

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

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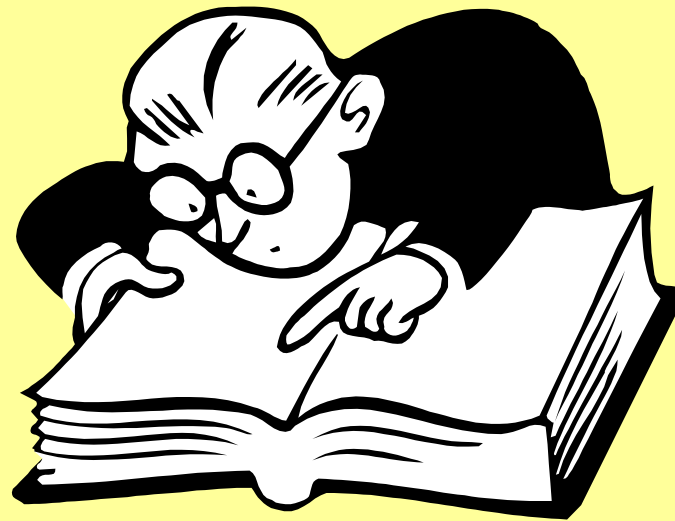
For further information please see:

<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...

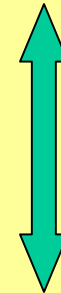
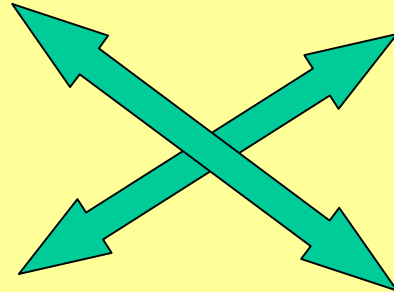
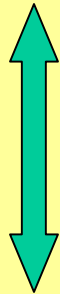
The capability to mobilize natural and financial capital depends on

- 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

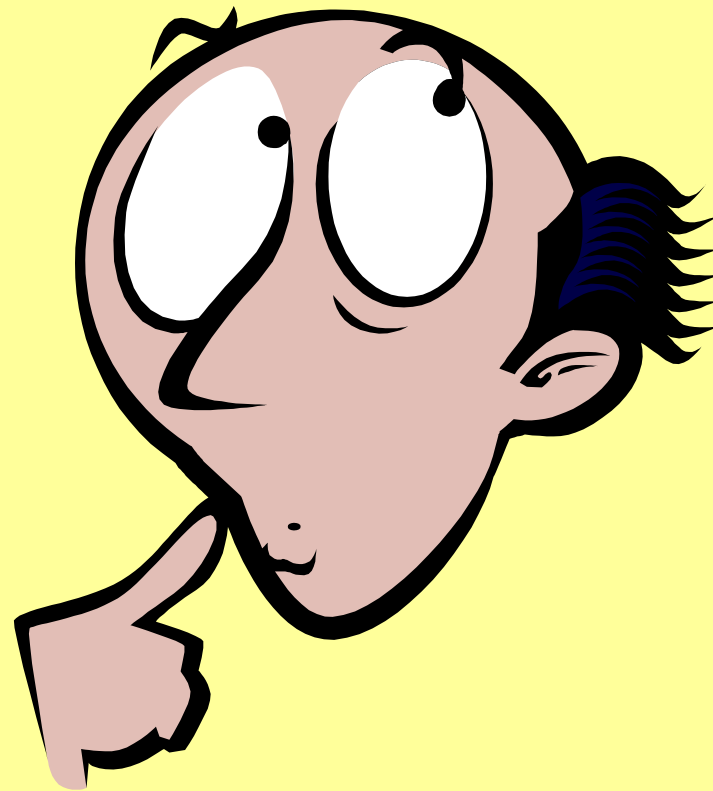
- Local businesses involved

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