



Vibrant Communities

Tackling Poverty

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Community Foundations of Canada

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Prosperity

- Canada has one of the highest GDP per capita ratings in the world.
- UN acknowledged Canada as #1 in its development index from 1993-2000.
- Except for short intervals, the economy has grown continually since the end of the second World War.



... and Poverty

- Poverty in Canada affects nearly 3.5 million Canadians
- Over 800,000 Canadians used a food bank in 2005.
- 1 in 8 Canadian children lived in low-income households in 2004.





Vibrant COMMUNITIES

Our Mission

To create and grow a movement of diverse leaders and communities from across Canada who are committed to exploring, challenging and testing ways to unleash the potential of communities to substantially reduce poverty and ensure a good quality of life for all citizens.



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Objectives

- To reduce poverty for at least 5,000 households.
- To expand the number of communities actively using four key approaches to poverty reduction.
- To link 15 communities in a process of collaborative learning and support five communities to more deliberately learn and apply these approaches to poverty reduction.
- To engage 250 nonprofit organizations and government agencies, 100 low-income leaders and 100 businesses in these community initiatives.
- To distill and document lessons learned from these initiatives so that they can be shared with others and be used to help shape policies across sectors and at all levels of government.



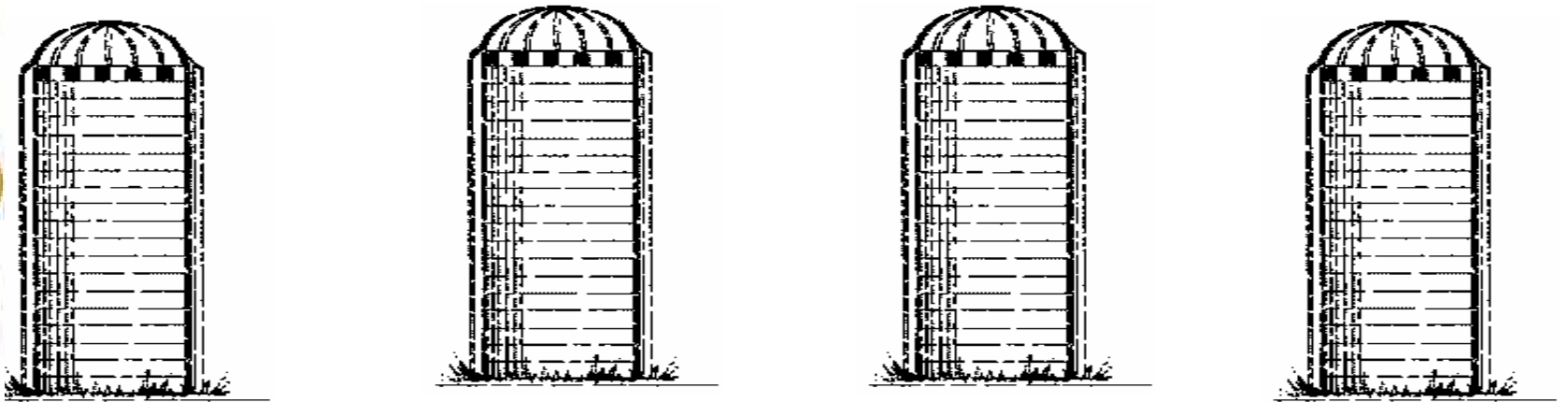
The Complex Nature of Poverty

QuickTime™ and a
TIFF (Uncompressed) decompressor
are needed to see this picture.

- A lot of inter-related root causes.
- Many stakeholders required to be involved in addressing issues.
- Shifting and dynamic environment.
- Uniqueness of local communities.



The Limits of Piecemeal, Fractured Responses



Fractured Approaches + Fractured Resources

=

Fractured Responses

=

Fractured Solutions

The Culture We Want to Build





Comprehensive Community Initiatives

- pursue broad, multiple goals
- promote multisectoral collaboration
- combine strategies to enhance their effectiveness
- seek changes in a number of spheres and levels of action simultaneously
- promote community capacity-building
- are intentionally flexible, developmental and responsive to changing local conditions
- recognize the long-term nature of their goals and employ relatively long-term time frames.



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Layered Architecture

- Trail Builder Community Initiatives
- Pan-Canadian Learning Community
- Building an Enabling Environment
 - Policy Dialogue
 - Funders Forum



Shared Aspirations


In our conversations with funders, it is clear that they simply want what communities want: a positive impact on the problem. Whether you call it ‘success’ or ‘effectiveness’ or ‘outcomes’ or ‘making a difference,’ the whole point of giving dollars...is to have a positive impact, to get to solutions.

-Community Visions, Community Solutions:
Grantmaking for Comprehensive Impact



High Engagement Funder

- Join with others around the search for deep solutions to complex problems
- A partner and co-learner
- High goals
- Strong commitment
- Long term focus



Learning-Oriented Evaluation

Developmentally oriented leaders in organizations or programs don't expect (or even want) to reach the state of 'stabilization' required for summative evaluation.... They expect to be forever developing and changing and they want an evaluation approach that supports development and change.

- Michael Quinn Patton

Development Versus Traditional Evaluation

Traditional	Developmental
Render judgments of success or failure.	Provide feedback, generate learnings, affirm direction or support changes.
Measure success against predetermined goals.	Develop new measures and monitoring mechanisms.
Position evaluator outside to assure independence and objectivity.	Position evaluation as an internal team function integrated into action.
Design based on linear, cause-effect logic models.	Design to capture system dynamics, interdependencies and emergent connections.
Aim for generalizable findings	Aim for context specific understandings that inform ongoing innovation.
Accountability: directed to external authorities and funders; aims to control and locate blame.	Accountability: centred on innovators' deep sense of values/commitment; learning used as response to lack of control and need to stay in touch with what's unfolding.
Evaluation engenders fear of failure.	Evaluation supports hunger for learning.



Learning and Evaluation Design

- Combination of numbers and learning
- Numerical targets for partner and household outcomes
- Theory of change and annual reflection sessions
- Extensive documentation (theory of change and poverty reduction stories)
- Mid- and end-of-year reports
- Sharing through Pan-Canadian Learning Community



Vibrant
COMMUNITIES
Saint John

A Trail Builder in Learning
An investment for funders

Dimensions of Poverty in Saint John

Five Key Areas:

- Affordable and Quality Housing
- Linking Education to Employment
- Investing in Children and Youth
- Neighbourhood Development
- Advocacy and Mentoring

What Vibrant Communities knows so far...

- 1 in 4 Saint Johners lives in a vulnerable neighbourhood - very high rates of poverty
 - Adult more likely to have not completed high school than to have any credentials in post-secondary
 - Significant numbers of single parent families
 - Majority of residents rent (rather than own) very old, drafty apartment units
 - Community Asset Building: Residents willing to become involved

October 2016

Poverty and Plenty

A Statistical Snapshot of the Quality of Life in Greater Saint John



Maritime Development Council

ST. JOHN'S
COMMUNITY
DEVELOPMENT

COMMUNITY
DEVELOPMENT

Adults without High School Community Learning and Change

100 experiences tell the story:

- *Getting people back to school:* Barrier with Childcare
- *Staying in School:* GED (high school equivalency) not for all; limited capacity to encourage retention
- *Moving forward:* More help with transition to employment; employers require GED for minimum wage jobs; Post-secondary training is unaffordable
- *Stopping the problem:* Youth drop out rate is a concern

And so.....

Difference to the Community

- Increased profile to poverty and current solutions
- Increased commitment from community
- Fuel poverty championed at NB Power hearings
- Additional low income housing
- Leaders learning through Task Force on children's health

How Do We Get to More Plenty by 2008? Here are some ideas...

- Remove the welfare wall; make it worth it to work
- Break the generational cycle of poverty: focus on single mothers and unemployed youth
- End the physical decline in neighbourhoods
- Ensure every youth will finish high school, and can attend higher education without undue economic hardship



Vibrant COMMUNITIES Edmonton

Vibrant Communities Edmonton believes that there has been a lot of good work done to address poverty in Edmonton. However, a lot of this work focuses on addressing the impacts of poverty rather than working to substantively reduce poverty. Vibrant Communities Edmonton wants to build on existing work in Edmonton to strengthen, support and increase the impact by adding value to existing efforts and by shifting the focus to building family economic supports.



The Community Foundation Difference

- *Community foundations are uniquely positioned to influence the capacity of communities to face present and future challenges – not only in their role of building financial assets and creative grantmaking, but also by offering leadership and building bridges between the diverse groups that give communities life.*



10 Reasons Why We Are Involved

- 1. An example of social justice grant making*
- 2. Exemplifies the principles of CFC*
- 3. An example of community engagement*
- 4. Provides opportunity for reflection and learning*
- 5. Solution focused*
- 6. Builds social capital and community capacity*



10 Reasons Why We are Involved

- 7. Enriches relationships and introduces new partners*
- 8. Effective use of resources – builds our capacity*
- 9. It will make a difference – it does make a difference*
- 10. It makes sense.*

Why Wouldn't We be Involved?



Vibrant Communities Edmonton

- Theory of Change
 - Broker connections between business, government, non profits, people work are working and earning low wages
 - Learn from business, government, non profits, people who are working and earning low wages
 - Build on the great programs that exist in Edmonton, don't duplicate
 - Create solutions that get to the root of an issue

Edmonton Community Foundation

- Grant making Criteria
 - Identify a creative, innovative and practical approach to solving/addressing a problem
 - Contribute new understanding about a community issue
 - Involve key stakeholders
 - Recognize diversity in our community as well as approaches that are used to creatively address community needs
 - Promote collaboration and sharing among agencies to reduce duplication of services
 - Develop new partnerships

Lessons Learned

- Introduced to new concepts, ideas and thinking – social innovation – social movements – collaborations
- Reflection is critical part of doing
- Deliberate and intentional
- Its about change – systemic, policy, attitudinal
- Issue doesn't rest with one sector, nor does solution
- Unique community response
- Focus on assets
- Patience

Questions for Discussion

1. What experiences have you had with comprehensive, multisectoral community initiatives? What lessons would you take from those experiences?
2. Do you see participation in such initiatives as a good fit for community foundations? What are the key roles you think community foundations can play?
3. What challenges would you see for your community foundation becoming involved in this type of initiative? What changes might be required in how you approach grantmaking, your leadership role in the community, attracting new donors?
4. What challenges do you see for your community? Does your community have a strong enough understanding of its issues or is further work required in that area?