

# Learning Strategies to Build Human Capital and Social Capital for Sustainable Rural Communities

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*Identifying Strategies to Support Sustainable Agriculture in Canada*

Presented by:  
Karen Rempel  
Rural Development Institute  
Brandon University

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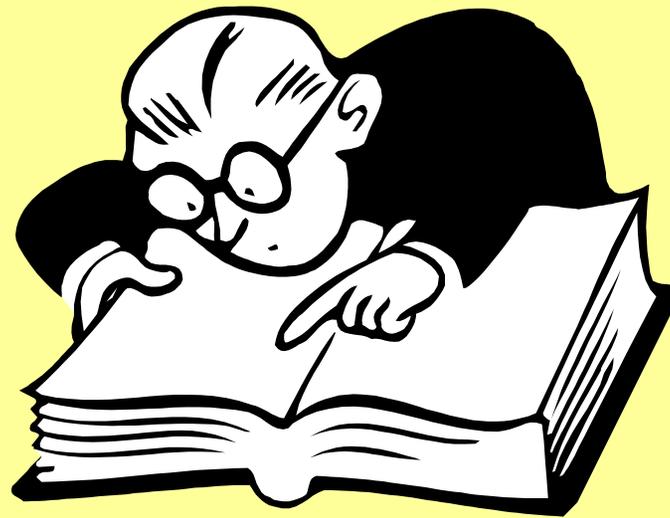
For further information please see:

<http://www.brandonu.ca/organizations/rdi/MRA.html>

# Presentation Themes

1. Theory – just a little!
2. Stories of 6 rural MB communities  
(interesting comparisons)
3. Learning strategies (helpful  
information I hope!)

A little knowledge...



# Background

*A sustainable rural community*

*“has enough economic, natural, human and social resources to ensure it can be maintained and respond to period stresses”.*

(Wall, E. (2002). Sustainable Rural Communities in an Era of Globalization. Guelph, ON: University of Guelph, p.11)

# Sustainable rural communities can

- *expand geographic boundaries*
- *accept controversy and the depersonalize politics*
- *foster a sense of community pride*

## *There's more...*

- *build flexible, inclusive and dispersed community leadership*
- *encourage private investment and local infrastructure improvements*

## *Most important of all...*

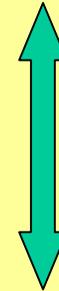
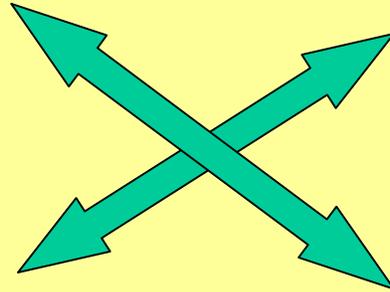
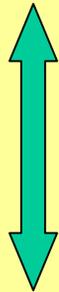
*The capability to mobilize natural and financial capital depends on*

- 1. the purposeful development of human capital*
- 2. the productive use and development of social capital*

# The Qualities of Sustainable Rural Communities are brought about by:

**Human  
Capital**

**Social  
Capital**



Natural Capital



Financial / built  
capital

Adapted from Flora (ed.) (2000) *Interactions Between Agroecosystems and Rural Communities*. New York: CHC Press as cited in Wall, E. (2002). *Sustainable Rural Communities in an Era of Globalization*. Guelph, ON: University of Guelph, p.11)

# The Concept of “Capital”

Have **PRODUCTIVE**

and

**ECONOMIC** value

*human capital*

individual's skills, knowledge, and abilities

*social capital*

relationships, networks and norms that  
facilitate individual and collective action

# So what?

*How do we capture and use the potential  
of human and social capital*

# Lifelong learning

- Continues throughout an individual's lifetime
- Develops human capital and
- Uses, constructs and re-constructs social capital

# *Lifelong learning in adulthood is*

- *intentional and planned learning activities*
- *that develop new skills, ability or knowledge*
- *for productive and economic value*

# The Adventures of Six Rural Communities and Lifelong Learning



# The six rural communities

- Runninghard ~ 5000 (regional)
- Smallville ~ 1000
- Potpourri ~ 5000 (regional)
- Shadow ~ 1000
- Constant ~ 1500
- Horizon ~ 3000

# Major Findings

*Community contexts and situations  
greatly affected*

- 1. Implementation of public policies and programs*
- 2. Perceptions of the value of learning*

# Public Policies and Programs

- **Cause**: Wide differences in the willingness and ability to implement public policies and programs
- **Effect**: Wide variations in the type and kind of learning activities

Most notable – the differences in the meaning and value of learning

- Runninghard – learning = highly paid professionals and \$ to property values
- Smallville – learning = educational levels not valued as much as hard work and experience
- Potpourri – learning = increased labour market skills for disadvantaged groups

- Shadow – learning = improved health of seniors and activities for kids
- Constant – learning = the adult learning centre
- ***Horizon – learning = inclusiveness, opportunities, economic and productive value***

# Horizon Sets the Bar

- Lifelong learning included in town's vision for the last 20-25 years
- All types and kinds of learning activities sponsored by a variety of organizations
- Includes all ages, abilities, occupations, ethnic groups

# Horizon – a Sustainable Rural Community

Geographic boundaries

- learning draws from surrounding area

Acceptance of controversy

- Increased participation across community groups

Community pride

- Broad-based awareness and support for learning

## Inclusive/dispersed leadership

- Ed Committee of Town Council source of pride / inclusiveness

## Private investment

- Local businesses involved

# Human and Social Capital

Town Council actively supports learning activities and development of human capital

Learning builds and takes advantage of social capital

*So... what can rural communities do?*



- Do not confuse education with learning
- Make all types of learning a priority
- Develop / take advantage of learning opportunities **IN THE COMMUNITY**
- Learning is based on **LEARNER's** needs

- Locate learning activities with partners or sponsors in the community .
- Use technology as a tool NOT a replacement for social interaction.

# *Examples*

- Apprenticeship programs
- Mentoring
- On-site training with experienced workers

- Co-operative education
- Peer support