the COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

Manual

A RESOURCE FOR RURAL RECOVERY & RENEWAL

the **COMMUNITY RESILIENCE** *Manual*

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THE WORKBOOK

Preface

Building any resource that is truly useful to communities is a significant challenge. It takes more time than is usually available. It takes a diverse team of community practitioners and researchers (a formation that is often hard to wire together). It takes community leaders who are willing to take a chance on yet another group of outsiders wandering around the environs asking questions. Finally, it takes resources to sustain the effort beyond a single fiscal year - something that is frequently well-nigh to impossible.

The fact that all those ingredients came together for the Community Resilience Project is due in large part to the Communities Committee of Forest Renewal BC (FRBC). In 1998 it approached the Centre for Community Enterprise in search of a simple, practical resource that could assist British Columbia's many economically-distressed small towns. The idea was to create a resource that they could use to assess local circumstances efficiently and effectively, and on that basis make better decisions about how to invest their limited resources. The committee deeply desired to leave a legacy to the people of this province.

The Centre took up the challenge, with some provisos. In the preceding ten years we had written and published many practical resources for communities across North America. We were not sure FRBC's vision could be realized, however. To reduce expectations, we designed a process of research and development with several critical points at which the project could be discontinued. Our thanks go to the FRBC Committee Chair, Garry Merkel, for maintaining the vision, our concerns notwithstanding. His persistence has borne fruit.

The Centre structured its relationship with FRBC as a partnership. We knew that FRBC's resources would not suffice and, to compensate, billed our time to the project at a much lower rate than the norm. A steering group from across the province was struck to act as a sounding board. In addition to Garry, this group included Peter Boothroyd, Ray Travers, Doug Weir, Chris Robertson, and Ken MacLeod, as well as FRBC staff members Kelly Nontell and Molly Harrington,. They proved tireless in their feedback and patience.

A selection of community test sites was critical to evaluating the progress of our work. A representative from each of these communities also joined the steering group. Our sincere thanks go to these "guinea pigs," the communities of Powell River, Port Alberni, Houston, Smithers, Burns Lake, and Revelstoke, and to their representatives who were so active in the steering group: Bill Ellwyn, Jerry Botti, Mayor Tom Euvermann, Susan Schienbein, Carmen Wheatley, Doug Weir, Glen Macrae, and Mayor Arnold Carlson. The Project has also been

fortunate to have many collaborators in government, but special thanks go to Brandon Hughes and Nathaniel Olsen of the Federal Rural Secretariat for their active and creative support.

In November 1999, after 15 months of work, we released for discussion the first draft of *The Community Resilience Manual* in portable document format. The response affirmed that our efforts were not misplaced. Our field work, even at the product development stage, indicated that the community resilience process reflected the partners' original intentions. What we did not anticipate was the import of the process for community mobilization. Communities, whether sophisticated or inexperienced in the application of community economic development, felt the community resilience process motivated and mobilized people and helped bring into focus priorities for action.

Over 500 communities, government agencies, researchers, and CED practitioners downloaded the draft in the subsequent 12 months. The state of New South Wales, Australia has adapted the process to employ ten tools and ten characteristics. They are being tested in six communities to develop community sustainability profiles. (Track their progress at www.communitybuilders.nsw.gov.au.) A senior social scientist at Statistics Canada is using the community resilience process in a major synthesis of developments in the field of community accounts and indicators.

Subjecting the draft process to a year of scrutiny has enabled us to refine it significantly for this, the first edition of *The Community Resilience Manual*. We have revised and expanded the process on the basis of many thoughtful critiques. Two towns in southeastern British Columbia provided opportunities to conduct fully-integrated tests of the process: from assessment through priority setting to strategy formulation, in the course of three months.

Additional research doubled to over 60 the number of entries in the "Catalogue" of community tools, techniques, and models that appeared in the draft. The enthusiasm for such a community economic development "encyclopaedia" warranted it a life of its own. We have designated it as a separate publication, *Tools & Techniques for Community Recovery & Renewal* - a companion to the Manual, but useful in its own right. We owe great thanks to Stewart E. Perry, *Tools & Techniques*' editor and chief contributor, as well as to many other people who assisted: Michelle Colussi, Flo Frank, Keith Jacobsen, Mike Lewis, Sandy Lockhart, James MacGregor, Don McNair, Ron Paynter, Brigitta Perry, Pippa Rowcliffe, Ivan Thompson, and Gary Wilson. We also express deep appreciation to FRBC, to the provincial Ministry of Community Development, Co-operatives, and Volunteers, and to the Rural Secretariat for funding this resource.

We now look forward to responses, suggestions, and news from the people who use the *The Community Resilience Manual* and *Tools & Techniques*. The Centre is committed to making these two of the premiere resources in North America for people committed to building sustainable communities.

In 2001 several specific research and development projects will enable us to refine the community resilience model, principally in terms of the integration of ecological characteristics and indicators. Likewise, we are exploring its application on a regional basis. In many rural areas, decision-making and strategy formulation could benefit from participation of several small communities and the examination of regional characteristics and indicators. People have also expressed interest in linking community health indicators to the process and in adapting it to First Nations communities.

We are also committed to revise, expand, and update *Tools & Techniques* in the years to come so that it keeps pace with the highly innovative field of community economic development. The Centre has earmarked some of its own resources for this work, but suggestions from readers and practitioners will be essential. We are already seeking funding for several new entries.

Please use the Community Resilience pages at our website, www.cedworks.com, to keep us apprised of your experiences and insights with respect to both the Manual and *Tools & Techniques*.

Finally, thanks to my fellow members of the Community Resilience Project Team: Michelle Colussi, Sandy Lockhart, Don McNair, Stewart Perry, and Pippa Rowcliffe. Many, many people have contributed to the learning represented here. Many, many more will contribute in the years ahead. We invite you to consider this a collective resource which we all keep building, and from which we all keep learning.

Mike Lewis
Executive Director, Centre for Community Enterprise
November 2000

Introduction

The *Community Resilience Manual* is for rural communities that want to make better decisions about how to mobilize and invest community resources. The specter of rural community decline is a significant threat to many towns across Canada. In British Columbia, where the tools in this Manual were developed and tested, the late 90's saw plant closures threaten the survival of entire communities (e.g., Gold River). Yet across North America, in some of the most unlikely places and against big odds, many communities have adapted to their new circumstances. They have taken steps that have enabled them to survive crisis, influence change, and become healthy, vital places for their citizens. They are *resilient*.

This Manual aims to help rural communities cost-effectively to assess their own state of resilience and establish priorities for strengthening it. It also provides an important set of resources by means of which communities can strengthen their ability to respond to, and influence the course of, social and economic change. Even though we consider this a work in progress, some test communities that collaborated in its development have already experienced positive results.

Nadina Community Futures reported that the process "the way the questions were asked and the way the data was presented has triggered discussion that didn't happen before. It showed us that we could have stronger communities by addressing the characteristics of resilience and taking a more holistic approach to community economic development."

Revelstoke participants stated that "even though we are often pointed to as a highly resilient community, we now see much more clearly that we must realistically integrate the social side of development more systematically. This resource has also engaged more people in the broader concept of development."

This collection of resources offers no quick fix or panacea. It opens up a way of thinking and helps focus community dialogue on key aspects of the functioning of healthy community that seldom find their way into a community strategic plan. The resources are empowering because they provide communities with a means to systematically strengthen a their capacity to steer their own future.

The goal is to help communities achieve more durable and cost effective results from their investment of time, talent, and resources. We invite you to collaborate in its on-going evolution, improvement, and extension to other communities that are contemplating uncertain futures and want to do something about it.

THE RESILIENT COMMUNITY

A resilient community is one that takes intentional action to enhance the personal and collective capacity of its citizens and institutions to respond to, and influence the course of social and economic change.

Rural communities across the country are facing the stress and uncertainty of volatile commodity markets. This volatility is a major source of stress in forestry, fishing, mining, and agriculture-based communities. Technological change and environmental concerns are just a couple of the other external pressures bearing down on rural communities. These issues are affecting all B.C. communities, some more heavily than others, depending on relative levels of reliance on a single producer/employer. At the same time, both federal and provincial governments are devolving more responsibility to municipal governments and to community institutions and organizations.

We believe that the state of community resilience plays a large part in determining the future of the places we live in: whether they survive or merely cope with a declining quality of life, or successfully adapt and prosper.

Research in Canada and the United States over the last decade has shown that resilient communities - those that have been adapting successfully in the face of big doses of stress from the larger society - have certain characteristics in common. A key idea is that all communities have within them characteristics that can either enable or constrain their ability to adapt and change. Bringing these characteristics to conscious awareness is an important step in moving communities towards taking intentional action to influence their circumstances.

In short, current research supports the idea that resilience is not a fixed quality within communities. Rather, it is a quality that can be developed and strengthened over time. As resilience is strengthened, the capacity to intentionally mobilize its people and resources to respond to, and influence social and economic change is enhanced.

HOW TO USE THIS MANUAL

This Manual to leads you through the following steps:

- Understanding the concept of resilience.
- Assessing your community resilience.
- Documenting your results in a portrait of community resilience.
- Making decisions - using the community portrait to set local priorities for investing community resources more effectively.
- Creating a plan to address community priorities and strengthen your resilience.

The concept or model of resilience, and the process used to assess your resilience is described in *Section 1: The Guide*. In *Section 2: The Workbook*, worksheets and detailed instructions assist you through each step in the process of assessing your community's resilience and making decisions about priorities and strategies.

A companion publication, *Tools & Techniques for Community Recovery & Renewal*, categorizes and describes a wide array of initiatives from across North America that successfully increased community resilience. It is an important resource as communities consider designing community investments. Indeed, it is a resource that is useful for any community concerned with building healthier, more inclusive local economies.

We recommend that you review all of these materials before you start to assess your community's resilience. However, a word of caution. You may be tempted to move directly to *Tools & Techniques* and to develop strategies or implement initiatives you read about there. It is natural to want less planning and more action! But, in order to succeed, local action must be based on a solid understanding of which priorities to target and why they warrant an investment of community time, talent, and resources. The community assessment and priority setting steps described in the Guide are intended to build this understanding. They have been designed to be as straightforward as possible. However, using the tool takes time. Based on the field testing to date on communities under 8000 in population, we estimate that implementing the complete process takes a maximum of 30 days over three or four months. Larger communities can be completed in a similar time span but implementation usually requires two people over about 40 days.

The Manual features cross-references to other parts of this publication as well as references to resources available on the internet. If you are using the Manual in its portable document format (PDF) and are viewing it on a computer monitor, cross-references appear in dark

purple letters. When you click your mouse on a cross-reference, your computer will immediately forward you to another page in the Manual where the specified topic is found. (To return to your point of origin, select "Go Back" from the "Document" drop-down menu.) References to internet resources appear in dark green. A click on the latter (if your computer has an internet connection) will launch your browser and point it automatically to the specified web page. In printed copies of this publication, cross-references and references both appear in a dark grey hue.

COMMUNITY RESILIENCE, CED, & STRATEGIC PLANNING

In this Manual we have made one important assumption. We have developed an approach to community assessment and analysis by using the philosophy, principles, and strategies that are associated with Community Economic Development (CED). We have done this for two major reasons.

The first is that CED, at its very core, is concerned with community resilience. It is an approach to development that is built on the belief that the various sectors and members of each community are all interdependent. It is also focussed on the need to improve the well-being of all these sectors and members. Finally, CED encourages self reliance, sustainability, and independence as a way of dealing with the stresses of global social and economic change. Its focus is on sustainable community vibrancy and resilience rather than more narrow goals of employment or income.

Second, a CED approach to development has been proven to be successful in helping communities strengthen their economies. In this Manual, you will be presented with planning and assessment tools that can enhance and strengthen your existing planning process and economic development efforts.

How Successful Communities Work

Recent research has suggested that successful or resilient communities demonstrate the behaviours described below. You will find that the resilience model and the process for data collection and decision-making outlined in the Guide builds on and strengthens these 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 overall 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 co-operating organizations through which locally based initiatives are implemented and evaluated.

5 Key Functions of a Local Economy

CED also indicates that certain approaches are particularly effective in addressing the social and economic problems that many communities face. The following five functions have been found to be essential to the vitality of any local economy. (Most of the entries found in *Tools & Techniques of Community Recovery & Renewal* serve in one way or another to help communities address one or more of these functions.)

Access to Equity Capital

Equity is a scarce resource that flows from the creation of wealth, or surplus. The extent to which re-investment of capital is influenced or controlled by a community affects its ability to influence economic development. Its absence, or the flow of capital from a community, is a major factor in the decline of a community economy. In resource dependent communities this can also be influenced by securing greater control over the local resource base. This is precisely what Revelstoke did with tremendously positive results. (See Appendix A in the companion publication, *Tools & Techniques for Community Recovery & Renewal*, for a mini-case study of this experience).
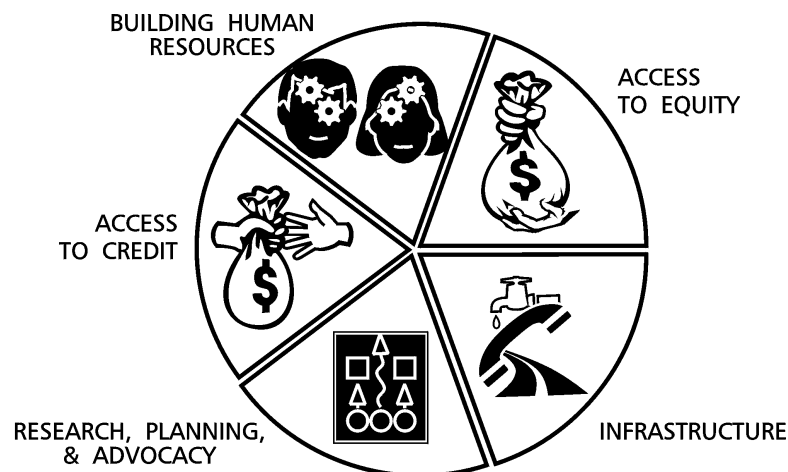
Access to Credit

Without access to credit, enterprise development is impossible. In communities under stress, traditionally risk-averse, conventional sources of credit tend to dry up. The more severe the decline the harder it is to access credit, thus reinforcing the downward spiral. Creating sources of credit that are locally owned and controlled, or which the community can come to influence, is critical to long term community survival.

Building Human Resource Capacity

Local people who are ready, willing and able to participate in the local economy are critical to a community's adaptive capability. This is true of both leaders and local citizens. It is also critical to the creation of new initiatives, whether they are focussed on social, economic or entrepreneurial development. Capacity for intentional action depends on vision, participation and skills of local people.

Capacity for Research, Planning & Advocacy

There is an old saying that the person without spies is a person without eyes. This means that if you do not know what is going on in the community and region, and if you are not aware of the linkages between your home area and the larger society, your decisions, related to the use of local and outside resources, are likely to be less effective than they could be. Active, ongoing research and information gathering ensures that planning is informed and that local interests can be represented to necessary decision-makers (outside the community).

Infrastructure

While streets, sewers, and buildings are typically in the domain of the city planner and the city engineer, it is important to link the planning around infrastructure to the vision and goals for the future of the community.

These five functions are all important to community and regional economies. Some may be more important than others in various settings and at various times. Communities, like individuals, have different assets, capacities and needs over time. The point is that successful communities maximize the use of their limited time and resources in those areas that will yield the greatest strategic benefits.

Links to Strategic Planning

Strategic Planning is a process of "thinking strategically" and making decisions that focus the energies of an organization or a community on tackling the most important issues with limited resources. The information collected through an assessment of community resilience will be very useful to any community as they:

- begin the process of planning to plan
- conduct an analytic assessment
- review options and decisions
- set goals
- develop operational plans
- monitor and evaluate an existing plan

The *Community Resilience Manual* will not replace whatever planning process you are using but it can enhance it. Communities involved in the field testing identified a number of benefits to their local economic development planning process:

- it gathers new information about local attitudes and organizations;
- it provides a framework for local decision-making and priority setting;
- it engages a broad cross section of the community in thinking about resilience - and the links to your economy - and thus creates new energy for local initiatives;
- the model, the Workbook, and the entries in *Tools & Techniques* can be used in a variety of ways as part of your assessment of resilience or as part of other community planning activities.

STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

PLANNING TO PLAN

VISION & VALUES CLARIFICATION

MISSION DRAFT

SITUATION ANALYSIS

STRATEGIES: OPTIONS REVIEW & DECISIONS

STRATEGIC GOAL SETTING

OPERATIONAL PLANNING

IMPLEMENTATION

MONITORING & EVALUATION
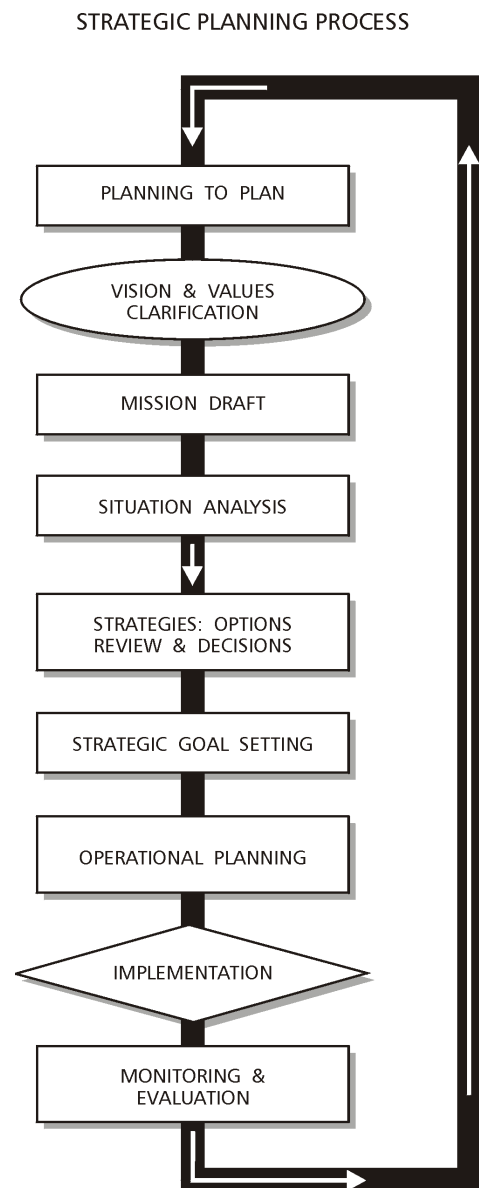
A MODEL OF COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

Our model of resilience is based on what we know about how communities work successfully. It is made up of two levels of information. At the center are what we call four *dimensions* of resilience. Each dimension is also expressed in terms of several, more detailed *characteristics* of resilience. Both the dimensions and the characteristics are based on the ideal - on the state or action that ideally exists in the most resilient communities. No community fits the following descriptions completely.

The 4 Dimensions of Resilience

The dimensions state, in a general way, the core components of community from the perspective of resilience.

- people in the community
- organizations in the community
- resources in the community
- community process

All four dimensions are linked, reflecting the reality that the parts of a community are all related and interdependent. The first three describe the nature and variety of resources available to a community for development. The fourth dimension, community process, describes the approaches and structures available to a community for organizing and using these resources in a productive way. The four dimensions are explained below.

People in your Community: Attitudes & Behaviours

Strongly held beliefs and attitudes, and the resulting behaviour of individuals and groups, create community norms that can either promote resilience, or hinder it. This dimension will help you to explore attitudes and behaviour related to leadership, initiative, education, and optimism. Resilient communities exhibit a sense of pride and openness to new ideas and alternatives. They value education and demonstrate an awareness of the economic impact of

social issues. Their leadership base is diversified and works to involve and mobilize the public around a common vision. The people in resilient communities have a "can do" attitude that is visible in their proactive response to change.

Organizations in your Community: Attitudes & Behaviours

The scope of public and private organizations, institutions, agencies and networks in your community can be an asset in times of social and economic change. Resilient communities work to ensure they have sufficient organizational capacity or influence within each of the five CED functions to provide the leadership and resources necessary to get things done. (Access to equity and to credit, human resource development, and research, planning, and advocacy are specifically assessed.) Social and economic development organizations in resilient communities work to inform and engage the public and demonstrate high levels of collaboration with each other.

Resources in your Community: Awareness & Use

Obviously, individuals and organizations require additional resources in order to effect change in their community. The presence of resources alone however, is not enough to ensure resilience. More important, is the way in which resources are viewed and utilized by the community. This dimension will assist your community in identifying the existing balance between internal and external reliance. Resilient communities are aware of and build on their local resource strengths while also seeking appropriate external resources to achieve their goals. They take steps to reduce their dependency on outside ownership and spend their money with a view to the long-term future of the community.

Community Process: Strategic Thinking, Participation & Action

This dimension examines the local processes for planning, participating in, and implementing CED. Resilient communities take the time to research, analyze and plan for their future. The plan becomes integrated into the work of those organizations involved in CED and contains strategies that merge social and economic issues and solutions. Resilient communities have a widely shared vision for their future, involve key sectors in the implementation of the goals, and measure results on a regular basis.

The 23 Characteristics of Resilience

Each dimension breaks down into a series of more detailed "characteristics of resilience." These characteristics are the specific factors that are examined in a community to assess the level of resilience. They can be researched and analyzed to provide a portrait of a community's resilience.

The characteristics in the model are not exhaustive. There are many other characteristics that might relate to or describe a community's resilience. At the outset of the research that led to this manual we started with over 60. However, those in the model have been chosen because they are particularly predictive and because they have the strongest relationship to resilience, given current knowledge about how successful communities work.

Each community is unique. Communities will experience a different level of resilience in each characteristic and these levels may change over time. Therefore, the characteristics are not black and white, but rather multiple shades of grey. The shades or levels that exist are what local people, not outsiders, assess them to be. Also, certain characteristics will play a more significant role in determining resilience in some communities, depending on the degree and nature of local stresses, and community history and values. This is important because the approach we take attempts to assess resilience in unique, very complex communities.
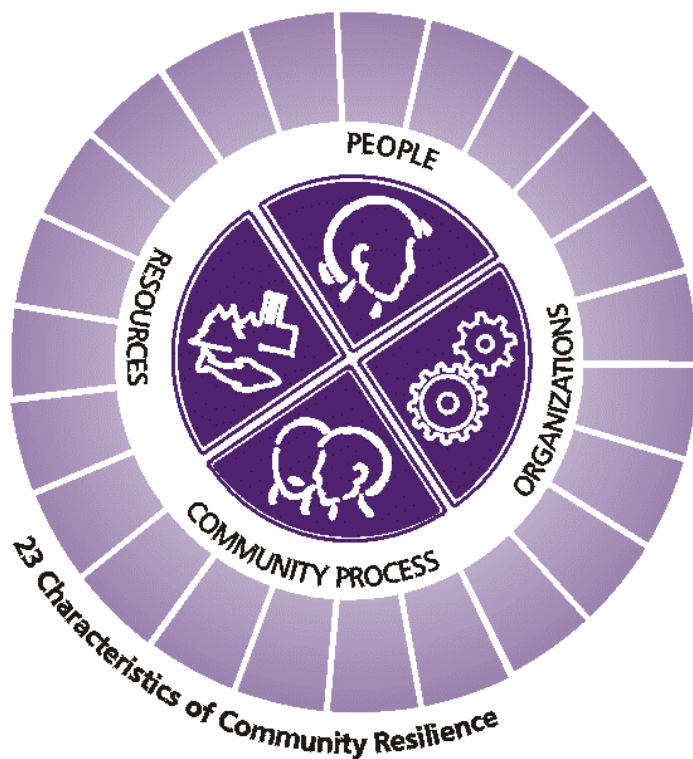
1. Leadership is diversified and representative of age, gender, and cultural composition of the community.

In resilient communities, leadership represents all citizens within the community: decisions are fair and balanced and take into account the many needs, aspirations, and values of people in the community. This applies to elected leaders and to those selected less formally.

2. Elected community leadership is visionary, shares power and builds consensus.

In resilient communities, elected leaders understand the importance of creating a clear vision for the future and sharing the responsibility of power. They use such techniques as consensus-building to ensure that community initiatives have the support and the buy-in of community members. By doing so, leaders minimize the potential for destructive conflict.

3. Community members are involved in significant community decisions.

In resilient communities, citizens have avenues open to them to express their opinions in a productive and positive manner. Community leaders work to encourage participation from all segments of the community and use this input as a guide for their decisions. Community decisions are therefore more reflective of the wide variety of views and opinions of those who live there.

4. The community feels a sense of pride.

In resilient communities, people feel a sense of pride which is demonstrated in the care with which they maintain their community and the energy and commitment they give to events such as community festivals and celebrations

5. People feel optimistic about the future of the community.

In resilient communities, people anticipate a bright future and sense that their community has great potential to develop and change. This positive energy is important to enabling the community to adapt and change. It is also important as it encourages a greater investment by people in their community and its future.

6. There is a spirit of mutual assistance and co-operation in the community.

In resilient communities, people make an effort to work together and help each other in times of difficulty. Local issues and problems are owned by the community and people take it upon themselves to do something about them.

7. People feel a sense of attachment to their community.

In resilient communities, people perceive that they are there for the long term and therefore invest their time, energy and money in improving the community.

8. The community is self-reliant and looks to itself and its own resources to address major issues.

In resilient communities, people perceive that the future of the community is in their hands. Though external support might be sought, people seek out and use productively the skills, expertise and finance available in the community to address issues and problems that are important to the citizens.

9. There is a strong belief in and support for education at all levels.

In resilient communities, education at all levels is valued and supported. Children are encouraged to participate and excel in school. Adults are provided with a range of services to support life long learning, career change, and skills upgrading. There is a curiosity or thirst for knowledge within the community.

10. There is a variety of CED organizations in the community such that the key CED functions are well-served.

Resilient communities recognize the importance of a range of capable organizations through which residents undertake or influence all the types of activity essential to local economic vitality.

11. Organizations in the community have developed partnerships and collaborative working relationships.

In resilient communities, organizations recognize that conflict is costly and consciously work together to resolve issues. Collaborative working relationships result in efficient use of limited resources and more effective and creative effort toward accomplishing the common goals.

12. Employment in the community is diversified beyond a single large employer.

Resilient communities are aware of the risks associated with reliance on a single, large employer and emphasize economic diversification by supporting employment in smaller companies and active promotion of local ownership.

13. Major employers in the community are locally owned.

In resilient communities, there is a high degree of local control over economic activities and resources. These resources are used to improve all aspects of community life.

14. The community has a strategy for increasing independent local ownership

In resilient communities, the importance of local control over resources is explicitly recognized and the community works to increase local control through a range of strategies and initiatives. These communities emphasize retaining and expanding existing businesses as well as supporting the development of new ones.

15. There is openness to alternative ways of earning a living and economic activity

Resilient communities demonstrate an openness to alternative development approaches, such as micro enterprise, dispersed ownership of community assets, and self employment. This openness signals a readiness to shift away from dependency on large, externally owned companies.

16. The community looks outside itself to seek and secure resources (skills, expertise, finance) that will address areas of identified weakness.

In resilient communities, optimal use of local resources and skills is balanced by careful use of the external resources and information required to address local gaps and accomplish local goals. Resilient communities are informed about, and have the connections to access outside resources.

17. The community is aware of its competitive position in the broader economy.

Resilient communities have identified and build on their strengths in relation to other communities and regions. They aren't afraid to compare themselves to others as a means of identifying opportunities and focussing local initiatives. They also co-operate with other communities when appropriate, combining resources to address a common goal.

18. The community has a Community Economic Development Plan that guides its development.

In resilient communities, a CED plan is a critical tool for providing direction and unity to all individuals and organizations. It is a means for ensuring a common vision among community members and maximizing resource allocation to gain the greatest community impact. It reflects the needs of all segments of the community and is built on an analysis of actual opportunities.

19. Citizens are involved in the creation and implementation of the community vision and goals.

Resilient communities take a long term, comprehensive approach to building active public participation in the development and implementation of their goals. They know this increases knowledge of and capacity for appropriate development approaches in their community.

20. There is on-going action towards achieving the goals in the CED Plan.

Resilient communities know that visible results breed optimism and a sense of self reliance. They focus on both short and long term goals and objectives. Implementation in these communities is co-ordinated and there is support for the organizations or groups involved.

21. There is regular evaluation of progress towards the community's strategic goals.

Resilient communities view their CED efforts as an on-going learning and capacity building process, so they have built-in evaluation criteria and procedures. Evaluation is also important as a means of identifying results and benefits in order to communicate them to the public.

22. Organizations use the CED Plan to guide their actions.

In resilient communities, the CED plan is integrated into the individual plans of many influential community organizations. It becomes a working document for ongoing decision-making and allocation of resources. This is more likely to occur if those organizations have been involved in the development of the plan and are familiar with the goals and objectives in it.

23. The community adopts a development approach that encompasses all segments of the population.

In resilient communities, the connection between unemployment and poverty and the economic stability of the community is understood. These communities adopt a CED approach as a way of integrating and strengthening the economic self-reliance of all aspects of their community.

Step 1:
Getting Ready to Use the Resilience Process

This step involves presenting the resilience process to community groups and funders and organizing a local steering committee for the process. Local people have an important role to play in determining which methods are used and how the resilience process will integrate with other local activities. Residents must also define what they hope to be able to accomplish as a result of the process. Another essential aspect of this step is to create a common understanding about what resilience is and why it is important. As you will see, the scope of orientation and discussion with a steering committee varies considerably with local history, culture, and other factors.

IS THE RESILIENCE PROCESS RIGHT FOR YOU?

We created this section of the Guide in response to one of the most frequently asked questions about the Manual: "How do we know if this is the right process for our community at this time?" While each community must answer this question for itself, the following list of statements may be of assistance. If any of them are true for your community, the resilience process could be helpful.

1. Your community has no plan for its local economic development and needs a starting point.
2. You have an economic development or community economic development plan but it is not being implemented.
3. Your community has had some success, but organizations seem to be competing more than collaborating around a common vision for the community.
4. You need to identify several initiatives that will do the most to strengthen your local ability for future action.
5. As you review the list of characteristics, you see attitudes or behaviours described that residents have discussed as community weaknesses or challenges for many years.
6. You want to focus on one thing your community can do to strengthen its self-reliance and already have at least one strength to celebrate and build on.

INTRODUCING THE PROJECT

Responses have been very positive to the *Community Resilience Manual* as it has evolved to date (October 2000). However, a few communities and funders have told us that they needed a summarized, more direct format and content appropriate for introducing the project to people who are unlikely ever to read the Manual. For example, a government funder with grant funds available may have passed along to the community the information about the Resilience Project. Alternatively, the community may have received the information and has yet to organize the funding. In either situation there is a need to present the Resilience Project and its benefits to another group for consideration.

There are two resources in the Workbook to assist you with such a process. Worksheet 2, "Introduction to the Community Resilience Project," includes a sample letter of invitation as well as a series of overheads for you to use. Depending on your audience you may want to add other pages from the Manual as well as specific community information that explains how this process could be helpful.

You may or may not have an audience that is used to the terminology and ideas concerning local economic development. Be thoughtful about your use of language. Make sure to explain any jargon that you use (such as "resilience," "community economic development," or "CED," for starters).

THE PROJECT STEERING COMMITTEE

You will need a host or sponsor organization for this process that can provide administrative support, meeting space, etc. If this organization has a board of directors or a community economic development committee, this might be a good starting point for the Resilience Project steering committee. You will want to ensure that you have buy-in and support from a range of groups or sectors, however. You may therefore wish to invite to the steering committee representatives of other sectors: education, labour market agencies, social service agencies, the local council or regional district, business (including key growth sectors), arts or heritage groups, and unions.

It is also important to keep the numbers on your steering committee to a reasonable working size. You want the committee to provide contacts and links to a variety of local groups and populations, but there are other ways to connect with and involve these groups. In other

words, they don't all have to participate in the steering committee as long as they are involved in other ways. In most communities you will find that one individual has connections with a wide variety of groups or organizations. This also helps to control the size of the committee.

Role of the Steering Committee

While the specific role of this group will vary between communities, there are some general tasks to which it must attend:

1. Securing and potentially administering funding.
2. Potentially hiring and/or liaising with a facilitator.
3. Working with the facilitator to identify specific outcomes from this project and the implications for the process.
4. Clearly defining the geographic scope of the project.
5. Reviewing possible information collection options with the facilitator to determine the best way to achieve the desired outcomes.
6. Advising project facilitators about the local political climate and other significant issues.
7. Providing the facilitators with contact leads for reports, groups, organizations, and individuals. The steering committee needs to be sure to include individuals and groups that would not typically be included in economic development initiatives.
8. Participating in the process including both workshops.
9. Providing volunteer or paid staff support for organizing, booking facilities, etc.

Generally, this group will need to meet three times over the span of the project for several hours each time: once at the beginning,, once following the information collection, and again at the end of the process.

Step 2:
Assessing Community Resilience

This step concerns the creation of a portrait of your community's resilience. In some ways, creating a portrait can be likened to the "Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats" (SWOT) analysis that is encouraged in traditional planning approaches. There are some important differences, however. The most significant difference is that a portrait involves qualitative information about community perceptions, attitudes, and feelings as well as maps of organizational linkages and levels of collaboration. Another significant difference is that the characteristics of resilience upon which the assessment model is based are derived from research evidence regarding what makes certain rural communities succeed to adapt and others to continue to decline. In other words, this process is specifically designed to view a community through the lens of resilience - or its ability to "take intentional action … to influence the course of social and economic change."

WHAT IS A COMMUNITY PORTRAIT?

A community portrait is a description of a community from the perspective of resilience. It gathers together information about a community for each of the 23 characteristics.

A portrait identifies where strengths and weaknesses lie. The strengths of a community act to increase resilience in times of change; weaknesses reduce that resilience. So, it is important to know where these weaknesses lie and how serious they are. As the strengths and weaknesses of a community change over time, so too will its level of resilience.

The community portrait that flows from the application of the assessment model can play a key role in developing a more comprehensive understanding of a community. While it does not displace issues that local economic development plans focus on (sector analysis, opportunity identification, identification of business development opportunities), it does add some new and important perspectives to discussions of community survival and development. It also helps reveal how various characteristics of the community are interrelated. Several characteristics may work together to either enable or constrain resilience. Being able to more explicitly understand where these linkages are and how they

influence each other can be very important when it comes to identifying priorities for action and selecting specific tools.

Creating a Community Portrait

Creating a portrait of your community's resilience involves the following tasks:

- Collecting information about your community.
- Analyzing and understanding the information you have collected.
- Writing a community portrait.

Before you commence this process be sure to read and understand the description of our model of resilience in Step 1 of this Guide. This model underpins the approach you will take to collecting and analyzing data for the portrait.

COLLECTING INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR COMMUNITY

For this task, your goal is to capture information that relates to each of the characteristics of resilience. Hopefully, this focus will save you time and money, for it should enable you to be very precise about what information is relevant and to avoid anything else.

We implement this approach to data collection by using *indicators*. Each characteristic in our model of resilience has associated with it a set of indicators. Worksheet 1 in the Workbook is a master table of each Characteristic and the Indicators associated with it. It may be helpful for you to have this in front of you as you read the rest of Step 2.

Using Indicators

The indicators have been selected to identify whether a characteristic is present in a community. Like the characteristics, the indicators we have chosen are not exhaustive. We have chosen them because they have proven to be good proxies: taken together, they give a sign as to whether or not a characteristic is present, and to what degree.

We have used two types of indicator. The first type is relatively simple and relates to facts that we are able to collect about a community. Most of the information for these indicators can be found in government statistics, local statistics, and community reports. (Worksheet 3 summarizes this type of indicator.)

The second type of indicator concerns perceptions, attitudes, and values. We use these indicators because many of our characteristics do not relate to facts but to community perceptions and attitudes. We collect information for these indicators through such things as interviews and focus groups. (These indicators appear on the questionnaire in Worksheet 4.)

Examples

To measure the level of public health in a community, an example of the first type of indicator might be "teen pregnancy levels." But for additional information we could use indicators of the second type, lik e "public attitudes toward exercise" or "youth attitudes toward birth control."

Such perceptual indicators are not generally given great credence in traditional economic research. In the context of CED, however, they are critical. Research has shown that such things as the level of optimism or pessimism, organizational co-operation, and quality and style of leadership in a community can have a very profound effect on its ability to change and adapt.

Just as there is a variety of types of indicator in this model, there are different ways to map each type. You will note in the table from Worksheet 1 that the nature of each indicator is clearly stated using the following categories:

\#   the number of people or activities or structures

%   the percentage of people or organizations compared to a total

✓   yes or no answer: does this occur or exist in your community

"   indicates an opinion or perception gathered through interviews or a survey

Sources of Statistical Information

Each community will have a variety of sources of information available to it for creating a community portrait. We have recommended certain data collection techniques that are particularly appropriate to the process we have designed. Further testing may enable us to expand this selection. You may also want to test out other approaches that seem easier and more appropriate in your community.

Information sources for factual and statistical information include:

- community studies and reports
- Statistics Canada
- provincial statistical agency
- city hall

- regional district
- other community organizations

The information from these sources will generally be presented in the form of a report. In some cases, the information you need might have to be extracted from larger reports that cover a range of subjects. In general, you will find that you have to use a range of reports and other sources to gather the information about each of the indicators.

Techniques for Collecting Perceptual Information

All the following techniques can be used to involve and hear the views of a broad range of community representatives. Some of the key people from whom you need to collect information are described below. Regardless of the technique you use to collect perceptual information, gather the input and ideas from as many people as possible. This will increase the validity and representativeness of your final portrait.

Who to Involve

- economic development agencies and organizations including: Chambers of Commerce, economic development commissions and committees, Community Futures, sector based organizations linked to tourism or other growth sectors
- human resource service providers including: college, high school or school board, skills centres, job clubs, career centres, small business trainers
- government including: municipal, regional, provincial and federal that play a significant role in your community
- community service providers including: social service agencies, youth counselling services, womens resources, community living or others that work with people with disabilities, housing societies, etc.
- large and small business
- other significant sectors including: a predominant labour organization, environmental groups, youth, etc.

Perceptions are also influenced by culture, income, age, gender and length of time in the community, so you should consider the representation of these factors in selecting your interview or survey respondents as well.

During the development of this Manual, a variety of qualitative data collection methods were tested. Each is introduced below in a general fashion. More detailed suggestions and forms are found in the Workbook.

Interviews

Interviewing key respondents is the primary method tested to date for collecting data on community perceptions and attitudes. (See Worksheet 4.) However, some people targeted for interviews can also provide access to local statistics relevant to certain indicators.

For example, an interview with the city manager will provide his/her views of the community. But this exchange may also provide an opportunity to gather factual data related to local celebrations, and complaints about litter and municipally-owned assets. As you set up interviews, think about some representation from staff, volunteers, and elected officials connected to the range of organizations and interests outlined earlier.

Organizational Inventory

We introduced five key functions necessary to strengthening a local economy on pages 1-8 and 1-9. Worksheet 5 includes a table to help you identify and organize those organizations that are currently involved in addressing one or more of these service areas in your community. This is "Listing Your CED Oorganizations" and is related to Characteristic #10. You may also want to use this to guide you in identifying the organizations that should be interviewed or involved in this process in your community.

The table "Mapping Your Organizational Relationships" is also included in Worksheet 5 and can be used either during interviews or as a survey form for organizations. The data collected here will help you to identify the range and nature of relationships between organizations in your community, which is an indicator under Characteristic #11.

Town Hall Meetings

This method of data collection will work best in communities that have established a fairly broad base of understanding and support for CED. If your community has recently completed a series of public meetings however, you may not be able to motivate people to attend yet another planning session. You will need to decide if this will work in your community or not. Worksheet 6 includes suggestions for this type of meeting and forms to help you facilitate data collection in small groups. This method should be supplemented by collection of factual data and, depending on the attendance at the meeting, additional key respondent interviews. (This approach has not been field tested to date, yet but a very similar approach has been used successfully by the Heartland Center for Leadership Development in Rural Communities, a technical assistance group located in Nebraska.)

Focus Groups

Focus groups (see Worksheet 7) are a way of dealing with issues that can be better understood by listening to a group discussion between people. As the discussion progresses, the attitudes and perceptions of people in the group and the group as a whole become evident. Focus groups are less time consuming than individual interviews, but they do not elicit the same detail and depth of information from any one participant. This is one of the limitations of this method. In addition, you may find that group discussion is difficult to keep on topic, or focussed on your specific question. Other issues - no less important, perhaps - may dominate the discussion.

In the field testing we found that while there was value to the groups involved in the focus groups, it was challenging to keep discussion focussed solely on the resilience characteristics. One way to keep discussion on track is to use Worksheet 6 as a way for individuals to focus their thinking prior to a group discussion. Then you can facilitate a discussion of one or two specific characteristics. When this method was used during field tests we found in many cases that the ratings (strength or weakness) from these small groups were very close to the ratings predominant in individual interviews. We were careful however to cluster the results from a good cross-section of different groups. The comments or ratings from any one of the focus groups (youth for example) have the potential to skew results significantly.

Written Surveys

We have provided both the Key Respondent Questionnaire (Worksheet 4) and Community Meeting Rating Table (Worksheet 6) in a format that could be used for either in-person sessions, or as a mailed survey. You will need to select the most effective method for your community. Mailed surveys have their advantages and disadvantages. The number of responses you get may depend on your relationship and credibility with the organizations on your mail list. Questionnaires can be run in the newspaper if you want a random, public response, or mailed to select groups. In either case, return rates are better if the issue or topic (in this case community resilience) has been previously introduced and understood. (Note: The field research to this point has not tested a mail-out questionnaire.)

ANALYZING & UNDERSTANDING THE INFORMATION

Once you have collected information for each of the indicators, it is time to describe your community in terms of each characteristic. This will start the process of assessing the overall level of your community's resilience.

Setting Up a Baseline

Your portrait of community resilience will present a snapshot of resilience at a point in time. However, you could use the process of assessing resilience at different times over several years to create a series of portraits. Other things being equal, these may begin to show the progress that you have made in strengthening your community's resilience. Your initial portrait can thus become the baseline from which you can assess changes in community resilience and get some measure of the results of community action.

Rating Systems

In order to make the information you have collected useful, it is important that you assess or rate the quality of the response. Rating allows you to understand whether a response is generally good or bad. By rating in this way, you can begin to see whether your community has scored high, medium, or low in any given characteristic of resilience.

Statistical Information

This type of information lends itself to comparative rating. In the example of a portrait of a town that follows (see p. 1-30), you will see that certain statistics have been compared to B.C. provincial averages. Another type of comparison is to look at change over time. A statistic for the community in one year is compared to future years to get a sense of improvement or deterioration. This is the most powerful form of comparison because it helps communities understand their own progress towards becoming more or less resilient. However, it demands that you establish your baseline and then repeat the data collection at regular intervals.

To begin to identify patterns or trends in statistical information, whenever possible get data for more than one year or period of time. Population figures from the two most recent census periods, for example, will be more informative than data from only one period.

Perceptual Information

This Manual uses a numeric rating system. The rating approach for each perceptual indicator is described in Worksheet 4, the Key Respondent Questionnaire. The system requires that interviewees rate their responses on a scale of one to four. They are also given the option of saying "Don't Know" or "Not Applicable." The questions in the interview guide have been carefully worded to try to eliminate confusion or bias. Responses rated on this scale during field tests were shown to be valid.

The questionnaire also suggests that you ask respondents if they feel certain aspects of the community have improved or become worse *over time*. This begins to develop a sense of change or transition in your community. If the interviews are carried out annually, some strong comparisons can then be made as to whether perceptions are improving or worsening over a longer period of time and whether or not your actions have had the intended impact.

Linking Issues & Identifying Themes

Characteristics within a given dimension, and across all of the dimensions, are linked together, and together they provide a clearer picture of this aspect of "community" than any one of them could do alone.

Example

Attachment to the community, community pride, and levels of optimism may not be significant in isolation, but together, they can create a fairly reliable picture of a community attitude. Further links can be found between this cluster of characteristics and those related to public participation. For example, low levels of attachment, pride, and optimism will usually result in low public participation.

As you begin to look at the information you have collected for all of the characteristics, you will start to see themes emerging. This will normally happen through clustering of responses or by finding the linkages between certain characteristics. These themes will help to identify not only where you have specific areas of strength osr weakness in one characteristic, but also where some characteristics relate to or reinforce each other.

PRESENTING YOUR COMMUNITY PORTRAIT

Once data has been collected and analyzed, it needs to be organized and presented in a form that can be readily understood and used for community priority setting. The power of the

portrait is in its clarity and the degree to which it presents information in an action-oriented and positive way.

Worksheet 8 is a complete portrait based on presentation of the data and related analysis for each characteristic. The information you see was collected in a B.C. community using key informant interviews and statistical data collection. The community portrait is not presented as an example of optimal resilience. Rather, it is a way to show how data can be analyzed and presented. In the process, the results of the application of the model are also described. This shows how strengths and weaknesses can be clearly identified.

The portrait comprises two sections. The first is a summary of the main themes and issues that are identified in a community. The second is a detailed account of the data collected for each of the indicators, arranged according to characteristic.

Presenting Detailed Information

The portrait itself is a presentation of all of the information collected for each indicator that is associated with each of the characteristics. For each characteristic, the data is presented in table form followed by an analysis of the implications of the data for the level of resilience in the community. The analysis will assess whether, given the variety of results for each indicator, the community has a relative strength or weakness within this characteristic of resilience.

To repeat, the portrait in Worksheet 8 is not intended to reflect any particular level of resilience in a community, but to demonstrate how the information for each characteristic can be interpreted. On the left hand page, you will see a reproduction of one page of a completed community portrait (relating to a single characteristic of resilience), including detailed data. On the right hand page are notes about a definition of the characteristic, some analysis of the data and considerations that are important to this analysis.

You will want to review this portrait and the notes about it before you develop the portrait of resilience for your community.

Writing a Summary

Once you have completed your portrait of resilience, you should write a summary. The portrait summary is critical because it identifies broad themes and relationships between characteristics both within a dimension and across dimensions. Since it is short and to the point, the summary is easier to read than the detailed data that forms the rest of the portrait. This ensures that people who do not have time for the detail can still access the information

in the portrait. It is important, however, to introduce the summary in a way that encourages the reader to look at the more comprehensive portrait and arrive at their own conclusions around the research findings.

The summary also provides information about how the data was collected, and from whom. Results are summarized under each dimension in order to begin to develop links between the characteristics in that dimension and some sense of themes. In addition to providing insight into how one characteristic might affect others, the summary of each dimension suggests potential strengths and weaknesses. The summary is an initial analysis of the data; it does not provide solutions or strategies for addressing the issues. Nor does it prioritize the issues - this takes place during the decision-making workshop.

Example

As you read the portrait summary that follows, you will see indications that one of the predominant issues for this community is the lack of connection between social service and economic development organizations in the community (Dimension 2). This is connected, in a broader sense, to the following: the perception that people are not as open to social development as they are to other forms of community development (Dimension 1); the levels of collaboration between organizations in general (Dimension 2); and the dissatisfaction with participation of youth, cultural groups, and marginalized people in community decision-making (Dimension 1). This theme or issue has an impact on the ability of the community to implement the projects in their CED Strategy (Dimension 4), which is also limited by the lack of staff resources to co-ordinate implementation.

These kinds of issues and connections - including a discussion of other factors that may be contributing to the issue - need to be further analyzed by community members during the decision-making workshop.

A summary of a community portrait of resilience follows. This summary is based on the complete portrait that is presented in .

A SAMPLE COMMUNITY PORTRAIT SUMMARY

The following summary is intended to illustrate how the detailed field test findings in the portrait of resilience can be readily presented in a very accessible format. The basis for these conclusions can be found by examining the detailed data provided. The information in the portrait was obtained through a variety of data collection methods over a period of about a week in the community, with subsequent follow up inquiries.

A summary is helpful, it is not intended to take the place of local analysis and decision making,. Rather, the summary should act as a starting point for further discussion. The *entire* portrait should be reviewed by the steering committee members so they can arrive at their own conclusions as to the community's resilience strengths and weaknesses. It should also be made available for this purpose at the decision-making workshop, as the workshop design indicates.

Methodology

Two primary methods of data collection were used to measure the indicators for each characteristic of resilience. The first method included gathering information about the community from a variety of sources, including the 1996 census, local organizations, town staff, and documents (e.g., the CED Strategy) that relate to recent community planning. The second method - key respondent interviews - involved meeting with both staff and volunteers from a range of groups and organizations within the community. In this community of approximately 5000 people, 15 residents were interviewed from organizations such as the municipality, social services, community economic development organizations, corporate employers, small business and educational institutions. In many cases, these individuals were connected with several organizations in the community either as staff or volunteers. All respondents were asked the same series of questions.

The Portrait Summary

Dimension 1: The People in the Community

In terms of the attitudes and behaviours of residents, they exhibit very high levels of pride in, and overall attachment to their community. They also place high value on education, knowledge and learning. Volunteerism is high and many people have chosen to stay in the community in spite of a job loss. The attachment of youth to their community was perceived to be much lower than the general population, and given the higher than average proportion of the population under age 14 (25%), this could be an area of concern in the future.

Youth, marginalized people, and cultural groups were not perceived to be as involved in decision-making in the community as they should be. Most respondents thought that more proactive efforts should be made to involve these groups. This could be part of the reason for lower levels of youth attachment to the community.

This is a fairly self-reliant community, with strong inter-personal (or neighbourhood) mutual support norms. People in this community have a history of taking action to improve the local

quality of life; they have a "can do" attitude. However, there was some indication that mutual support did not extend into the community's more formal organizational structures, and that support for local action to address social issues could be stronger.

This lack of support for social development was highlighted by responses to questions about the communities openness to new ideas. Generally, people are fairly open to alternatives and new ideas. Still, this openness may be limited to positive influences on each residents' quality of life and may not extend to meeting the needs of others. Examples include the public outcry against social housing, the men's shelter, and a service organization for the community's poor.

Finally, the representativeness of the elected leadership is perceived to be less than satisfactory. Council is viewed as primarily representative of the business community. Most respondents indicated that council could be more proactive in leading the community to develop a vision and in sharing power with community members. It was noted by several that although this area required attention, it had improved slightly in the last few years. Although it was strongly felt that community meetings were well advertised and open, there were concerns about poor public participation and the extent to which public involvement has been successful in influencing community decisions.

Dimension 2: Organizations in the Community

Respondents were moderately satisfied with the level of services for CED planning, research and advocacy and for building human resources. The college has not received an increase in funding in the last ten years. Although both Community Futures and the Chamber (through the economic development committee) play a role in planning, research, and advocacy, it is not clear who leads or who provides which services. This confusion could be related to lack of communication, or to a need for stronger co-ordination in this area. Generally speaking, respondents thought that more staff resources (and funding) were required to support the volunteer efforts. There is little access to equity and some felt that access to higher risk credit was also weak within the community.

Working relationships between organizations are improving, but continue to be challenged by competition for limited funding. Social service and human resource development organizations meet regularly and the Chamber of Commerce and economic development committee are viewed as representing the business community. These two sectors of the community do not meet or collaborate to any great extent. Conflict is perceived to be poorly managed by over half the respondents.

Dimension 3: Resources in the Community

In this community, 36% of the work force is employed by either government or by the area's two largest mills, resulting in a substantial economic impact if either of these were to reduce operations. A fair number of people (exact figures not available) are self-employed or are employed by small businesses in the community. The number of recent business closures (one of which involved a long-time, family-owned business whose owner retired) suggests that this sector is struggling. This may be an area the community should address. The community does not have a strategy to assist businesses in trouble or provide succession planning assistance. Community Futures is the only organization working to increase local ownership through their lending and business development support services.

Openness to alternative forms of earning a living and economic activity are relatively high. For example, the community has a high number of seasonal workers who hold down more than one job over a year and a high level of home-based self-employed people. This bodes well for the community's ability to select a wide range of strategies (both individual and collective) in order to strengthen local equity, control resources, and create employment.

The town's purchase of the airport is viewed as a potential for further development and diversification. In contrast, the town-owned subdivision is viewed as a "white elephant." There is some sense that investments do not necessarily reflect the local priorities or opportunities which have been researched and analyzed in the CED plan. Respondents also indicated that information about and access to external resources (financial and human) needed to be improved in order to address local gaps and accomplish some of the projects in the plan.

Dimension 4: Community Process

The CED plan for the community is less than a year old. The plan reflects most aspects of best practices in planning, but is organized around projects rather than goals and objectives. The vision is a long list of community values - some of which are contradictory - and should be clarified.

The plan includes several specific projects related to low-income people in the community, but most respondents perceive that the integration of social and economic issues in the plan could be strengthened. Half the respondents believed that the link between social and economic organizations also needs to be stronger and that strategies are needed to increase job opportunities for the unemployed.

There seems to be regular, on-going action related to the implementation of the CED plan. However comments were again raised that this action was not co-ordinated effectively and

more could be done with additional staff resources. The public was adequately involved in the development of the plan and is involved on a variety of committees that are implementing the plan. Further efforts to link the town and social service organizations to implementation of the plan would ensure that more organizations integrate it into their own planning process.

The plan has not been evaluated to date.

Step 3:
Decision-Making: Setting Community Priorities

Rural communities are dealing with a large number of issues. When faced with the issues that have emerged from your portrait of resilience, it may be difficult to know where to begin, or what will have the greatest impact. The identified issues may add to an already long list of things that require attention within your community. In light of this new information about your community, you may choose to do nothing, to panic, or to use the information to develop and/or enhance your local strategic priorities.

Step 3 helps you do the latter. This step provides a framework for examining resilience issues in the context of other community issues and goals, and for setting priorities that are meaningful, comprehensive, and most productive in terms of local resilience.

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

The decisions you make as a result of your community portrait will hopefully act as a guide for community action and allocation of resources. For this reason, it is important that the process you use to make decisions involves community members, builds consensus, and generates commitment. Step 3 suggests ways in which you can do this.

What are You Trying to Decide?

In most cases, communities will have done some of the analysis of their portrait as it was developed and will have a sense of the themes or issues that are emerging. You now need to further examine those issues in order to determine the most effective thing you can do to strengthen resilience in your community. Remember that you are determining your goal, as opposed to the specific actions that will accomplish it. Although implementation is a factor in decision-making, you should not worry too much about the specific details of "how" at this point.

Who Needs to be Involved & Why?

If you have come this far in the process, your community will likely have an organization or group who have taken on the assessment of resilience. Either this group collectively, or an individual associated with it, has developed your portrait of resilience based on the data collected. The Decision-Making workshop is an opportunity to involve a broader group of people in reviewing and analyzing the significance of the data. This group will need to work through their own analysis of the portrait in order to take ownership for the decisions that are made. Regardless of the size or scope of your original group, you will need to consider who else should be involved in order to arrive at priorities that are both informed and representative of the broader community. Participation in decision-making will be determined by the nature of your community and the specific issues that have emerged from your portrait.

We earlier presented a number of considerations regarding the people to involve in the collection of perceptual data (see page 1-24). The same considerations hold true for decision-making. In addition, you may want some very specific expertise or representation at the table in order to provide additional information to the group. Generally speaking, the more your participation includes those responsible for implementation, and those affected by the issues, the more likely you are to find support for the eventual action you will take.

How Should They Be Involved?

You know your community best. There are many ways of involving, informing and consulting people and organizations in order to include them in this process in some way.

Example

- You may decide that several different decision-making workshops with different groups will work best in your community.
- You may want to keep some groups informed, even though they will not participate in the actual decision-making. How will you do this and when?
- You may want a very large, public workshop and require several facilitators and/or a longer period of time to complete the process.

If an issue has come out of the portrait that requires some specific background expertise, you can access that information before the workshop or invite participation. Think about additional information/reports that you may want to have handy at the workshop.

In most communities, it will be important to have some participation (and buy-in) from elected officials and key organizations involved in economic development.

What If You Can't Decide?

In the field testing for this Manual, most communities arrived at a clear consensus on a set of priority issues and identified the most significant of these issues by the end of a 1-day workshop. If this does not apply in your case, however, you may need to think about addressing more than one priority or (if this is not feasible for your community) how you will move beyond potential blocks. You may need to consult more broadly within the community, gather more information, or create additional criteria to help screen your initial list of issues still further. All of these methods are more strategic than and preferable to a voting process.
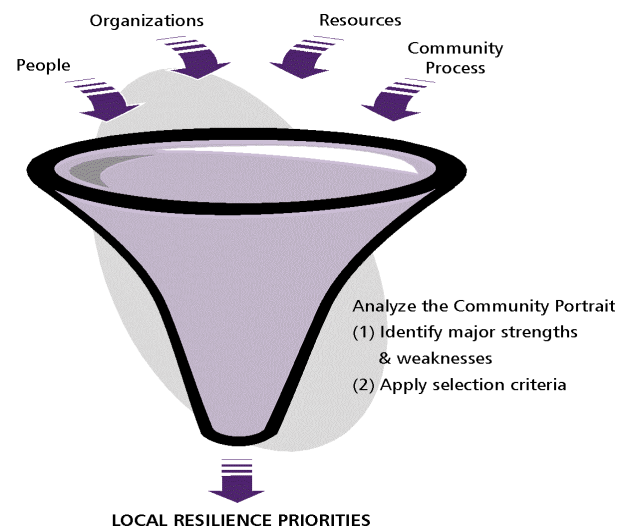
A FRAMEWORK FOR DECISION-MAKING

The framework for decision-making is much like a funnel. Large amounts of information are fed in at the top and screened in order to arrive at the (one) priority for most effective community action at this time. With each level of screening, emphasis moves from individual to collective priorities and from a large number of priorities to fewer.

To commence, individuals (or small groups, if participation is very high) rank the strengths and weaknesses found in the portrait. The weaknesses which people identify are then considered in light of their relationship to each other, to other resilience characteristics, and to other local issues. As a result of this discussion, you will be able to create a list of important resilience issues in your community.

This list will not likely include more than seven issues. These priority issues are then screened again by rating them against the selection criteria. In the end, you will have one or two priorities specific to strengthening your community resilience.

Organizations   Resources

People   Community Process

Analyze the Community Portrait
(1) Identify major strengths & weaknesses
(2) Apply selection criteria

LOCAL RESILIENCE PRIORITIES

Applying the Criteria

The criteria for the decision-making workshop have been selected because they help people to think about additional factors that might influence a priority issue: for example, their unique community history, other community issues, and the practicality of taking action at this time.

The criteria used for a final screen of resilience priorities are:

- change over time
- linkages with other characteristics and with other local issues
- practicality - readiness of the community to act and consequences of not

The group should discuss these criteria and ensure a common understanding of them prior to working through this step. A discussion of the limitations and utility of each criterion follows.

Change Over Time

The rating (new or old issue) of this criterion is not as important as the discussion about the pattern of this issue in your community. This criterion is intended to encourage groups to discuss local trends and norms. It could be that an issue that has existed for decades has undermined resilience substantially or that it has not. Likewise, a fairly recent issue may indicate a downward trend that should be addressed immediately, or not. In other words, it is important to come back to this criterion and reflect on it in the context of the ratings applied to the other criteria that follow.

Linkages

Generally, the greater the number of resilience characteristics and other local issues that a given priority is related to, the greater the significance of the priority and the potential impact to be derived from addressing it. The nature of the cause and effect relationship between a priority and other issues however is a key to understanding where your community can have the greatest impact at this time. If several priorities are rated as having high linkages it will be important to further examine the nature of those relationships in order to arrive at the most significant priority for your community.

For example, a community determined that "openness to alternatives" (#15) and "strong belief in education" (#9) were priority weaknesses. One of the underlying issues related to both priorities was a concern for very low literacy rates in the community. It was determined that if literacy were strengthened, it would in turn strengthen both of these resilience characteristics. Literacy became the priority for this group.

Practicality

In order to assess the readiness of the community to act, groups must first determine who needs to be ready to act. Does this priority require broad community support and participation, or can it be addressed by one or more organizations alone? Rate the readiness to act with some awareness of those who will have to act.

An examination of the consequences of not acting needs to consider the linkages with other characteristics and issues for the community. Determining the negative consequences can be fairly subjective, so it is important to consider all the possible consequences, and then determine the degree of risk to the community should these consequences come true.

Using Additional Criteria

If you do select or design additional criteria for weighting the importance of issues, you should develop rating systems similar to those used in Worksheet 9.

For example, organizational capacity to undertake action around a priority might be a local concern. You might add a criterion under practicality such as "organizational capacity to undertake action around this priority." You would then determine what factors would qualify as a high, medium, or low rating. (e.g., "organization exists and has the resources and skills to organize this work" might qualify as a high rating, whereas "no organization exists with a mandate to lead this work" might qualify as a low rating.)

The Final Analysis

Once individuals or small groups have rated each of the priorities using the criteria provided, it will be important to review the final scores. Often people will rate things differently due to different interpretations or assumptions and when these are clarified a consensus is usually apparent. Make sure ratings are presented back to the whole group with a rationale.

At this final stage in the process, you may also want to refer to your local economic development strategy (if one exists) in order to further clarify the relationship between your community resilience priorities and your economic development goals. Depending on the people involved in this workshop, you may or may not have developed this relationship as a result of group discussions. Strong cause and effect links here may help you view your resilience priorities differently and integrate them into an existing plan.

The overriding goal in decision-making is to select one priority that will have the greatest impact on your community resilience and that has a high chance of being accomplished. We focus on one, final priority as a way of recognizing that communities are undertaking many

different initiatives and may not have the capacity to take on substantial, additional work. This does not mean that you should not undertake a more complex plan that addresses more than one of your priorities. It is also not intended to prevent you from tackling long term, complex issues, but only to ensure that you believe the capacity to do so exists, or can be developed, in your community. In most cases, with the right people around the table, your group will have a good sense of local capacity and the relationship between your resilience priorities and other local goals.

This assessment of resources and local capacity requires that groups begin to make hunches about the "how." It is important however, not to get bogged down in debating detailed approaches or solutions - action planning is the next step. Reinforce that this is a fluid process, and that as you begin to develop a plan to address your priority there will be opportunities to further refine your specific goal(s) as well.

The Decision-Making Workshop

Worksheet 9 includes a proposed workshop agenda and some other guides and forms that may be helpful in conducting your own decision-making workshop. You will see that within the agenda, there are options for communities to consider depending on the nature, scope and length of this workshop in your community. You will need to adapt the process to meet your needs. Given our field tests with this workshop, we offer the following suggestions for all sessions.

You will need a facilitator for this workshop who can focus on group process and on accomplishing the desired outcome. The facilitator should have some prior understanding of CED.

The workshop is designed as a full day session. You may instead choose to complete this over two evenings or half days. You will not likely be able to work through the process in less than six hours.

You should consider the background and previous participation of workshop participants in this project and other CED initiatives. To ensure that participants share an adaquate understanding before you begin, you may need to enhance the background portion of the agenda or to add an introduction to CED principles and functions.

Participants should have at least the summary of your portrait well ahead of the workshop. In some communities you may want to distribute the complete portrait. Such a detailed document may be overwhelming for some, but others will want to read and digest it in order to make informed decisions.

Step 4: Planning

This, the final step in the resilience process, involves the development of a plan to strengthen the priority selected in the decision-making workshop. Step 4 is potentially the most complicated in the resilience process and will look very different in each community. As you read these pages you will see that we are not as prescriptive in this step as we have been in earlier ones. We could not present options for every every possible situation, however. Your community may need to create a process that is quite different.

We have used a community planning workshop as the foundation for bringing people together to think through the implementation options. Your community may choose another approach. For example, you might delegate responsibility for the research and design of a draft plan to a small working group chosen in the course of the decision-making workshop. Perhaps you would then have one larger meeting to review the draft. This does not allow for the same learning and common understanding to be established across a broad base of local stakeholders and may reduce the commitment to implementation. Neverthess, this approach could be very appropriate in some communities.

COMPONENTS OF A PLAN

A plan needs to be customized to address the needs related to your specific priority. In some cases, a plan may be based on an actual feasibility study or a needs assessment, while in other cases the plan can merely outline the rationale and process for doing those things. In the latter case, your plan will provide a road map only for some initial steps and outcomes you expect from strengthening your resilience priority. It is also important to note that, unlike the decision-making process (which was largely completed in one workshop), the implementation process requires additional activities prior to and following the workshop: research, documentation, and perhaps even pre-workshop meetings.

Most implementation plans will include the following components:

1. Who is leading this process, who else is involved and why.
2. A statement of goal.
3. A rationale for the goal that is founded in local strengths, weaknesses and best practice knowledge.

4. The outcomes your community desires from this action, and when the community expects to see them (e.g., one and three years from now, or two years and five years, etc.)

5. A summary of best practice approaches and principles that others have used successfully to accomplish this goal and some analysis of which approaches might work best in your community.

6. You may need to conduct specific feasibility or needs assesssment work related to getting more information about your priority issues. This work can be completed prior to the planning workshop - which will move you further along the process - or it can be named as a task in your action plan. Do not forge ahead and frame a goal if you really need more information. In this case your action plan should focus on the next steps required to get the information you need.

7. An operational plan with a timeline, budgets, etc.

You can see that item #1 is a product of the decision-making workshop, and that items #5 and #6 will likely need to be completed in advance of the planning workshop. The other components of the plan can usually be developed (at least as draft material) during the planning workshop itself.

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

At the end of the decision-making workshop your group looked at the next steps required to take action related to addressing your priority. You should have discussed such things as who needs to be involved, what additional information you need, etc. This information - linked to the priority that has been selected - is your starting point for the implementation process. It is assumed here that you have identified a group or individuals to take on different tasks related to planning and organizing this process.

Who Should Be Involved?

It could be that you will have identified several or many new participants (organizations, businesses, politicians or other individuals) who are not involved in the decision-making workshop, but do need to be part of the implementation process. These people must be invited to the workshop. More important, they must be informed well in advance of the nature of the priority, what it will do for the community, and the role they could play in moving this forward in your community.

Take for example the sample community cited earlier (p. 1-31), which selected a literacy program as a priority. It was very unlikely that all the labour market providers and social service agencies were present at the decision-making workshop, although all of them obviously would have a role to play in developing the literacy program. So delegates from the working committee need to meet with these groups well in advance of the planning workshop. It may also be that the nature of your priority requires only one or two additional people to be involved - or none.

Think about the following when you review participants for the planning workshop:

- Who will have to implement this?
- Who has decision-making authority related to this?
- Who else has a stake in this issue?
- Who has information or resources that will be helpful in accomplishing this?

Establishing a Best Practice Context

Although you may not have a clear goal at the end of the decision-making workshop, you will have a priority issue that the community needs to address. This issue will be linked to specific resilience characteristics and to other local issues. With this information you can begin exploring how other communities have addressed this issue, and what has worked - or not worked - for them. This record of effective action is what we call *best practice*. By familiarizing ourselves with best practices, we avoid "reinventing the wheel." Instead, we learn from what others have done, and adapt or enhance proven approaches to meet our own unique local needs.

Prior to the workshop, all participants should receive a package of information about best practices relevant to your priority issue. The information should provide a general sense of the principles, the theory, and the specific approaches that others have used successfully. We recommend the following sources of information:

- *Tools & Techniques for Community Recovery & Renewal* (the companion to the *Community Resilience Manual*, available on-line at www.cedworks.com).
- The Customized Document Service of the Centre for Community Enterprise (CCE). For a small charge, the CCE can search out and supply articles from past editions of *Making Waves* that relate to specific topics and issues. (See the "Customized Document Service" section at www.cedworks.com.)
- Depending on the nature of your issue, you should check your local library, college library, or government resource centres (e.g., HRDC, provincial rural development ministries, Community Futures, etc.)

Information about the Issue in Your Community

The decision-making workshop culminates in an important question: What else do we need to know in order to develop an appropriate approach to this issue in our community? The answer to this question will vary widely depending on the community, the workshop participants, and the nature of the priority or issue.

For example, the community with the literacy priority might want to meet with all local organizations concerned with this issue in advance of the planning workshop in order to assemble background information and gain their support. Such a meeting could also serve as an opportunity to survey these stakeholders' client base, perceived needs, existing services, etc. The participants could even decide that they need to conduct a more formal community needs assessment prior to the planning workshop.

In the case of a community with a priority to create a CED strategy, it is more likely that the necessary organizations have already participated in the decision-making workshop and can bring a great deal of local knowledge to the planning workshop. In these circumstances, it may even be possible to design a complete action plan at the planning workshop without a great deal of preliminary research.

THE PLANNING WORKSHOP

A sample agenda for this workshop is provided in Worksheet 10 along with several resources that can guide participants through a series of questions related to the priority they have identified. The planning workshop is designed to be completed in about seven hours, given about 20 participants. If you expect more or less than 20 to attend, make allowances accordingly.

It is helpful if the facilitator for this workshop can develop the following materials as overheads or flipcharts:

- A draft statement of goal(s) that reflect the discussion of the priority issue from the decision-making workshop.
- A review of the resilience characteristics and other issues relating to the goal(s) from the decision-making workshop (both strengths and weaknesses). This leads into the rationale for the goal - why is this the most important thing for us to focus on at this time to strengthen our community?

- A summary of the best practice resources - who have been singularly successful in addressing this issue? What principles and approaches did they apply to it?
- Depending on the issue and the group you may also want to draft strategic options for the participants to consider - what are some methods that we could use to accomplish the goal?

Participants should review and discuss all the above material to ensure a common understanding prior to completing on the worksheets. The facilitator should add additional items, options, etc. that the group generates at this time.