



COMMUNITY-BUILDING: SEIZING THE OPPORTUNITY

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F A M I L Y N E T W O R K



Background

- This presentation was to the Annual General Meeting of the Social Planning Council of Sudbury on November 8, 2004.



Cities and Communities are Back on the Agenda

Three issues to consider

- **Why?**

Opportunities and challenges spatially concentrated

- **Implications**

Is Canada ready?

- **Moving Forward**

Governments *and* community organizations



The Paradox of Globalization (1)

Old Conventional Wisdom

- New information and communications technology: “The irrelevance of local place”
- Public policy assumptions: “The irrelevance of local scale”
- The action is on the world stage: transnational business, culture, governance



The Paradox of Globalization (2)

New Awareness: Globalization's Five Key Flows Converge in Cities

- People: 80% of Canadians live in urban areas
- Investment: New economy is urban centred
- Ideas: Innovation is a social process
- Policy: Municipalities/communities acquiring new responsibilities
- Security: First responders on the front lines



“Place Matters”

Jane Jacobs and Richard Florida show the difference “place quality” makes to national goals:

- Social inclusion: neighbourhood institutions vital for individuals and families
- Economic innovation: mobile talent clusters in creative places, both large and small
- Cultural diversity: cities where diversity expressed
- Ecological sustainability: sprawl, congestion, waste management



Three Messages

- The great public policy questions of our day are now urban questions
- Crucial problem solving resources – knowledge and networks – are localized
- Countries that invest in their cities and communities will be the 21st century's success stories



Canadian Cities: A Double-Edged Reality

Flood of recent research shows Canada's cities are simultaneously places of most dynamic innovation and most severe exclusion

- Innovation: Spatially concentrated smart organizations and knowledge networks – “clusters”
- Exclusion: Spatially concentrated poverty and negative neighbourhood effects – “ghettos”



Moreover Canada's Urban System Is Complex

- The national urban system contains three different kinds of cities: a handful of large city-regions; a number of medium-sized cities; and many smaller cities and communities
- The largest cities, represented by the C-5 network, have been getting most of the attention in Canada's New Deal debate
- But medium-sized cities have distinctive challenges and opportunities: retain and attract talent; diversify the local economic base; build on the strong bonds of community and potential for cross-sectoral alliance building



Canadian Cities Falling Behind? The Role of Governments

Canada's urban policy approach recently described as "disjointed" and "lagging"

- Deferred municipal infrastructure investments
- Fiscal squeeze on local services
- Political culture of non-recognition for cities
- Mistrust between levels of government
- Departmental silos persist
- Top-down design and delivery of programs
- Episodic commitment and short-term funding



Canadian Cities Falling Behind? Non-Governmental Organizations

Canada's community sector recently described as "passion and commitment under stress"

- Funding constraints and cookie cutter designs
- Isolated, fragmented local projects
- Struggling for comprehensive, longer term focus
- Stronger capacity for research and strategic planning
- More collaborative relationships needed



Other Jurisdictions Moving Ahead

1990s: A decade of policy innovation

- Europe: EU Regional Development Funds expanded and decentralized to local scale
- United Kingdom: Joined-Up Governance and the New Deal for Communities
- United States: Revitalized HUD and community empowerment

Three lessons: horizontal and vertical collaboration; place-specific policy; empower community-based organizations



Canada's Challenge: A New Architecture for Community-Building

The message may be getting through...

"We intend to make the social economy a key part of Canada's social policy tool kit... Over the course of the next year, we will work with these groups to develop the tools they require. Just as entrepreneurs are essential to a strong economy, social entrepreneurs are essential to strong communities, and they require our support"
(Prime Minister Martin, 2004).



The Message May Be Getting Through

“It is in communities that the elements of the national innovation system come together... By coordinating efforts, federal, provincial/territorial and municipal governments can work with private, academic and voluntary sectors to build local capacity and unleash the full potential of communities across the country”
(Industry Canada/Human Resources Development Canada, 2002).



A New Architecture for Community-Building

The Paradigm

- Value social innovation/entrepreneurship as much as economic innovation/entrepreneurship
- Community-driven with broad resident involvement
- Comprehensive vision and strategic sequencing
- Research-driven, asset-based
- Tailored to local conditions with regional focus
- Local partnerships and extra-local collaborations
- Valuing cultural diversity, tackling institutional barriers
- Trust relations are key



A New Architecture for Community-Building

For Governments...

“There is no one government or single policy that will do the job. Governments must collaborate to adapt to place-specific assets, needs and capacities.”

- Tap local knowledge, engage local networks
- Bring cities to the table and empower them
- Combine resources across departmental lines
- Offer menu of reinvestment possibilities to communities
- Delegate authority to local departmental officers
- Establish funding and accountability relations with community-based organizations



A New Architecture for Community-Building

For Non-Governmental Organizations...

“Required is a further coming-together of existing institutions in the field. This does not imply the need to form any new institution, but rather the collaboration of existing ones around the shared purpose of expanding and strengthening community building across the country” (Urban Institute, *Community Building Coming of Age*, 1998).



A New Architecture for Community-Building

National/provincial intermediaries have key role

- Funding and advocacy
- Integration and information
- Training and learning
- Canadian examples: The Maytree Foundation, Tamarack Institute, United Way Canada



National Intermediary In Action: Tamarack Vibrant Communities

- Four-year national effort launched in 2002 to explore and enable local solutions to reduce poverty
- 14 cities and communities across Canada engaged, all developing their own local plans and sharing lessons
- Multi-Sectoral Steering Groups: business, government, anti-poverty groups, voluntary sector, poor people themselves
- Tamarack Pan-Canadian Learning Partnership: Monthly Teleconferencing, Knowledge Brokering, Public Policy Dialogues



A New Architecture for Community-Building

Local intermediaries have key role

- Convening the partners (grassroots volunteers and front line organizations)
- Community visioning
- Inventorying assets/generating research
- Facilitating action
- Community-based indicators
- Canadian Examples: Social Planning Councils, Toronto City Summit Alliance, Greater Halifax Partnership



Local Intermediary in Action: Chatham-Kent Community Capacity Builders

- Since 1997, the United Way of Chatham-Kent has led multi-sectoral effort to identify and maximize community assets
- Partners include: Chamber of Commerce, Municipality, Federal Community Futures Development Corporation, Ontario Healthy Communities Coalition
- *Nurture the Future Project* to link community and economic development
- Many collaborative initiatives: Social Capital Survey; Corporate Community Investment Survey; Life Long Learning
- Creating Community Resource Centre, Funders Alliance



A New Deal for Cities and Communities: Bringing It All Together

- No one-size-fits-all policy approach
- Involve the municipalities and communities in decision-making processes
- Build on existing Urban Development Agreements and community-driven projects
- What works where and why? A Canada-wide Cities and Communities Innovation Council



Some Larger Questions Remain

- Is there a tension in the community-building movement between social change and service provider missions?
- Is the current round of corporate restructuring – what some refer to as the “hollowing out of corporate Canada” -- leaving businesses more detached from local communities and civic matters?
- Given that alliances and partnerships are critical for community-building how are such trust relations established and maintained?





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