learning strategies their communities will gain benefits from:

- ✓ making more efficient and effective use of the learning resources of every sector of their community;
- ✓ drawing upon, and adding to, their stock of social/intellectual capital;
- ✓ promoting a local lifelong learning strategy to ensure coherent and socially inclusive learning opportunities;
- ✓ gaining substantial down-stream savings through initial preventative strategies such as health promotion or quality pre-school initiatives; and
- ✓ fostering a shared vision of a lifelong learning culture for their community.

The following table contrasts some of the differences between a learning community and a conventional community.

Learning Community	Conventional Community
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ uses both formal and non-formal sector learning resources ▪ economic and education partners share their training resources ▪ learning is seen as the common denominator of education/training ▪ social/intellectual capital is valued, added to, and used for comparative advantage ▪ learning is seen as investment ▪ learning is seen as a social process that results in a comparative community advantage for economic development ▪ community thrives on greater autonomy of decentralization ▪ innovations are supported by interactive learning among learning organizations within the community ◆ local lifelong learning strategy developed including individual learning plans for economic enterprises and learner smart cards to promote learning for all ◆ universal local access to learning technologies for networking within and among communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ the education system has few links to the non-formal sectors, particularly the community ▪ companies and education often compete: there is often limited community access to either ▪ education is viewed as prestigious and training is devalued ▪ social/intellectual capital is unrecognized and largely untapped ▪ education is seen as a cost ▪ learning is viewed as an individual activity for individual benefit ▪ community develops dependency upon centralized policies ▪ innovations are isolated and viewed as competitive threats by others in the community ◆ incoherent, sporadic, and unequal learning opportunities are provided with chief benefits to an educated elite ◆ limited access to learning technologies with little networking beyond the community
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • health determinants and brain research informs preventative learning strategies to save costly remedial education, health, criminal justice, and social programs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • access to quality early health and learning opportunities is either limited or non-existent
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ the development of a lifelong learning culture is a community goal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ some individuals promote lifelong learning values

Another significant reason for establishing learning communities is that governments aren't relating to communities in the ways they use to. There is less money to hand out but it is more than that, there is also less paternalism on the part of governments. While this is obviously good, many communities don't yet have the skills to take their destinies

into their own hands. The traditional approach was for governments using policy writers or economists or social planners to figure out what communities needed, then design programs and implement them with some kind of oversight and measured deliverables. All well intentioned, but this approach usually translated into the community forcing itself into some new alien shape to fit the needs of the program. Without real understanding and commitment the programs often missed their intended mark. What was missing in these approaches was a real emphasis on communities taking the lead role in developing ownership for their own destinies, and defining their own mission, embracing it with enthusiasm, and then finding partners, including government and the private sector, to help them reach their goals and objectives. It is therefore imperative that communities become more knowledgeable about not only their own community but also the bigger world and how they are going to relate to it. Thus learning becomes essential.

A growing body of research indicates that learning is much more than an individualistic act. It is a profoundly social and community process. Most of what we learn is with and from others. We are social beings who learn in community and within context. We also build on much that has been gained from the legacy of past thought and discovery of our ancestors. In every dimension - past or present - our communities have influenced why, what, where, and how we have learned.

To that end leading nations, except Canada, have developed and implemented national lifelong learning strategies.¹ Unlike Canada, they are using the full learning resources (formal and non-formal – see Glossary for terms) of their countries in coherent, substantial initiatives that view learning communities as an integral part of their comprehensive lifelong learning strategies. These strategies incorporate learning-based community development for a variety of inter-related purposes such as citizenship education; health promotion; economic development; environmental/ecological safeguarding; rural/urban development, and social planning and development for communities and individuals from early childhood to senior life-stages.

While there is much to learn from the experience and insights of others, British Columbia has a firm foundation to build on. There are many communities within the Province that have both the motivation and the social and intellectual capital needed to build ever more competent and caring learning communities.

PART II BRITISH COLUMBIA IN BRIEF

British Columbia has been a Province within Canada for almost 130 years. During that time its economic and social history has featured significant swings in the business cycle that have affected both urban and rural communities. Such shifts from prosperity to recession have tended to follow global patterns that have affected every resource-based economy, whether it is agriculture, fisheries, forestry or mining. BC's blessing and curse has been that it has been endowed, until recently, with an abundance of all of these

¹ Reports by both UNESCO and the OECD in 1996 emphasized the importance of developing national lifelong learning strategies. OECD, 1996, *Lifelong Learning for All*, Paris and UNESCO, 1996, *Learning: The Treasure Within*, Paris.

resources. World-wide trends such as the end of the fur trade, the petering out of the gold rushes, low world prices for many minerals, and the ecological threat to sustainable fish and forest industries have all, in their time, provided major challenges to the future well-being of British Columbians. But where resource-based communities once followed the boom and bust cycles and returned to life as usual, that time is now over. There simply are not enough resources to ensure that all those communities will bounce back and enjoy life as it once was. That time is gone forever.

A. SOCIO-ECONOMIC SITUATION

Nowhere is the threat to resource-based economies more evident today than in the hundreds of smaller communities throughout the province – whether coastal or interior, village or town. All face the challenge of moving into a knowledge-based society. For some communities they can add value by applying knowledge and appropriate technologies to their existing resource base. For others, they must re-invent their future as they face the reality of dwindling resources such as wood fibre or fish stocks, and closing mines. These various scenarios require communities not only to diversify their economies but also to recognize that there must be a willingness to learn new skills and values and to engage more actively in their roles as citizens seeking the common good.

1. A Brief Environmental Scan

Any scan of the dynamic BC socio-economic environment is impressionistic. Data on many of the most important factors related to a knowledge-based economy is non-existent. For example, no systematic attempt is made by governments to assess the magnitude or scope of what must be a massive non-formal learning sector (i.e. non-credit learning in the workplace, home, voluntary organizations and community). Occasional studies of the Canadian voluntary sector reveal that substantial intentional learning is carried on while research on non-formal learning in the private sector indicate that non-formal learning is an invisible giant.² There are, however, a number of factors and trends

² Ross, David, 1990, *Economic Dimensions of Volunteer Work in Canada*, Secretary of State, Ottawa.

Ross found that skill development was an important spin-off value for the economy in that 16 million separate skill/learning experiences were recorded in his survey, and over 1/3 of the volunteers reported that they were able to transfer skills learned as volunteers to their paid work. Carnevale estimates that non-formal workplace learning is responsible for about 70% of all workplace learning, while adult educators estimate that over 70% of all life-span learning is of a non-formal nature. Carnevale, Anthony, "Human Capital: A High-yield Investment" in Lynn Elen Burton (ed.), 1992, *Developing Resourceful Humans: Adult Education Within the Economic Context*, Routledge, London. See also V.J. Marsick and K. E. Watkins, 1990, *Informal and incidental learning in the workplace*, Routledge, London. A 1998 survey of informal and non-formal learning in Canada revealed that about 70% of Canadians say that their most important job-related knowledge comes from other workers or learning on their own. See Livingstone, David W., 1998, *First Canadian Survey of Informal Learning Practices*, OISE, University of Toronto, Toronto.

that must be taken into consideration as one assesses the relevance of learning-based community development.³

1.1 Changing Demographics

British Columbia's increasingly diverse population will continue to grow at a rate significantly above the Canadian average (nearly twice the rate of other provinces during the 1990's). The single greatest contributor is net in-migration, that has accounted for about 75% of the growth, with increased migration from Asia providing the predominant source. By 2016 an overall increase of 40% from 1996 will result in an estimated population of five and one half million, with an annual rate of increase of approximately 1% in every region of the province, except the Lower Mainland where there will be an annual increase close to two percent.

Unlike the rest of Canada, BC's youth population will continue to grow until at least 2021 and continue to place significant demands on the education and learning systems.

1.2 Economic/Labour Force Trends

Approximately 75% of the existing workforce will still be working fifteen years from now. Many of these workers will require continuous skill upgrading. The demand for increased skills, competencies and ability to learn has risen and/or changed for almost all types of employment. Employment growth in the Communications and Business sectors has been greatest over the recent past, with particularly significant growth in the film and television sectors, as well as computer services, and service industries. The MAETT Environmental scan notes that:

“A key trend is that more and more of the work being done in all sectors is information and knowledge creation, distribution, application and processing.... Information and knowledge embedded and enabled by skilled people have emerged as a key economic resource, perhaps more critical than capital.”⁴

1.3 Social Trends

UK Prime Minister Tony Blair speaks of “joined up” problems such as poverty, ill health and poor education. Among those in BC needing economic and social assistance to combat these “joined up” problems are:

- ✓ single parent mothers
- ✓ the disabled
- ✓ aboriginal families living on and off reserve
- ✓ recent immigrants, and
- ✓ adults without a high school diploma.

³ British Columbia, 1998, *Environmental Scan: British Columbia's Learning and Labour Market Environment*, Ministry of Advanced Education, Training and Technology, Victoria. Much of the data for this study is taken from the MAETT scan.

⁴ MAETT scan, p. 30 Three quarters of the province's GDP comes from the service sector and it employs ¾ of the workforce.

While statistics indicate that the overall poverty rate has remained steady, analysis of specific groups such as children living in poverty indicate growing numbers, often living with their single parent mothers in both urban and rural settings across the province

B. CHALLENGES, OBSTACLES, OPPORTUNITIES & ASSETS

The following challenges, obstacles, opportunities and assets of communities are viewed in the context of an emerging knowledge-based society and through the lens of lifelong learning. They are challenges for which a learning-based approach to community development is particularly relevant.

1. Challenges

1.1 The Economy and Employment

If long-term, sustainable change is to occur throughout BC's communities then new knowledge, skills, attitudes and values will have to be acquired by all citizens. This calls for a profound change in behavior and attitude of many citizens, but particularly younger persons, who in earlier generations could leave school early and engage in relatively low-skilled but high paying occupations in resource-base industries. Indeed, sons often followed fathers into mills or worked together in family enterprises with relatively little need for advanced education or training. Until the past decade federal immigration policy and provincial labour market strategies focused more on bringing in skilled workers to meet skill shortages than training British Columbians for skilled employment. For example, BC's post-secondary participation rate was tied with Newfoundland for tenth place by the late 1980's while today, because of a change in both attitude and policy, it is 2nd in the nation.

Many single industry communities thrived for extended periods and developed dependencies on corporate largesse. Decisions made in corporate headquarters hundreds or even thousands of miles away from a community could affect its quality of life or even its continued existence. Active citizenship, let alone economic democracy, were not issues of the day in those communities - yet today they rank amongst their greatest challenges.

1.2 Social and Community Change

Fundamental changes in the social structure and life of many communities present special challenges for community development. Patterns of family life are more diversified and many families are more mobile than ever before. Roles of family members, especially women are being changed and increased longevity and longer periods of retirement from paid employment are new realities for many.

New Canadians are bringing their religious and cultural heritage to a new, largely secular world. The need for cross-cultural learning and collaborative skills has never been greater – and must be addressed community by community.

1.3 Inequalities and Social Exclusion

For many people in BC the daily issue in their lives is not exploitation but exclusion – the often-silent non-involvement of people who, because they are poor or of an ethnic minority, are systematically excluded from the rights and responsibilities of full citizenship. Inequalities and divisions range from those of income and wealth to the realms of health, housing, employment, transport and education. Many are multiple and mutually reinforcing - the “joined up” problems that will require “joined up solutions”.

1.4 The Learning Divide

Repeated studies have shown that those with low levels of education are those most likely to live in poverty, be unemployed or on welfare, serve time in penal institutions. They are also those who will encounter greater personal and family ill health throughout their lives. Children from families with low education (and often low income) are more likely to drop out of school, take drugs, have unplanned pregnancies than those from well educated families. Breaking the vicious cycle of under-education and its tragic human consequences is an issue that can often be tackled most effectively at the community level.

On the other hand, those who have already enjoyed a substantial share of public educational resources are more likely to continue learning in both formal and non-formal sectors.

1.5 The Digital Divide⁵

British Columbia leads Canada in access to, and use of, the Internet. Almost 70% of British Columbians use a computer, and have access to the Internet (interestingly 77% of this group mentioned home as the place they use computers). Yet that access and use is too often determined by social class membership.

The 30% of British Columbians who have no computer skills, nor access to the Internet are generally from the bottom third of the economic ladder, and of that group almost 40% indicate that they cannot afford one. A full quarter of the population has heard of the Internet but has never seen it or accessed it. This group includes:

- ✓ those currently unemployed (49%)
- ✓ older persons (55%)
- ✓ low income earners (44%), and
- ✓ those with a limited formal education (42%).

⁵ British Columbia, 1998, *Awareness and Usage of the Internet*, Information, Science and Technology Agency, Victoria. See URL: http://www.ista.gov.bc.ca/pubs/InternetSurvey/3_0.html

Community level provision of computer and Internet training and access for all will be an important challenge for many communities preparing for the knowledge-based society.

1.6 Aspirations and Citizenship

The task of developing a democratic political culture for the 21st Century is a global challenge. A global perspective must inform active local citizenship. The balance of citizen rights and responsibilities must constantly be reviewed and renewed. Through learning, competing values can be assessed and emerging values forged. First Nations people face unique challenges as they simultaneously learn to build on the foundations of their culture that honours their past while incorporating new skill sets that are needed in the technological age.

2. Obstacles

A number of inter-related barriers to learning-based community development exist. They are deeply rooted and complex obstacles to learning that call for the “joined up” solutions that learning communities can provide. Yet while recent research has indicated that the vast majority of Canadians are active non-formal and informal learners, many of those who do not participate in formal education provision cite a variety of reasons.⁶

2.1 Attitudinal

Substantial research over the past 30 years has identified the attitudes of would-be learners as the single greatest obstacle to their involvement in formal or non-formal learning opportunities. Factors such as previous negative school experiences, low self-esteem, lack of motivation, fear of ridicule - these and other, often deeply rooted personal attitudes and perceptions, prevent some from becoming active learners.

2.2 Financial

Time and again financial barriers appear to be the second greatest barrier to learner participation in the formal education sector. Not only the cost of training but also the foregone incomes are factors that decision-making individuals take into account. The financial obstacles are especially significant for some social groups such as single parent mothers, First Nations people, and the disabled – groups that too often face major economic problems.

2.3 Complexity, Incoherence and Lack of Coordination

⁶ Livingstone, D. W., 1998, *First Canadian Survey of Informal Learning Practices*, OISE, University of Toronto. According to survey respondents some of the major barriers to participation are:

1. about 40% said that courses are at inconvenient times or places;
2. over 40% stated that they have no time to participate;
3. almost 40% cite family responsibilities; and
4. about one-third indicate that courses are too expensive.

While many leading nations have developed coherent national qualification systems and are building assured means of learner progression, Canada is a balkanized collection of 14 different education systems (10 provinces, soon-to-be 3 territories, and the federal jurisdiction) with limited coordination or cooperation of educational authorities. The absence of any national educational or training goals, objectives or targets, or comprehensive national lifelong learning strategy, such as exists in leading nations, places our provinces and our country at a competitive disadvantage. To navigate the educational waters is a daunting task for many and it may be at the community level where common sense cooperation and partnerships of educational providers will achieve the best results.

2.4 Transportation

For many people in both urban and rural settings lack of low-cost public transportation is a barrier to their participation in on-going learning. Poor people, the disabled, many seniors – all depend upon public transportation to get them to learning events within their communities.

3. **Opportunities**

3.1 Learning Technologies

New information and communications technologies that have been among the drivers of globalization, may now provide the means by which communities, no matter how isolated, might network with others for mutual socio-economic benefit. They can be the means by which communities share best practice with others facing similar challenges. The same technologies that are often used for centralization can now be used for decentralization and wider involvement of local people. For example, people knowledgeable about local conditions can use central databases at the local level for analysis in order to inform better local decision-making. The choice is ours.

3.2 Partnerships

Learning how to build effective and sustainable partnerships at the community level is a key to building successful learning communities. Tapping the considerable resources (human and physical) of the five partners – civic, public, economic, educational, and voluntary/community – will enable a community to accomplish things together that they could never do in isolation. Collaboration at the local level may promote much-needed cooperation and coordination of government agencies – which in turn will be able to respond in more coherent and effective ways.

3.3 Participation

Learning how to engage citizens in the community learning enterprise is central to building a sustainable learning community. Using the considerable social/intellectual capital that exists in many communities will contribute to developing social cohesion that in turn adds to the stock of social capital. Strategies for social inclusion ensure that all of

the talent of a community is harnessed, and that no permanent underclass is created which diminishes the lives of all community members.

4. Assets

4.1 Social, Intellectual and Human Capital in Communities

New technologies are driving a new political economy, the key elements of which are slowly emerging. Paradoxically this new economy is evolving around a notion that will influence community development as much, if not more, than every other aspect of socio-economic thought and action. The notion is social capital, and its central tenant – the valuing of intangible community assets such as trust, networking, and shared values – is the basis of the new political economy. Thus a fourth form of capital has joined the old triumvirate of land, labour, and capital as the fundamental elements of economic analysis. In a knowledge-based economy a natural corollary is a learning society – one in which lifelong learning is both a social goal and an organizing principle. In such a new paradigm social capital forms a synergistic relationship with human capital (skilled labour). Yet the focus, assumptions, and means of measuring outcomes are different (see below).

HUMAN & SOCIAL CAPITAL DIFFERENCES			
		<u>HUMAN</u>	<u>SOCIAL</u>
1.	<i>FOCUS</i>	<i>INDIVIDUAL</i>	<i>NETWORKS</i>
2.	<i>ASSUMES</i>	<i>RATIONALITY</i>	<i>SOCIAL INFLUENCE</i>
3.	<i>MEASURES</i>	<i>INPUTS</i>	<i>ENGAGEMENT</i>
4.	<i>MEASURES</i>	<i>OUTPUTS</i>	<i>SOCIAL WELL-BEING</i>

Tom Schuller
Three steps toward a learning society, 1998¹

Learning communities are those that use the intangible assets of social capital (trust, networking, and shared values) in practical yet imaginative ways to multiply the benefits of human capital (e.g. education, training) as well as build upon the stock of social capital within a community. Further, they build upon the intellectual capital of their communities as they tap the goodwill, the know-how, and the communication infrastructure (formal and informal) of their local human organization.

This is not mere theory. It is a reality in BC where community after community is prepared to use learning resources from every sector - civic, public (health, libraries etc.), economic, education, and voluntary – to prepare for the challenges of the new economy:

- ❖ In Lumby over half a dozen local agencies are collaborating to form a Monashee learning centre
- ❖ In Upper Skeena, Gitxsan First Nations leaders and non-native leaders are committed to working together to develop learning villages in their valleys

- ❖ In Valemount a learning centre initiated by college, school, government, and private sector partnership is the launching pad for a more skilled and diversified local economy.

In many parts of the province necessity is indeed the mother of new social inventions, whether they be partnerships, strategic alliances, or new forms of economic development such as social or economic cooperatives. Economic diversification is as necessary for community survival as biological diversity is for a species. New value-added approaches to the natural resource industries are an example of skilled intelligence and applied learning at the local community level. Sustainability, a catchword in community development, has a new meaning in the learning communities of BC where its realization is more probable as new knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values are acquired not just by a few – but by many.

The people of BC are its greatest assets. They are the source of the social and intellectual capital that no market can evaluate in monetary terms. It is their trust, networking, shared values and know-how – combined with their caring for and commitment to their communities – which cannot be bought or sold. Active citizenship, productive workers, caring parents and family members, and creative learners – these are the social roles that are most effectively learned and practiced through experience in local communities that recognize, value, promote and celebrate learning in all its forms – learning communities.

4.2 Growing Support for Learning-Based Community Development

Communities are willing and able to respond to community development that is truly community-focused and learning-based. While community leaders understand that initial outside consultation is often necessary, they also realize that if the initiative is to be sustained the community must own it. Learning-based community development builds upon previous and existing initiatives – it enhances and informs all types of community development regardless of purpose – whether it is citizenship education, health promotion, economic development, environmental sustainability, rural or urban development, or social development, or often a combination of objectives.

PART III. BRITISH COLUMBIA: CASE STUDIES

British Columbia is earning a reputation as the home of a wide variety of community development initiatives, a number of which are of an explicit learning-based nature. The following case studies, which are arrayed according to their central purposes, will reveal a measure of the richness of the BC experience and indicate possible future directions. They will also underscore the eclectic and pragmatic approach that characterizes community work

1. **Citizenship/Civic Education** Upper Skeena

The Upper Skeena is located in Northwestern BC. It is comprised of over 6,500 people living in fourteen villages scattered around the connecting valleys. About 70% of the population are Gitksan First Nation. The communities have a higher proportion of youth than the BC average with over 60% below 30 years of age. The area is among the most resource-dependent regions of the province with unemployment in recent years ranging from 40 to 70% in many villages.

The Gitksan Treaty Office and the municipal government of the Village of Hazelton have been among the leaders in the community development initiatives in Upper Skeena over the past decades.⁷ In the summer of 1999 a community-based steering committee commenced a process to create a learning community after it had successfully applied for developmental funding from the HRDC Community Learning Network Initiative.⁸ The Hazelton council declared the village a “learning village” and the village mayor and a Treaty Office chief committed to working in a collaborative cross-cultural way.

The heart of the learning community proposal is the use of community service-learning as a tool to promote citizenship values and action among the youth, both in and out-of-school, in the Upper Skeena. This objective was echoed in the Gitksan 20 year Millennium Education Plan that the Treaty Office was evolving. The development of

⁷ Recently the two bodies have promoted extensive socio-economic research in the area. Visioning and value identification processes resulted in a flurry of studies, including:

1998, *Action 2000: A journey into the human and economic potential of the Upper Skeena*, A-D Communications.

1998, *To Live a Good Life: Perspectives on a high school education*, Val Napoleon & Assoc.

1999, *Beyond 2000: Creating our futures – Socioeconomic priority setting*, A-D communications.

1999, *Breaking Barriers: A model for a literate citizenship*. A-D Communications.

2000, *Upper Skeena Learning Communities Partnerships*: Upper Skeena Development Centre.

⁸ The Office of Learning Technologies of HRDC had announced the CLN Initiative in January of 1999. Up to \$25 thousand could be available on a non-shared basis for developmental work, and up to \$100 thousand on a 50% cost-shared basis for each of three years for approved Pilot Projects. The central purpose of the Initiative was to promote the imaginative use of learning technologies to build networks within and between communities so as to create lifelong learning cultures.

future citizens and leaders for their emerging First Nation was seen as crucial, thus quality service-learning, with its proven power to challenge youth, was central to the Gitksan educational strategy. Recently the Plan has incorporated a learning community approach to provide a wider organizing principle and context.

Several pilot service-learning projects have already been successfully completed and the youth, many of whom were at-risk, were publicly thanked in community celebrations. Several of the young people have changed their attitudes toward learning and are going to seek further education. Plans are being laid to engage in a variety of service-learning initiatives, including the use of the Internet to connect a youth team led and mentored by Gitksan university students at UNBC with local college and high school students working on a joint service-learning project. Plans are also being laid for a combined service-learning/outdoor education project aimed at at-risk youth.

A local community developer, respected by both cultural communities, worked with the Upper Skeena Learning Community Partnership, to draw support from civic, public, private, educational and community leaders to explore a variety of local actions. They are investigating means of economic development and diversification, including possible small-scale social and economic cooperatives. They have also identified pre-natal to pre-school education as a community priority and have explored ways to strengthen provision of this area through programs such as Parents as First Teachers. Overall, they have identified a cluster of experiential learning approaches that meet not only their needs but also the way they learn best. They have taken a "Made-in-Upper Skeena" approach to empower their communities and mould a new generation of citizens.

2. Health Promotion

There is an increasing awareness that the promotion of both healthy individual life-styles and healthy communities are twin objectives that are major investments with significant individual and social return. This is particularly true in the case of providing good nutrition and nurture to babies and children. There are a number of learning-based community development initiatives underway that provide examples of communities and their local agencies collaborating to strengthen pre-natal to pre-school programs as well as a host of associated health promotion concerns.

2.1 Lillooet

Lillooet is a community of some 6,000 persons, 3,000 of whom live in the village and the balance in surrounding rural areas, including six First Nations bands. It is a community that for many years relied on a thriving forest industry that has now significantly diminished.

In 1999 a partnership of over half a dozen community organizations supported a proposal by the University College of the Cariboo, on behalf of the community, for a Community Learning Network (CLN) Initiative grant to become a pathfinder learning community. The Office of Learning Technologies (OLT) of the HRDC approved a developmental

grant and by January 2000 a two-person consultant team began to work with local people to further identify their community's needs and assets.

The initial proposal had identified the need for a strong pre-natal to pre-school initiative in the community. A group of local people had become aware of the growing body of health determinant, early childhood education and brain research that emphasized the need for good nutrition and nurture of babies if their later lives were to be healthy and productive. Subsequent discussions revealed that there was an additional need to develop a more effective network of learning technologies, especially if the First Nations people were to acquire learning opportunities that were culturally sensitive both in content and process. A need to diversify the local economy presented the challenge of assessing the environmental impact of proposed initiatives such as a major recreation/ski hill development and other eco-tourist industries.

A Learning Community Partnership steering committee, co-chaired by two local leaders, one of whom is the chief of the largest of the six Upper St'at'imc First Nation bands, will complete its multi-year business plan for submission to the OLT in June, 2000. The project consultation is committed to an open process that will build partnerships and promote ever-wider public participation.

2.2 Burns Lake

Few college centres in British Columbia are as connected with or as active in its community as the Lakes District Campus of the College of New Caledonia that is situated in Burns Lake. It serves a population of approximately 5,000 persons of whom 3,000 live in rural areas, some of which can be reached only by logging roads. Forty per cent of the population is First Nations and approximately 50% of the daytime students are First Nations.

The campus had 5,300 enrolments in 1999, all but 200 of which were on a cost recovery basis. The campus philosophy of being community based and learner centred is clearly expressed in its focus on serving the needs of individuals, families and a community challenged by Fetal Alcohol Syndrome/Effects (FAS/E). A number of programs that focus on those with those with FAS/E, include:

- ✓ FOCUS Employment Program, a federally recognized employment preparation program for adults with FAS/E
- ✓ Crime Prevention, a provincially recognized pilot project in FAS/E with community facilitator/mediator training
- ✓ Healthier Babies, Brighter Futures, a provincially recognized pilot project to provide education and support to mothers at risk of delivering babies affected with FAS/E as well as workshops to raise community awareness
- ✓ Kid's Edge, a program to assist FAS parents and children from birth to age 6

Preventative community-oriented programs include:

- ✓ an affiliated Family Enhancement Society that is housed at the campus
- ✓ a Toy Lending Library for toys important to child development

- ✓ Early Intervention Services including speech language, physical therapy, and a family support worker

The College's FAS Project is an example of one of its partnerships. The FAS Funding and Community partners are:

- Lake Babine Nation
- Family enhancement society
- Ministry for Children and Families
- Ministry of Health
- Health and Welfare Canada, and
- Ministry of Advanced Education, Training and Technology

The program has an advisory committee of most of the above departments as well as bodies such as Babine Forest Products and other local businesses, the local school district, Burns Lake Community Development Association, Lake Babine Health and Social Services Department, Northern Interior Health Unit, parents, and medical professionals.

The commitment of the Weldwood forest plant to community endeavours is striking. For example, it shut down one hour of each of its three shifts for a public education presentation to its workers on the dangers of a pregnant woman drinking, especially focusing on FAS. This cost the firm about \$250,000 in wages and lost production but made a significant contribution to community awareness.

Other programs build community capacity including the Volunteer Adult Literacy Training program that matches tutors with learners to improve literacy, a Diversity Training Program, and Institutional-based Training that provides access and referral to training and programs for income assistance recipients.

2.3 Kamloops

Few professions have so rigorously applied principles of good adult education to their training and practice as that of nursing. In British Columbia five colleges, four university colleges, and the University of Victoria have formed a Collaborative Nursing Program. The common curriculum for these institutions is conceptualized and developed by the partners. In the third and fourth years two courses are presented that have a strong learning-based approach to community development.

The third year course, entitled 'Health Promotion and Community Development',
"focuses on community as client from a health promotion perspective. The underlying principles of health promotion, including the social determinants of health, participation, capacity and empowerment, are emphasized. Community development as a pattern of community health promotion practice is explored."

A co-requisite course with a community placement, for academic credit, of 78 hours within a group, agency or population of the student's choice is also required.

The fourth year course, 'Health/Professional Growth: Nurses Influencing Change',

“explores ways nurses can influence and create change for the promotion of societal health. Emphasis is placed on selective strategies for enhancing nursing influence on the evolving Canadian health care system.”

Once again, the co-requisite course requires a 78-hour placement in a community agency.

The University College of the Cariboo is an active member of the partnership and its students are active in a wide array of community service-learning initiatives. For example, teams of two students:

- ✓ worked with a Kamloops community organization that advocates on behalf of, and supports, social and health issues of, sex trade workers to build bridges of understanding with local political and community leaders, and
- ✓ raised public awareness of WCB smoke free regulations as a project of the South Central Health Unit.

Other student teams have worked with community groups that aid those who live in the shadows of our society such as the homeless, Aids patients, those with eating disorders, and clients of the John Howard Society. In every placement the students explore ways by which both the groups they serve and the wider community can engage in informed dialogue about controversial issues that require new knowledge and attitudes for their eventual resolution.

3. **Economic Development**

3.1 Valemount

Valemount is a village of some 1300 people. Its main industries have historically been forest-related. Its use of community development processes began in 1983-4 when the College of New Caledonia closed its Robson Valley campus because of general government restraint. Local reaction to this loss of educational resources resulted in the College and the citizens requesting a community development expert to assist the community in assessing its needs, assets, and options. The Continuing Education Division of the Ministry of Education provided pilot project funding for a community development process and by the fall of 1984 the college provided \$25,000 annually to the Canoe Robson Education Development (CREDA) to operate offices in McBride and Valemount.

During the past decade its local economy was boom or bust, depending upon international lumber market conditions. Valemount has a beautiful scenic location with lots of outdoor adventure opportunities. In recent years, tourism has played an increasingly important role in the community's economy.

In 1994 the Village of Valemount developed an Economic Development Plan which identified the development of a Learning Centre as a priority. An Education and Technology committee was formed to guide development. It was composed of community members, plus representatives from CREDA, the Village, the college, UNBC, the Open Learning Agency, Ministry of Small Business, and the Prince George Regional Development Office. The community was turned down as a location of a provincial Skills Centre because of its small population base.

In 1996 the Ministry of Advanced Education, Training and Technology agreed to fund a computer training program for mill workers, and HRDC jointly funded employment counselling and some job training. Henceforth a Valemount Learning Centre has survived on a series of training contracts. Due to difficulty in coordinating administration between the two communities, Valemount formed its own society – the CREDA Learning Society, while McBride maintained the original Canoe Robson Education Development Association. Although the two communities still work closely together, each community has its own separate learning organization.

In 1999 the College agreed to work with the Learning Centre to develop and run a Northern Outdoor Recreation and Ecotourism Certificate course in Valemount. It is designed to run annually and to attract students from outside the area. A recent survey shows that the CNC/Learning Centre program has the highest level of support in the community of any of the proposed developments, including a hot springs resort and a gondola.

3.2 Salmon Arm

The federal and provincial governments entered into a Labour Market Development Agreement in April 1997 to enable a collaborative approach to assist British Columbians not currently in the labour market to move into employment.⁹ Under this Agreement pilot projects were initiated to develop best local solutions, and Tripartite Committees (HRDC, and provincial ministries responsible for Advanced Education and Human Resources) worked with Community Service Providers to test innovative ways to assist clients through programming leading to self-sufficiency.

One of the 17 projects that were developed took place in the North Okanagan town of Salmon Arm. There, a project was initiated by a local organization that provides services to the unemployed to create a resource centre with the capacity to facilitate development cooperatives as a means of local economic development and employment creation. This project was begun because many local people wanted a new form of self-employment in an area that needed economic diversification. Two public workshops were held in late 1997 and early 1998 that investigated various business co-operative models. The project, entitled “Co-opportunities”, commenced in October 1998. It was designed to provide a range of services including:

- ✓ skill assessment,
- ✓ marketing support,
- ✓ assistance with research and development,
- ✓ education and training,
- ✓ mentoring support and
- ✓ access to microloans/equity pools.

Key project activities included:

⁹ Canada-BC Labour Market Development Agreement, 1999, *Review of Pilot Projects Funded Under the LMDA*; Main Report and Technical Reports, Ference Weicker & Company.

- conducted research on background information on co-operative models, training etc.
- developed a co-op resource library at the local campus of Okanagan University College. The college is also developing a rural development program with a significant co-op component.
- Developed a 6-week Co-op Opportunity Business Training Program.
- Staged two training sessions with intakes of 12 and 11 respectively
- Provided “micro-training” – an evening orientation to co-ops – to approximately 60 interested citizens

As a result of the project 14 co-ops are at various stages of development: 3 have been or are in stages of incorporation, 2 have completed their business plans, 4 are at early developmental stages, and 5 are in formative stages. The three co-operatives being incorporated include:

- ◆ Silicon Garden – employing 3 people
- ◆ Organic Milling Co-op – initially 2 people will be employed
- ◆ Virtually Everything Co-op – a range of business services to small home-based or coop business will be provided.

The two coops completing their business plans include:

- ◆ Automotive Repair and Parts Co-op
- ◆ Earthborne Co-op – production of a variety of herbal products.

The four cooperatives in early stages of development include:

- ◆ Catering and Food Co-op – specialized catering, meal-on-wheels, and a quality restaurant
- ◆ Value Added Wood Products Co-op – use of recycled and scrap wood. This coop has a number of Metis people and an opportunity for Metis youth involvement is under consideration.
- ◆ Micro-Brewery Co-op – utilizing organic grains grown locally
- ◆ Landscaping and Irrigation Co-op – A comprehensive service including horticulture, green housing and an educational program.

This project commenced before the creation of the new Ministry of Community Development and Cooperatives or the Institute for Cooperative Studies at the University of Victoria. With the addition of these significant resources that are committed to supporting community-level development, a form of learning-based community development that could have the impact of a modern day Antigonish movement - but “Made-in-BC” - is possible. The project report notes that:

“success rates for co-operatives are higher than the success rates for small businesses. For example, a Canadian study found that the 5 year survival rate for co-operatives was 64% (as compared to 36% for regular businesses) and the 10 year survival rate was 46% (as compared to 20% for regular businesses).”

Thus the creation of new economic and social co-operatives as means of sustainable economic development will be another option for communities seeking greater economic diversification.

3.3 Prince Rupert

Traditionalists don't think of a library as a community partner in economic development. Yet the Prince Rupert Library is exactly that, among other things. Recently the Library gained new computer hardware courtesy of the Forest Renewal BC and the Skeena-Bulkley Natural Resource Access Project at NorthWest Community College. The project will enable public access to natural resource reports and studies. In addition users can obtain materials from district forest offices, related ministry agencies and First Nations' offices that, for the most part, had been previously inaccessible or uncatalogued. It will benefit workers in the natural resource industries through to school or college students learning more about surrounding industries and resources.

The library fostered a partnership with Industry Canada, community volunteers, the librarian's union and the library board to enable low-cost public access to Internet services. The Internet site has been a source of economic development in several ways, including:

- ✓ attracting a BBC film production on the Prince Rupert region that resulted in \$35,000 being spent locally by the British film crews, and a half-hour film featuring the city that was aired to 5 million UK viewers;
- ✓ facilitating an HRDC Fisheries Adjustment and Retraining Program to retrain fisheries workers to operate computers and enter the modern workforce; and hosting thousands of tourists who check their e-mail but also book local accommodation or tours via the Internet.

4. Ecological/Environmental

4.1 Clayoquot

The Clayoquot Sound region on the West Coast of Vancouver Island has been an area of dispute between logging and environmental interests regarding land and resource use for over a decade. The issue of sustainable development in the Clayoquot Sound was included in the public report by the Commission on Resources and the Environment (CORE) in 1993 whose recommendations included establishment of a Scientific Panel to review current land use standards. Government subsequently accepted Panel recommendations, including:

- principles of an ecosystem-based approach to planning and using watersheds as the basic unit of planning and management
- recognition of the need for the First Nations' cultural, social and economic well-being, and
- that land-use decisions must, to the extent possible, not prejudice or be subject to the outcome of comprehensive treaty negotiations, which were just beginning to get underway.

The BC government and the Nuu-chah-nulth Central Region Tribes commenced government to government negotiations on the co-management of the Sound and in 1994 an Interim Measures Agreement (IMA) was signed. The IMA enabled the creation of the Clayoquot Sound Central Region Board (CRB).

The CRB is composed of 5 First Nations and 5 government appointees and co-chaired by a First Nations and a government appointee for a total of 12 members. The mission of the Board, with the aid of a small secretariat experienced in experiential learning approaches, is to manage land and resources in the Sound prior to the conclusion of a treaty, in a manner that:

- provides opportunities for First Nations consistent with aboriginal resource uses and heritage, and considers options for treaty settlement;
- conserves resources in Clayoquot sound and promotes resource use that supports sustainability, economic diversification, and ecological integrity;
- encourages dialogue within and between communities and reconciles diverse interests.

Learning is central to the whole process. The Board and its committees engage in a variety of facilitated processes to promote capacity building. Almost all initiatives are a result of community consultation in areas including:

- ✓ sustainable forestry
- ✓ cedar tree salvage
- ✓ biosphere reserve initiatives, and
- ✓ oyster aquaculture.

Some community educational activities such as an oyster workshop grew into a region-wide initiative that closely involved First Nations' people.

There are no models in BC for the Board to copy. There are no other negotiated interim agreements that demand the constant learning and consensus building that this model of shared leadership and implementation require. There is no handy road map. There is as much learning required by government as by the First Nations who share this challenge and opportunity.

4.2 New Westminster/Coquitlam

The Green Links Project at Douglas College is a classic example of service-learning in aid of environmental sustainability. It is a 10-year effort to increase urban biodiversity.

An Institute of Urban Ecology was established in 1996 as part of the College's Centre for Environmental Studies and Urban Ecology. The Institute is community based, with support from community groups and the cities of Coquitlam, Burnaby, Delta, Surrey and New Westminster.

There are a variety of student service-learning opportunities ranging from simple course projects to internships and practicum placements. Course projects include:

- ✓ Production and distribution of educational brochures by students in the Habitat Restoration Program, and
- ✓ Production of thematic maps of vegetation in environmentally sensitive areas by Introductory Cartography students.

Internships have included:

- ✓ students in the Print Futures Program who produced outstanding documents for public education, and
- ✓ on-the-job training of environmental students to achieve greater employability skills in a range of employment.

Several students in the Print Futures program have been involved in practicum placements that have involved the layout and design of school library books and material for high school native plant propagation programs.

Not just students but also community members are involved. For example, there are several public contests to create awareness and celebrate good practice such as:

- ✓ an essay-writing contest in schools in which students reflect upon, and write about nature in the city and its importance in their lives
- ✓ photography contests about the natural environment
- ✓ a Backyard Wildlife Habitat Enhancement challenge, and
- ✓ a Gardens of Babylon Balcony Challenge to encourage people to plant native vegetation around their homes.

4.3 Cranbrook

Cranbrook is a growing centre in the East Kootenay region. Running through the city is Joseph Creek, a stream with increasingly doubtful water quality. For almost 5 years sporadic steps have been taken by the local authorities to take needed action on the situation. An able instructor of the second year ecology course developed a service-learning approach whereby her students brought important information to people who had very little scientific background, including elementary children. These children in turn educate their parents about not only the condition of the Creek but also ways to prevent further pollution.

The College students engaged in this community learning exercise rather than making traditional seminar presentations. Like all quality service-learning the whole community wins. The students reported that this project was one of the best they had ever participated in, and the awareness level of a whole City was raised. Four groups now support the Joseph Creek initiative of the College; the City of Cranbrook, the Public Health Unit, the local environmental society, and the Water Quality Branch of the Ministry of Environment that has helped fund some of the project costs.

4.4 Prince Rupert

Prince Rupert is one of the oldest ports on the B.C. coast. Northwest Community College has a campus in this beautiful city and has endeavored to design programs that will be particularly relevant to the community. Thus a College instructor designed and developed a Coastal Integrated Resources Management Program to take an interdisciplinary scientific approach to both the water and forest resources of the area.

To further engage her students in relevant learning, a variety of service-learning opportunities have evolved both First Nations and non-aboriginal learners. For example, a number of projects have occurred over the past year that have involved collaboration with civic, voluntary and educational partners and promoted student learning, aided the community, and led to economic development, including:

- ✓ exploration of the feasibility of a specialized kelp industry with potential foreign markets
- ✓ innovative plankton monitoring that may lead to full-time employment, and
- ✓ a stream stewardship and restoration project that also involves youth from a local alternate school who are mentored by college students

Thus a legacy of not only environmental learning but also socio-economic development is left when imaginative learning-based community development occurs.

5. Rural/Urban Development

5.1 Lumby

Lumby, a community of some 1,500 people, is situated in the North Okanagan near the Monashee mountain range. Nearby villages and farms bring the district population to approximately 8,500 in an area that has traditionally been dependent upon forestry and agriculture. Today 32% of the local economy is dependent upon forestry and related manufacturing while agriculture, tourism, retail trade and construction account for 8% each. With the closure of the largest sawmill in 1999, and 220 lost jobs, unemployment has risen to almost 20%.

Thirty per cent of the area families have low family income (twice the provincial average) and almost 25% of families are led by a single parent (chiefly female) - twice the provincial average. Educational attainment in the district is below provincial averages, with 9% of adults not having gone beyond grade 9 and only 3% having attained a baccalaureate.

In 1995 a local group, spearheaded by the local elementary school principal, applied for a rural Community Access Program (CAP) site from Industry Canada. The principal also worked with a local group to obtain provincial government funding for the creation of four community schools. A Lumby Community Internet Association was formed to promote training and “increase opportunities for community development”. The community has repeatedly identified the need for local access to learning, business skill

and job training, continuing education, and federal and provincial services, programs and resources.¹⁰

The closure of the town's largest saw mill galvanized the community to action. The village mayor, leaders from community agencies and the education sector engaged in a series of public consultations on the area's future. Using their successful CAP site experience and working with an outside consultant on learning community development, a local partnership from the civic, public (e.g. local social service, library and museum agencies), private sector, education (school district, Open Learning Agency and Okanagan University College), and community groups and individuals submitted a proposal to the OLT Community Learning Network (CLN) Initiative.

Thus in the spring of 1999 Lumby became one of the first CLN developmental projects. The development of a multipurpose one-stop Learning Centre was identified as the highest priority at a need identification event held on a Friday evening at which about 130 people, or 10 % of the village, participated. During the developmental stage a growing number of learning community partners committed themselves to supporting a Monashee Learning Centre that would be the central node of a distribute learning network in the district. Partners include:

- ✓ the Village of Lumby
- ✓ the North Okanagan Regional District
- ✓ the local school district, University College, Open Learning Agency, and Community Schools Association
- ✓ the Whitevalley Community Resource Centre
- ✓ North Okanagan Library Board
- ✓ Lumby Community Internet Access
- ✓ HRDC district office
- ✓ Service Canada
- ✓ Canadian Rural Partnership
- ✓ Monashee Economic Development Council
- ✓ Lumby & District Chamber of Commerce
- ✓ Monashee Arts Council

The community awaits response to its application for 3-year funding as a CLN Pilot Project that is committed to strengthening partnerships, increasing citizen participation and assessing performance based on community-set learning targets.

5.2 The Fort Nelson First Nation

The Fort Nelson First Nation is a community determined to build a "healthy" community in the fullest sense of the term. It has set a vision to have the community "be a strong,

¹⁰ See the following reports: 1997, *Lumby and District Forest Sector Training Needs Assessment*, WCRC, 1998, *Work, Income and work Wellness Survey Report*, Social Planning Council for the North Okanagan. 1999, *Lumby & Area Economic Development Action Plan*, Community Adjustment Team. See URL: <http://www.monashee.com/cat/finalreport.html>

healthy, proud, and self-reliant community, made up of strong, healthy, proud, and self-reliant community members.”

Among a number of committees and working groups, a Community Development Committee has been set up to determine community priorities. Development funds, which are acquired through a Memorandum of Understanding with the Province in regards to oil and gas activity, are to support community development initiatives. The Committee, working alongside the Band Council, determines how the funds will be used for community initiatives.

The Community Development Committee works closely with two other bodies. The first is the Social-Health-Education Committee made up of staff within various departments of the Fort Nelson First Nation. The committee members collaborate so that many of the issues overlap. For example, residential school effects need to be approached in an holistic manner as facet's of a person's life and family could be affected such as mental health, employment, and family breakdown.

A newly formed Economic Development Committee will serve as an advisory body to the Band Council regarding economic issues, i.e. what type of economic development does the community want, and how will the community be involved?

The community is attempting to ensure that both provincial and federal program funding is integrated to meet community needs. For example, a project funded by the provincial Ministry of Community Development, Cooperatives and Volunteers under its Community Enterprises Fund is enabling a comprehensive community needs assessment. This process supports two federally funded initiatives. The first is the Income Security Reform project supported by the Department of Indian Affairs. In this project an approach is being taken toward development of the “whole environment” of the community. The objective is to enable community members to become healthy and trained/educated, and able to take part in long-term careers in a sustainable local economy. In order for this to happen appropriate services and programs must assist members to develop their full potential, and long-term employment opportunities are developed. This will entail a move away from the seasonal and low skill jobs that are sometimes available in the oil and gas industry such as bush slashing. A second project, funded under the federal Department of Justice “Community Mobilization” program involves an assessment of the “root causes of crime”.

The Fort Nelson First Nation is clearly going beyond short-term “band aid” approaches. A very successful example of their long-term approach is the Chalo elementary school. A recent report of an external accreditation team noted its many strengths, including:

- ✓ the extra-ordinary warmth and deep caring of the entire staff;
- ✓ the high degree of staff professionalism;
- ✓ the outstanding communication between the school and the community as demonstrated by a traditional Morning Circle as well as many positive comments of community members;
- ✓ the creation of a community of readers; and

- ✓ the leadership at both the Band and the school that is focused on making a difference for the children.

5.3 Surrey

For over 20 years the Surrey Interagency Network has evolved into a forum for efficient information exchange in the fastest growing community in Canada. The Network is a consortium composed of several dozen social service agencies, advocacy groups, government representatives, and community education providers serving Delta, Langley City, Langley Township, Surrey and White Rock. Its mission is “to encourage and promote services and social policies which contribute to the general health, welfare and quality of life of the residents of Surrey.” Its goals are three fold, namely to:

- 1) enhance networking among human service organizations in surrey;
- 2) monitor the human service delivery system in surrey and make recommendations for improvement, and
- 3) work closely with city, provincial and federal initiatives dealing with human service delivery in surrey, thus ensuring representation of Network members.

The Network collaborates with other organizations to promote community development in the region. For example, it co-sponsored a South Fraser Regional Community Development Conference at the end of May 2000, along with the Surrey Social Futures and Kwantlen University College, and the conference funder, the provincial Ministry of Community Development, Cooperatives and Volunteers. The conference focused on identification of major socio-economic conditions in the region, promoted collaboration to support community development, and informed participants about best practices, community strengths and opportunities.

An example of how novel partnerships enable non-traditional learners to progress is the collaboration of the Nisha Family and Children’s Service Society and Kwantlen University College. The Outreach Education Program offered by Nisha, in partnership with Kwantlen, provides at-risk youth aged 19 to 24 with much-needed educational upgrading in tutorial and small groups at the Nisha location in Whalley. This program reaches many youth who otherwise would not engage in educational upgrading. Many of the youth had previously had very negative experiences in school and would not return to the traditional classroom, about 50% had some form of learning disability - others could not afford the travel to the nearest campus. One-to-one counseling and instruction enabled many of the students to progress. Of the 60 students who participated in the first eight months:

- ✓ 15 wrote the GED test and 9 passed and 6 partially passed
- ✓ 12 students found employment
- ✓ 8 students went to further training at Kwantlen
- ✓ 6 went to other training programs

This is a case study of successful non-formal and formal sector collaboration to reach those in communities who would otherwise not be engaged in further learning. In the

learning-based approach to community development the formal education sector does not have a monopoly on providing learning opportunities, but rather is a partner prepared to meet the special needs of learners within the wider community.

5.4 Humanities 101: Vancouver East and Victoria

The University of British Columbia is BC's oldest university and has earned a reputation as a traditional academic institution. Yet, for several years one of the most challenging university courses in the provinces is being offered in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside. The course, Humanities 101 is a credit liberal arts course that was initiated by two UBC students who were inspired by a similar program in New York City. The students gained funding support from the University and the student union and ran a 3-month pilot project for 23 students. Funding provides students with a hearty dinner, bus passes, child care, books and other resources. The non-traditional recruitment criteria included:

- ✓ no previous university experience
- ✓ little likelihood of access to a university, and
- ✓ literacy sufficient to read a newspaper

The first course was in philosophy and of 23 students who participated, 19 completed the course. Woven into the interdisciplinary Humanities 101 program are opportunities to discuss such fields as poetry and literature, art, architecture, opera and history.

After only a year's experience some positive outcomes are reported. Most of the students, who had been school drop-outs, reported that they had discovered that they were capable of learning. Several students have gone on to higher education via UBC's continuing education department; one has won a scholarship to a Christian theology college. Many of the program's graduates have volunteered to work with next year's students.

Building on the UBC success, the University of Victoria, with contributions of UVic professors, the Student Society, and space provided by the community-based Cool-Aid Society, commenced the Humanities 101 course in downtown Victoria in January 2000. The provincial Ministry of Social Development is providing \$15,000 to cover child care and meals.

Once again, a learning-based approach to community development, initiated by community leaders and building on partnerships, can gradually build community capacity and individual opportunities for even the most disadvantaged urban residents.

5.5 Cedar

Living in a rural area on the fringe of a large urban centre can present special problems. Cedar, in Regional District A near Nanaimo, has a widespread rural population of some 7,000 chiefly low-income people. In 1997, after a local needs identification process was conducted by a group of citizens who wanted to develop a community school, hopes were high. A Cedar School and Community Enhancement Society was created, however the

designation of two community school allocations (in total \$150,000 from the Ministry of Children and Families) went to 2 elementary and 2 high schools in the low-income Harewood area of Nanaimo. Thus Cedar remains one of several community schools in the province attempting to operate without any designated funding – an exhausting and frustrating experience.

A community activist (a retired woman) has voluntarily provided community leadership, and in doing so has worked with others to create important links with several partners, including:

- ✓ creation of a Community Police Station for RCMP community policing (supported by the local Island Credit Union);
- ✓ a Computer Access Centre with Industry Canada CAP funding, and support from a local First Nations band (a First Nations student is presently the Centre facilitator);
- ✓ a Youth Drop In Centre, initiated with HRDC funding, and now supported by the Nanaimo Youth Services and the local United Church in which the Centre is housed;
- ✓ a *Coats for Kids* project in collaboration with the Nanaimo RCMP.

All four of these ventures were initiated by the Society and spun-off as independent activities. The Society is hoping to gain support for future activities from two very successful provincial programs:

- the Youth Community Action program, that enables youth to earn post-secondary tuition through voluntary service, and
- the Attorney General's Night Alive program for night-time youth recreation.

Once again the issue of small on-going financial support for local community capacity-building, with significant multiplier effects, is raised. In small rural communities too often a small group of volunteers carry most of the load and, as their energy is sapped and their time consumed, they withdraw exhausted and disillusioned. Citizens in learning communities sometimes learn things governments don't want them to learn. Seeking support for community initiatives in the maze of government short-term project funding is proving to be a time-consuming and tiring process for many community leaders. Often just a relatively small amount of sustainable funding for a community animator can make a big difference to a small community, as we now turn to the next case study – Bamfield.

5.6 Bamfield

Bamfield and the near-by First Nations community of Anacla straddle the Cape Beale headlands on the south shore of Barkley Sound on Vancouver Island's West Coast. The combined population approaches 500. The communities are accessible by 100km of very active gravel logging road or by boat from Port Alberni. Like so many natural resource dependent communities, the downturn in the economy has led to significant local changes. Approximately 100 persons have left the community in recent years, the local school population has dropped from about 90 to approximately 65 during the past two

years. As in so many small communities the volunteer sector is stretched to the limit and there is evidence of “burn out”.

Several years ago the people of Anacla and Bamfield devoted six months to develop a Vision Statement, part of which defines their values and character as follows:

- We are a spirited, friendly, caring community with diverse backgrounds and interests, in a secluded west coast setting
- We value the beauty of the natural and cultural environment and our connections to it. We also value the special opportunities that exist within our community for understanding, appreciating and utilizing natural and cultural resources.
- We are dedicated to preserving and sharing these values.

A spark plug of this little community is the local community school. The Bamfield Community School Association (BCSA) was incorporated in 1995 and by 1996 a new Bamfield Community School (BCS) was opened. The basic funding for the community school comes from the School District 70 (Alberni). The Ministry of Children and Families contracts with the School District to fund three community schools in the district, one of which is in Bamfield. Additional funds for local programming come from the Ministry of the Attorney-General, the Ministry of Advanced Education, Training and Technology, HRDC, Industry Canada, Community Futures, MacMillan Bloedel Ltd and other local organizations. A community-based Board directs the Association and its many activities, which include an impressive array of partnerships such as:

- ✓ support for the local school newspaper and student-run television station;
- ✓ close communication with the Huu Ay Aht First Nation’s band office, health centre, and natural resource office
- ✓ BCS is the North Island college Bamfield site post-secondary information source;
- ✓ BCSA and the Alberni-Clayoquot community skills centre have a developed a service provider/facility provider relationship;
- ✓ BCSA has contracted with the Vancouver Island Regional Library to provide space and volunteers to staff a community book deposit;
- ✓ BCSA is developing a relationship with the Port Alberni Health Team to provide greater service and collaboration
- ✓ BCSA has contracted with Industry Canada to provide a Community Access Program site to the Internet.

The community has identified provision of youth services as a priority. The Attorney General’s “Nights Alive” program is in operation and several new ventures are in process. One of the most imaginative ventures is the operation of an Artisan’s Cottage begun five years ago as a grade 10 Business project where high school students were taught basic business principles while operating an art gallery. A “Jobs for Youth” grant donated by MacMillan Bloedel provided initial support. Continued aid for the project has come from Jobs for Youth, Summer Works, and Career Placement programs and the BCSA. Future support is being sought from Weyerhaeuser.

In May 2000 the project expanded with the opening of a second outlet, the Net Loft, located near the main dock. The BCSA, in collaboration with the Bamfield Arts Council,

supports this form of social entrepreneurship as well as various children's art activities. Along with providing tourist information, the Artisan's Cottage/Netloft Gallery sells local artwork (paintings, carvings, sculpture and pottery) on a commission basis.

5.7 Britannia Community School

The Britannia Community Centre is a large complex of inter-related educational and social services in the city's east side that date back to 1974, when after several years of community action, the Vancouver School Board and the City of Vancouver developed a dynamic, integrated approach to community education and development. Today the community school component of the complex has an active partnership approach to its work.

Through its on-going need identification processes the area of family and child development has become a priority. A variety of initiatives in which the school was a major player have been undertaken recently, including:

- ✓ an awareness Campaign 2000 focused on "Spotlight on Children and Youth" and their early developmental needs;
- ✓ a Working Committee on Poverty completed a study on "Unfulfilled Expectations, Missed Opportunities: Poverty among Immigrants and Refugees in BC";
- ✓ a Ministry of Children and Families ethno-cultural committee completed the "Cultural Competency Assessment Tools" project the will assist ethno-cultural organizations in identifying their strengths and weaknesses; and
- ✓ a community workshop on the asset based community development approach of John McKnight

The school, often in cooperation with a wide range of partners, also fostered a number of student programs, including:

- ✓ An intergenerational program for grade 5 students who are involved in weekly visits to the Britannia Seniors Lodge
- ✓ A parent/child science workshop co-sponsored by the Royal Bank
- ✓ An Artist in residence program supported by the Port of Vancouver
- ✓ An expanded volunteer program supported by groups including Frontier College
- ✓ An eye examination program co-sponsored by the North Health Unit and Lenscrafters by which 238 students were tested and 138 received eyeglasses.
- ✓ A mentoring program by which 60 adults mentored over 200 students thanks to corporate support and a Ministry of Education grant.

The school teamed up with Simon Fraser University and the National Council of Jewish Women to pilot a HIPPY program (Home Instruction Program for Preschool Youngsters). Funding was received from Health Canada, the Vancouver and Diamond Foundations, and the United Way. Home visitors provide weekly instruction to parents, who in turn teach their children. In all there were 6 cultural communities served: 2 First Nations, and one each of Vietnamese, African, Spanish, and multi-cultural.

5.8 Sunshine Coast-Sea to Sky-North Shore

Because of their regional nature many colleges have the potential to contribute to both rural and urban development. Capilano College serves the heavily urban North and West Vancouver area as well as part of the largely rural Sunshine Coast and Sea to Sky corridor to the Whistler area.

Highlights of their Foundations Initiatives in the rural portion of their region includes:

- ✓ a Family Literacy through Drama project co-sponsored by the Mount Currie Literacy committee and the Mount Currie Band's Xit'olacw Community School to promote literacy awareness and family opportunities to learning together
- ✓ a Regional Literacy project in partnership with Literacy BC and literacy coordinators from Mt. Currie, the Sunshine Coast and the Howe Sound to develop joint planning, needs assessment and provision of community support systems.
- ✓ a Women Literacy and Economic Development project in partnership with the Howe Sound Women's Centre Society with a goal of involving disadvantaged women in the process of developing a strategy to address issues of economic security for women in the Squamish area.

Similar community-based approaches are taken in urban projects such as:

- ✓ an on-going project delivering literacy training to Vancouver's Downtown Eastside in partnership with the Carnegie Community Association and the Carnegie Centre. This year the volunteer program is expanding outside the Centre to reach even more non-traditional learners with multiple social, health and economic problems.
- ✓ a partnership with a drop-in centre serving women in the sex trade to develop a participatory approach to literacy learning relevant to the women's needs.
- ✓ a Youth Community Action project run jointly with Malaspina University College and the College of New Caledonia to provide at-risk youth with work experience in the third sector whilst also providing them with tuition credits for further education.

The potential for the post-secondary institutions to be active partners in a wide variety of learning-based community development initiatives is enormous. A clear policy mandate, some dedicated funds, and strategic community partnerships would have a significant leverage effect that would be felt province-wide in both rural and urban development initiatives.

6. Social Development

6.1 Greater Victoria

Many people think of Victoria as a large city surrounded by a few suburbs. In fact the City of Victoria is the second largest municipality, after Saanich, in a region of 13 separate municipalities. The Community Planning Council of Greater Victoria, led by an

Executive Director with a strong adult education and international development background, has adopted a learning-based approach to community development. Learning how to build partnerships and promote participation has been central to success in variety of recent initiatives focused on quality of life and poverty issues.

Quality of Life in B C's Capital Region

Reliable and valid data on a range of socio-economic indicators is essential to informed discussion and decision-making by the various public, private and community organizations in modern communities. In Greater Victoria, with its 13 municipalities, different school districts and post-secondary institutions as well as various government ministries, the need for a shared data base was increasingly evident. For example, there are 5 municipalities with their own police forces, while the rest are served by the RCMP – no uniform reporting system exists in this area to this day!

A multi-year project has just published its first report on such matters as:

- ✓ Regional demographics
- ✓ Quality of employment, and housing
- ✓ Community health, stress, safety, participation and affordability.¹¹

Although no new data was collected, the publication brings together into one document existing reliable data that are not readily accessible from a wide variety of sources. This was possible because of the willingness to share information and skills exhibited by local and regional jurisdictions and community organizations.

Downtown CRUNCH

Since late 1996 many stakeholders in Victoria's downtown have been finding new ways of working together. This process of community learning was supported significantly by the Vancouver foundation, which recognizes the importance of investing in innovative change initiatives. In the midst of CRUNCH'S developmental process in 1998 the Mayor of Victoria created a Task Force to Improve Safety and the Quality of Life Downtown. The Task Force Report, "DOWNTOWN PRIDE" noted "the courage of the Street community's representative to request involvement in the Task force." In fact, a number of community representatives were added by the efforts of the business and other elites who had been working on Downtown CRUNCH and had learned that participation by all sectors of the community was essential to successful problem-solving. The Report concluded with the observation that "A perceptible shift from competition to cooperation occurred amongst diverse stakeholder groups. Finger pointing and blaming has been replaced by dialogue and cooperation."¹²

Capital Urban Poverty Project

¹¹ Community Social Planning Council, 2000, *Quality of Life in BC's Capital Region*, Victoria. The framework of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities Quality of Life Indicators was used.

¹² City of Victoria, 1998, DOWNTOWN PRIDE, Mayor's Task Force to Improve Safety and the Quality of Life Downtown.

The Canadian Council on Social Development (CCSD) initiated a cross-Canada survey of urban poverty in 1997. Although the CCSD had initially sought only municipal authorities to become partners and not local social or educational institutions, the CCSD was very willing to work with the partnership of 13 organizations created in Victoria to examine poverty. Three of the partners were grass roots, social justice groups. Three were from distinct organizational units within the University of Victoria. Two partners represented municipal governments and one represented the Region's planning services.

A representative from the Capital Health Region joined early on as there was a strong concern about the impact of inequality on health. The remaining three partners were the Community Social Planning Council, the United Way of Greater Victoria, and a private consulting company.

The partners agreed to four principles that guided the project:

- 1) Accurate comprehensive data will be made available and accessible at minimal cost.
- 2) Data will be consistent with existing municipal boundaries where possible and complement rather than replicate existing data.
- 3) Opportunities for participation in the project will be extended widely.
- 4) The project will find ways to locate project findings into existing systems so that it leaves a lasting legacy.¹³

The partners worked closely for over two years and became a "learning community" of common concern.¹⁴ A process of public consultation during the process was positively received. For example, several community forums were held and a major conference on poverty issues and action attracted over 450 persons. Media played a very important role in broadening the public debate about local poverty. The project report was released in April 2000 and project partners are already considering ways of joint action.

6.2 Comox

The Comox Valleylinks Community Network is developing, in partnership with key organizations in the community sector, a "Learning Community's Resource Network". This project, funded by the Community Learning Network initiative of the Office of Learning Technologies, HRDC, has many inter-related objectives, which are to:

- ✓ strengthen self-directed and informal learning through technology that enhances local lifelong learning opportunities. Initial priority will be increasing the capacity of the community sector workforce.
- ✓ improve income and status for all through sharing and enhancing community sector know-how
- ✓ extend and bolster social support and family networks, especially for those disadvantaged by barriers to literacy and technology use
- ✓ foster increased citizen involvement

¹³ University of Victoria, 2000, *Poverty and Inequality in the Capital Region of British Columbia: A Report on the Capital Urban Poverty Project*, Faculty of Human and Social Development, Victoria.

¹⁴ Personal interview, May 11, 2000 with Mabel Jean Rawlins-Brannan, Executive Director of the Community Social Planning Council.

- ✓ reinvigorate the public health services through consumer-based health information and healthy child development

The project goal is a citizen-centred on-line community learning resource that stimulates the community's knowledge transfer process. This will enable a more robust form of citizen-centred community development through collaboration on:

- community initiatives
- wide-spread exchange of ideas, and
- transfer of know-how from one sector to another or the community as a whole.

This initiative is building on several years of successful experience in use of Industry Canada's Community Access Program (CAP) in the Comox Valley and could prove to be an important pathfinder project for those who wish to integrate CAP resources with the wider purposes of community development.

6.3 Chilliwack

The Fraser Valley Regional Library is one of a number of partners sponsoring a self-sufficient community literacy program aimed at families. The Families in Motion program promotes literacy for all family members. It runs out of two places; Family Place and also the Skway First Nations Hall-McCammon elementary school. Program partners, besides the Library, include:

- ✓ School District 33
- ✓ The University College of the Fraser Valley
- ✓ Skway First Nations, and
- ✓ Chilliwack Community Services

The program, which has run without provincial government funding for seven years, commences with a buffet breakfast for the children and parents. The children then go to their pre-school program while the adults focus on learning skills, computer literacy, and a parenting program. Last semester 19 children and 18 adults were registered and 7 participants worked on their GED (high school equivalency) course. The elementary school principal has observed that:

“Probably the most valuable thing from this program is having these adults in our school, in our hallways and our computer labs. They are showing our children that learning is indeed a lifelong venture.”

6.4 Prince Rupert

Roosevelt Park Elementary school is a school with several differences. First, it has been designated as a community school by the local school district and thus receives the standard community school grant of the Ministry of Children and Families. Second, about 90% of its 325 students are First Nations and 5% are Vietnamese-Canadians. A community-based Advisory Board directs the school programs, raises funds, and assures that a wide-range of activities are supported by an equally wide range of organizations, for example:

- the Ministry of Children and Families supports both a student breakfast and lunch program that ensures proper nutrition
- the Attorney General's department supports several programs for at-risk youth including night basketball
- the local Kinsmen Club provides its house for youth meetings
- the City of Prince Rupert has provided free facilities for programs such as a cross-cultural Vietnamese language and culture program
- the RCMP sponsor recreation events
- the Parks and Recreation Commission has provided gymnasium and computer room access.

The program has made a difference to the health and well being of the children but has also changed the behaviour of at least some at-risk youth. For example, a recent Multi-Cultural Garden Contest, in which each class developed a multi-cultural collection of flowers and design, resulted in all the garden boxes being arrayed outside the school. Unlike other times, no acts of vandalism occurred to the display- to which all had contributed and for which all had taken pride.

6.5 Cowichan/Lytton/Tache/Fort St.John/Mount Currie

Over the past decade First Nations community partners have worked with the First Nations Partnership Program of the School of Child and Youth Care, University of Victoria. The primary mission of the partnership is the development of community capacity to support optimal development of children and youth in culturally supportive ways. Since 1989, seven First Nations partners in Saskatchewan (two partners) and British Columbia (five partners including the Cowichan Tribes, the Nzen'man' Child and Family Service of Lytton, the Tl'azt'en Nation of Tache, the Treaty 8 Tribal Association of Fort St.John, and the Mount Currie First Nation) have engaged with the university-based team to co-construct, deliver and evaluate the community-based, bi-cultural course work leading to a diploma in Child and Youth Care.

A "generative curriculum model" has evolved in which cultural knowledge about child development, child-rearing practices and community life are considered alongside Euro-Western theory, research and practice. While the form, structure and content of each program varies with the community involved, all partnerships have been guided by general principles:

- community initiative and involvement in all aspects of program delivery;
- bicultural respect;
- co-construction of curriculum (Community specific tradition and Euro-Western tradition);
- community development through partnership;
- child as focus within an ecological context;
- university accredited Child and Youth Care education ladder; and
- broad scope of child and Youth Care applications and career preparation.

Research findings involving all seven projects indicate the importance of:

- ✓ offering the training in the student's own communities,
- ✓ involving the community in every step of program development and delivery,
- ✓ basing the curriculum process and content in intergenerational relationships, community-collaboration, and the real needs of the children.

The results of this community development good practice were evident in the research findings that:

- ✓ student completion rates (60-100%) were twice the national average for First Nations post-secondary students (below 40%);
- ✓ 95% of graduates remained in their own communities;
- ✓ 65% of graduates were employed in human service-related occupations five months after the program end;
- ✓ over 90% of graduates reported their parenting or grand parenting skills improved;
- ✓ at least 80% of program expenditures remained within the community.

At least of equal importance was qualitative data that indicated, for instance, that:

- students developed mutually supportive relationships with older persons in their communities, many of whom contributed to teaching in the program, and
- graduates who suffered ill effects from residential schooling reported significant healing, recovery of cultural identity and pride, and became community leaders as advocates for children and youth.

APPENDICES

I. LEARNING-BASED COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN THEORY AND PRACTICE

Learning-based community development is possibly one of the oldest forms of local development on record. From ancient times the link between learning and the communities in which it occurred has been indelible. From Athens to Alexandria; from the seven university cities of the early Islamic world to early universities of Medieval Europe; from the first settlement in Acadia to the Antigonish adult education movement of 20th Century Nova Scotia – the civic location as much as the learning that took place has been remembered. From the philosophical discourses of Greece to the spiritual teachings of the three great monotheistic religions of the Middle East, fundamental issues of citizenship, the nature of humanity, and of faith have been discussed in communities. Little wonder that in our time of massive socio-economic challenge and change, learning communities are being re-invented.

Today, thanks to powerful forces of institutionalization and professionalism, community development is as fragmented as any field of theory and practice. For this reason, and to ensure some common understanding of the core concept and meaning, as well as the limitations of this study, a working definition will be presented. The interdisciplinary nature of the field, related purpose-driven models, and recent insights will then be briefly discussed. Finally, the historic roots, recent trends and best practices of community development will be reviewed.

A. TOWARDS A WORKING DEFINITION

Learning-based community development comes in many forms. Its modern definition has been greatly influenced by the emerging understanding of the lifelong nature of learning. With the release in 1996 of two major international reports that dealt with lifelong learning as an organizing principle and social goal for the 21st Century knowledge-based society, the relationship of community development to a wider lifelong learning strategy has become clearer.¹⁵ Specifically, when the lens of lifelong learning is focused on community development substantial insights occur, including recognition that:

- ✓ the vertical or life-long dimension of an individual's learning is greatly influenced by the individual's environment throughout the life-span stages, from pre-natal to pre-school through to senior age
- ✓ the horizontal or life-wide dimension of learning values learning whether it has been acquired through formal education, non-formal workplace or community settings, or informal serendipitous learning, and
- ✓ learning is as much a social process as an individual activity.

For purposes of this study the term community development has been defined as:

¹⁵ OECD, 1996, *Lifelong Learning for All*, Paris and UNESCO, 1996, *Learning: The Treasure Within*, Paris.

“action by people locally to enhance the social, cultural, environmental and economic conditions of their communities.”

The “learning-based” approach to community development can take many forms. It is not a type of community development; rather every sort of community development can be informed and infused by a learning-based approach (see section 2, page 57 for the types of community development). The learning-based approach goes beyond a traditional educational approach, it:

- ✓ focuses on learners and learning rather than teachers and teaching
- ✓ goes beyond mere information transmission – it requires two-way communication or inter-active dialogue
- ✓ recognizes that information (data) must be given context, application and meaning to become useful knowledge
- ✓ applies learning, using the community as the classroom or laboratory e.g. it emphasizes experiential learning, including field or community-based learning such as service-learning, apprentice or internships, as well as collaborative or peer learning, and traditional knowledge or wisdom, and
- ✓ mobilizes the resources of the total learning system (formal and non-formal) to promote the purposes of community development.

One form of learning-based community development that has emerged in the past decade is the “learning communities” movement. This version gained currency following the 1992 Conference on Learning Communities in Gothenburg, Sweden. Sponsored by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the event placed learning communities on the international public agenda. The focus was on initiatives in large urban settings, with featured cities from countries such as Japan, Australia, and the USA.¹⁶ By 1997 the OECD initiated a series of seminars focusing on five different models of learning cities and regions in Western Europe. The basic assumption of all models was that “learning, the production and use of knowledge, and the deployment of new information and communication technologies are essential for maintaining competitiveness in our global economy - for an enterprise, a city, or a region ...”¹⁷ A study-visit to the UK learning communities in the summer of 1998 resulted in a report that adopted the UK learning community definition, namely:

*“...any city, town or village, and surrounding area, that, using lifelong learning as an organizing principle and social goal, promotes collaboration of the civic, private, voluntary and education sectors in the process of achieving agreed upon objectives related to the twin goals of sustainable economic development and social inclusiveness.”*¹⁸

¹⁶ The conference report, which gave examples of learning city initiatives, included Edmonton and its lifelong learning consortium as the sole Canadian case.

¹⁷ OECD, 1998, *High Level Seminar on Competitive Strength and Social Cohesion Through Learning Cities and Regions: Concepts, Developments, Evaluation*, Paris, 26-27 January.

¹⁸ Faris, Ron, 1998, *Learning Communities: Cities, Towns and Villages Preparing for a 21st Century Knowledge-Based Economy*, Centre for Curriculum, Transfer and Technology, Victoria. Since 1995 a network of UK learning communities has emerged. In 1998 there were 20 members in the Learning Cities Network, today there are 40 associates, and by next year about 75 cities and towns will be involved in this

In this study, a definition of learning-based community development will adopt some of the elements of the OECD/UK models and will be characterized by the following features:

- ✓ a focus on geographic rather than virtual communities
- ✓ an emphasis on processes that promote individual and group learning within and across every sector of a community whether –
 - civic
 - public (health, social services, libraries, museums etc.)
 - economic (private or cooperative)
 - education (from kindergarten to university)
 - voluntary/community
- ✓ learning how to build and sustain learning partnerships across all sectors
- ✓ learning how to promote and sustain citizen participation/involvement in setting, achieving and evaluating learning targets
- ✓ learning how to assess performance and
 - set achievable/measurable objectives
 - benchmark best practice
 - evaluate progress
- ✓ learning how to enable access to learning technologies so that all have
 - basic computer literacy
 - means of networking within and between learning communities here and abroad
 - opportunities to use technology as a tool to achieve individual and community development purposes
- ✓ the equal valuing of learning, whether acquired in the community, the home or the classroom

For purposes of this study the term “learning-based community development” is defined as:

“community development that is viewed through the lens of lifelong learning so that the development of individuals and groups, and the achievement of their economic development and social inclusion objectives are achieved through continuous acquisition and use of the knowledge (traditional and new), skills, attitudes and values in order that a culture of lifelong learning, with its preventative as well as remedial and sustainable features, is shared by all who can contribute as:

- *active global citizens*
- *productive workers*
- *caring parents and family members, and*
- *creative learners.*

voluntary association dedicated to the promotion of best practice and the learning cities movement. The Network is financed by its civic members and the Department for Education and Employment.

1. Interdisciplinary Nature

Both community development and lifelong learning are concepts that are interdisciplinary in nature. They draw upon virtually all of the social sciences, sciences, and humanities for insights and data, and are decidedly not “value-free”. These fields of practice have evolved from thought and action that is grounded in democratic and humane values. Both celebrate diversity and support the historic struggle of ordinary people for liberty and social justice. Learning-based community development transcends a traditional education-based approach with its attendant academic gatekeepers, and those who would create a monopoly on the production and distribution of knowledge or skills. It is not an education-based or schooling model. It is rooted in the belief that the capacity and curiosity to learn is a natural human trait, and assumes that:

“Men and women have within themselves and their communities the spiritual and intellectual resources adequate to the solution of their own problems.”¹⁹

2. Common But Fragmented Community Development Objectives

A variety of approaches to community development have emerged over the past seventy years of its growth. While most have roots in the thought and action of practitioners in the pre-World War II era, several have emerged more recently from the insights of the health and environmental sciences. All are purpose-driven models to which learning-based approaches can contribute, and have been applied. The following typology forms an acronym, **CHEERS**, which stands for six major purposes or objectives of community development:

- Citizenship/education
- Health promotion
- Economic development
- Environmental/ecological sustainability
- Rural/urban development
- Social planning/development

None of these approaches are in watertight conceptual compartments, but practitioners from each field appear to often have little or no contact with their colleagues from other schools. The “stove pipes” of government departments and the disciplinary purity of academic/professional training often exacerbates the situation. Yet the theory and practice in each appears to be occasionally influenced by the results of the other approaches. There are, however, crosscutting concerns, methods and techniques that inform practice in every approach. It is to a number of these to which we now turn.

2.1 Some Common Issues of the Six Approaches

There is evidence that learning-based models are of some interest in every one of the types of approaches. Indeed, a growing awareness of the importance of incorporating a life-long learning strategy within each of the six approaches may be one of the few common core values and principles that all share. At the very least, applying the lens of

¹⁹ Canadian Association for Adult Education, 1946, *Statement of Purpose*, Toronto.

lifelong learning - with its life-span and life-wide dimensions - helps to bridge some of the more insular aspects of disciplinary and professional perspectives. Further, every approach, regardless of its purpose, appears to share some concern about one or more of the following issues:

- Development of less fragmented and more holistic approaches to community development;
- Recognition of the importance of identifying the value base of both the community and the developers/consultants who work with them;
- Application of communications and information technologies as tools for achieving a community's purposes rather than as drivers;
- Means of creating sustainable development, including sustainable community processes and infrastructure;
- Ways of identifying, using and enhancing social/intellectual capital;
- Methods of more effectively assessing community development outcomes.

B. HISTORIC ROOTS

1. An International Perspective

Canada has been blessed by a wide variety of approaches to community development in the past. Many of the First Nations had forms of leadership and spiritual values that were intuitively concerned with issues of sustainability and community well being. Early French and British settlers, and later European immigrants, brought with them, at their best, a determination to create a more just society than they had left in the Old World and a belief in the power of learning (formal and non-formal) to help them help themselves and their communities. Canadians have always been influenced by the thought and action of their southern neighbours – this is as true in the field of community development, and particularly learning-based approaches, as in any other field.

2. A “Made -in-Canada” Approach

2.2 The Foundation of Learning-Based Approaches in Canada

Canada as a nation was built on community collaboration and self-help whether it was barn raising bees, creating local cooperatives or developing local government to ensure a measure of law, order and basic public services. Learning-based community development has its roots in both non-formal and formal learning sector initiatives. Civic learning or citizenship education was the major pre-occupation of Canada's fledgling adult education movement by the turn of the 20th Century. The non-formal sector, led by groups such as Frontier College, engaged in active citizenship/basic literacy programs for new Canadians as well as resource industry workers scattered in rural or remote settlements.²⁰ Women's Institutes, initiated in Stoney Creek, Ontario began forms of health promotion in the 1890's following the death of its founder's baby due to spoiled milk. The Canadian

²⁰ Toronto-based Frontier College eventually expanded into more overt community development approaches in both urban and rural settings across Canada following the Second World War.

tradition of learning-based community development is based on the real-life concerns and needs of ordinary Canadians and is neither education-driven nor an academic exercise.

The formal education sector, led by St. Francis Xavier University and the Antigonish Movement in the 1930's, developed a variety of programs in extension departments across Canada to encourage active citizenship and community economic development at local levels. Drawing upon practice and insights as far afield as Denmark and the UK, and casting an eye on best practice in the US, Antigonish leaders such as Moses Coady adapted an unique and holistic learning-based community development approach. The Movement helped revivify rural life in Nova Scotia and informed practice across Canada, and then the world.

The Canadian Association for Adult Education commenced community development work among the sawmill workers of The Pas, Manitoba and aided the creation of a Community Life Training Institute in Barrie, Ontario in the late 1930's. The Association, in concert with the CBC and the Canadian Federation of Agriculture, commenced the National Farm Radio Forums in 1941 to promote informed discussion of farm issues and promote social action. Indeed, in its first 10 years, over 400 credit unions and cooperatives were formed through Farm Forum listening groups, as well as a number of rural electrification and community centre projects.

By 1943 the Canadian Association for Adult Education, in cooperation with the CBC, began an urban radio series, Citizen's Forum, in order to promote informed discussion of war and peace aims as well as other relevant topics suggested by listening group participants. In collaboration with the National Film Board and its film circuits, local action projects, often of a community development nature, were initiated. Thus the CAAE was involved in a variety of learning-based community development approaches – citizenship, economic, rural and urban development – using adult education methods and techniques to promote both individual and community betterment.

The role that the federal government played in community development during and after the Second World War is, unhappily, largely forgotten. At least two periods are worth mention. First, the creation of national institutions with a broad learning mandate in the late 1930's – the CBC and the NFB – was to have an impact on community development until the 1970's. Second, the flurry of community initiatives, largely initiated during the Trudeau era, indicated the ability of the national government to influence events at a community level and to warn of the frailty of programs largely dependent on short-term funding, and subject to shifting political sands.

The 1960's and 70's were periods of significant community development initiatives across the nation. The Maritimes, as ever, was a hotbed of novel activity. In Newfoundland the Extension Division of Memorial University initiated the acclaimed Fogo Island project using film as a means of promoting more informed and participative rural development. New cooperative activities in Nova Scotia were characterized by the development of the New Dawn enterprise. In Quebec, the silent revolution and its reform of the education system unleashed substantial social animation through the newly created CGEP's or colleges. Two western provinces, Saskatchewan and Alberta launched

innovative formal learning sector initiatives in the early 1970's. Saskatchewan created a unique brokerage model college system based on community education principles that specifically promoted community development as a college role. Alberta first created a province-wide system of community-based Further Education Councils and then supported expansion of a provincial network of community schools that were to become involved as community development partners.

2.2 British Columbia's Heritage

Like its Canadian partners, BC has an early history of learning-based community development in which the non-formal sector, such as Women's Institutes and the YMCA, played an important part. Unique social experiments such as the creation of the Utopian co-operative community on Malcolm Island by Finnish miners in 1903 serves as another example of self-reliant community initiatives of pioneering British Columbians. Formal learning sector involvement was limited to the work of UBC's extension division which, influenced by the Antigonish model, carried out development of fishermen's cooperatives and credit unions in coastal communities during the late-1930's.

Because of post-war provincial government policy that saw education as a low priority, BC developed community colleges in a way that ironically created the potential for learning-based community development. In the late 60's, following the report by UBC President John MacDonald, local school district referenda were necessary for creation of a local college – thus developing a measure of local commitment and accountability to the first colleges. However by the early 70's rural BC was ill-served and a government Task Force in 1974 recommended a new model of college based on lifelong learning principles and with a specific role as regional animators/resources of community education and development. Draft legislation along these lines was stillborn with the defeat of the government.

Two years later a provincial committee on continuing and community education recommended development of policy frameworks, administrative, and funding systems that would enable community education and development, including increased support for the community schools that had commenced in the early 1970's. From 1976 until 1986 these systems were put in place by a Division of Continuing and Community Education that funded, among other initiatives, community development projects in villages such as Revelstoke, Lake Cowichan, McBride, and Valemount. Two consortia of colleges and school districts concerned with the effects of dire socio-economic times were formed to work with the unemployed and their communities, and with community partners to strengthen family life and learning.

A 1985 Continuing and Community Education Division study of community economic development initiatives in both the formal and non-formal sector reported a wide range of activities.²¹ Some examples of local economic development links were:

²¹ British Columbia, 1985, *Collaboration for Local Economic Development: The Role of Public Educational Institutions*, Division of Continuing Education, Ministry of Education, Victoria.

- ❖ Malaspina College created a Student Development Corporation that worked with a local credit union to foster student self-employment projects
- ❖ Douglas College facilitated the formation of a Development Association which created a community economic profile and then an entrepreneurial centre
- ❖ Surrey School District Adult Education developed a pilot project course to assist residents in establishing small, home-based “cottage industries”
- ❖ Camosun College worked with a plywood workers cooperative to develop a comprehensive training plan for its new board and member-workers.

The report indicated that educational institutions played one or more of the following roles:

- ✓ creating interest and awareness about community economic issues
- ✓ informing communities about a range of options and approaches for developments
- ✓ collaborating with many sectors to promote development
- ✓ initiating comprehensive community economic councils
- ✓ initiating specific courses, programs and projects to aid individuals and groups
- ✓ incubating promising business ideas through making their facilities, equipment and expert resources available to their communities.

The report cited 12 case studies and gave 18 examples of ways in which education and economic development could be linked.

With the abolition of the Continuing and Community Education unit of the Ministry of Education in 1987, many of the activities in the formal education sector ceased, with some notable exceptions.²²

Three studies in 1992 revealed significantly reduced support for community education and development through the education ministries and their school and post-secondary systems. The first, an assessment of the development of adult and continuing education in the period 1983 to 1990, found that none of the ministry roles, policies, and funding guidelines established in the period 1976-83 “have been formally reversed or denied – they have simply been ignored.”²³ The report found that there were three characteristics reflected by most educational institution’s continuing /community education programs:

- a) A reduction in services to community organizations, as compared to business, industry and allied organizations;
- b) Reduced program activity for deprived, needy and disadvantaged people, and
- c) A philosophical shift in community programs from “service” to “market” orientation.

²² The Community Economic Development Centre at SFU was created in 1989 and has played an important role in training community economic developers who have worked throughout the province and elsewhere.

²³ British Columbia, 1992, Ministry of Advanced Education, Training and Technology, *Continuing Education in British Columbia Colleges and Institutes: A Foundation for Lifelong Learning*, Centre for Policy Studies in Education, UBC.

A second government study of Adult/Continuing Education, using a lifelong learning policy lens, focused a number of recommendations on increased community education, “particularly in non-metropolitan regions and disadvantaged areas generally, including funding for programs that promote:

- a) Multi-cultural and citizenship education;
- b) Local economic development;
- c) Solution of social problems;
- d) Family learning;
- e) Health and safety education; and
- f) Volunteer training.”

It also recommended that such funding be allocated through a system of community-based learning councils which would allocate funds to non-formal as well as formal providers.²⁴ However the funding for community education that was abolished in the mid-1980’s was never restored.

The third 1992 study focused on collaborative efforts of post-secondary institutions with community partners for community economic development. A survey revealed that several universities, the Open Learning Agency, and almost half of the colleges were involved in aspects of community economic development. Examples of the wide range of activities include:

- ❖ Simon Fraser University’s Community Economic Development Centre combined on-going research with a growing teaching program, including development of a distance education program.
- ❖ UBC ‘s Centre of Continuing Education developed a certificate program on shared decision-making about community/regional economic and social issues and its schools of Social Work and Community and Regional Planning were working at the community level as with provincial bodies such as SPARC on community development issues.
- ❖ The Open Learning Agency worked with the British Columbia Roundtable on the Environment and the Economy using a learning circle (discussion group) approach on issues such as the changing nature of work in a sustainable economy.
- ❖ Northern Lights College worked with local game farm (bison and reindeer) producers in order to improve game farm productivity and diversify the local economy.
- ❖ Malaspina College was actively involved in the Parksville Healthy Community Project and, through the Project’s Economic Development Committee, explored ways in which education could support sustainable economic development.

The study concluded that:

²⁴ Faris, Ron, 1992, *Lifelong Learning for the 21st Century: A Report on the Future Development of Adult/Continuing Education in British Columbia*, Ministry of Education, Victoria.

“The post-secondary system has the basic experience, and with limited, but strategically allocated, new resources could have the capacity to collaborate in the promotion of community economic development. The Ministry of Advanced Education, Training and Technology and the system share the conviction of the 1985 Report that “public educational institutions as participants in local economic development can provide the link between learning and its practical application in the community.” Indeed, unless appropriate learning by all participants accompanies each step of the community economic development process the sustainability of any project outcome is at risk.”²⁵

The report recommended that the Ministry should play a support role to another ministry responsible for community economic development. Thus, with inter-ministerial collaboration, the considerable talent and resources of the post-secondary system could be harnessed for effective partnerships at the community level.

II. RECENT TRENDS AND BEST PRACTICE

Learning-based community development approaches are, like the six types of community development that it informs and infuses, influenced by global trends that affect British Columbia and the rest of Canada. There is gradual articulation of both principles and cases of best practice against which it can and should be benchmarked.

A. AN INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

A global assessment of community development in 1998, “Community Development in a Global Context”, brought both good and bad news – but the core message was that communities and those who would be community developers must incorporate a global dimension to their thinking.²⁶ The good news was that *“there has been a remarkable growth of interest in the concept of community and community development at local, national and international levels.”* The bad, or not so good, news was the twin trends of *globalization of economic power* and the *hegemony of the free market*. The “trickle-down” theory of economic development – John Galbraith described it as “if you feed enough oats to the horses, some will pass down the road for the sparrows” – has been largely discredited. However, the view that the market will solve all economic ills remains an assumption of many leaders of the political and economic elites despite mounting evidence of growing poverty world-wide.

Associated with these trends is an equally serious issue of *the growth of inter-communal conflict* based on different combinations of race, culture or religion. Another trend is the increasing *globalization and realignment of political power* through the construction of supranational political structures and institutions such as NAFTA. The final trend identified was that of *increasingly rapid global communication* with its potential for good

²⁵ Faris, Ron, 1992, *Collaboration for Community Economic Development*, A Background Paper on the Past and Present Initiatives, and Potential Roles of the Post-Secondary System of British Columbia in Regard to Community Economic Development, Ministry of Advanced Education, Training and Technology, Victoria.

²⁶ Craig, Gary, 1998, “Community Development in a Global Context”, *Community Development Journal*, Vol.33 No.1 January, pp. 2-17. Craig is a British expert in this field.

or bad human consequences, dependent upon how it is used. British Columbians will have little difficulty relating these trends to the economic and cross-cultural challenges they and their communities face.

Yet a review of literature and selected Web sites, and a survey of best practice here and abroad reveal a number of other trends – exemplified by two concepts: social capital, and community capacity-building that are changing thought and practice - that bode well for future development of learning-based community development. These concepts and their relevance to emerging practice in BC will illustrate what the positive potential learning-based approaches hold for community development.

1. **Towards a New Political Economy: Social Capital**

There is a growing awareness that classical political economic theory does not help decision-makers or citizens to understand or deal with a host of inter-related challenges in the 21st century knowledge-based society. There is increasing concern that the gap is widening between the rich and the poor, the educated and the undereducated, and between nations. Present trends could lead to the creation of permanent under-classes with high levels of unemployment, increasing violence and crime, social welfare dependency, poor health and housing, and inadequate skills.

Prime Minister Blair, among other European leaders, has recognized that the policies and approaches to economic and social development that have been used for the last 30 years are resulting in increasingly fragmented communities. Rather than general increases in the standard of living in western society, we are seeing instead increased polarization, with an ever-increasing gap between the rich and the poor while the middle class is slipping further down the economic ladder. Further, as the pool of impoverished and excluded residents increase in a community, so do the associated social problems such as crime, youth unemployment, and various aspects of family breakdown and dysfunction. The result is increased costs (requiring increased taxation) for police, health, education and welfare that act as a drag on the economic growth of the country, while the decline in the social fabric of our communities make them less desirable places in which to live. These factors all help dampen the very economic growth they were designed to encourage. The side effects of the policies we have adopted have, to a significant degree, counteracted their benefits. If we continue on our present course this will lead to increasing socio-economic instability with its attendant negative consequences that will further diminish Canada's ability to meet not only its economic goals but also its social, and health goals.

There is an emerging view of community economic development, named by some political economists as the Third Way, that leaders like Blair, President Clinton, and Prime Minister Chretien have promoted as a new way to analyze and act to prevent social exclusion and promote economic regeneration. It is based on communitarian values that;

- balance individual rights with civic responsibility,
- emphasize the importance of decentralizing resources and power to the local community level, and

- recognize and use the intangible assets of the community – its social capital – to promote economic development and social inclusion.

In this approach to community economic development, attention is paid to all socio-economic groups in the community including the poor who are given opportunities to upgrade their skills, and increase their self-reliance. As a consequence they draw less upon the welfare system for support, are more skilled and are better able to contribute to their regions' economy and consequently free up resources that can be diverted to other economic development initiatives.

The corporate sector has recognized for some time that an important factor, perhaps the most important factor, in determining a modern company's success in a knowledge-based economy, is the intellectual capacity of its employees. Successful companies find ways to nurture and develop their "intellectual capital".²⁷ While the private sector has appropriated use of the term "intellectual capital", several of its key elements are found in communities, including:

- ✓ the collective value of the knowledge, skills and abilities of its members
- ✓ the potential of people to build upon their knowledge, experience and expertise
- ✓ core competencies that create unique competitive advantage for an organization [community]
- ✓ the cumulative capacity of an organization [community] to acquire, process and use knowledge that contributes to its success
- ✓ organizational [community] systems, culture, or values that promote individual learning²⁸

Thus the intangible assets of the local community: the intellectual capacity, know-how, trust, networks and shared values of the residents, have been termed "social/intellectual capital".

This is not just mere theory. One initiative that incorporates many of these values and principles is the OECD learning community model found in Western Europe. This pragmatic model has been adapted in British Columbia. Six learning village pilot projects will act as incubators for several inter-related experiential learning initiatives aimed at

²⁷ Stewart, Thomas A., 1997, *Intellectual Capital: The New Wealth of Organizations*, Doubleday, New York. Stewart relates "communities of practice" and human capital theory to intellectual capital but does not mention social capital. Yet some of his insights have application beyond the corporate sector. For example, his discussion of new organizational networks concludes that "the center, the genome, of all these new forms of organizational architecture is intellectual capital." p. 198.

²⁸ American association for Training and Development, 1997, "Intellectual Capital", 1997 First Quarter Survey Report at URL: http://www.astd.org/CMS/templates/template_1.html?articleid=20344

Intellectual capital is also called the non-tangible assets of an organization [community]. Both knowledge and learning were viewed as the two key elements of intellectual capital by Survey respondents.

4 Thurow, Lester, 1996, *The Future of Capitalism*, William Morrow and Company, New York. Paul Romer, a leading expert on economic growth in a knowledge-based society emphasizes the crucial role of the process of discovery and new ideas in a modern economy. See URL: www.strategy-business.com/thought/leaders/97110/

community capacity-building focused on parenting/family growth, citizenship and occupational education, and economic self-reliance.

An International Context

In this era of profound and escalating change, a number of outstanding social scientists have argued that classical economic theory is an inadequate explanation of emerging challenges and have offered alternative analyses and theories.²⁹ There is increased discussion of a new market-influenced economy in which the ownership of skills instead of physical capital is the key strategic asset and that economic success will depend on willingness to make social investments in education, skills, and knowledge. Those nations that will be most competitive will use the talents of all citizens and will not condone the existence of a permanent under-class, more often excluded than exploited, that will increasingly drain off precious financial resources without providing much if any return. Referring to the large number of under-educated in the US, Lester Thurow notes that “Building a first world economy on top of a massive third world workforce does not create the strongest of economic foundations.”³⁰ Many social scientists have emphasized the increasing importance of recognizing and investing in the human capacity to learn, that is, the ability to acquire and use knowledge, skills, attitudes and values in ever-changing circumstances – an essential requirement of sustainable economic change.

Thus the development of effective lifelong learning strategies have been seen as a national economic and social imperative for the new learning age.³¹ Many countries, as a means of mobilizing their total human capital, have developed national lifelong learning strategies.³² A small, but growing number of political economists have argued that the other two classical forms of capital - **financial**, and **environmental** – must be augmented by a new, fourth category – **social capital**. Social capital is defined as the societal networks, norms and trust that act as the social glue of local communities. It also serves as the lubricant for more efficient transactions nation-wide thus providing an economic competitive advantage for societies in which it is present in large measure. This concept

³⁰ Thurow, 1996, p. 126. Thurow is among the new breed of economists who recognize the importance of learning and communication in a modern economy. He asserts, “Learning is a social, not an individual activity. Communities are not aggregations of individuals but interactions among individuals – conversations and storytelling are central.” p. 304

³¹ OECD, 1996, *Lifelong Learning for All*, Paris and UNESCO, 1996, *Learning: The Treasure Within*, Paris.

³² Tom Schuller, a leading UK adult educator, is making a valuable contribution to the social capital debate. He acknowledges the contribution of human capital theory to the notion of education as investment but “it needs to be complemented by an approach [social capital] which underlines the recognition that learning is a social activity and depends for its value on its embeddedness within a social framework.” See “Three steps towards a learning society”, *Studies in the Education of Adults*, Vol. 30, No. 1, April 1998, pp. 11-20. He also warns that lifelong learning is sometimes interpreted as lifelong education and that “The thinking behind social capital is to stress the links between networking that goes on informally in which people learn from each other through informal associations as well as participating formally in courses in which they enrol and for which they get credit.” DfEE, 1998, *The Learning Age: “Towards a Europe of Knowledge” Conference Report*, Manchester. p. 196.

is emerging as a crucial element of a new political economy that both leading American and British thinkers are describing as a Third Way.

Social Capital and a New Political Economic Model

This new political economic model is in fact the multi-disciplinary product of sociologists, economists and political scientists. While Harvard's Robert Putnam and the Rand Corporation's Francis Fukuyama have provided a comparative historical and international perspective to development of social capital theory and analysis in the US, it is Amitai Etzioni who has provided the philosophical and ideological underpinnings within the American context in the form of Communitarianism.³³ At the international level the World Bank has adopted the concept as a means of tackling social development and the intractable issue of poverty.³⁴

Simon Szreter, at Cambridge, has made an equally significant contribution by asserting that a Third Way – a synthesis of liberal and social democratic political economic thought – will evolve from the developing concept of social capital. He contends that:

- ◆ the Third Way must encompass a new vision of the economy appropriate for the next 25 years
- ◆ the concept of social capital provides the basis for an entirely new approach to the economy
- ◆ social capital emphasizes the importance of participatory citizenship and mutual respect as the basis for building the most economically effective knowledge economy and learning society
- ◆ social capital emphasizes the importance of equality of communicative competence throughout the economy, with radical implications for a range of policies, including education.³⁵

Szreter asserts that in order for the Third Way to have a long-term impact, analogous to that of the Keynesian school, then three inter-related structural elements are essential, namely:

- moral principles and priorities related to its beliefs and direction;
- a more fully elaborated ideology that details how these principles and priorities can relate to the 'real world', real people, and their relationships to each other and to the economy; and
- specific policies and programs to change the current society and economy towards a desirable model of Third Way social and economic relationships.³⁶

³³ Etzioni, Amitai, 1993, *The Spirit of Community: The Reinvention of American Society*, Simon and Schuster, New York.; Fukuyama, Francis, 1995, *Trust: The Social Virtues and the Creation of Prosperity*, The Free Press, New York.; Putnam, Robert, 1993, *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, and Putnam, 1995, "Bowling Alone: America's Declining Social Capital," *Journal of Democracy*, 6 (1995):65-78.

³⁴ See URL: www.worldbank.org/poverty/scapital/bank1.htm

³⁵ Szreter, Simon, 1998, 'Social capital, the economy and the Third Way' at URL: <http://www.netnexus.org/events/july98/talks/szreter.htm>

The developing Communitarian philosophy appears to answer many of his first concerns while his current analysis supplies many of the relationships between the real world and the economy. For example, Szreter emphasizes that the necessity of achieving “a state of relative equality of communicative competence” so that all citizens “may converse with each other on a basis of trust and mutual respect.” The subsequent benefits of social capital are three-fold. First,

“It is in generating the capacity to process information effectively on the part of the greatest proportion and diversity of citizens that social capital will provide the most dynamic primary driving force for a knowledge-processing, creative economy of the future....”

Second, it is essential to the success of true partnership based on mutual respect and “communicative equality”. Third, it enables “active participatory citizenship” in a society in which “all are capable of dialogue with each other on a basis of communicative equality.”³⁷ Thus Szreter contributes to a model that links economic development, partnership building, and active citizenship to competent use of information or learning technologies.

Learning Communities and Social Capital

The concept of learning communities has emerged from the OECD concern with creating strategies to promote economic development while increasing social cohesion and inclusion. Since the launching of the concept in 1992, over 100 learning community projects have developed, chiefly in Western Europe. Such communities have been defined mostly on a geographic basis, either of a local or regional nature, and are based upon a structural/process model. A growing number of learning communities in the UK, chiefly cities and towns, are developing a variety of initiatives to achieve their twin objectives of economic development and social inclusion.

In British Columbia much smaller scale communities, villages with populations ranging from one to eight thousand persons are at early stages of implementing the learning community model, albeit with a “Made-in BC” approach. The BC initiatives are in fact hybrid models, as their conceptual frameworks have been influenced by the confluence of community development, adult education, and tele-community concepts. Indeed, the commitment to providing access to appropriate learning technologies within a learning-based community development model is an important step. It will enable the “communicative capacity” which will, in turn, enable greater local economic development, “true partnership”, and “active participatory citizenship” which Szreter asserts are critical for success in the “knowledge-processing, creative economy of the future”. Thus all learning communities will apply technologies within their communities as tools to achieve their socio-economic and cultural purposes, as well as to network with other communities here and abroad in order to share solutions to common problems.

³⁶ Szreter, Simon, 1999, ‘A New Political Economy for New Labour: the Importance of Social Capital’, Political Economy Research Centre Policy Papers - Paper 15, University of Sheffield, Sheffield.

³⁷ Szreter, 1999, p.8

A cluster of inter-related methodologies that use social capital and build social inclusion/cohesion will be tested, in various combinations, in the learning community projects. The following methods share a common experiential learning approach and, taken as a whole, provide a lifelong learning spectrum within a community:

- ✓ Parents as First Teachers
- ✓ Community Service-Learning
- ✓ Modern Apprenticeships
- ✓ New social and economic co-operatives

Through these initiatives the learning resources of both the formal (education) and non-formal (workplace and community) sectors will be mobilized in forms of partnership. Community members will thereby be able to do together what they cannot do alone as they learn more about working collaboratively for the common good.

2. Community Capacity-Building: Service-Learning Legacy

A concept closely allied to those of social and intellectual capital, and of learning-based community development, is that of “community capacity building”. The Aspen Institute, one of the American leaders in the development and use of this notion, combines three types of community development in its operational definition of community capacity building, namely:

- ✓ economic development
- ✓ stewardship or environmental sustainability
- ✓ civic capacity or active citizenship

Throughout the Institute’s exposition of the term is the need for communities to continuously learn in order to be resilient. Capacity building efforts focus on eight outcomes:

1. Growing, Diverse, Inclusive Citizen Participation
2. An Expanding Leadership Base
3. Strengthened Individual Skills
4. Widely Shared Vision
5. Strategic Community Agenda (Includes a Plan)
6. Consistent Tangible Progress Toward Goals
7. More Effective Community Organizations and Institutions
8. Better Resource Utilization By The Community³⁸

The learning implications of these outcomes are clear. Without the acquisition of relevant knowledge, skills, attitudes and values none could be achieved. This emphasis on learning is echoed in a somewhat different definition that stems from the UK Community Development Foundation of capacity building as:

“... a systematic approach to assisting community organizations to play a major part in the regeneration of neighbourhoods.”

The Foundation observes that community organizations often have a wealth of expertise and experience but they also are often “actively requesting help with training,

³⁸ See URL: http://www.aspeninst.org/csg/csg_ccbnotes.asp

organizational development and resources to enable them to have a full and lasting impact on neighbourhood regeneration.’³⁹

Emerging in British Columbia is a novel and powerful form of experiential learning that is directed at achievement of the two objectives shared by both definitions – civic participation and leadership training. To that we now turn.

2.1 Service-Learning Defined

Service-learning has been practised for over 20 years in the United States. Over 3 million school children, and students in over 500 post-secondary institutions participate in some form of community service-learning in America. It has come to be defined as the integration of student curricular activities with service in the voluntary or not-for-profit sector for academic credit. There are many examples of emerging service-learning in BC. School students have helped build and maintain a fish hatchery near a Coquitlam high school, and elementary, high school and college students have created a year-round hiking/skiing trail in a nearby recreation area in Hazelton. An MA student in Leadership and Training at Royal Roads University has assisted a First Nations band to develop and present a pre-employment training package, and interns at Douglas College have worked on projects to enhance the green belt in Greater Vancouver. In every case, the learners were supported by active education-community partnerships.

Several core elements are central to an operational definition, regardless of the activity undertaken, namely:

Partnership

- a) Reciprocal relationship amongst all partners – students, community and educational institutions
- b) Mutual benefits to all partners including educational, social or economic

Reflective Practice

- a) Builds on community strengths and students’ prior learning
- b) Integrates formal learning with service
- c) Promotes development of citizenship values, attitudes, and skills
- d) Enhances career exploration⁴⁰

While the development of service-learning originated in the formal education system, the use of this powerful form of experiential learning does not need to be limited to that sector. Experience in Human Resource Development Canada (HRDC) projects in Nova Scotia indicate the effectiveness of service-learning experiences for out-of-school

³⁹ See URL: http://www.cdf.org.uk/capacity_building.htm Canada’s Caledon Institute emphasized the need for appropriate training of both community leaders and community developers in leadership skills in a Roundtable on Building Community Capacity it sponsored in 1996. It has also expanded the notion of social capital to include financial, human and natural/built resources and applied the term “community capital”. See URL: <http://www.caledoninst.org/full65.htm>

⁴⁰ Faris, Ron, 2000, *SERVICE-LEARNING THINK TANK*, Centre for Curriculum, Transfer and Technology, Victoria. p. 9.

youth.⁴¹ With the advent of increasingly effective prior learning assessment capacity in British Columbia's post-secondary system, the prospect of recognition of prior learning from experiences gained in projects launched by the non-formal sector is significantly enhanced.

2.2 Developments in British Columbia

Interest and activity in BC is relatively recent. The Centre for Curriculum, Transfer and Technology (C2T2) has played a catalytic role with its post-secondary system partners, and collaborating government ministries, in regard to promoting informed discussion and action on service-learning. Several steps include:

- ✓ 1996-97 - C2T2 and HRDC (Office of Learning Technologies) co-funded a pilot distance education service-learning course in the MA program in Leadership and Training at Royal Roads University
- ✓ 1998 - an edition of the C2T2 *Learning Quarterly* featured examples of exemplary service-learning initiatives in BC
- ✓ 1999 - March - Ministries of Advanced Education, Training and Technology and Education co-sponsored a Service-Learning Forum to discuss theory and practice in the emerging but unco-ordinated field
 - December - The Ministry of Community Development, Cooperatives and Volunteers joined the two education ministries in co-sponsoring a Provincial Think-Tank on Service-Learning to discuss the development process, and content, of a working definition and guidelines for service-learning in the post-secondary system.
- ✓ 2000 - April - the *Kaleidoscope 2000* conference of educators focused on community service-learning as a major theme of post-secondary system-wide innovation.

Quality service-learning occurs only when there is extensive collaboration between the voluntary or not-for-profit sector and educational institutions at the community level. Government support, including guidelines and funding, is critical to sustained programming, as is that of institutions which wish to link in more relevant ways with their communities to provide a legacy of learning and service. Service-learning can be another weapon in the arsenal of community development and capacity building.

B. CANADA IN REVIEW

A survey of learning-based community development across Canada should commence in the historic incubator of such an approach – Atlantic Canada. To this day the Antigonish Movement of Nova Scotia serves as an historic benchmark of community rooted, learning-based community development. From Newfoundland to BC any respondents to the study survey with an adult education background immediately understood the notion

⁴¹ Faris, Ron, 1999, *Service-Learning in Canada: A survey of Policy and Practice in the Public Education Systems of Canada and the Practice of Using Voluntary Service as a Means of Earning Post-Secondary Tuition Credit*, HRDC, Ottawa.

of “learning-based” community development as soon as the Antigonish Movement was cited. Indeed, a number of the respondents, particularly in Eastern Canada, had studied at the small but influential St. Francis Xavier University and applied some of their learning to new community development initiatives, some of which are now described.

1. **Newfoundland:** Regional Social Development

Canada’s newest province has always been a place where local communities have been valued. Yet successive government initiatives have proven largely unsuccessful in protecting them from the ravages of economic dislocation. In June 1996, the Premier released the *Strategic Social Plan Consultation Paper*, and appointed a Social Policy Advisory Committee (SPAC) to conduct public consultations throughout the province. Following the consultations SPAC released two reports in the spring of 1997, the first on the public feedback and the second on proposed new strategic directions. The net result was that government and its community partners realized that they had to rethink their objectives and the means to achieve them.⁴²

SPAC emphasized the importance of integrating social and economic policies and focusing on community-based social development that employs three inter-related strategies:

- ✓ building on community and regional strengths
- ✓ integrating social and economic development, and
- ✓ investing in people.

The strategy emphasized the importance of building on the social capital of the communities, strengthening the third or community-based sector, and shifting from a remedial model of crisis intervention to a preventative and early intervention approach, especially for children and their families. Woven throughout the analysis was the importance of relevant learning opportunities in both the formal and non-formal sectors.

The goals of the Social Plan are four-fold:

- Vibrant communities where people are actively involved;
- Sustainable regions based on strategic investment in people;
- Self-reliant, healthy, educated citizens living in safe communities; and
- Integrated and evidence-based policies and programs.

A social audit, to be conducted after the first five years of the Social Plan, will include socio-economic indicators of well-being, employment and economic security, and community stability, a significant number of which are education and learning-oriented.

The implementation of the Social Plan commenced in April 1999 and a \$1.2 million demonstration fund was made available to support regional planning processes in the initial year. The number and size of regions will be determined by negotiations with potential community partners. An additional \$1 million was made available for demonstration projects proposal that met either community capacity building, or early intervention or prevention objectives and demonstrated best practice.

⁴² Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, 1998, *People , Partners and Prosperity: A Strategic Social Plan for Newfoundland and Labrador*, St.John’s. p.4

The future development of this community-based Social Plan and its relationship to the creation of 20 Regional Economic Development Boards covering all of Newfoundland and Labrador is of interest. These Boards have a mandate to coordinate social and economic initiatives related to economic development as well as the promotion of public participation and community education. By July 2000 the sixth and last social region will be created and representatives from school districts and post-secondary institutions within each region will join others from the Federation of Municipalities, and several provincial departments including Health, and Employment.

2. PEI: Local Development

Prince Edward, Canada's tiny island-province, of is the home of decentralized community development. PEI is a classic example of a jurisdiction with scarce resources that is attempting to blend formal and non-formal learning resources for the service of local communities. For instance, in the Acadian community of Evangeline, some 20 kilometres square with a population of only 2500 residents, a network of some 16 cooperatives have developed over the past 60 years to form what some analysts have called an "integrated community-controlled economy"⁴³.

Community self-help is an island tradition. Over 35 community schools, influenced some thirty years ago by Antigonish initiatives, grew around the island. All the teachers are volunteers who provide a wide range of adult education courses in community facilities such as senior's homes or community halls. Some 18 learning centres are also operating, without base government support save rental costs. All are dependent upon acquiring project funding and one recently was closed after it was unable to obtain further project funding when its TAGS (fishermen re-training) projects had ended. Finally, community-based literacy and adult basic education partnerships are functioning in 17 locations, under the control of community-based management committees.

Two inter-related Island priorities are adult literacy provision and community development. The former concern arose when the International Adult Literacy Survey (1995) revealed that 40% of adult Islanders faced functional literacy challenges. The Department of Education's Division of Adult Learning and Literacy was charged with facilitating "a continuum of learning in a community learning environment as part of an adult learning system." In 1999 the provincial Government, through its Department of Development, created a Community Development Fund to complement citizen-led local development by contributing as a partner in strategic community initiatives. Government ministers responsible for health, education, environment and economic development will form a Community Development Bureau to ensure coordination within communities. The Fund will contribute up to 30 % of any community project costs, up to a maximum of \$50,000.

⁴³ Wilkinson, Paul and Quarter, Jack, 1996, *Building a Community-Controlled Economy: the Evangeline Experience*, University of Toronto Press, Toronto.

3. **Nova Scotia:** Regional Level Development

Nova Scotia has a history of pioneering community development initiatives. This tradition continues in a wide array of both government and community-led projects. Two leading-edge initiatives at the regional level illustrate the range of successful activities that have recently taken place in the province.

The first is an innovative form of community service-learning that commenced in 1998-99 through collaboration of several provincial departments and the HRDC. The first of several project phases began when eight community agencies in the south-western region proposed projects of local benefit to be carried out by 45 youth-in-transition for a 16 week period. While working on community projects the youth engaged in a variety of learning opportunities including life skills, development of a career and life management plan, as well as job skills and confidence building. At the conclusion of Phase I almost two-thirds of the participants entered either employment or further education (all graduates received a completion bonus of \$500 to pursue further education or employment options). A planned Phase II entails expanding the scheme to other regions, and Phase III will be an eventual provincial roll-out.

The second example was a March, 2000 regional workshop of provincial and federal officials, and community leaders in the Annapolis/Fundy region who devoted a day to the theme of "Government Roles in Building Sustainable Communities". The goal was to:

- 1) support sustainable communities through a collaborative approach which integrates social, cultural, economic and environmental policies and programs.
- 2) design and implement horizontal coordination within government, and
- 3) build community-government partnerships through new governance models.

The workshop was based on two assumptions. First, that there is a trend towards local governance in the province, and second that it is an innovative approach that all the workshop participants will "best learn by doing". Four questions were central to their discussions:

- ✓ What partnerships to build sustainable communities already exist?
- ✓ What do sustainable communities need?
- ✓ What can government offer them?
- ✓ What do we need to know/learn more about?

The workshop concluded with yet further learning-based approaches as the participants recognized that if they are to respond in a relevant way to the challenge of building sustainable communities, they had to:

- ✓ learn more about the Annapolis/Fundy region
- ✓ engage in cross-cultural training resources
- ✓ develop existing and new competencies in government and communities
- ✓ inform and build support for change, and
- ✓ champion action for change.

4. **New Brunswick:** Learning Centre Networking

New Brunswick was among the first provinces to join the federal Information Highway initiative of the mid-1990's. Connect NB Branche is a provincial agency of the

Information Highway that coordinates community based activities and strategies to encourage use of the information highway. It provides current information technology training to a network of 200 Community Access Centres (located mainly in public schools) across the province “while promoting economic and community development.”⁴⁴ Its primary elements are:

- Mission: - to provide citizens with lifelong learning opportunities using current technologies in an accessible community environment.
- Mandate: - to establish and provide sustainable support to Community Access Centres in locations throughout New Brunswick.
- Vision: - to establish partnerships with and for communities to further their economic, cultural, and social development regionally and globally.
 - ⇒ to ensure the existence of an infrastructure that will encourage information, exchange, commerce, training, and networking.
 - ⇒ to further the promotion of New Brunswick’s resources.

The 200 Community Access Centres, which are run by volunteer steering committees, are staffed chiefly through various work programs for high risk, unemployed individuals such as social assistance recipients, students and EI clients. These programs are sometimes funded by federal departments, and sometimes jointly with federal/provincial assistance, and sometimes provincially.

On April 30, 2000 a new Community Access Sustainability Employee (CASE) program was announced. This initiative, an Innovation and Research pilot project, between the Department of Training and Employment Development (TED) and Education will provide Centres with a total of 180 cost shared EI eligible employees over a three-year period. The primary role of the employees is to provide overall management of these Centres and to move the Centre to self-sustainability. TED funding diminishes annually: provincial funding is at the 70% level in year 1; 50% in year 2, and 25% in year 3 - the Centre share rises accordingly. The scheme commences May 29, 2000 and provide full time employment for 36.25 hrs/wk at \$7.75/hr. The promotional material states that “Ideal candidates will be “go-getters” that will make excellent Centre promoters, have good interpersonal skills and feel comfortable in a technological setting.”

Of particular interest to community developers is the link that Connect NB Branche has made with the University of Kansas Work Group on Health Promotion and Community Development. The Kansas Web site, entitled The Community Tool Box, contains over 3,000 pages of skill-building material on over 100 community topics (see URL: <http://ctb.lsi.ukans.edu>).

⁴⁴ See URL: <http://cnbb.unb.ca/english/about/Default.htm> Connect NB Branche and its Web site are funded in part through the Canada/New Brunswick Regional Economic Development Agreement (REDA). The Agreement is administered for the federal government by the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (ACOA) and for the provincial government by the Regional Development Corporation.

5. Quebec: Social Economy Initiatives and Independent Community Action⁴⁵

Quebec, with its very active cooperative and credit union sector, has historically had a long history of learning-based community development. When, in the 1960's, the provincial college (CEGEP) system was developed, one its earliest initiatives was "animation social" within many surrounding communities. Today a number of innovative community development initiatives are noteworthy.

5.1 Social Economy Initiatives

Partly because of exemplary French activities and influence, as well as Quebec's drive to be more economically self-sufficient, Quebec is a leader in social economy initiatives in Canada.⁴⁶ In Quebec, as elsewhere, many social and economic needs remain unmet because neither the public nor the private sector has responded to them. It is the third or non-profit sector to which they have turned to either institute new services or expand existing ones so that jobs may be created at the community level - in short, new forms of social entrepreneurship.

Four areas currently being tested show the most promise in terms of job creation in the social economy, namely:

- local care-related services:
 - childcare
 - personal home services
- waste recycling
- social housing, and
- integration services for certain clients such as ex-offenders and people with mental illness

Other sectors, chiefly in rural areas, that may well prove fruitful include forest management, agriculture, and wildlife habitat management. Since 1997 various social economy projects have generated some 10,000 jobs. For example, in the area of personal home services, a network of enterprises has been created.

5.2 Assistance Fund for Independent Community Action

In 1995 the government created a Quebec secretariat for independent community action and an associated assistance fund for community initiatives. The amounts allocated are equal to 5% of the net profit for the preceding year from the operation of State casinos and the management of contributing businesses. In addition an extra 1% of these same profits is earmarked for international humanitarian action.

In 1998-99, 19 government departments and agencies granted financial support to community organizations for a total of over \$378 million. Three per cent of this sum, or

⁴⁵ Province of Quebec, 2000, *The Concept of Social Economy as Applied in Quebec*, and *Assistance Fund for Independent Community Action*, Policy Directorate, Ministry of Social Solidarity, Quebec.

⁴⁶ France is the acknowledged leader in the theory and application of social economy ventures. Historically strong communitarian values in France and Quebec appear to be fertile ground for the seeds of social economic enterprise.

approximately \$11 million, was allocated to the secretariat for independent community action to sustain its community initiatives funding.

6. **Ontario:** Sustainable Community Indicators

The Hamilton-Wentworth regional Council, serving almost half a million people at the western end of Lake Ontario, is among the Canadian pioneers in developing sustainable community indicators.⁴⁷ Following a two and a half-year citizen's task force, the Council received a report in 1993 that recommended some 400 actions including the development of indicators for monitoring purposes, and related local activities such as an annual community day to report on progress as well as youth forums to ensure that this segment of society has a voice.

The Council, in partnership with the Environmental Health Program of McMaster University and the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives, formed the project team. The team agreed that a key design element would be identification of indicators (economic, social/health, and environmental factors) that the general public could easily relate to, and determine themselves what they had to change or modify.

Community involvement in the development of the indicators was essential, and a series of workshops were held to gain the views of participants who range from school students to senior citizens. The original 80 indicators were eventually reduced to 29 following the multi-year process. Associated targets were established in 1996, chiefly by input of "experts". One of the lessons learned by Council officials was that development of targets as an integrated part of the indicator project would have been more effective if a community consensus building exercise had been used rather than relying on the views of experts.

The project experience indicated that public development of indicators is an excellent way to get the issues before the public via the media, and that through informed discussion changes in attitude and behaviour i.e. learning, does take place. To assure greater exposure of the indicators and their relevance to the public, release of the indicators coincides with the annual sustainable community day.

Finally, officials have learned that indicators stimulate discussion and debate, and that governments must be prepared to respond, be it policy review or program adjustment.

7. **Manitoba:** Community Choices

Since 1991 the Community Choices Program, operated by the Department of Intergovernmental Affairs has helped Manitobans examine their communities and make decisions on how best to manage resources for the future. The program concentrates on helping communities plan comprehensively, act strategically and work towards achievable goals.

⁴⁷ Pearce, Bill, 1998, *Hamilton-Wentworth Sustainable Community Indicators*, Targeting Sustainability: Indicators for Sustainable Communities Conference, University of Texas at Austin.

The program supports the formation of Community Round Tables that are comprised of representatives from municipalities and local organizations who plan and integrate social, environmental and economic matters. Each Round Table prepares a community vision statement and development strategy representing the people and priorities of the community. Local goals and priorities can result in a variety of programs within the context of sustainability, local control, consensus, local support, and transfer of skills and information. Communities identify social, economic and environmental opportunities and address local concerns from an integrated standpoint.

By December 1999, over 170 municipalities had participated with 100 Community Round Tables. Matching grants from the Department of Intergovernmental Affairs and the local municipalities of \$2,000 each assists the Round Tables, depending on population. The Department also provides an additional non-matching grant for Round Tables that include more than one municipality.

Since its inception, grants totaling \$280,000 have assisted rural communities to develop their local capacity to self-direct their own future. To date, over 80 community Round Tables have developed vision statements and are actively implementing their action plans. The Department has been able to assist the action plans through a variety of Rural Economic Development Initiative (REDI) Programs. The Department has also assumed responsibility for community/economic measures for Northern Affairs communities and has provided Community Round Tables for eight of these communities to date.

8. **Saskatchewan:** First Nations Initiatives

In the vast domain of northern Saskatchewan the economic challenges are clear. Sixty one per cent of the families have annual incomes of less than \$30,000 compared to 29% of Canadian families, and the northern unemployment rate is 37%.

Social issues abound in northern Saskatchewan. For instance:

- ✓ 36% of adult have less than grade 9 education compared to a provincial average of 16%
- ✓ 56% of residents are under 25, compared to 38% provincially
- ✓ Northern Saskatchewan has
 - a larger than average number of people per dwelling,
 - a higher percentage of single parent families,
 - a greater percentage of children of children born to mothers less than 19 years of age,
 - a greater tuberculosis rate,
 - a greater percentage of alcohol and drug abuse,
 - a greater suicide rate amongst youth, and
 - a higher level of criminal code offenses than the general population.⁴⁸

⁴⁸ Keewatin Career Development Corporation, 1999, Headwaters Project –Vision of the Future at URL: <http://www.kcdc.sk.ca/hwp/vision1.asp>

The provincial government has focused on the development of Community-based Regional Development Organizations (CREDOs) for its economic development strategy. CREDOs are managed cooperatively by the Provincial departments of Economic Development and Northern Affairs. Three main ways are used to assist the community level development:

- 1) direct involvement with business creation
- 2) creation of “mini banks” that give financial support and resources to present or planned businesses, and
- 3) giving advice, information and making contacts with resources for businesses.

Each CREDO can have a combination of more than one of these services or simply specialize in one.

In August 1999 the Keewatin Career Development Corporation (KCDC) one of CREDO's most successful enterprises was created. This non-profit corporate partnership was formed among northern Saskatchewan agencies. It provides career service that is directed by 12 First Nations, Metis, and educational and provincial organizations. KCDC recently applied to the Smart Communities program competition of Industry Canada. In May 2000 the proposal was one of 12 projects across Canada that were approved to explore how new technologies can aid socio-economic development. The program will provide up to \$5 million over three years on a 50% cost shared basis (cash or in-kind contributions must match federal input). The project, entitled the Headwaters Project, will set up Community Access Centres in as many northern communities as possible to promote four main developmental areas:

- the **Education** stream will focus on distance learning in areas that are difficult to deliver in many communities such as Physics, Chemistry and Nursing while basic computer literacy and general classroom enhancement will be available in all communities. Provision of a full range of lifelong learning opportunities is a specific project goal.
- the **Business** stream will focus on connecting northern business people with the rest of the world. A Northern Saskatchewan Trade and Tourism web site will be a marketing vehicle for the e-business the project will foster. Larger businesses will receive assistance to develop wholesale distribution and purchasing through deployment of new technologies.
- the **Health** stream will support current initiatives to make better use of technologies in northern health delivery. Continuing health professional education and consultations will make greater use of new technologies.
- the **Services** stream will enhance northerner's access to other agencies such as career/employment, environment and resource management, and libraries.

The Headwaters Project will build upon the learning-based community development foundations laid by the earlier work of the KCDC. Now an even wider partnership is possible in order to gain increased participation of residents of the scattered communities

of northern Saskatchewan in developing greater community capacity to respond to and manage change.

9. **Alberta:** Community Initiatives

9.1 Community Self-Reliance

Alberta Community Development, the provincial department responsible for community development in the Province, has a unique, wide mandate. In addition to promoting community development, defined as “the development of Alberta’s communities and increasing the capacity of community organizations for self-reliance”, the Ministry is also responsible for:

- supporting the independence and well-being of seniors;
- protecting the human rights and promoting fairness and access;
- preserving, protecting and presenting Alberta’s unique natural, cultural and historical resources; and
- supporting Alberta’s special purpose housing needs.⁴⁹

The Volunteer Services Branch plays the lead role in the Ministries community development strategy. The four Branch goals are as follow:

- 1) Communities and community organizations have the capacity to become increasingly self-reliant.
- 2) Communities and government departments adopt “Community Development Principles and Practices”.
- 3) Programs and program components are successfully delivered by the Volunteer Services Branch.
- 4) Our Branch is a dynamic, innovative and progressive “Learning Organization”.

The Branch administers volunteer components of the Provincial “Wild Rose Foundation” Programs, the Zone Sport Program, and the community Lottery Board Program in addition to its central community development objectives of:

- assisting communities and organizations to increase the number of leaders and volunteers;
- developing the skills and capacities of individuals by assisting them in increasing their own existing skills and acquiring new skills thereby achieve higher levels of self-reliance.

The Branch supports community development but is not itself a “community developer”. It emphasizes training programs for community leaders, volunteers and youth and promotes increased dialogue, participation and partnerships activities at the community level.

⁴⁹ Alberta Community Development, 2000, *Community Development: Business Plan 2000 – 03*, Edmonton.

9.2 Sustainable Calgary State of Our City

Sustainable Calgary was formed in 1996 by ten volunteers influenced by the Sustainable Seattle model and the community sustainability work of the Arusha Centre, a local non-profit society. The goal of sustainable Calgary is to develop and institutionalize a set of sustainability indicators and monitor them to track the city's long-term health and vitality. Over the years funding has been received from a number of local sources, Environment Canada, Health Canada and CUSO.

A number of public forums were held in 1996 to describe the Seattle project and seek volunteer participants. Initially 8 people volunteered to research local sustainability indicators. The process was initially designed to have wide citizen participation and an early attempt to monitor the diversity of people involved foundered when the planned data base was not maintained.

An introductory workshop in March 1997 that attracted 85 citizens resulted in the creation of five think tank groups focused on development of five theme areas:

- 1) economy
- 2) community
- 3) natural environment
- 4) resource use, and
- 5) health and education.

In mid-1997 each group presented the top ten indicators they had identified for a future edition of the State of the City report. Twenty-four indicators were selected across the five themes. Think tank participants were invited to a project up-date while stewards were appointed to further develop the indicators and work with local experts to refine them. Indicator research was completed by early 1998 and the first Sustainable Calgary State of Our City Report was created. In total, more than 300 citizens volunteered over 4,000 hours over two years to the project.

Following the launch of the report Sustainable Calgary received a funding to conduct a series of sustainability workshops and public forums to expand the community representation of the project to include, for example, youth, business, social studies teachers, ethnocultural communities, street involved people, the disabled, and the poor.

They are part of "2000Voices", the citizen involvement plan for the second report. So far, workshops and presentations have engaged 900 people.

Among the lessons learned, the project coordinators have found that a high level of diverse participation is possible, particularly with marginalized people. This possible only if a proactive approach that includes aggressive recruitment and making it easy for individuals and organizations to get involved, is adopted. In addition, the integration of elected officials and key decision-making bodies into the project is imperative. A key finding was that as citizen participation increased, business and government interest increased. A lesson learned regarding indicators themselves was the development of an "indicator in progress" – a good indicator for which a technically sound measure does not exist (e.g. food grown locally may be an indicator of local self-reliance and

sustainability). The response was to set up a task force for such an indicator to respond to citizen's interest in it and explore how to begin to measure it.

The Sustainable Calgary project has been invited to participate in the City of Calgary initiatives regarding future quality of life indicators. The State of Our City Report is used as curriculum material in several courses at the University of Calgary. Sustainable Calgary is now working with a local agency to explore community-based outcome indicators for new immigrants, intending to address newcomers directly and also professionals in immigrant services agencies. It is also funded to coordinate two other projects – the Green Map and the Ecological Footprint. Once the Report is institutionalized the focus will be on mobilization of the community to positively influence indicators through advocacy and action.

9.3 St. Albert

The City of St. Albert is a large and growing middle class suburb of Edmonton, Alberta. Since 1996 a community group has promoted the notion of a Continuous Learning Community (CLC). Its Vision is to foster “a world-class, learner-centered, continuous learning community.” Its Mission is to “encourage people to become knowledgeable and realize sustained prosperity through continuous learning.” The Mission will be realized when:

- St. Albert's residents embrace the pursuit of lifelong learning
- St. Albert is known/renowned as a world-class, learner-centered, continuous learning community

The St. Albert Continuous Learning Celebration Society was formed in January 1999 when the original steering committee was dissolved in order that the CLN could become a programming rather than a facilitating organization. At the same time a virtual newsletter every two months replaced the monthly meetings of the pioneer body.

There are four sub committees that carry out the CLN's mission:

- Public Participation – to raise public awareness of the value and benefits of lifelong learning and increase participation of individual, organizations and businesses in continuous learning activities
- Partnering – to facilitate discussion, exploration, and partnering among learning providers to continually develop and provide learning opportunities
- Prosperity – to foster economic growth and community prosperity by initiating, supporting or implementing learning-related projects in and around the City.
- Planet – to establish links and relationships with people, organizations and communities around the world to share ideas, best practices, and achievements, and to recognize and celebrate lifelong learning and continuous learning communities.

Over the years the CLN has been involved in a number of initiatives. For example, it held a CLN Learning Festival in 1997, has applied for federal CAP site funding, and, albeit unsuccessfully, applied for a federal Smart Community project. The Society is linked with the European Lifelong Learning Initiative.

The CLN initiated a feasibility study in 1999 regarding possible development of a Hi-tech and Research Park in the City of St. Albert. Over a dozen civic, economic, provincial, and educational partners participated in the assessment. The conclusion was that while a stand-alone Park was not feasible, the development of a techno-learning community in St. Albert was a viable option. The CLN is going to explore this concept and its implications for the community.

10. **NorthWest Territories:** School of Community Government

The Territories' Department of Municipal and Community Affairs has the mandate to build community capacity. One of the Department's strategies to accomplish its capacity building goal has been the creation of a School of Community Government. The chief task is to improve the quality and quantity of training opportunities for community government employees. The School has developed several programs to attain its objectives, including training in such areas as:

- ✓ Aboriginal leadership and political development
- ✓ community management
- ✓ community administration
- ✓ planning and lands administration

The School is currently developing and offering, as a pilot project, three courses through the Internet as well as offering distance education.

The School has already produced a number of tools for community governments. These include a CD ROM to orient Mayors and councils, and a Human Resource Tool Kit to help community governments (First Nations, Metis, Inuvialuit, and Municipal) to develop their own human resource needs assessments, develop job descriptions, evaluate staff, and identify training for staff in community governments. It is also developing a Needs Assessment Tool Kit and a Performance Evaluation for community governments to assist them in building human resource capacity.

C. FEDERAL INITIATIVES

There are two federal government departments and an inter-departmental agency that play direct roles in promoting learning-based community development. Two major inter-related themes of the recent federal Throne Speech were building skills and knowledge for the 21st Century and building stronger communities.⁵⁰ Under a memorandum of understanding on lifelong learning between HRDC and Industry Canada closer collaboration may develop to the benefit of local communities faced with a plethora of federal programs and acronyms.

⁵⁰ Canada, 1999, *Speech from the Throne to open the Second Session of the Thirty-Sixth Parliament of Canada*, Ottawa. There is continued but vague reference to a lifelong learning approach. For example, the Throne Speech promises the establishment of "a national action plan on skills and learning for the 21st Century" that "will focus on lifelong learning, address the challenge of poor literacy among adults, and provide citizens with the information they need to make good decisions about developing their skills."

1. Human Resource Development Canada

Given that the Department of Secretary of State, a long-time partner in learning-based community development, was incorporated into the HRDC it is no surprise that some vestiges of Department's social action tradition still remain in that very much larger bureaucracy.

1.1 Office of Learning Technologies

The Office of Learning Technologies (OLT) is one of the branches that retain the old values of working with communities. Its mission is to create a lifelong learning culture through the use of learning technologies that are driven not by technology but by the needs and purposes of the communities themselves. To this end, they are carrying out a Community Learning Network (CLN) Initiative that is funding a growing number of leading-edge projects. British Columbia, with its strong foundation of adult education and tele-communities development, has been a leader in development of CLN projects, particularly in resource-based communities hard-hit by economic downturns and dwindling resources.⁵¹

1.2 Labour Market Learning and Development Unit

This HRDC Unit has built on earlier initiatives such as the Community Future Training package, *Community Economic Development and Strategic Planning*, produced by HRDC in 1992, and the recent *Community Capacity Building Toolkit*. In 1999 the Unit produced *The Community Development Handbook* and the related *Community Development Facilitator's Guide*.⁵² A major section of the *Handbook* focuses on the attitudes, knowledge and skills needed to undertake the community development process.

2. Industry Canada

The creation of the Information Highway Advisory Council in 1994 with its five Working Groups, including one on Learning and Training has provided increased impetus for a wider concern about communities by a department focused chiefly on issues of connectivity and access.⁵³ The Advisory Council had adopted the principle of "lifelong learning as a key design element of the Information Highway." In addition to the very successful educational partnership of SchoolNet (to connect schools), other collaborative initiatives such as VolNet (to connect voluntary organizations) and LibNet (to connect libraries), as well as special programs with the First Nations, have increased connectivity and access for both the formal and non-formal learning sectors.

It is the evolution of the Community Access Program (CAP) and its CAP sites that has provided the most potential for learning-based community development, however.

⁵¹ British Columbia has the highest adult education participation rate in Canada and a very active tele-communities movement led by the BC Community Network Association.

⁵² Copies of the *Handbook* and *Guide* are available at URL: <http://www.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/community>

⁵³ Canada, 1995, *Connection Community Content: The Challenge of the Information Highway*, Industry Canada, Ottawa.

2.1 Community Access Program

The Community Access Program was launched in 1994 as part of the federal government's *Connecting Canadians* initiative. The Minister responsible has stated that the objective of the initiative is to make Canada the world's most connected nation and "Connecting schools and communities to the Internet links more Canadians to the opportunities of the knowledge-based economy and broadens potential for community-based economic development and lifelong learning."⁵⁴

By April 2000 CAP had reached about 90% of its goal to establish 5,000 public access sites in rural communities (over 4,300 sites in over 3,000 rural and remote communities). That month the first 194 urban CAP sites were established in 26 urban centres across Canada. The goal is 5,000 urban sites as part of a national network of 10,000 public access sites by March 31, 2001.

2.2 Smart Communities

In June 1998 Prime Minister Chretien announced creation of the Smart Communities Panel to advise the federal government on how to realize the goal of creating one world-class Demonstration Project in each province, in the North and in an Aboriginal community by the year 2000. The 20-person panel produced the *Report of the Panel on Smart Communities* in November 1998 and communities were invited to submit proposals based on the Report guidelines. Of 129 communities that submitted letters of intent, 46 were asked to submit comprehensive business plans and in May 2000 12 communities were chosen to "become world leaders in the integration of information and communication technologies into community life – areas such as health care, education, training and business." Each of the successful communities will receive up to \$5 million in matching funds over the next three years.

The SMART CHOICES Project from Coquitlam, Port Coquitlam and Port Moody has won the B.C. competition. This project is joint project of the three communities, as well as School District 43, Douglas College and Simon Fraser University. Partners also include not-for-profit, education, business, culture and specific citizens groups. There will be multi-dimensional project benefits. Including:

- ✓ a community portal with one-window access to community services and information
- ✓ Learning Linkage, to foster a continuous learning environment by providing access to learning opportunities for all citizens and provide parents with closer links to their child's classroom

⁵⁴ Press release, August 1999, John Manley, federal Industry Minister and Paul Ramsey, then Education Minister of B.C. jointly announced funding for Internet connections and telecommunications upgrades for 92 Northern B.C. schools. Several months before the provincial government announce a \$123 million investment over six years to hook up the province's 1,700 public schools and 22 post-secondary institutions to the Provincial Learning Network (PLN), a telecommunications network that provides public access to the Internet, teaching support materials and advanced forms of distance learning such as video conferencing.

- ✓ Safety Net to provide information related to personal safety by linking citizens to community policing offices and health and support services
- ✓ e-Z Community Services to provide residents with 24-hour service to obtain information, register and make payments to all levels of government, community associations, educational institutions and the private sector.

The region is in transition from a suburban area to an urban centre that will double its population within the next 20 years. A major project objective is to

“integrate all the community stakeholders, creating a common vision that balances social, economic and environmental goals. It will accelerate the creation of a complete community where people live, work, shop and spend their leisure time closer together.”⁵⁵

3. **Canadian Rural Partnership**

In 1997 the government endorsed a rural initiative for interdepartmental activities under the banner of the Canadian Rural Partnership (CRP). Some 26 federal departments and agencies are working together to improve access to federal programs and services in rural areas, support cross-government rural partnerships and coordinate policy that focuses on rural community development.

A CRP Pilot Projects Initiative has been created to work through partnerships with community groups operating in rural areas. These groups can include the private and voluntary sectors, cooperatives and other levels of government. The Initiative’s objective is to promote strong, sustainable community development in rural and remote areas.

III. INTERNATIONAL CASE STUDIES

Since the early 1970’s two major international organizations, UNESCO and the OECD, have gradually put the concepts of lifelong learning and recurrent education on the international policy agenda. By the early 1990’s there was a convergence of thinking. The two bodies began to emphasize the practical application of the two dimensions of lifelong learning to policy and practice; the horizontal or cross-sectoral use of learning resources, often in partnerships, and the vertical or life-span dimension that health determinant, early childhood education, and neuro-science research showed as crucial to long-term personal, community and economic health. Other UN agencies and international development bodies, as wide-ranging as NGO’s and APEC, have adopted this mode of analysis in their regional or community level strategies.

A. OECD INITIATIVES

In 1992 the Centre for Educational Innovation and Research (CERI) of OECD undertook a study of strategies for lifelong learning, including seven city case studies (including Edmonton, Pittsburg, Adelaide, and Gothenburg, Sweden). This led to publication of City

⁵⁵ See the Smart communities Web site for a description of all 12 projects at URL: http://smartcommunities.ic.gc.ca/demoprojects/bc_e.htm

Strategies for Lifelong Learning for an international conference on Learning Cities held in Gothenburg in 1992. It was not until 1997, however that CERI initiated planning for a 3-year series of seminars focused on learning cities and regions in five countries:

- a learning region in the Kent Thames-side
- Jena (Germany)
- the Vienne region (France)
- the Andalusia region (Spain), and
- the Oresund region of Copenhagen/Malmoe (Denmark/Sweden)

The initiative's objective is to emphasize the fundamental importance of coherent learning and innovation strategies for developing cities and regions into active players in the knowledge-based society.

The OECD launched the seminars in January 1998 with a meeting that identified the core characteristics of the learning cities/regions, namely:

1. A clear and sustained commitment from public authorities, private enterprises, education and research institutions, voluntary organizations and individuals to set learning at the heart of the city/region's development through partnership;
2. A development strategy encompassing the whole range of learning from early childhood education to adult education;
3. Creating globally competitive knowledge-intensive production and service activities; improving human and organizational capacities and creating environments conducive to learning, innovation, creativity and change;
4. A specific purpose and identity implying shared values and networks;
5. Social cohesion and environmental issues are an integrated part of the city or region's development.⁵⁶

The OECD seminar series focused on the development of widely varying learning cities/regions, including:

Jena

The German city of Jena project focused on economic and cultural transition. Before 1989 and German reunification, Jena's economy was dominated by the Carl Zeiss optics and instrumentation complex. The company had employed 23,000 workers in 1989 and now has 4,500. A new development strategy promoted the area as a high tech region and some 200 companies have been attracted. A new biotechnology sector employs over 1,000 workers.

The Vienne Region

The rural area around Poitiers has developed through communications technology, multi-media and a highly skilled workforce. A theme park called Futuroscope, combining research development with education and leisure activities, is the focus of its strategy. Over 70 firms have been attracted to the region and 1,700 jobs have been created in the park and 12,000 jobs indirectly related in the whole region. It is now a major tourist site

⁵⁶ OECD, 1998, *High-Level Seminar on Competitive Strength and Social Cohesion Through Learning Cities and Regions: Concepts, Developments, Evaluation*, CERI, Paris.

drawing visitors from around the world. Most of the development is funded by public investment.

The Oresund Region

This area straddles the Danish-Swedish border that is now linked by a 16 kilometre bridge and tunnel. This region will have the greatest concentration of research facilities, educational institutions and technological know-how in Scandinavia. A cooperative research, education and investment policy is being developed.

The Andalusia Region

This historic home of the Moors is one of Spain's poorest regions but it is focusing on an economic diversification strategy that will build on its strong tourism base. Cooperation between the major cities of the region in regard to investments in communications, technology and research in combination with well-established universities is serving as a magnet for new enterprises.

The Kent-Thames Corridor

One of Europe's largest redevelopment projects is occurring in this region, with an investment of some 4 billion pounds over 30 years to transform the region from an industrial site to a diversified economic zone linked closely to the European continent. Some 20 primary and 10 secondary schools will be built, with the support of the private sector. The development is led by a partnership of Borough and County Councils, a private developer and the University of Greenwich.

A recent CERI analysis underscored the importance of several common success factors:⁵⁷

- Commitment of all partners – public, private, civic and education – to place learning and knowledge dissemination at the centre of development. The summary noted that:
 - “...their sense of common purpose, identity and trust between various actors is a driving force in cultivating shared values and networks within the city [or region]. This can be described as social capital and it is vital to making learning cities work.”
- Determination to create globally competitive, knowledge-intensive industrial and service activities and to base their work on the local capacity for learning, innovation and change. The summary concluded that:
 - “Lifelong learning lies at the heart of their formal and informal training at all ages and levels, as do the objectives of social cohesiveness and sustainability, which are central parts of the development of any learning city or region.”
- Location or “geographically defined labour markets, regional conventions, norms and values” are advantages, for “firms and knowledge institutions

⁵⁷ OECD, 1999, “Learning cities: the new recipe in regional development”, *Observer*, No. 217, Paris.

clustered in the same location have greater opportunities to share a culture and understanding that facilitate the process of social interaction and learning.”

B. THE UNITED KINGDOM

The pragmatic, incremental development of learning communities characterizes the British approach to building learning towns and cities. The National Institute for Adult and Continuing Education (NIACE) of England and Wales began to monitor developments following the OECD Gothenburg conference and discuss possible initiatives with civic officials. By 1995 eight centres –Sheffield, Nottingham, Liverpool, Norwich, Milton Keynes, Derby, Hull and Edinburgh – joined forces to create the Learning City Network (LCN). The network has grown from some 20 members in 1998 to 40 in 2000 and an estimated 75 by 2001. The LCN exchanges best practice among members, acts as an information exchange, and collaborates with both NIACE and the Department for Education and Employment (DfEE) to promote the learning communities movement.

In 1997 a new British government declared education as its highest priority and the core of its efforts to create an economically competitive and socially inclusive nation for the 21st Century knowledge-based society. The response to this challenge has varied in every community and every sector including the civic, public sector (library, museum, health, social service authorities), economic sector (private and cooperative), and education.

However British research findings have informed their practice, and emphasis has been laid on three strands of development that are seen as important to success in any learning community:

- **Partnership** - learning to build connections between all sectors in a community
- **Participation** - learning to involve the public in the policy process, and engage in learning opportunities, and
- **Performance** – learning to evaluate progress.⁵⁸

No one learning community model has gained prominence nor is there any attempt by government to impose one, however the DfEE is working with the LCN and learning communities to experiment with different approaches. Learning communities are seen, however, as an integral part of a comprehensive national lifelong learning strategy, of which some key initiatives include:

- ✓ A Sure Start program focused on quality pre-natal to pre-school learning for parents and their infants;
- ✓ A National Learning Grid with 2,000 new electronic learning centres
- ✓ A new University for Industry (Ufi) aimed at employees of small to medium enterprises
- ✓ Individual Learning Accounts for almost 1 million adults by the end of 2000

⁵⁸ DfEE, 1998, *Learning Communities: A Guide to Assessing Practice and Progress*, DfEE & Learning Cities Network, London.

- ✓ Local Learning Partnerships to coordinate formal sector provision
- ✓ Initiatives of the Cabinet's Social Inclusion Unit aimed at the most disadvantaged e.g. street people, single mothers, and poor neighbourhoods.

A 1998 study of learning community development in the UK indicated that at that early stage of development less attention had been given to assessing the potential of lifelong learning as an organizing principle for civic policy and practice and more attention had been placed on its use as a socio-economic tool. It noted that some communities were beginning to focus the lens of lifelong learning on a range of their services and are devising strategies to break down barriers between providers:

“For example, Swansea has begun to have police officers job-shadow youth workers for several weeks in order to add a new, and better informed perspective to community policing. Other communities are increasingly involving health care home workers who provide books to mothers of six month infants as part of a highly successful *Books for Babies* family literacy campaign.”⁵⁹

An important part of the British approach is the establishment, by learning community steering committees, of measurable, achievable “learning targets”. These targets vary, for example:

- ✓ Southampton, a learning city, has an objective of 15 % of its workforce having basic computer skills by the end of 2000
- ✓ Retford, a learning town of 25,000, has set outcomes that include increased funding, learning participation rates, and community awareness

Learning communities and their Learning Cities Network are contributing to major policy initiatives in the UK such as the development of a White paper and subsequent action on regeneration of the nation's urban centres. The systematic way in which the British are using a lifelong learning policy lens is impressive. For example, the DfEE commissioned a study, *Learning Elements of the Single Regeneration Budget* [SRB], that reviewed the SRB allocations to local partnerships for community regeneration and identified its contribution to the Government's lifelong learning aims.⁶⁰ The 1999 White Paper, *A better quality of life: A strategy for sustainable development for the United Kingdom*, contains a chapter on “Building Sustainable Communities” that identifies a wide range of government action targeted at specific communities.⁶¹ For example:

- ✓ Education Action Zones have been set up to raise standards in clusters of schools facing challenging circumstances;
- ✓ An “Excellence in Cities” program will raise standards of education, create new opportunities and tackle barriers to learning in inner cities

⁵⁹ Faris, Ron, 1998, *Learning Communities: Cities, Towns and Villages Preparing for a 21st Century Knowledge-Based Economy*, Centre for Curriculum, Transfer and Technology, Victoria. See URL: <http://www.vanisle.net/users/rfaris>

⁶⁰ DfEE, 1999, *Learning Elements of the Single Regeneration Budget*. See URL: <http://www.lifelonglearning.co.uk/srb/sect01.htm>

⁶¹ DETR, 1999, *A better quality of life: A strategy for sustainable development for the United Kingdom*. See URL: <http://www.environment.detr.gov.uk/sustainable/quality/life/07.htm>

- ✓ A New Deal for Communities regeneration program will tackle problems of multiple deprivation; and
- ✓ A new Countryside Agency will work on social exclusion in rural areas.

All of these initiatives are being integrated with other mainstream programs for education and employment.

Although many of the UK learning-based community initiatives address unique British situations the basic principles and developmental processes that are evolving there should be of interest to Canadians who do not wish to re-invent the learning community wheel. UK officials in the DfEE and the learning communities movement have generously shared their time and expertise to promote a British-Canadian exchange of ideas and initiatives related to learning communities.

C. OTHER

Among the bodies that are exploring and promoting the notion of learning communities in the English-speaking world is a British-inspired European organization with some links to Canada, and several Australian educational research bodies. There are also several initiatives within the European Union that promote aspects of learning communities and their practice.

1. Europe

1.1 The European Lifelong Learning Initiative

The European Lifelong Learning Initiative (ELLI), a non-profit organization sprung from a European conference on Lifelong Learning held at Oxford University in 1992. Its original focus was on the application of the concept to issues of industry and employability. Today it has a membership of some 140 organizations, 10% from industry, 50% from universities, and the rest from professional associations, schools, teacher training institutions, adult education organizations and others. Its scope has enlarged dramatically to include ambitious objectives for Europe, such as:

- ✓ the creation of learning communities in every city, town and region
- ✓ the development of learning organizations in every company, school, university and government department
- ✓ defining, measuring and monitoring progress to the acquisition of lifelong learning skills, values, and habits throughout society.

ELLI has gained support from several European commission programs including:

- Leonardo that supported development of an electronic “Learning Highway” Web site for lifelong learning courses and case studies
- Socrates Program that supports the current TELS (Towards a European Learning Society) project that has conducted an in-depth study of six European cities in Year 1 and is expanding in to 100 cities in Year 2.

The focus of the TELS project is three-fold:

1. The extent to which the city, in its plans, understands the difference between the paradigm of Education and Training and the new Lifelong Learning paradigm and is taking actions to increase the incidence of learning among citizens.
2. The strategies, already in place and planned, to implement Lifelong Learning concepts in the participating cities and the way they have been communicated to citizens, and
3. The one year study of policies and programs evolving in six cities that have declared themselves learning cities (Gothenburg; Southampton; Espoo, Finland; Edinburgh; Limerick, Ireland; and Drammen, Norway) and, based on this preliminary investigation, will extend the survey to another 100 European cities and that plan to become learning cities.

The results of this project will be disseminated at the First European Festival of the Learning City in Sheffield in mid-September 2000.

1.2 The European Commission

Two major programs of the European Union focus on education and training. The Socrates Program emphasizes cooperation in the field of education while the Leonardo da Vinci aims at cooperation in the area of vocational training. While neither deals specifically with community development, it is Socrates with its emphasis on both formal and non-formal learning within a lifelong learning context, that provides some support for learning community initiatives such as the aforementioned TELS project of ELLI.

The Aries Program on the social economy support some community economic development initiatives, while the European Social Fund is a major source of funding for community development initiatives in socio-economically disadvantaged regions of Europe.

In 1997 the Council of the European Union recognized that there was a need to promote local community development through education and training (formal sector provision). It noted:

“However, local community development through education and training generally involves people at the local level making an effort to maximize their development potential by participating in the planning and implementation of their own programmes of learning with the local community. These programmes are principally for adults and are undertaken outside the provision of formal education and training. Also, the delivery of such programmes could include interaction between education and training institutions and local communities.”⁶²

The Council called upon the European Commission to initiate “a study of the practice and approaches to local community development through education and training [both formal

⁶² Council of Europe, 1997, COUNCIL CONCLUSIONS of 17 February 1997 on local community development through education and training.

See URL: http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/en/lif/dat/1997/en_397Y0306_01.html

and non-formal].” The document was delivered in November 1999 but has not yet been released. However the principles upon which it is based were stated in the 1997 resolution as:

- ✓ empowering individuals and groups to attain new levels of personal and social awareness;
- ✓ empowering people at the local level to become expert in their own need identification and program development including the use of information technologies;
- ✓ fostering social inclusion by involving people actively in the political, economic, cultural and social dimensions of their society; and
- ✓ promoting equality of rights and opportunities for all people in local communities.

2. Australia

For over 15 years Australia has been engaged in a remarkable period of substantial educational reform at both the national and state levels. While the initial activities were aimed at developing a more coherent and integrated federal system of education and training to ensure the nation’s international competitiveness, more recent initiatives are informed by lifelong learning theory and practice, and a concern for regional and community development.

The Regional Australia Summit

In October 1999 the Australian federal government convened the Regional Australia Summit to develop strategies to address challenges facing regional (i.e. rural and remote) Australia.⁶³ Over 280 delegates discussed and put forward solutions to the many challenges facing regional Australia.

One of twelve themes discussed was “Education and Training in Regional Australia”. The theme presentation paper dealt with education, training and lifelong learning at the “Learning Region” level.⁶⁴ The paper, using research and case study findings, emphasized a number of themes that appear to be universal, namely:

- ✓ Seventy per cent of skills are learnt outside formal institutions, for example informal learning is the main source of skills acquisition in small business;
- ✓ Local involvement in planning for education, training and lifelong learning produces commitment and results in resilient and sustainable outcomes;
- ✓ Educational institutions contribute to regions and communities in many ways including , adding to intellectual capital and as a focus for lifelong learning;
- ✓ Education, training and lifelong learning improves outcomes for equity groups
- ✓ Generally the further from an urban centre one is, the less one has of almost everything from income to qualifications

⁶³ Commonwealth of Australia, 1999, *Regional Australia Summit*, Commonwealth Department of Transport and Regional Services. See URL: <http://www.dotrs.gov.au/regional/summit/>

⁶⁴ Falk, Ian and Kilpatrick, Sue, 1999, *Re-focusing on Learning Regions: Education, training and lifelong learning for Australia’s well being*, Centre for Research and Learning in Regional Australia, University of Tasmania.

- ✓ There are generally lower participation rates and school retention rates in rural areas;
- ✓ Emerging evidence shows that learning older people engaged in learning not only contribute to society directly but also make a contribution indirectly by having lower health care costs and associated costs such as home care.

The paper concluded by identifying “principles of good practice in building strong and resilient communities through community development.” Some of the “features of good community leadership” important for improving a community’s future include:

- building relationships across all community sectors;
- building local and external networks and local social capital;
- bringing people together with resources to plan possible futures; and
- celebrating and documenting success, recognizing and moving on from failures.

A Summit Steering Committee was formed to follow-up on the various Summit recommendations (some 250 in total!). In April 2000 it produced an Interim Report that included a vision statement and proposed that the federal government, in partnership with state/territory and local governments and community and private sectors, commit to a ten-year plan to realize the vision.⁶⁵ The committee identified three strategic areas for change:

1. Community Empowerment
2. Economic and Business Development in Regional Communities
3. Equity of Services in Regional Communities.

The report emphasized that:

“The potential of generating and facilitating greater community involvement and empowerment in regional development must be a key element in the design and delivery of all government programmes, given the multiplier effect it can have and the potential it has for reducing duplication and lowering costs.”

The Committee’s Interim Report included a section devoted to “Community Empowerment”. The section emphasized the need for “an enhanced skill base and stronger leadership capacity” for many regional communities and the importance of recognizing the different problems and solutions of each community. The document called for a number of capacity building measures, including:

- ✓ funding for priorities determined by the communities themselves
- ✓ support for leadership of community leaders, including women and indigenous people, with a specific youth leadership component
- ✓ building rural leadership networks, and
- ✓ training and support programs, including resources, to improve the skills of volunteers within communities.

The report also noted the concerns expressed by Summit participants about the lack of a coordinated approach to the delivery of government services, and the need for “a more

⁶⁵ See URL:

http://www.dotrs.gov.au/regional/summit/outcomes/committee/report/executive_summary.htm

integrated, whole-of-government approach to funding and supporting the needs of rural and regional communities.” It also noted that federal and state ministers responsible for regional development had met and were establishing a framework for co-operation between all levels of government.

Finally, the report recommended showcasing “best practice” community and business initiatives in regional areas so that other communities could share them.

3. The United States

While community economic development, normally based on conventional economic theory, dominates much of the U.S. approach to community development there are occasionally broader, learning-based approaches that merit further investigation.

In 1993 President Clinton signed the bill that created Empowerment Zone/Enterprise Communities (EZ/EC) Program that began the most extensive federally funded community development project of the decade. The EZ/EC initiative challenged local communities with high rates of poverty to develop their own vision of change, and authorized \$3.5 billion in tax incentives, block grants and other benefits to revitalize rural and urban low income communities.

Communities that applied for the EZ/EC grants were asked to define what makes a community livable, vibrant and sustainable, and then to develop a 10-year strategic plan to realize their vision. Criteria for applications included the:

- ✓ openness of the strategic planning process;
- ✓ comprehensiveness of the strategic plan;
- ✓ effectiveness of the performance benchmarks;
- ✓ extent to which community residents will be an active part in the plan implementation; and
- ✓ geographic diversity of the applicants.

In December 1994 thirty-three rural communities and were designated as EZs or ECs. By 1998 twelve cities and 3 rural counties were designated as Empowerment Zones (EZs). The urban EZs received \$100 million each while the rural areas obtained \$40 million per site. They thus received significantly more funding than the 90 Enterprise Communities (ECs), composed of 30 rural and 60 urban sites, that each received \$3 million.

An EZ/EC Learning Initiative

A National EZ/EC Learning Initiative was launched at the Community Partnership Center (CPC) of the University of Tennessee, Knoxville to measure the program’s impact. The Learning Initiative, funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the Ford Foundation, and the Rural Economic Policy Program of the Aspen Institute, piloted a participatory evaluation process in 10 of the rural sites.⁶⁶

In each of the sites ‘Learning Teams’ made up of 10-15 individuals representing a broad range of local stakeholders worked with professional researchers to track the project

⁶⁶ See URL: <http://www.ra.utk.edu/ora/rag/bulletin/rbs96/cpc.html>

progress and make recommendations for improvement. The teams worked with a facilitator to attain the skills needed to conduct evaluations, monitor project progress, and share information about their communities. The 'Learning Team' approach ensured citizen participation and enabled community capacity building.

Among the early findings of the CPC "Learning Team" process was disagreement at the community level over the meaning of the term "development":

"Some factions within communities promote economic development as definitive, while others focus on the building of 'social capital', which is much more difficult to define or measure. Yet it has been this very social capital, the historic ability of communities to build and maintain networks of cooperation, that CPC is finding to be most critical to the success of the EZ/EC programs".

Healthy Communities, Healthy Economy

A 1999 study of health improvement opportunities in EZ/ECs viewed health as "an important economic and community development issue facing" the projects.⁶⁷ The report, *Improving Health in Empowerment Zones and Enterprise Communities: Lessons Learned from the EZ/EC Health Benchmarking Demonstration Project*, saw the EZ/EC initiative as an opportunity to infuse health promotion learning to:

- ✓ develop sustainable communities that support healthful individual behaviors; residents' access to care, and safe environments;
- ✓ create a healthy workforce that is attractive to employers;
- ✓ increase residents' ability to gain employment and maintain jobs;
- ✓ reduce health disparities, injuries, and conditions that take an economic and human toll on EZ/EC neighborhoods; and
- ✓ broaden participation in EZ/EC holistic community realization.

Three urban demonstration sites were chosen. "Lessons Learned" over an 18-month period of working with community partners in each site to promote community health improvement was derived from the project assessment. They were plain language observations that included:

- The sooner you know where you're going, the faster you'll get there
- Communities need a road map and guide to improve health
- Communities value an "honest broker"
- The community should be ready to do it
- Planning and action often occur simultaneously
- Clear communication is an ingredient of success
- Health is a mobilizing issue that brings people together
- Data should inform, not sidetrack, the process

Other "lessons learned" were specific to the EZ/EC program.

Accomplishments in Round I (1994-98) of rural EZs and ECs include 10,000 jobs created or saved, 14,000 workers trained, and 102 water or waste treatment systems under

⁶⁷ see URL: <http://aspe.hhs.gov/progsys/ezec/lessons/TOC.htm>

construction. Round II (commenced in October 1998) increased the number of sites and included, for the first time, Indian reservation lands.

III. LITERATURE REVIEW

There are two inter-related terms that are central to this study. The first is “learning – based community development” and the second, “learning communities”. When one searches the literature or Web sites with the term “learning-based community development” a limited number of truly relevant resources will be found. Perhaps that is because the term has been constructed for purposes of this study. As such, it encompasses the contribution of both the institutional or formal education and training sector, and the non-formal learning sector of the workplace, community and home to the full range of community development approaches that may be found within a community. The term is concerned with community capacity building and not academic studies – it is about the learning – formal and non-formal - that enables people locally to enhance the social and economic conditions of their community.

A search of the Web sites using the term “learning communities” will find more hits, but its definition will largely depend upon whether one is using the European (and British) definition or the American. Almost without exception, the American literature defines learning communities in terms of institutional, or classroom, learning environments and not geographic communities.⁶⁸ The Europeans, along with international organizations such as UNESCO and the OECD, normally define learning communities in terms of geographic location or communities of interest (real or virtual).

Historically both formal and non-formal learning has contributed to community development in British Columbia, Canada and abroad. Combined, they have the potential to inform and infuse future community development initiatives whether the purposes are citizenship/civic education; health promotion; economic development; environmental sustainability; rural/urban development, or social planning and development – or a relevant mixture of objectives.

This brief review will first identify some seminal documents that contribute to an emerging conceptual framework upon which learning communities are being built. It will then lay out two concepts - social/intellectual capital and community capacity building - that are particularly pertinent to learning-based community development and the growth of learning communities. It will conclude with a focus on some key documents related to learning-based approaches to the chief purposes of community development.

⁶⁸ An analysis of the American definitions is found in the ERIC Digest 1999 article on “Learning Communities” that identifies “five major learning community models in existence” – all institutional based. It makes no reference to the European or international organization’s geographic terminology or perspectives. See Eric Clearinghouse on Higher Education Washington DC./ BBB32577_George Washington Univ. Washington DC. Graduate School of Education and Human Development.

A. A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

1. Lifelong Learning

The concept that is central to both the notions of learning-based community development and of learning communities is that of lifelong learning. While the phrase lifelong learning has been used for almost eighty years ago, it was placed on the international agenda in 1973 by UNESCO when it published the report of the International Commission on the Development of Education (Faure) entitled “*Learning to Be*”.⁶⁹ This report called for fundamental re-thinking of the traditional education system and its focus on teaching and the initial preparation of students for life. It claimed that there was an urgent need to develop a new paradigm that focused on “learning and learners” rather than “teaching and teachers”. It argued that allocation of significant resources to a “front-end loaded” education model rather than a more equitable distribution of educational resources throughout a lifetime made no sense in what would be an increasingly complex and changing world. It criticized a conventional system that favoured the elites and disempowered the masses, particularly in the Third world.

Of particular relevance to the learning community model was the Faure report’s analysis that there was not only a lifespan or vertical dimension of learning but also a life-wide or horizontal dimension. The horizontal dimension entailed the learning acquired by an individual as they simultaneously played roles as family and community members, workers and members of a variety of groups and organizations. The report noted that virtually every government department or agency has a role in promoting non-formal learning to the publics they serve. Indeed it was this report that triggered growing interest in assessing the vast amount of non-formal and informal learning that would go on in the “learning society” it envisioned. UNESCO and its member organizations have subsequently used the concept as an organizing principle and social goal for its promotion of a learning society for all.

In 1996, the “European Year of Lifelong Learning”, two major reports emphasized the importance of informing and infusing not only government policies but also social, cultural and economic life at all levels with a comprehensive lifelong learning strategy. UNESCO’s International Commission for the Twenty-first Century produced *Learning: The Treasure Within*, and the OECD issued *Lifelong Learning for All*.⁷⁰ OECD member nations, including Canada, made “a commitment to pursue and implement a broad strategy for lifelong learning, suited to the circumstances of each country.” upon receipt of the report.

⁶⁹ UNESCO, 1973, *Learning to Be: The World of Education, Today and Tomorrow*. Paris. An excellent analysis of the difference between education and learning is found in Thomas, Alan, 1991, *Beyond Education: A New Perspective on Society’s Management of Learning*. Jossey-Bass Ltd., San Francisco.

⁷⁰ UNESCO, 1996, *Learning: The Treasure Within*, Paris and OECD, 1996, *Lifelong Learning for All*, Paris.

2. Learning Communities

The OECD promoted coordination of both regional and urban learning communities by establishing learning communities' budget and office within its Centre for Educational Innovation and Research (CERI) as part of its lifelong learning strategy.⁷¹

In 1997 the new UK government, as part of its national lifelong learning strategy, formally supported local civic initiatives at developing a network of learning communities (cities and towns) throughout Britain. A series of research publications supported by the Department for Education and Employment (DfEE) soon followed aimed at promoting best practice. *Learning Towns: Learning Cities* (1998) provided 19 case studies of the development of learning communities in England, Scotland and Wales.⁷² The report identified a number of problems encountered including:

- ✓ rivalries of institutional providers
- ✓ lack of employer involvement
- ✓ lack of involvement of schools
- ✓ funding for an infrastructure
- ✓ lack of interest on the part of a particular partner
- ✓ initiative too closely associated with one partner, and
- ✓ difficulties in devising strategies to involve the whole community.

The report speculates that smaller communities may be more effective than larger because of people's greater identification with their local community and speculates that there is no reason why there shouldn't be "the learning village, the learning hamlet or the learning suburb."

Parallel research resulted in the creation of *Learning Communities: A Guide to Assessing Practice and Progress* (1998). This document is especially helpful as it identified, based on research findings, "the three strands of development" that were important to success, namely:

- ⇒ Partnership - learning to build connections between sectors
- ⇒ Participation - learning to involve the public in the policy process
- ⇒ Performance - learning to evaluate progress.⁷³

This Guide, which has undergone almost two years of field testing, will be revised by the fall of 2000. Its recommendation for a three-year developmental approach with community-established learning targets and on-going action research provides a model of good practice that should be carefully assessed by British Columbians. There is no need to re-invent the wheel and many of the principles and practices found in the Guide are clearly evidence-based and sound.

⁷¹ Reports of learning community activities are published and available at the OECD publications office or, sometimes on the OECD/CERI Web site.

⁷² DfEE, 1998, *Learning Towns: Learning Cities*, Department for Education and Employment, Sudbury.

⁷³ DfEE, 1998, *Learning Communities: A Guide to Assessing Practice and Progress*, Sudbury. The crucial importance of learning how to build partnerships, promote wide citizen participation and assess progress is supported by community development research in Europe, North America and Australia.

3. Social /Intellectual Capital

The concepts of social and intellectual capital are emerging and controversial notions. Both challenge traditional accounting and political economy theories. As discussed in detail in the report (see Part IV. Towards a New Political Economy: Social Capital), the concepts meet at the confluence of streams of thought with a number of social scientific tributaries. One stream is social capital theory. While James Coleman is credited by most as the founder of the school, Robert Putnam is the current President.⁷⁴ Putnam's pioneering work on the value of social capital in Italy and his subsequent analysis of its decline in the United States has instigated considerable discussion and research in Britain, the United States, Canada and Australia. In the United States both urban and rural community developers have been influenced by the concept, as have those concerned with the promotion of a civil society. A study of the US Civic Practices Network is a good example of viewing learning and social capital in the practical context of grassroots environmentalism and community development.⁷⁵ Among its conclusions was that participatory learning both at the community and governmental levels are necessary if positive social capital is to be built.

The Centre for Research and Learning in Regional Australia at the University of Tasmania is conducting a wide range of community-based research on lifelong learning and social capital in communities and regions.⁷⁶ While the Centre's research generally supports the importance of building social capital for community development a less positive view is shared by two Irish researchers who argue that the related notion of social cohesion is a conservative factor and that the concept, "as generally defined", provides little value. They suggest that much of what formal educational institutions do in the field of adult education and community development should be devolved to the 'dispersed community of lifelong learners', in short, the non-formal community sector.⁷⁷

⁷⁴ Coleman, James, 1990, *The Foundations of Social Theory*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1988, "Social Capital in the Creation of Human Capital" in *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol.94 (supplement), pp.S95 – S120.

Putnam, Robert, 1993, *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy*, Princeton University Press, Princeton.

Putnam, Robert, 1995, "Bowling Alone: America's Declining Social Capital." in *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 6, No.1, 1995, "The Strange Disappearance of Civic America", *Political Science*, Winter.

⁷⁵ Siriani, C and Friedland, L.,1995, "Social Capital and Civic Innovation: Learning and Capacity Building from the 1960s to the 1990s." See URL:

http://www.cpn.org/sections/new_citizenship/theory/socialcapital_civinnov.html

⁷⁶ See, for example, Kilpatrick, Sue and Falk, Ian, 1999, "How learning for VET (Vocational Education & Training) can build social capital for regions." A paper presented at the Lifelong Learning Network's first National conference on 27 August, 1999 at the University of Canberra. See URL:

<http://llnetwork.canberra.edu.au/ll/PUBLICATIONS/KilpatrickLearningforVET.htm> The Centre Director can be reached via e-mail: ian.falk@utas.edu.au

⁷⁷ McClenaghan, P. and Shanahan, P.,1999, *Community Development Education: The University in a Community of Lifelong Learners*, presented at the European Conference "Lifelong Learning – Inside and Outside Schools", University of Bremen.

See URL: <http://www1.uni-bremen.de/~erill/lios/contrib/s2-02.html>

The work of Francis Fukuyama in *Trust: The Social Virtues & the Creation of Prosperity* and his notion of trust as an element of economic comparative advantage has inspired considerable international comparative studies of not only trust but also other non-tangible assets.⁷⁸ The strength of a country, according to Fukuyama, lies not in its ethos of individualism but on the cohesiveness of its civil associations and communities.

The concept of intellectual capital is even more controversial as its leading proponents are generally found not in universities but in the private sector. While the foremost practitioners are found in the Swedish international insurance giant, Skandia, its most articulate promoter is the American author Thomas Stewart, whose book, *Intellectual Capital: The New Wealth of Organizations* remains a seminal document.⁷⁹

A. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT: SIX PURPOSES

This study has identified six traditional purposes for community development. They are:

- Citizenship/civic education
- Health promotion
- Economic development
- Environmental/ecological sustainability
- Rural/urban development, and
- Social development/planning.

1. Citizenship/Civic Education

The six approaches are not mutually exclusive but they do have somewhat different disciplinary origins and historic importance. For example, in Canada arguably the oldest and longest-standing concern in the field of adult education and community development is citizenship education.⁸⁰ Whether it was the earliest work of the Frontier College, a voluntary organization inspired to assist new Canadian workers; or the early co-operative development initiatives of the Antigonish Movement; or the co-operative movement in Quebec or western Canada; or the related development of the National Farm Radio Forum and Citizen's Forum, citizenship education broadly defined, was an integral purpose. Thus the relationship between some forms of community economic development and citizenship are close. Ian MacPherson, the historian of the cooperative movement, notes that "cooperators most caught up in their movement have been essentially adult educators."⁸¹ Indeed both Farm Radio and Citizen's Forums engaged both rural and urban cooperators and other activists who, particularly in the case of Farm Forum, engaged in cooperative development and other forms of community development.

⁷⁸ Fukuyama, F., 1995, *Trust: The Social Virtues & The Creation of Prosperity*, Free Press, New York.

⁷⁹ Stewart, Thomas, 1997, *Intellectual Capital: The New Wealth of Organizations*, Doubleday/Currency, New York. The Skandia Web site contains useful articles on topics such as "intelligent organizations" that have implications for all forms of human organizations, whether in the formal or non-formal sectors. See URL: <http://www.skandia.se/>

Skandia is a pioneer in applying the concept of intellectual capital to its own accounting system/reports.

⁸⁰ Selman, Gordon et al, 1998, *The foundations of adult education in Canada*, Thompson Educational Publishing, Toronto

⁸¹ I. MacPherson, in Cassidy, F. and Faris, R. (Eds.), 1987, *Choosing Our Future*, OISE, Toronto.

In the text of this report service-learning was introduced as a powerful means of harnessing the talent and energy of youth through their applied academic work in the Third sector for purposes of community capacity-building and development. Substantial research has also indicated that quality service-learning is an effective means of civic or citizenship education.⁸² In 1997 the US Education Commission of the States created the Compact for Learning and Citizenship in which service-learning plays a central role. Reciprocal benefits to the learners, the community and the schools are evident.⁸³ At-risk youth, in or out of school, may particularly benefit from this form of experiential learning as they learn in a non-classroom environment that they can learn and contribute to their community.

2. Health Promotion

Health promotion also has a long community development tradition in Canada. Like citizenship education, and indeed many other purposes served by community development, it is historically rooted in the real needs of people at the community level who responded through joint action and learning. For example, in the late 1890's the Women's Institutes began when a mother, Adelaide Hoodless of Stoney Creek, Ontario, lost her baby because of spoiled milk. Mrs. Hoodless was determined that this tragic loss would not happen to others and began on a path of developing a non-formal learning organization that ultimately spread around the world. Indeed the interest of the Institutes spread to include not only home economics and hygiene but also the arts and citizenship, women's advocacy, and a wide range of community initiatives.⁸⁴

Over the past hundred years the area of health promotion and its involvement in community development has evolved greatly. Fueled in recent years by health determinant and neuroscience research, increased emphasis has been placed on social and community action at both the pre-natal to pre-school period and youth development stages.

Canadian health promotion practitioners have been interested in learning-based approaches to strengthen communities for several decades. The "healthy community" initiative has deep roots. As early as 1974 a Canadian report, *a New Perspective on the Health of Canadians*, was among the first serious attempts to explore factors other than health care that impact on and influence the health of Canadians.⁸⁵ In 1986 *The Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion and Achieving Health for All: A Framework for Health*

⁸² See Mark Battersby, 1998, "Education for Citizenship: Service-Learning and the Reflective Citizen", pp.3-6, and Robert Shumer and Madeleine Hengel "Service-Learning and Higher Education: A Brief Review of Important Literature and Resources" pp.21-24 in *Service-Learning: Community's missing piece*, Centre for Curriculum, Transfer and Technology, Victoria for additional references. The

⁸³ See the Compact Issue Paper at URL:

<http://www.ecs.org/ecs/ecswweb.nsf/02afdf...5fafd750e838725676200702334?OpenDocument>

⁸⁴ See Selman, G. pp.168 – 170 for an analysis of the Institutes, whose motto is "For Home and Country".

⁸⁵ Prince Edward Island, 1996, *Circle of Health: Prince Edward Island's Health Promotion Framework*, PEI Health and Community Services System, Charlottetown.

Promotion were released at the First International Conference on Health Promotion in Ottawa. *The Ottawa Charter* called for action in five inter-related areas:

- ✓ Build Healthy Public Policy
- ✓ Create Supportive Environments
- ✓ Strengthen Community Action
- ✓ Develop Personal skills
- ✓ Reorient Health Services

Throughout the post-War years the World Health Organization has been evolving a broad definition of health promotion. In 1993 its Health Promotion Working Group suggested that health promotion must be part of all health-related initiatives:

“Health promotion is the process of enabling people to increase control over, and to improve their health. It is not a stand-alone program. It is the way we think about and take action on health matters. All health programs, activities and resources must have the goal of developing the capacity of individuals, groups and communities to deal effectively with life’s circumstances and challenges.”

Promotion of “healthy communities” has occurred across Canada and the world. An especially interesting model related to learning-based community development developed in 1996 with the creation of Prince Edward Island’s Health Promotion Framework. Entitled *Circle of Health*, it was produced after a yearlong process of forging a community-based health promotion strategy. The six priorities identified by Island health workers included:

- Community development
- Strengthening families
- Education and awareness
- Collaboration on policies and legislation
- Demonstration of effectiveness of health promotion
- Skill development for health promoters

The Framework adopted a First Nation medicine wheel as its way of displaying the holistic health approach it envisioned.⁸⁶

For several decades leaders such as Fraser Mustard and Clyde Hertzman have produced reports, often through the Canadian Institute for Advanced Research, that have documented the substantial cost-benefit of healthy policy and practices and their integration in wider socio-economic strategies. Mustard, in *Technology, Information and the Evolution of Social Policy: The Chips for Neurons Revolution and Socio-Economic Challenge* (1996), makes an important argument for integrated social and economic policy when he asserts that:

“...Since the quality of human capital is important for economic growth and since social policy in its effects on the social environment has a major effect on human development, particularly early childhood, factors influencing human

⁸⁶ The medicine wheel had evolved from an initial compass rose of Maritime tradition.

development are a major long-term economic issue as well as a social issue and should be important in social policy...'⁸⁷

Health promotion experts have produced a wealth of evidence related to the effectiveness of learning-based community initiatives. For instance, the Canadian Institute of Child Health report (1993) looked at the "Prevention of Low Birthweight in Canada" and identified the importance of preventative, community-wide approaches of which public awareness and education are crucial elements. It applauded the French pre-term birth prevention program that integrated patient, professional and public education at the community level. Over a 10-year period the national low birthweight rate fell from 8.2% to 5.3%. The greatest reduction occurred among women with the lowest levels of education.⁸⁸

The *Annual Report on the Health of British Columbians* by the Provincial Health Officer has reiterated the importance of strengthening communities. In 1995, for example, he noted the importance of "vibrant networks and norms of civic engagement" advocated by Robert Putnam and noted that communities with strong social capital are "better positioned to offer the supports that are so important to population health." In the 1996 report the importance of lifelong learning was noted and several targets were developed to measure the "opportunities for all individuals to develop and maintain the capacities and skills need to thrive and meet life's challenges and to make choices that enhance health"⁸⁹

The relationship between health promotion and both learning-based community development and learning communities is illuminated by a recent work co-edited by UBC's Clyde Hertzman entitled *Developmental Health and the Wealth of Nations: Social, Biological and Educational Dynamics* (1999). While the first half of the document identifies links between socio-economic status, achievement and health, the second part explores ways that schools and communities can develop new kinds of learning environments to enhance positive change and foster intellectual growth. The chief thesis is that a learning society will become imperative if humanity is to cope with rapidly increasing change. A community development case study is provided that focuses on community and individual empowerment in building supportive environments in which children and parents can learn and thrive in five Montreal neighbourhoods.⁹⁰

⁸⁷ Mustard, Fraser, 1996, *Technology, Information and the Evolution of Social Policy: The Chips for Neurons Revolution and Socio-Economic Challenge*, Canadian Institute for Advanced Research, Toronto.

⁸⁸ Canadian Institute of Child Health, 1993, *Best Start: Community Action for Healthy Babies*, Ottawa.

²² British Columbia, 1995 -6, *A Report on the Health of British Columbians*, Provincial Health Officer's Annual Report, Victoria.

²³ Bouchard, Camil, "The Community as a Participative Learning Environment: The Case of Centraide of Greater Montreal 1,2,3 Go! Project" in Keating, D and Hertzman, C. (Eds.), 1999, *Developmental Health and the Wealth of Nations: Social, Biological and Educational Dynamics*, The Guilford Press, New York.

3. Economic Development

Perhaps the most dominant field of current community development practice is that of economic development. This search revealed that community economic development is narrowly defined in some jurisdictions. For example, in some US states it focuses chiefly on attracting new investment or building community physical infrastructure such as social housing. The Canadian historic tradition, based on the Antigonish Movement, is very much broader. Ian MacPherson traces the social historical roots of the Movement and its emphasis on learning to achieve its socio-economic purposes in “Co-operatives, Adult Education and Community”.⁹¹

While learning-based community development is integral to traditional community cooperative development, and the Maritime universities that are heirs to the Antigonish Movement, it appears to be peripheral to much current economic development theory and practice that is often dominated by classical market and education approaches.⁹² These traditional views, often expressed in top-down approaches to communities and their needs, are frequently one-off projects of an economic or educational nature - ignoring lifelong learning or other factors crucial to sustainability.

A rural community economic development document, *The Community Resilience Manual*, just being completed for Forest Renewal BC, asserts that “Historically, the usual efforts to strengthen the local economy have been project based – such as industrial recruitment, buy-local campaigns, or mainstreet improvement.” It notes that research on successful or resilient communities identifies the following behaviours:

- they take a multi-functional approach to create a sustainable (economically, ecologically, politically and socially) development system within the community
- through strategic planning or other efforts, they maximize the use of their limited time and resources in those areas that will yield the greatest strategic benefits;
- they develop plans that merge social and economic goals and build local capacity;
- they are able to mobilize key sectors of the community around priorities;
- they focus their energies on mobilizing internal assets (both financial and human) while also leveraging outside resources to achieve their goals;
- they have established a critical mass of cooperating organizations through which locally based initiatives are implemented and evaluated.⁹³

⁹¹ I. MacPherson, “Co-operatives, Adult Education and Community” in Cassidy, F. and Faris, R., 1987, *Choosing Our Future: Adult Education and Public Policy in Canada*. OISE, Toronto.

⁹² In addition to St. Francis Xavier University, the University College of Cape Breton and several smaller Nova Scotia universities, the Antigonish tradition has influenced adult educators in Memorial University. Also a host of non-formal learning-based organizations in fields ranging from tele-communities to literacy initiatives with a broad community economic development approaches have developed throughout the region.

⁹³ Centre for Community Enterprise, 1999, *The Community Resilience Manual: A Resource for Rural Recovery & Renewal*, prepared for Forest Renewal BC, Port Alberni. Pp.1-1 – 1-2. The *Manual* is

The growing interest in the “Social Economy” or not-for-profit sector such as cooperatives, associations, foundations etc. is rife with implications for collaboration with emerging learning communities. The Social Economy is based on the following values:

- ✓ economic activities with social goals;
- ✓ sustainable development;
- ✓ equal opportunities
- ✓ inclusion of disadvantaged people; and
- ✓ civil society.

The ARIES information centre of the European Union provides social economy on-line information, news and networking designed to promote collaboration and action within the sector at the European level.⁹⁴

4. Environmental/Ecological Sustainability

Perhaps the greatest learning curve humanity must ever faced is being encountered by this generation and its understanding that more of the same i.e. mindless use of limited global resources, exploding Third world populations cannot be sustained. From Rachel Carson’s *Silent Spring* of the 1950’s to the Bruntland Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development, the need to learn and change our individual and socio-economic behaviour has become clearer. The term “think globally, act locally” is being taken to heart by increasing numbers of communities and community developers. Fortunately many leaders in this field, while drawing upon scientific research, take an interdisciplinary approach that also calls upon insights from the social sciences.

A Canadian leader with such an approach, Mark Roseland, has aptly combined scientific and social scientific analysis in *Towards Sustainable Communities: Resources for Citizens and their Governments* (1998).⁹⁵ Roseland focuses on issues around environmental sustainability, urban and community economic development. His analysis of the evolving notion of social capital and its “multiplier effects”, and a wide array of references and Web sites make this a valuable contribution to the field.

Among the emerging approaches rife with learning implications is the “indicators movement” that is developing criteria and processes that enable communities to measure their progress towards more sustainable socio-economic futures. An especially useful recent tool is the *Guide to Sustainable Community Indicators* (1999) that views social,

comprised of three sections: a Guide; Process Tools & Techniques; and a Catalogue of practical strategies and initiatives. The *Manual* draft is available at URL: <http://www.cedworks.com>

⁹⁴ See URL: <http://www.aries.eu.int/> Members are provided with news and information about the sector as well as about existing partnerships and projects.

⁹⁵ Roseland, Mark, 1998, *Towards Sustainable Communities: Resources for Citizens and their Governments*, New Society Publishers, Gabriola Island. Roseland produced a useful literature review of sustainable communities in 1994 in which he identified “10 streams of literature” on the subject that vary with the “worldviews, or orientations of the authors”. See Mark Roseland, 1994, *Sustainable Communities: an Examination of the Literature*, Ontario Round Table on Environment and Economy, Toronto.

economic and environmental within a community context.⁹⁶ It includes education indicators, such as literacy and continuing education participation rates, noting that:

“Education is an investment in the social capital of a community...It provides common knowledge on which to base actions. Education in a sustainable community develops citizens who are capable of working together to create, maintain, and enhance a sustainable society.”⁹⁷

The Canadian Policy Research Networks has recently released *A Sampling of Community-and Citizen-driven Quality of Life/Societal Indicator Projects*. This study reviews a number of environmental sustainability projects, such the Hamilton-Wentworth project found in this report, as well as others that include environmental factors among other studies more focused on social and economic dimensions.⁹⁸ Based on the twenty-one projects reviewed in the *Sampling* it is clear that citizen involvement varied from token to significant, and that community participation and partnerships were success factors. Achievements noted in projects with citizen involvement include:

- ✓ citizen and community animation
- ✓ awareness raising of personal, neighbourhood and community values, issues and concerns
- ✓ individual and community empowerment to monitor progress, voice opinions and engage in debate, and
- ✓ improvement in community choices and responses to issues.

All of the above outcomes entail learning of new knowledge, skills, attitudes and values. Yet few of the projects overtly or explicitly had established learning objectives or targets, and only one, Alberta's *Measuring Up*, gave lifelong learning as a key value. The traditional education-training paradigm with its pre-occupation with formal sector provision appears to still dominate in many initiatives.

Perhaps one of the most stimulating and challenging analysis of learning-based approach to environmental sustainability is a paper from the Dutch author Christina Elzinga whose paper, *The ability to learn, a critical factor in environmental justice*, asks why so many official policies remain ineffective.⁹⁹ She asserts that the answers can be found at four different but inter-related levels of human consciousness and learning:

- ≡ the spiritual level of inspiration and values
- ≡ the mental level of rational thinking
- ≡ the emotional level of need, and
- ≡ the physical level of (economic) activities.

She argues that environmental policies will only be effective when people learn to change their attitude on all of these levels simultaneously. This challenge for holistic and transformative learning has implications for every approach to community development.

⁹⁶ Hart, Maureen, 1999, *Guide to Sustainable Community Indicators*, Hart Environmental Data, North Andover, MA.

⁹⁷ Hart, M., pp. 66 –68.

⁹⁸ Legowski, Barbara, 2000, *A Sampling of Community-and Citizen-driven Quality of Life/Societal Indicator Projects*, CPRN, Ottawa.

⁹⁹ Elzinga, Christina, 1997, *The ability to learn, a critical factor in environmental justice*, paper for the international conference on 'Environmental Justice: Global Ethics for the 21st Century', University of Melbourne, October 1-3, Melbourne.

5. Rural/Urban Development

There appears to be a trend in the literature, which may reflect practice, toward a growing interest in regional development, which often encompasses both urban and rural development. For example, at the international level the OECD created a Territorial Development Service in 1994 to build the analytical and theoretical framework for innovative regional policies. The Service focuses on urban, rural and local economic development, broadly defined. It acknowledges the contribution of top-down regional strategies but argues that bottom-up development models are critical for economic development as it asserts that human resources, community empowerment and small firm development are the building blocks of economic and employment development.

One of the Service's most interesting projects involved some 38 Area-Based Partnerships (in urban and rural areas) created by the Irish Government and the Structural Fund of the European Union. Broadly based partnership of local community interests, including the unemployed, and local and national social partner organizations provided the governing boards. A wide range of experiments with new forms of training and learning for the previously unemployed were initiated, with mixed results. However, the project revealed the need for "joint learning" by all concerned whether at the central government or local community levels about the effects of devolution of initiatives to the local level as compared to the traditional Irish model of centralization.¹⁰⁰

The Service has launched a new "Cities and Regions" initiative focused on how cities and regions should use their devolved and decentralized powers to respond to new global trends. It argues that there is need for a new paradigm with four components:

- ⇒ building human and social capital;
- ⇒ supporting local entrepreneurship and inward investment;
- ⇒ fighting social exclusion and improving the quality of life; and
- ⇒ encouraging local partnerships among governments, the private sector, and the civil society (voluntary/community) sectors.

Such new approaches are necessary because the OECD has concluded that "redistribution policies do little to stimulate growth and employment either in the regions concerned or at the national level."¹⁰¹

Issues around regional approaches to community development are also raised in a stimulating background paper produced at the University of Wales, Bangor.¹⁰² This paper argues that classical economic theory and orthodox conceptions of regional development have failed to provide guidance in the evolution of the European Union in particular and the world scene in general. It argues that the European region should be viewed as a

¹⁰⁰ OECD, 1999, *Local Partnerships and Social Innovation: Ireland*, Territorial Development Service, OECD, Paris. See URL: <http://www.oecd.org/tds/bis/Ireland1.html>

¹⁰¹ Hugonnier, Bernard, 2000, "Devolution and Globalisation – Implications for Decision-Makers", Introductory remarks by the Director of the territorial Development Service, International Conference, 28-29 February, Glasgow.

¹⁰² Ashton, Shan and Williams, Selwyn, 2000, *Community Development Training within the Context of Regional Development*, Keynote, University of Wales, Bangor. See URL: <http://www.bangor.ac.uk/crach/madc/keynote.html>

“Learning Region” and that the concept of lifelong learning must supplant the old distinction of education and training, as the new concept more clearly “relates to the need for flexibility and responses to changing economic circumstances”. The paper calls for the integration of the notion of the Learning Region, lifelong learning, and appropriate use of telematics (information technologies) in such a way that regional development is never viewed in isolation from the communities that constitute it.

Because urban development and learning communities are the focus of the UK learning communities addressed in the main body of this report an emphasis will be placed on some of the innovative thinking going on in a country with many similar challenges to Canada – the Commonwealth of Australia.

The symbiotic relationship of learning and social capital, and the contribution of rural schools, is being investigated in Australia by the Centre for Research and Learning in Regional Australia, University of Tasmania. It is engaged in a two-year study that concludes in September 2001 with recommendations on:

- the provision of education services in rural communities;
- the integration of education, health and other services in rural communities;
- the implementation of rural and community development programs, and
- the content and design of the Rural Leadership Program and educational leadership courses in order to enhance school and community partnerships.

A pilot study that informs this two-year project has concluded that important school-community partnership outcomes included;

- ✓ fostering of lifelong learning opportunities,
- ✓ development and strengthening of intergenerational links, and
- ✓ transmission of the norms and values of the community,

each of which has contributed to increased community cohesiveness.¹⁰³

The Centre presented a paper at the 1999 Australian Regional Summit entitled *Re-focusing on learning regions: Education, training and lifelong learning for Australia’s wellbeing*.¹⁰⁴ Among other matters, their Australian research revealed that 70% of skills are learnt outside formal institutions. For example, non-formal learning is the main source of skill acquisition for small business. The paper concluded by identifying good practice in community development and leadership as:

- ✓ building relationships across community sectors;
- ✓ developing social capital;
- ✓ identifying and using local knowledge;

¹⁰³ See URL: <http://www.crla.utas.edu.au/schools.shtml> . For a synopsis of papers at an International Symposium on *Learning Communities, Regional Sustainability and the Learning Society* see URL: <http://www.crla.utas.edu/confer/ABS/k1.shtml> Many of the papers relate social capital to learning communities.

¹⁰⁴ See URL: <http://www.crla.utas.edu.au/sumpap99.shtml>

- ✓ promoting public participation;
- ✓ encouraging networking across all groups and sectors; and
- ✓ celebrating successes and recognizing and moving on from failures.

6. Social Development/Planning

Social development and community development have been related for about a century in Canada. Even before the turn of the 19th century non-formal, voluntary groups concerned with the social betterment of Canadians, and often newly arrived immigrants, were active. For example, organizations such as the YMCA (and then the YWCA), immigrant settlement groups, and many churches provided aid; sometimes learning opportunities and other times housing or other means of practical assistance. Processes such as urbanization, professionalism, and increasing complexity in the socio-economic order have led society recognizing that there is shared responsibility for providing all Canadians with a social safety net.¹⁰⁵

The challenges to the field of social development are, like those of all humanity – lifelong and life-wide in scope. The 1995 World Summit for Social Development in Denmark identified three priority objectives for the United Nations: providing social protection for the individual; assisting social integration; and maintaining social peace.¹⁰⁶ A “Group of 77” of developing countries and an associate NGO Forum enabled the event to deal realistically with many of the most serious issues with which the Summit had to grapple. A final Declaration stressed the urgency of addressing profound social problems, especially the poverty, unemployment and social exclusion that affect every country.

Canadians value just social policy that is linked to economic development. In a landmark study, *Exploring Canadian Values: Foundations for Well-Being (1995)*, Suzanne Peters identified a strong value base for community development in Canada.¹⁰⁷ Unlike the US and some other nations, Canadians see a direct role for government in alleviating economic disparity. However, they also see a collective responsibility at the voluntary or community level, as well a strong belief in investing for the future, particularly in children’s health and education as the future generation. They also support initiatives that end dependency on social programs by providing opportunities for individuals and groups to gain greater self-reliance – all objectives of learning-based community development initiatives.

While virtually all of the OECD and UK literature on learning communities and learning-based community development identifies such problems as priorities to be addressed in every local initiative, other approaches sometimes deal with these matters in a less focused way. The Caledon Institute of Social Policy held a conference on *Sustainable Social Policy and Community Capital* in Montreal in June 1996. Noting that there was “no research on this subject or commonly accepted definition of the term”, an attempt

¹⁰⁵Peters, Suzanne, 1995, *Exploring Canadian Values: Foundations for Well-Being*, CPRN, Ottawa.

¹⁰⁶The UN sponsored Summit, held from March 5th to 12th 1995, attracted the 120 Heads of State and government and a parallel NGO Forum.

¹⁰⁷Peters, Suzanne, 1995, *Exploring Canadian Values: Foundations for Well-Being*, CPRN, Ottawa.

was made to identify the key elements of the concept. Sherri Torjman noted that sustainable development seeks:

- ✓ increased local control of resources,
- ✓ local institution-strengthening and capacity building, and
- ✓ greater involvement of non-governmental organizations and local levels of government as delivery mechanisms.¹⁰⁸

She identified three key principles of sustainable social policy as:

- i. linking economic and social policy
- ii. meeting present needs while bearing in mind those of future generations, and
- iii. wise use of all resources, especially human resources through basic health care, education, training, upgrading and renewal [lifelong learning].

Torjman foresaw the notion of sustainable social policy as particularly relevant to three major areas:

- ⇒ Economic security, often through community economic development and associated community development that “involves identifying and building the capacities and skills of local leaders.”
- ⇒ Social investment including health (broadly defined) and lifelong learning, “which moves well beyond the traditional notion of education.”, and
- ⇒ Civic participation that includes the rights and responsibilities of citizenship.

She argues that “one way to promote civic participation and involvement of all relevant sectors is through community-based planning – a decentralized, participatory process that engages many sectors and stakeholders”, and that another way is “to build leadership capacity in local communities through building knowledge and skills.”¹⁰⁹

There has been considerable activity on quality of life/societal indicators across Canada. The Canadian Policy Research Networks has just released a study of 21 citizen- and community-driven quality of life indicator initiatives that have taken place in the past 10 years in Canada and the US.¹¹⁰ The degree of citizen involvement varied greatly. In those projects with significant citizen input a variety of techniques were employed including town hall meetings, focus groups, public hearings and individual feedback opportunities such as interactive Web site, submission of written responses, and response booklets. Locally-based community organizations and venues such as school, health or recreation centres, senior’s residences and places of worship were used to disseminate or gather

¹⁰⁸ Torjman, Sherri, 1996, “Sustainable Social Policy” in *Sustainable Social Policy and Community Capital*, Caledon Institute, Montreal. The Institute initiated an active Social Partnership Project in 1995 to explore various alliances between business and nonprofit organizations for the purposes of promoting economic and social well-being.

¹⁰⁹ See Torjman, Sherri, 1998, *Community-Based Poverty Reduction*, Caledon Institute, Ottawa for a subsequent analysis based on feedback from across Canada to earlier work on community capacity building. Every one of the four interventions she proposes: meeting basic needs; removing barriers; building skills; and promoting economic development depend upon acquisition of new knowledge, skills, attitudes and values.

¹¹⁰ Legowski, Barbara, 2000, *A Sampling of Community- and Citizen-driven Quality of Life/Societal Indicator Projects*, CPRN, Ottawa.

information. As noted in section 3 above, this report indicates that no learning outcomes or targets had ever been established or measured in any of the 21 projects.

The potential of information technologies to meet socio-economic objectives of communities is considerable. A recent global survey of the International Bureau of Education, *Communities and the Information Society: the Role of Information and Communication Technologies in Education* (1998), notes the potential benefits of internal and external community networking and as a tool for sustainable development. However it notes that it is important to consider the impacts that could be provoked by the introduction of technologies in the life of the community, including:

- ✓ cultural changes
- ✓ changes in the social structure
- ✓ conflict between generations, and
- ✓ increasing disparities between the rich and poor.

The report wisely notes that “it is difficult to foresee all possible impacts.” It does add, however, that technologies could:

- ⇒ provide information to assist in sustainable development and informed problem-solving
- ⇒ promote participation in collective activities
- ⇒ link with outside learning resources, and
- ⇒ conserve traditional knowledge as the basis for education towards sustainable development.¹¹¹

A Canadian survey of communities using learning technologies, including five case studies, *Models of Community Learning Networks in Canada* (1998), revealed five elements crucial to long-term success:

- **PARTNERSHIPS:** collaborative partnerships involving government, community-based institutions, foundations and, on occasion, private-sector firms, formed the cornerstone of several cases
- **COMMUNITY MOBILIZATION:** local leadership emerged from local public servants, business or not-for-profit sectors. Volunteerism plays an important role, especially a not-for-profit structures have been adopted with strong local control.
- **SUSTAINABILITY:** diverse funding sources were tapped but long-term sustainability is at risk, especially in smaller communities.
- **LIFELONG LEARNING:** there was “a marked tendency away from formal learning and towards informal and non-formal learning. Many of the communities studied stressed the importance of community members learning together to fulfill both their personal and their community goals.”
- **PUBLIC- AND PRIVATE-SECTOR ROLES:** the government role in fostering the local developments is crucial. The private sector seldom was a monetary contributor. Governments will have to consider forms

¹¹¹ IBE, 1998, “Annex 1 The use of information and communication technologies for community development”, *Communities and the Information Society: the Role of Information and Communication Technologies in Education*, sponsored by the International Development Research Centre, Ottawa.

of sustainable financial assistance that ensure accountability while enabling community control.¹¹²

In the UK, the Social Exclusion Unit of cabinet produced a report, *Bringing Britain together: a national strategy for neighbourhood renewal (1998)*, as a basis of public consultation. In the report's introduction Prime Minister Blair stated that "A new approach is long overdue. It has to be comprehensive, long-term and founded on what works." A not-for-profit organization that promotes the effective use of information technologies, Communities Online, engaged in research and discussion with community practitioners to produce an evidence-based response. Their report identified a variety of community-based projects and the characteristics that underpinned their success, such as:

- Technology is used as a means to an end, a tool to achieve a wider social, economic and/or community objective;
- Each project started as small scale and local;
- They either community owned or deeply involved with the local community;
- Each has been driven by one or two key individuals or local project champions;
- They all have developed links and partnerships with local agencies;
- They share a strong focus on developing local jobs and work opportunities for local people;
- They all have diversified their range of activities; and
- They have developed wider links beyond the local community.

Many of the report's recommendations have resonance in Canada, including those that urge Government to:

- ✓ Make social and economic policy links more explicit;
- ✓ Prioritize race and gender in regeneration strategies;
- ✓ Establish simpler and more appropriate criteria and longer funding timescales for community project funding, outputs and impact;
- ✓ Set up a 'social venture capital fund' to support information technology-based neighbourhood renewal; and
- ✓ Develop 'learning and enterprise in the community' [experiential learning] initiatives to support those people not currently in work or formal education.¹¹³

¹¹² HRDC, 1998, *Models of Community Learning Networks in Canada*, Office of Learning Technologies, Ottawa. Pp.83-85.

¹¹³ Shearman, Claire, 1999, *LOCAL CONNECTIONS: Making the Net work for Neighbourhood Renewal*, Communities Online's response to the Social Exclusion Unit's Report. See URL: www.communities.org.uk/main.asp



