Report on the Strengths, Challenges and Opportunities of Community Development Corporations in Manitoba

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Issues Identified from Report

• Rapid growth in the CDC movement in the 1990s
• There was no ‘catalogue’ of CDC organizations in the province
• Among the CDC organizations there is great variability with regards to the services and programs offered
Collaborative Effort

• Manitoba Community Development Corporations Association (MCDCA)
• Intergovernmental Affairs-Government of Manitoba
• Rural Development Institute-Brandon University
• Community Futures Partners of Manitoba
Research Method

• Mail-out survey sent to 92 incorporated CDCs in Manitoba
• 2 products of the study are
  • Website
  • Final report
• Final report is based on the responses provided in 55 returned surveys
• Questionnaire collected information concerning:
  – I. Community/regional development issues
  – II. Administrative/operational features of CDCs
  – III. CDC functions, activities, and priorities
Benefits of the Website

• Serves to promote the association,
• Promotes MCDCA services, events and programs,
• Provides contact information of MCDCA members,
• Contains relevant documents to CDCs, such as the Motivator, and
• Serves as a conduit for discussion among CDCs
MCDCA Website Homepage

- [http://www.brandonu.ca/rdi/mcdca.html](http://www.brandonu.ca/rdi/mcdca.html)
- Provides information on:
  - Upcoming events
  - Services
  - News
  - Links to other CDC organizations
Highlights of the MCDCA Website

- All CDC members are listed, along with their contact information.
Highlights of the MCDCA Website

- Links are provided for:
  - CDCs
  - CFDCs
  - RDCs
  - CED organizations
  - Research Institutes & CED Centres
Key Study Findings

• I. Community and Regional Development Issues:
  – 45 respondents (81.8%) considered the local CDC to be the primary development agency in the area.
  – 30 respondents (54.5%) indicated that CDCs were involved in broader regional development organization and planning.
  – Potential role(s) of CDCs in regional development include: mutual cooperation and support, partnering, sharing resources/information, promotional activities, as well as business development and attraction.
  – CDCs commonly engage in a range of inter-agency activities aimed at local and regional development.
Key Study Findings

• II. Administrative Features of CDCs
  – Board Characteristics: The Boards of CDCs responding to the survey commonly meet on a monthly basis (65.5%); the vast majority take minutes (100%), make use of agendas (98.1%), record motions (92.6%), and have formal by-laws (90.7%).
  – Staffing Issues: Reliance on volunteers, need for additional professional and support staff, and technical expertise. Of the participating CDCs:
    • 8 have a full-time economic development officer
    • 15 have a part-time EDO
    • 6 have one other (part-time) positions in addition to an EDO
Key Study Findings

• II. Administrative Features of CDCs
  – Committees: 33 respondents (60%) remarked that their CDCs made use of committees.
  – Financial Assistance: 45 CDCs (81.8%) indicated having received assistance from municipal councils (over the past three years). In most instances, these funds took the form of direct municipal cash contributions (82.6%), followed by VLT revenues (13.0%), and mill rate levies (8.7%). Only 4 of the participating CDCs received $50,000.00 plus.
  – Board and Staff Training: Respondents rated the availability and adequacy of Board and Staff training. Some noteworthy areas include business attraction and retention, opportunity identification, marketing and promotion, housing, as well as project development and evaluation.
Key Study Findings

• II. Administrative Features of CDCs
  – Planning Activities: 39 of the 53 individuals responding to a general question on planning (73.6%) indicated that their CDCs were involved in some form of short-term and/or long-term planning. Answers to supplementary planning questions suggested that these plans were (a) followed “Somewhat” or “Very Closely” (97.4%), (b) integrated or coordinated with other community-based organizations (85%), and (c) reviewed periodically (90.2%).
  – Community Profile: Question responses suggested a perception that community awareness and understanding of CDC goals and objectives were both concentrated in the “Very Low” to “Moderate” categories (i.e., 98.2%).
Key Study Findings

• III. CDC Functions, Activities, and Priorities
• The following list indicates the three-most often noted activities in each of eight functional areas:
  – Business Development: business attraction, financial support, and business retention.
  – Opportunity Identification: business opportunities, resource inventory, and industry research.
  – Investment and Capital: attracting community, individual, and external investment.
  – Capital Projects: financing, project management and design.
Key Study Findings

• III. CDC Functions, Activities, and Priorities
  – Community Profile: data collection, maintain/ update profiles, and publish/release profiles.
  – Community Promotion and Marketing: publications, business solicitation, and website.
  – Human Resource Development: youth retention, population retention/increase, and attracting employees.
  – Other Sector Activities: housing development, community facilities, and social/recreational projects.
Concluding Remarks

• Survey responses create an image of CDCs as organizations that:
  – are strategically positioned to contribute significantly to community-based development activities, as well as to work cooperatively with regional development entities to enhance multiple levels and aspects of development.
  – can be interconnected with diverse community groups in the promotion of local development.
  – rely heavily on community representation and volunteerism (e.g., Board and staff members).
Concluding Remarks

- follow structured protocols for running regular Board meetings (e.g., minutes and motions).
- seek out qualified professional staff and expertise (given funding limitations).
- make use of committees to enhance effectiveness.
- pursue diverse funding sources to carry out valued objectives.
- recognize the importance of strategic planning processes for community-based development initiatives.
Concluding Remarks

– look for opportunities to enhance CDC capacities through human resource training.
– remain open to a wide range of potential areas of development initiatives and activities (e.g., opportunity identification, investment, community promotion, business development, attraction, and retention).
– three substantive areas of concern for the future include staffing, training, and funding issues.
Moving to Action
Check out the MCDCA on the web

www.brandonu.ca/rdi/mcdca.htm