



Initiative on the New Economy Project

Innovative Services and Voluntary Organizations: Project Report

**Greg Halseth and Laura Ryser
Rural and Small Town Studies Program
University of Northern British Columbia
Prince George, B.C.**

March 2006



TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page Number
About the Project	vi
Acknowledgements	viii
Availability	ix
1.0 Innovative Services and Voluntary Organizations	1
2.0 Methodology	5
3.0 Organizational Structure	9
4.0 Funding	23
5.0 Filling Service Gaps	30
6.0 Organizational Operations	34
7.0 Sources of Information	37
8.0 Use of Communications and Technology	39
9.0 Partnerships	50
10.0 Social Capital and Social Cohesion	62
11.0 Challenges for Innovative Service Providers and Voluntary Organizations	69
12.0 Conclusion	77
Bibliography	84
Appendix A	91
Consent Form	92
Innovative Services and Voluntary Organizations Interview Guide	93

List of Tables

	Page Number
Table 2.1: Sites Selected for Innovative Services and Voluntary Organizations Study	6
Table 2.2: Interview Respondents	7
Table 3.1: Does your organization have a president / chairperson / owner? - % of responses, by community.	9
Table 3.2: What is the gender of the president / chairperson / owner? % of responses, by community.	10
Table 3.3: Is the leader elected? - % of responses, by community.	10
Table 3.4: By whom is the leader elected? - % of responses, by community.	11
Table 3.5: Is the leadership position voluntary or paid? - % of responses, by community.	11
Table 3.6: Does your organization have a board of directors? % of responses, by community.	12
Table 3.7: What is the gender distribution amongst the board of directors? % of responses, by community.	13
Table 3.8: Are board members elected or paid? - % of responses, by community.	14
Table 3.9: Are board members voluntary or paid? - % of responses, by community.	14
Table 3.10: Are there local leaders on the board of directors? - % of responses, by community.	15
Table 3.11: Reasons why your organization adopted a board of directors? % of responses, by community.	15
Table 3.12: How many people hold the main decision-making power / responsibilities? - % of responses, by community.	16
Table 3.13: Have there been any changes in the number of staff over the last year? - % of responses, by community.	17
Table 3.14: Reasons why organizations lost members or employees - % of responses, by community.	18
Table 3.15: Has your organization needed to recruit new members or employees over the last year? - % of responses, by community.	18
Table 3.16: If yes, has it been easy to recruit new members or employees? - Rating of responses, by community.	19
Table 3.17: Has your organization needed to recruit new board members over the last year? - % of responses, by community.	20
Table 3.18: If yes, has it been easy to recruit new board members? - Rating of responses, by community.	20
Table 3.19: Does your organization have office space? - % of responses, by community.	21
Table 4.1: Changes in sources of funding – 2003/2005 – % of responses, All 4 Sites.	23
Table 4.2: Sources of revenue - % of responses, by community.	24

List of Tables

	Page Number
Table 4.3: Were any conditions required to receive funds? - % of responses, by community.	26
Table 4.4: Sources of revenue - % of responses, by presence of board of directors.	27
Table 4.5: How effective were board members in pursuing funding? Rating of responses, by community.	28
Table 5.1: Does your organization offer / deliver services to people? % of responses, by community.	30
Table 5.2: If yes, has the composition of the people your organization serves changed over the last year? - % of responses, by community.	31
Table 5.3: Have there been any changes in the services offered over the last year? - % of responses, by community.	31
Table 5.4: Identify the types of changes in services / programs over the last year - % of responses, by community.	32
Table 5.5: Were any local service closures covered by local service providers / voluntary organizations over the last year? - % of responses, by community.	32
Table 5.6: Did your organization respond to service cutbacks or closures over the last year? - % of responses, by community.	33
Table 5.7: Did any service providers emerge over the last year to provide a similar service to yours? - % of responses, by community.	33
Table 6.1: Who has the primary control over the organization's budget? - % of responses, by community.	34
Table 6.2: Who has the primary control for setting major policies? - % of responses, by community.	35
Table 7.1: Does your organization use the following sources of information for its mandate or to deliver services? - % of responses, by community.	37
Table 8.1: How does your organization communicate with CLIENTS? % of responses, by community.	40
Table 8.2: How does your organization communicate with MEMBERS? % of responses, by community.	41
Table 8.3: How does your organization communicate with FUNDERS? % of responses, by community.	43
Table 8.4: How does your organization communicate with PARTNERS? % of responses, by community.	44
Table 8.5: What importance do you place on adopting new technologies for each of the following points? Rating of responses, by community.	45
Table 8.6: Has your organization adopted new technology for the following reasons? - % of responses, by community.	46
Table 8.7: What is the importance of the Internet for your organization for the following? - Rating of responses, by community.	48

List of Tables

	Page Number
Table 9.1: What importance do you place on the following types of partnerships? Rating of responses, by community.	51
Table 9.2: Does your organization have partnerships with voluntary groups, businesses, institutions, government OUTSIDE of the community? 2005 - % of responses, by community.	52
Table 9.3: Has your organization formed partnerships with groups outside of the community over the last year? - % of responses, by community.	52
Table 9.4: Did local board members use networks to develop partnerships outside of the community? - % of responses, by community.	53
Table 9.5: How would you rate the effectiveness of your partnerships / linkages outside of the community? - Rating of responses, by community.	54
Table 9.6: Does your organization have local partnerships with voluntary groups, businesses, institutions, government INSIDE the community? 2005 - % of responses, by community.	54
Table 9.7: Has your organization formed partnerships with local groups over the last year? - % of responses, by community.	55
Table 9.8: How would you rate the effectiveness of your local partnerships / linkages? - Rating of responses, by community.	56
Table 9.9: Have any partnerships led to the adoption of the following changes or benefits? - % of responses, by community.	56
Table 9.10: Partnerships and Access to Government Grants - 2005	57
Table 9.11: Partnerships and Access to Government Programs - 2005	58
Table 9.12: Partnerships and Use of Communication with CLIENTS - 2005	59
Table 9.13: Partnerships and Use of Communication with MEMBERS - 2005	60
Table 9.14: Partnerships and Use of Communication with FUNDERS – 2005	60
Table 10.1: As a result of these stresses and reactions, do you think local organizations are more able to work effectively together? - % of responses, by community.	65
Table 10.2: As a result of these stresses and reactions, do you think the local community has increased or decreased trust and confidence in these groups that helped out? - % of responses, by community.	66
Table 10.3: How effective are each of the following people or groups in supporting your community? - Rating of responses, by community.	67
Table 11.1: What are the challenges facing your organization - Funding Challenges % of responses, All 4 Sites.	69
Table 11.2: What are the challenges facing your organization - Challenges with Human Resources - % of responses, All 4 Sites.	70

List of Tables

	Page Number
Table 11.3: What are the challenges facing your organization - Challenges with Human Resources - % of responses, by community.	71
Table 11.4: What are the challenges facing your organization - Challenges with Organization Operations - % of responses, by community.	72
Table 11.5: What are the challenges facing your organization - Challenges with Networks and Communications - % of responses, by community.	74
Table 11.6: What are the challenges facing your organization - Challenges with Infrastructure - % of responses, by community.	75

ABOUT THE INNOVATIVE SERVICES AND VOLUNTARY ORGANIZATIONS PROJECT

The research project on **Innovative Services and Voluntary Organizations in Rural and Small Town Places** was conducted through the Canadian Rural Revitalization Foundation (CRRF) by members of its New Rural Economy (NRE) team. The project was funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council's Initiative on the New Economy program. Innovative service providers and voluntary organizations have become important as rural and small town places cope with restructuring stemming from the downsizing and closure of industries. These places tend to be more vulnerable than their urban counterparts since their economies are less diversified and often controlled by decision-makers outside of these places (Apedaile 2004; Halseth 1999; Bradbury and St. Martin 1983). With the loss of jobs, there is an increase in the demand for social and support services. As well, family and community relationships are strained (Gill and Smith 1985). All of these will put pressure on local services during periods of economic and social change.

However, at the same time that economic restructuring is taking place, services are being withdrawn (Cater and Jones 1989). Such closures have profound impacts on the most vulnerable residents of the community, such as senior citizens or those living in poverty, while at the same time they can affect the very viability of rural places (Liu *et al.* 2001; Carter 1990). Service restructuring may mean that citizens must travel to other places to access services, and this can be particularly difficult for residents who do not have access to transportation. If residents of rural and small town places wish to retain these services, they will have to find new ways to have them delivered. Within this context, voluntary organizations and innovative service providers have emerged to fill the void of services that may not otherwise exist. The purpose of this research is to explore how innovative service providers and voluntary organizations contribute to local capacity and community development, and how they sustain themselves during periods of transition.

Four study sites participated in this project. In selecting these sites, a number of factors in the NRE sampling framework were considered including low versus high exposure to the global economy, fluctuating versus stable economies, non-adjacent to versus adjacent to metropolitan areas, high capability versus low capability, and leading versus lagging (Reimer 2002). The study sites participating in the Innovative Services and Voluntary Organizations Project were:

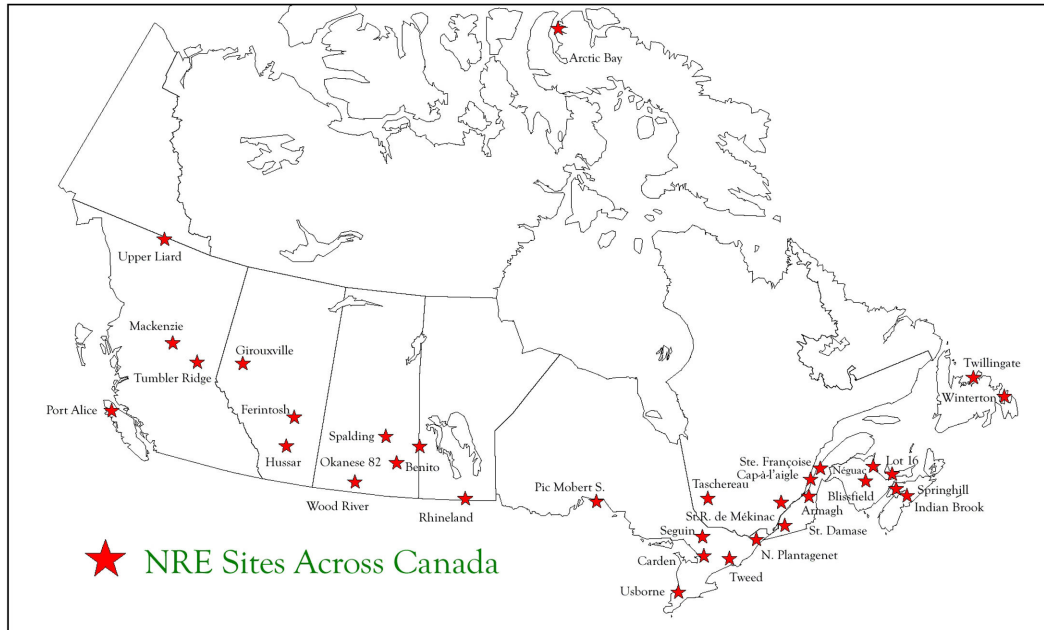
- Springhill, Nova Scotia
- Wood River, Saskatchewan
- Mackenzie, British Columbia
- Tweed, Ontario

Researchers visited the 4 sites to conduct interviews with key service providers and voluntary organizations. While forty in-depth interviews were conducted in 2003, thirty-six interviews were conducted in 2005. The smaller sample reflects the closure or amalgamation of some of the services that we were tracking. During the Summer of 2004 we also made brief contact with the participating organizations.

Data were collected to examine:

- background information on the organization,
- organization's structure,
- demographics of the organization,
- targeted clientele of the organization,
- logistical operations,
- changes to service delivery,
- networks and relationships,
- social capital and social cohesion,
- funding,
- general organizational profile,
- use of technology, and
- personal information of the interviewee.

By exploring these twelve themes, this study explores how innovative service providers and voluntary organizations are able to fill service gaps while coping with the pressures associated with social and economic change. Organizational structures provide a foundation for stability to innovative service providers and voluntary organizations. Such structures play an important role in shaping decision-making, communication frameworks, and funding networks. Relationships and routine social interaction have also provided an important foundation to build networks and for citizens to become engaged in voluntary organizations. These networks, and the forms of trust they create, are then mobilized during times of transition. Mobilization of these groups may involve new services, the adoption of new processes, networks, and partnerships, as well as the use of technology. All of these facets will impact the capacity and roles that service providers and voluntary organizations may play to help rural and small town places cope with transition in order to retain businesses and residents.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This research was undertaken as part of the New Rural Economy (NRE) program of the Canadian Rural Revitalization Foundation (CRRF). The CRRF links researchers, policy makers, and rural residents to address the challenges and opportunities of the new rural economy and to disseminate information in support of the revitalization of rural Canada. We wish to thank all participants and their organizations in Mackenzie, Wood River, Tweed, and Springhill for taking the time to answer our many questions. We hope that the information contained in this report will be of assistance in their decision-making.

We would also like to thank the research staff at the University of Northern British Columbia, including Shiloh Durkee and Chelan Hoffman. At Mount Allison University, we would like to thank David Bruce and Lindsay Lyghtle. At the University of Guelph, we would like to thank Ellen Wall and Leigh Golden. At the University of Saskatchewan, we would like to thank Diane Martz and Ingrid Brueckner.

Greg Halseth and Laura Ryser
University of Northern British Columbia
Prince George 2006

AVAILABILITY

Copies of the *Innovative Services and Voluntary Organizations: Project Report* were distributed to local government offices and public libraries in Mackenzie, Tweed, and Springhill. In Wood River, copies of the report were distributed to the local government office and the public library in Lafleche. Additionally, copies have been posted on Greg Halseth's website (<http://web.unbc.ca/geography/faculty/greg>) and are also available on the website of the Building Capacity in Rural Canada project of SSHRC's Initiative on the New Economy (<http://nre.concordia.ca>).

For further information about this report or other available reports on rural services, please contact Greg Halseth at:

Geography Program
University of Northern British Columbia
3333 University Way
Prince George, B.C.
V2N 4Z9

Telephone: (250) 960-5826
E-mail: halseth@unbc.ca

For further information about other CRRF and NRE reports, please contact Bill Reimer at:

Initiative on the New Economy
H-1125-1
Department of Sociology and Anthropology
1455 boul. de Maisonneuve O.
Concordia University
Montreal, Québec
H3G 1M8

Telephone: (514) 848-2424 ext. 2323
E-mail: reimer@vax2.concordia.ca
Website: nre.concordia.ca

Report Contributors: Greg Halseth, Laura Ryser, Regine Halseth, Shiloh Durkee, Chelan Hoffman, Ellen Wall, Leigh Golden, David Bruce, Lindsay Lyghtle, Diane Martz, and Ingrid Brueckner.

Funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council - Initiative on the New Economy

1.0 Innovative Services and Voluntary Organizations

Social and economic restructuring has led to the downsizing and closure of many services in rural and small town places. These places tend to be more vulnerable than their urban counterparts since their economies are less diversified and often controlled by decision-makers outside of these places (Apedaile 2004; Beckley and Burkosky 1999; Bradbury and St. Martin 1983). Rural and small town places may also be more vulnerable due to the transient nature of work and the workforce (Halseth 1999; Gill 1990). During restructuring, Bluestone and Harrison (1982) note the impact of plant closures on displaced workers and services. With the loss of jobs, there is an increase in the demand for welfare and support services. As well, family and social relationships are strained (Gill and Smith 1985). All of these will put pressure on local services during periods of economic and social change.

However, at the same time that economic restructuring is taking place, services are being withdrawn (Cater and Jones 1989). Such losses have ranged from transportation services (Rural Development Commission (n.d.)), to government offices (Halseth *et al.* 2003), to health care services such as hospitals (Lowndes 2004). Such closures have profound impacts on the most vulnerable residents of the community, such as senior citizens or those living in poverty, while at the same time they can affect the very viability of rural places (Liu *et al.* 2001; Carter 1990; Robinson 1990). Service restructuring may mean that citizens must travel to other places to access services, and this can be particularly difficult for residents who do not have access to transportation. If rural and small town residents wish to retain these services, they will have to find new ways to have them delivered. Within this context, voluntary organizations and innovative service providers have emerged to fill the void of services that may not otherwise exist. The purpose of this research is to explore how innovative service providers and voluntary organizations contribute to local capacity and community development, what makes them successful, and how they sustain themselves during periods of transition. The remainder of this section outlines some key concepts that will be used throughout the report.

Social Cohesion

Social cohesion and social capital are two concepts that help to explore the successful developments of innovative services and voluntary organizations during periods of change. While the research literature uses these terms in different ways depending on the context and topic under study, in this project we understand social cohesion as involving relationships and interaction, while the concept of social capital is understood as initiating trust between individuals and groups.

Service pressures have emerged at the same time that communities face increased service demands. In response, relationships and routine social interaction have provided an important foundation to build networks, to help citizens develop social cohesion, and to respond collectively to economic, social, political, or environmental stresses (Beckley 1994).

In a rural and small town context, service providers and voluntary organizations, such as post offices, seniors' centres, recreational or cultural organizations, and schools, provide focal points for citizens to engage in routine social interaction (Potapchuk *et al.* 1997; Krout *et al.* 1994;

Robinson 1990). These networks, and the forms of trust they generate, may then be mobilized as social capital to help communities cope with social and economic stressful events (Lowndes 2004; Wall *et al.* 1998). In this context, innovative service providers and voluntary organizations have emerged from these networks to fill service gaps and to help communities cope with social and economic change.

Social Capital

Social capital refers to social assets, either with respect to the source of investment or with the goods or services produced (Reimer 2002). Social capital is treated either as stock (institutions) or flow (collective action) components. Social capital encompasses the key features of trust and cooperation (Korsching *et al.* 2001). This foundation of trust and prior relationships is thus a resource drawn upon to accomplish things for these individuals or groups, such as the provision of services to meet local needs (Bruce and Halseth 2001; Wall *et al.* 1998). An additional nuance to social capital is introduced by the issue of spatial scale in the development of trust. Trusting relationships at the local level is often labelled ‘bonding’ social capital since it intensifies local ties. Trusting relationships with groups outside of the community is often labelled ‘bridging’ social capital since it links local groups to a wider pool of ideas, experiences, advice, and support.

The Role of Voluntary Organizations During Social / Economic Restructuring

Numerous definitions have been used to describe voluntary organizations. Characteristics of voluntary organizations may include organizations that are organized, non-governmental, non-profit, self-governing, and voluntary (unpaid) (Barr *et al.* 2004). Similarly, Marshall (1999) concludes they generally serve a public benefit; depend upon volunteers, at least for their governance; obtain financial support from individuals; and experience limited direct control by governments, other than in relation to tax benefits. This definition typically excludes universities and hospitals that might have large numbers of volunteers, but includes organizations that may not qualify for charitable status, such as recreational associations, service clubs, and advocacy groups. Sullivan and Halseth (2004: 339) define voluntary organizations as those to which “people belong to part-time and without pay, such as clubs, lodges, good-works agencies and the like, and which an individual joins by choice”.

Sullivan and Halseth (2004) break down voluntary groups into three categories including strictly voluntary, mixed voluntary and paid, and strictly paid. Strictly voluntary organizations do not have paid staff members, office space, or government funding. They also have limited access to resources outside of their organization. Mixed voluntary groups have both volunteers and paid part-time staff. They may also have access to government funding and part-time office space. Strictly paid organizations have full-time staff and office space with access to many different funding sources from various government or private agencies. They remain defined as voluntary as “their activities and policies are directed by a voluntary management board” (Sullivan and Halseth 2004: 340). Other services and organizations that do not fall into one of these categories are considered to be non-voluntary.

An important component of a community's capacity to respond to social and economic change lies within the strength of its community-based voluntary organizations (Halseth and Sullivan 1999; Beckley and Sprenger 1995). Voluntary organizations often respond to crises or conditions of stress such as rising unemployment, government cutbacks, limited services, or increased use of emergency shelters (Keast *et al.* 2004; Berman and West 1995). Their importance in small towns is demonstrated as many voluntary organizations have identified that if they ceased to exist, there would likely be no other local organization to step in and fill the void (Bruce *et al.* 1999).

Within this context, voluntary organizations may face challenges in mobilization. While voluntary organizations have experienced increased demands for services and assistance (Wall and Gordon 1999), they may have fewer full-time staff with specialized skills compared to urban voluntary organizations (Barr *et al.* 2004). They may lack members, have members who offer little participation, or have members who lack adequate training to carry out their activities (Bruce and Halseth 2001; Bruce *et al.* 1999; Marshall 1999). People may not be able to participate due to work schedules, lack of resources, discrimination, costs, distance, and a lack of education.

Another challenge faced by voluntary organizations surrounds limited financial resources (Barr *et al.* 2004; Wall 1999). Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, the Canadian government reduced core funding to voluntary organizations, which were encouraged to seek private funding or develop partnerships if they wanted government support (Leskey *et al.* 2001). Funding challenges have also emerged within communities. For example, people are donating smaller amounts, and more groups are competing for limited local funds that help them to provide activities and programs in rural and small town places. Cutbacks and amalgamations of local governments (stemming from federal and provincial constraints) have also led to less support or assistance from the local government for voluntary organizations because the resources are not there or municipal officials are now too busy to meet with third sector groups (Wall and Gordon 1999). Consequently, some organizations must move to a 'user-pay' system of service delivery (Bruce *et al.* 1999). In other cases, some non-profit organizations have moved towards for-profit legal status and are operating business ventures to compensate for lack of funding (Hughes and Luksetich 2004; Hodgkinson and Nelson 2001). Aside from attempts to obtain funding through grants and contribution agreements, voluntary organizations have faced challenges in obtaining charity status. This impacts the organizations' ability to obtain public support in the form of tax deductible donations (Phillips 2001/2000).

Innovative Service Providers

Previous studies have described innovative services as organizations that bridge social capital primarily through networking, partnerships, and the application of technology that are not necessarily constrained by place (Wallis 1998; Nyland 1995). Innovation may include a new product, a new service, different administrative practices, new technology, new behaviours, knowledge, or new strategies (Keast *et al.* 2004).

Partnerships can help innovative service providers and voluntary organizations share experience and expertise; increase networks to access information; provide in-kind services in the form of volunteer hours and office supplies; promote the organization's goals; and demonstrate their legitimacy within and outside of the community. Partnering with government, universities, and industrial partners can also provide organizations with a framework for stable social interactions (Doloreax 2002). Local government, and other public and private bodies, can also facilitate the building of partnerships and networks by sponsoring dialogues through public meetings, workshops, community forums, local committees, or local advisory boards, and by developing policy that encourages the collaborative decision-making that can build social capital (Scott 2004; van der Voort and Meijs 2004; Potapchuk *et al.* 1997; Berman and West 1995).

Innovative strategies, including partnerships, for some organizations have been mandated through government policy and changes in the public sector. With government cutbacks, there was a movement towards formal strategic partnership arrangements between governments, the private sector, innovative service providers, and voluntary organizations (O'Toole and Burdess 2004; Bradford 2003; Tupper 2000/2001; Borgen 2000). Within this context, groups were encouraged to develop partnerships with other non-governmental groups "to demonstrate the voluntary association is showing initiative and proposing activities that have appeal in the larger community, including business corporations" (Wall and Gordon 1999: 3.3).

There are, however, several constraints to building effective partnerships and networks. Korsching *et al.* (2001: 88) note that "many rural community leaders do not understand the potential of telecommunications". The lack of involvement of technology leaders in economic development activities in some communities translates into the adoption of fewer innovative services. Furthermore, while the Internet has been a useful tool for overcoming barriers to accessing information in rural and small town places (Halseth and Arnold 1997), some rural residents may be excluded from using the Internet because of technophobia, specialized vocabulary, lack of availability, and costs. They may also lack the typing or literacy skills to function in this text based environment. Partners may not all have the same level of commitment, something which may "undermine the incentive for stakeholders to actively participate in the partnership process" (Scott 2004: 58). Finally, while partnerships involve the building of relationships and trust over time (Keast *et al.* 2004), it is difficult to determine how long this will take to develop. Yet, there tends to be an over-dependence on public funding that is often restricted for short time periods (Maddock and Morgan 1998). There is also a trend towards 'outcome funding' where funding is based on the achievements of the program (Osborne and Murray 2000). At times, with low levels of funding and loss of key staff, there may be little incentive to continue collaboration (Lesky *et al.* 2001).

Conclusion

In the context of social and economic change, pressures have emerged as communities have faced increased demand for services. To cope with these pressures, rural and small town places are using innovative service providers and voluntary organizations to fill service gaps left by the private and public sectors. Relationships and routine social interaction have provided an important foundation to build networks and for citizens to become engaged in voluntary

organizations. These networks, and the forms of trust they create, are then mobilized during times of transition. Mobilization of these groups may involve new services, the adoption of new processes, networks, and partnerships, as well as technology. However, innovative service providers and voluntary organizations face a range of challenges in delivering these services, such as limited financial and human resources. This report explores the changing structure, capacity, and roles of these groups to provide a foundation for retaining and attracting businesses and residents.

2.0 METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this research is to explore the changing context and operation of voluntary organizations and innovative service providers in rural and small town Canada. This includes examining their changing structure, capacity, and roles, together with the implications of these changes on local places. We will also focus on innovations in service delivery that have emerged as a result of these changing conditions. To do this, we will track voluntary organizations and innovative service providers to build a foundation for analysis of their impacts on local capacity building, social capital, and social cohesion, and on retaining and attracting businesses and residents. We will also explore the longevity of these arrangements and the lessons which may be learned from their experiences.

A compilation of innovative service providers and voluntary organizations was made for each study site that participated in the NRE surveys conducted in 2000. From this, four sites were selected in accordance with the best fit for regional representation, as well as for representation across the NRE sampling variables: high versus low exposure to the global economy; stable economy versus fluctuating economy; metro adjacent versus non-metro adjacent; high capability versus low capability; and lagging versus leading (Reimer 2002). To explore the exposure to global economic processes, sites were classified as high or low exposure to the global economy depending upon the level of employment in industries that are exposed to global economic processes. The employment base of census subdivisions was used to categorize places that may have stable versus fluctuating economies. The metro-adjacent versus non-metro adjacent variable explores the proximity of selected sites to metropolitan areas. This evaluative variable is based on census subdivisions from Statistics Canada. Sites were classified as having high versus low capability using data for individual skills and institutional infrastructure in the census subdivisions. There was a particular focus on measuring employment in education, health, and government sectors. Leading and lagging variables identify the capacity of a place to respond to social and economic restructuring (Halseth *et al.* 2004). Leading sites are typically identified by characteristics such as low unemployment, high percentage of income from employment, higher levels of education, lower housing costs, high rates of home ownership, and low levels of divorce and separation rates. The number and range of innovative service providers and voluntary organizations in each site was also considered.

Site Selection

Previous work has identified a range of definitions for rural and small town places (McLaren 2002; Statistics Canada 2001; Gill 1990). These places may be distinguished by their isolated location, the range of services provided, the dominant economic sector of the local economy, the size of their population, or by the demographic composition of their population. Rural and small town places can be defined by the types of relationships that exist in the community, as well as by the dominant type of land use. Tonnie=s concept of ‘*gemeinschaft*’ describes close kinship relations linked to a particular rural place leading to co-operative action for the common good (Cloke 1994, 537). Carter (1990) further notes that a rural community is small in size so everyone knows everyone else. Therefore, rural places are not just defined by geographical areas that may be largely undeveloped, but also by a close network of social systems where interaction

is important.

In this research, communities, also referred to as study sites, were selected to represent small towns, villages, and other populated places with less than 10,000 people (Statistics Canada 2001). The sites selected for the Innovative Services and Voluntary Organizations study included Mackenzie, British Columbia, Wood River, Saskatchewan, Tweed, Ontario, and Springhill, Nova Scotia (Table 2.1). This provides the study with representation across most regions in Canada and across most NRE sampling variables. Unfortunately, no French Canadian sites were included, nor were any sites with low capability.

It is also important that we obtained sites with a range of innovative service providers and voluntary organizations. All four of the selected sites provide this range of examples. Mackenzie, Tweed, and Springhill provide examples of networking and technology through their participation in the Community Access Program. All four sites include services targeted at vulnerable populations. Springhill and Wood River allow us to explore questions of innovative businesses, while Mackenzie and Wood River provide an opportunity to explore the role for co-ops.

Table 2.1: Sites Selected for Innovative Services and Voluntary Organizations Study

Community/ Province	Low Global Exposure	High Global Exposure	Stable Economy	Fluctuating Economy	Not Metro Adjacent	Metro Adjacent	High Capabilities	Low Capabilities	Lagging	Leading
Mackenzie, B.C.		High Global Exposure	Stable Economy			Metro Adjacent	High Capabilities			Yes
Wood River, SK		High Global Exposure		Fluctuating Economy	Not Adjacent		High Capabilities			Yes
Tweed, ON	Low Global Exposure		Stable Economy			Metro Adjacent	High Capabilities		Yes	
Springhill, NS	Low Global Exposure		Stable Economy		Not Adjacent		High Capabilities		Yes	
SUM	2	2	3	1	2	2	4	0	2	2

There are four site teams involved with this project. The site coordinators include David Bruce from Mount Allison University, Ellen Wall from the University of Guelph, Diane Martz from the University of Saskatchewan, and Greg Halseth from the University of Northern British Columbia. These researchers and their assistants have built up relationships with local service providers which assist in carrying out the research objectives. The research is coordinated out of the University of Northern British Columbia.

Selection of Participants

In each study site, participants were strategically chosen as people who occupy roles as leaders or key contact personnel amongst innovative service providers and voluntary organizations (Gilchrist 1999; Hycner 1999; Pettigrew 1995). At the beginning of each interview, respondents were informed that their participation was strictly voluntary and that they were free to withdraw from the process at any time. While forty interviews were conducted in 2003, thirty-six interviews were conducted in 2005 (Table 2.2). The smaller sample reflects the closure or

amalgamation of some of the services that we were tracking.

Table 2.2: Interview Respondents

Place	Mackenzie	Wood River	Tweed	Springhill	All 4 Sites
2003 Respondents	10	10	10	10	40
2005 Respondents	9	9	8	10	36

Source: Innovative Services and Voluntary Organizations Survey 2003, 2005.

Evaluative Variables / Confidentiality

The interview methodology and survey were approved by the respective Research Ethics Boards at the University of Northern British Columbia, the University of Saskatchewan, the University of Guelph, and Mount Allison University. In a cover letter accompanying the interviewer, respondents were notified of the ethics review confidentiality agreement.

The *Innovative Services and Voluntary Organizations Interview Guide* included questions on twelve topic areas. These included:

- background information on the organization,
- organization's structure,
- demographics of the organization,
- targeted clientele of the organization,
- logistical operations,
- changes to service delivery,
- networks and relationships,
- social capital and social cohesion,
- funding,
- general organizational profile,
- use of technology, and
- personal information of the interviewee.

A copy of the consent form and survey is attached (Appendix A).

While survey data for this report gives totals for respondent answers, in undertaking an analysis of these responses it is quite typical to use a set of 'evaluative variables' that may point out differences from the 'overall' pattern of responses. The evaluative variables used throughout this report include:

Leading versus Lagging

Mackenzie and Wood River were classified as leading sites, while Tweed and Springhill were classified as lagging sites.

Metropolitan Adjacency

Mackenzie and Tweed were classified as sites adjacent to metropolitan areas, while Wood River and Springhill were classified as sites not adjacent to metropolitan areas.

Voluntary Profile

Participating organizations were classified as strictly voluntary, mixed voluntary, strictly paid, and non-voluntary. This evaluative variable will explore relationships between survey data and the degree to which voluntary organizations are formalized and organized with office space, resources, and staff.

Additional evaluative variables, including the presence of a board of directors or funding, were applied when appropriate to evaluate how different levels of resources may impact organizational activities. Not all of the evaluative variables are reported for each question in the survey. This happens when there is relatively little difference in the distribution of responses. Notable differences between the 2003 and 2005 findings are also reported.

3.0 Organizational Structure

Organizational structures provide a foundation for stability and will support the capacity of an organization to conduct its activities. Organizational structures also facilitate communication and decision-making (Lesky *et al.* 2001; Hinnant 1995), as well as processes of innovation (Hage 1999). In this section, characteristics such as leadership, presence of a board of directors, staff, and office space, will be explored.

Leadership

Leadership is important for developing a common vision, building membership interest and commitment, and for ensuring that an organization fulfills its mandate (Markham *et al.* 2001; Plas and Lewis 2001). Leadership ensures that sufficient funding exists to allow the organization to sustain its activities (Kluger and Baker 1994). It is also instrumental in planning and communication within, and outside of, the organization. Leaders may be empowered to make decisions on behalf of their organizations, and may play important roles in developing partnerships with other groups (Berman and West 1995). As leaders are more likely than non-leaders to hold more memberships and board memberships in other organizations, they are also important assets for building networks (Markham *et al.* 2001).

When participants in All 4 Sites were asked if their organization had a president, chairperson, or owner, just over 90% said ‘yes’ (Table 3.1). In fact, all of the organizations we spoke with in Mackenzie and Tweed reported that their organization had a leadership figure. In Springhill, some organizations we spoke with noted that leaders were lost due to health issues, along with a lack of interest among members to fill the leadership position.

Table 3.1: Does your organization have a president / chairperson / owner? - % of responses, by community.

Response	Mackenzie	Wood River	Tweed	Springhill	All 4 Sites
Yes	100.0	88.9	100.0	80.0	91.7
No, but used to have one	0.0	0.0	0.0	20.0	5.6
No, organization never had one	0.0	11.1	0.0	0.0	2.8
	n=9	n=9	n=8	n=10	n=36

Source: INE Innovative Services and Voluntary Organizations Survey 2005.

Leadership and Gender

Previous literature explored the different roles and opportunities that men and women have in leadership positions. Studies suggest that most organizations are managed by men, and that women have less leadership or management authority (Lowndes 2004; Burke 2003; Rindfleish and Sheridan 2003; Moore and Whitt 2000; Bourke and Luloff 1997). Within this context, research suggests that women may be attracted to leadership opportunities in the voluntary sector because of limited opportunities to develop their skills in other venues (Markham *et al.* 2001).

The gender imbalance in leadership positions can have important implications for the daily operations of organizations. Maddock and Morgan (1998: 243) assert that the gender imbalance in senior management positions has meant that there are too few managers who “recognize the necessity of looking at the impact of top-down restructuring, new management fads, structural conditions on staff morale, motivation and trust”. Therefore, participants were asked to identify the gender of the president or chairperson.

Findings revealed a fairly even gender split amongst the leadership figures of organizations interviewed in All 4 Sites (Table 3.2). However, there were notable differences between the sites. While organizations in Mackenzie were more likely to have a female president or chairperson, organizations sampled in Tweed were more likely to draw from men for leadership positions.

Table 3.2: What is the gender of the president / chairperson / owner? - % of responses, by community.

Response	Mackenzie	Wood River	Tweed	Springhill	All 4 Sites
Male	22.2	50.0	75.0	50.0	48.5
Female	77.8	50.0	25.0	50.0	51.5
	n=9	n=8	n=8	n=8	n=33

Source: INE Innovative Services and Voluntary Organizations Survey 2005.

Gender differences for leadership positions within organizations were revealed when the leading and lagging status of sites were reviewed. A greater proportion of organizations sampled in lagging sites drew from men for leadership.

Election of Leaders

When participants were asked if their leaders were elected, approximately three-quarters of the organizations we spoke with in All 4 Sites said ‘yes’ (Table 3.3). While half of the organizations sampled in Wood River elected their leader, all of the organizations in Tweed had elected leadership figures. Leaders who were not elected were either appointed, hired, or were business owners.

Table 3.3: Is the leader elected? - % of responses, by community.

Response	Mackenzie	Wood River	Tweed	Springhill	All 4 Sites
Yes	66.7	50.0	100.0	87.5	75.8
	n=9	n=8	n=8	n=8	n=33

Source: INE Innovative Services and Voluntary Organizations Survey 2005.

Upon reviewing the metro-adjacency status, a greater proportion of organizations sampled in metro-adjacent sites had elected their leadership figure. When leading and lagging status was examined, organizations interviewed in lagging sites were more likely to have elected their organization's leader.

Participants were also asked to describe how their leaders were elected. Most of the organizations we spoke with in All 4 Sites had their leaders elected by their members (60%), although 36% of leaders were elected by an organization's board of directors (Table 3.4). In terms of leading and lagging status, a greater proportion of organizations sampled in leading sites had their leaders elected by members.

Table 3.4: By whom is the leader elected? - % of responses, by community.

Response	Mackenzie	Wood River	Tweed	Springhill	All 4 Sites
Members	66.7	75.0	50.0	57.1	60.0
Board of directors	33.3	25.0	37.5	42.9	36.0
Other	0.0	0.0	12.5	0.0	4.0
	n=6	n=4	n=8	n=7	n=25

Source: INE Innovative Services and Voluntary Organizations Survey 2005.

Voluntary Versus Paid Leadership

Financial compensation can be a major attraction for leaders in voluntary organizations (Markham *et al.* 2001). Consequently, participants were asked if their leaders were voluntary, paid, or received compensation. Findings revealed that approximately 80% of the organizations sampled in All 4 Sites rely on voluntary leadership (Table 3.5). There were differences between the sites. While all of the organizations we spoke with in Springhill had voluntary leaders, almost half of the organizations in Mackenzie had paid leadership figures. Some organizations we spoke with in Wood River noted that leaders receive honorariums for each meeting they attend or compensation for travel expenses.

Table 3.5: Is the leadership position voluntary or paid? - % of responses, by community.

Response	Mackenzie	Wood River	Tweed	Springhill	All 4 Sites
Voluntary	55.6	83.3	87.5	100.0	80.6
Paid	44.4	16.7	12.5	0.0	19.4
Compensation	0.0	33.3	0.0	0.0	6.5
	n=9	n=6	n=8	n=8	n=31

Source: INE Innovative Services and Voluntary Organizations Survey 2005.

*Some groups in Wood River were both voluntary and received compensation.

In terms of metro-adjacency status, a greater proportion of organizations interviewed in non-adjacent sites relied upon voluntary leadership. When leading and lagging characteristics were examined, organizations sampled in lagging sites were more likely to depend upon voluntary leadership.

Board of Directors

Previous studies have explored the role that boards of directors play in private, public, and non-profit organizations. A board of directors may have the responsibility to set policies, hire executive personnel, provide guidance, and monitor an organization’s operations (Werther and Berman 2004; Moore and Whitt 2000; Hinnant 1995; Kluger and Baker 1994). A board may also focus on acquiring and managing organizational assets and resources. Through membership, a board can access diverse sources of information and reduce uncertainty by developing relationships with other organizations (Miller-Millesen 2003; O’Regan and Oster 2002). Research has noted that larger boards with more external contacts can help organizations obtain resources and develop networks (O’Toole and Burdess 2004; Callen *et al.* 2003). Boards also provide a forum of communication for a broad scope of sectoral interests within the community (Scott 2004).

Two-thirds of the innovative service providers and voluntary organizations sampled in All 4 Sites had a board of directors (Table 3.6). There were, however, differences amongst the four sites. While all of the organizations sampled in Tweed had a board of directors, less than half of the organizations we spoke with in Wood River had a board. Some organizations noted that they no longer had a board of directors as regional bodies dismantled the board. In other circumstances, boards dissolved due to limited attendance or the out-migration of board members.

Table 3.6: Does your organization have a board of directors? - % of responses, by community.

Response	Mackenzie	Wood River	Tweed	Springhill	All 4 Sites
Yes	66.7	44.4	100.0	60.0	66.7
No, but used to have one	11.1	11.1	0.0	0.0	5.6
No, organization never had one	11.1	44.4	0.0	40.0	25.0
Other	11.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.8
	n=9	n=9	n=8	n=10	n=36

Source: INE Innovative Services and Voluntary Organizations Survey 2005.

In terms of metro-adjacency status, organizations sampled in metro-adjacent sites were more likely to have a board of directors compared to groups we spoke with in non-adjacent sites. When the leading and lagging status was examined, a greater proportion of organizations sampled in lagging sites had a board of directors.

Gender and Board of Directors

Board membership can provide a range of benefits including financial compensation, power, access to information, social and business contacts, and career advancement opportunities (Moore and Whitt 2000). Men and women can bring different perspectives and networks to an organization’s board of directors, with previous work suggesting that men are more likely to be attracted to serve on boards of economic organizations, while women may be more inclined to serve on community-based organizations. Previous research also suggests that the composition of boards of directors continues to be dominated by men (Sheridan and Milgate 2003; Siciliano 1996; Ashburner 1993). As such, participants were asked to identify the gender distribution amongst their board of directors.

Overall, findings indicated that women have leadership opportunities to manage their organization by sitting on a board of directors (Table 3.7). In other words, when we looked at the organizations in most of the sites, half of the organizations were dominated by men and half of the organizations were dominated by women. In Springhill, women have an even larger presence on their organization’s board of directors.

Table 3.7: What is the gender distribution amongst the board of directors? - % of responses, by community.

Response	Male		Female		n=
	<u>Less than 50%</u>	<u>50% or more</u>	<u>Less than 50%</u>	<u>50% or more</u>	
Mackenzie	50.0	50.0	50.0	50.0	6
Wood River	50.0	50.0	50.0	50.0	4
Tweed	50.0	50.0	50.0	50.0	8
Springhill	50.0	50.0	33.3	66.7	6
All 4 Sites	50.0	50.0	45.8	54.2	24

Source: INE Innovative Services and Voluntary Organizations Survey 2005.

Election of the Board of Directors

When participants were asked if their organization’s board members were elected, just over 50% of the groups with a board in All 4 Sites said ‘yes’ (Table 3.8). There were considerable differences between each site. While all of the organizations we spoke with in Wood River that had a board elected their board members, approximately 83% of the groups sampled in Springhill had appointed their board members.

In terms of metro-adjacency status, organizations sampled in metro-adjacent sites were more likely to elect their board members. Half of the organizations sampled in non-adjacent sites that had a board appointed their members. There were also considerable differences between leading and lagging sites in terms of whether or not organizations elected board members. In this context, innovative service providers and voluntary organizations sampled in leading sites were more likely to elect board members, while a greater proportion of organizations we spoke with in

lagging sites had appointed board members.

Table 3.8: Are board members elected or paid? - % of responses, by community.

Response	Mackenzie	Wood River	Tweed	Springhill	All 4 Sites
Elected	66.7	100.0	62.5	0.0	54.2
Appointed	16.7	0.0	37.5	83.3	37.5
Mix of elected / appointed	16.7	0.0	0.0	16.7	8.3
	n=6	n=4	n=8	n=6	n=24

Source: INE Innovative Services and Voluntary Organizations Survey 2005.

Voluntary Versus Paid Board Membership

Most of the innovative service providers and voluntary groups in All 4 Sites continue to rely upon voluntary participation for their board of directors (Table 3.9). Few respondents noted that board members receive paid employment to be part of a board of directors. In some cases, such as in Wood River, the organizations in our sample rely on voluntary participation amongst board membership to conduct organizational activities, but some of these volunteers also receive a small honorarium for attending meetings or receive compensation for travel expenses incurred for their organization's activities.

Table 3.9: Are board members voluntary or paid? - % of responses, by community.

Response	Mackenzie	Wood River	Tweed	Springhill	All 4 Sites
Voluntary	83.3	100.0	87.5	83.3	87.5
Paid	16.7	0.0	12.5	16.7	12.5
Compensation	0.0	50.0	0.0	0.0	8.3
	n=6	n=4	n=8	n=6	n=24

Source: INE Innovative Services and Voluntary Organizations Survey 2005.

*Some of the board of directors with groups in Wood River were both voluntary and received compensation.

Local Leadership Representation on the Board of Directors

O'Brien *et al.* (1991) assert that connections with leaders in universities, government, or business are especially important as they may possess the potential resources, including information and contacts, to assist the community. When organizations we spoke with were asked if there were local leaders on their board of directors, 37.5% of them said 'yes' (Table 3.10). When reviewing differences across the sites, findings indicate that a greater proportion of organizations in Mackenzie have local leaders, such as councilors or industry leaders, on their board of directors.

Table 3.10: Are there local leaders on the board of directors? - % of responses, by community.

Response	Mackenzie	Wood River	Tweed	Springhill	All 4 Sites
Yes	83.3	0.0	50.0	0.0	37.5
	n=6	n=4	n=8	n=6	n=24

Source: INE Innovative Services and Voluntary Organizations Survey 2005.

While almost 65% of the organizations sampled in metro-adjacent sites have local leaders on their board of directors, none of the organizations in non-adjacent sites report having local leaders on their board. An analysis of leading and lagging variables reveal that organizations sampled in leading sites are more likely to have local leaders on their board of directors.

Reasons to Adopt a Board of Directors

When sampled organizations across All 4 Sites were asked to describe reasons why their organization originally adopted a board of directors, just over half reported that it was in response to regulatory requirements (Table 3.11). This was followed by a need to respond to funding requirements, to enhance accountability, and to expand the mandate of the organization. Other reasons for adopting a board of directors included the need for recognition as a formal and credible society, to become a chapter of a larger organization, to assist the leader in their mandate, and to adopt an organizational model based on other similar organizations.

Table 3.11: Reasons why your organization adopted a board of directors? - % of responses, by community.

Response	Mackenzie	Wood River	Tweed	Springhill	All 4 Sites
Response to regulatory requirements	50.0	60.0	63.6	50.0	56.7
In response to funding requirements	12.5	20.0	18.2	0.0	13.3
Accountability	12.5	20.0	9.1	0.0	10.0
Mandate of organization expanded	12.5	0.0	9.1	0.0	6.7
Other	12.5	0.0	0.0	50.0	13.3
	n=8	n=5	n=11	n=6	n=30

Source: INE Innovative Services and Voluntary Organizations Survey 2005.

Decision-Making Power and Responsibilities

Previous work suggests that many voluntary organizations are dominated by an active minority of leaders (Markham *et al.* 2001). Therefore, participants were asked how many people hold the main decision-making power and responsibilities for their organization. There were a wide

range of responses across All 4 Sites (Table 3.12). For example, while most organizations sampled in Springhill reported that decision-making responsibilities were evenly divided, most of the decision-making power in the organizations we spoke with in Wood River was concentrated amongst five or fewer people.

Table 3.12: How many people hold the main decision-making power / responsibilities? - % of responses, by community.

Response	Mackenzie	Wood River	Tweed	Springhill	All 4 Sites
1-2 people	33.3	33.3	0.0	22.2	22.9
3-5 people	0.0	33.3	0.0	11.1	11.4
6-10 people	11.1	22.2	50.0	0.0	20.0
More than 10 people	11.1	0.0	37.5	0.0	11.4
Evenly divided	33.3	11.1	12.5	55.6	28.6
Other	11.1	0.0	0.0	11.1	5.7
	n=9	n=9	n=8	n=9	n=35

Source: INE Innovative Services and Voluntary Organizations Survey 2005.

There were also differences between the distribution of decision-making responsibilities amongst organizations sampled in adjacent and non-adjacent sites. Organizations in non-adjacent sites had decision-making power focused amongst a smaller group of people, while organizations sampled in metro-adjacent sites were more likely to have decision-making responsibilities spread out amongst a greater number of people. In terms of leading and lagging status, a greater proportion of sampled organizations in leading sites had decision-making power concentrated amongst a smaller group of people.

Organizations with Staff

In addition to carrying out an organization's activities, staff work in close contact with clients and other service providers (Hinnant 1995). Through their regular work, staff provide an important element of organizational stability. Approximately 30% of the organizations we spoke with in All 4 Sites said that their staff levels had changed over the last year (Table 3.13). Just over one-quarter felt that staff levels remained the same. Roughly 41% of the organizations in our sample noted that their organization did not have any staff. While this is an increase from research conducted in 2003, the loss of organizations with staff is explained by the closure of programs and services that previously had staff. The loss of members or employees can have important implications for organizations as it places more pressure on leaders who may have to undertake additional tasks and activities themselves (Markham *et al.* 2001).

Table 3.13: Have there been any changes in the number of staff over the last year? - % of responses, by community.

Response	Mackenzie	Wood River	Tweed	Springhill	All 4 Sites
Yes	44.4	22.2	25.0	30.0	30.6
No, staff remained the same	55.6	22.2	37.5	0.0	27.8
No, organization did not have any staff	0.0	55.6	37.5	70.0	41.7
	n=9	n=9	n=8	n=10	n=36

Source: INE Innovative Services and Voluntary Organizations Survey 2005.

When metro-adjacency status is compared, a greater proportion of organizations sampled in non-adjacent sites noted that their organization did not have any staff, while organizations we spoke with in metro-adjacent sites were more likely to respond that staffing levels had remained the same. In terms of leading and lagging status, a greater proportion of organizations in lagging sites did not have any staff, while organizations interviewed in leading sites were more likely to state that staffing levels had remained the same.

Reasons Why Organizations Lost Members or Employees

Participants were asked to identify reasons why their organization lost members or employees over the last year. Across All 4 Sites, a wide range of reasons were suggested for why organizations had lost members or employees (Table 3.14). Of interest, 25% of the organizations sampled in All 4 Sites noted that their organizations had not lost any members or employees over the last year. There were variations in the reasons identified between the four sites. For example, a greater proportion of organizations sampled in Mackenzie lost members or employees due to out-migration, while the organizations we spoke with in Springhill identified that some members lacked time to participate. Other reasons in All 4 Sites included transfers of employees to other communities, transfers of employees into other departments, inconvenient changes in times that services were provided, difficulty maintaining professional certification, difficulty in keeping contact with members, distance for members from around the surrounding area to travel for meetings, and death.

When the metro-adjacency status of participating organizations was compared, there were few notable differences between organizations in each category and reasons why organizations lost members or employees. However, a greater proportion of organizations sampled in metro-adjacent sites had lost members or employees due to out-migration. When the leading and lagging status was examined, sampled organizations in leading communities were more likely to be impacted by the out-migration of their members or employees.

Table 3.14: Reasons why organizations lost members or employees - % of responses, by community.

Response	Mackenzie	Wood River	Tweed	Springhill	All 4 Sites
Moved away	50.0	16.7	9.1	7.7	18.2
Lost interest	0.0	8.3	18.2	7.7	9.1
Lack of time to participate	0.0	0.0	0.0	23.1	6.8
Health	0.0	0.0	0.0	15.4	4.5
Childcare	0.0	0.0	9.1	0.0	2.3
Personality conflicts	0.0	8.3	0.0	0.0	2.3
Chose to retire due to age	0.0	8.3	0.0	0.0	2.3
Other	37.5	16.7	36.4	30.1	29.5
No members were lost	12.5	41.7	27.3	15.4	25.0
	n=8	n=12	n=11	n=13	n=44

Source: INE Innovative Services and Voluntary Organizations Survey 2005.

Recruiting New Members and Employees

Some voluntary organizations may have problems recruiting members, particularly younger members. Bruce *et al.* (1999) and Wall (1999) note that voluntary organizations typically use only a few recruitment strategies. These organizations tend to use less sophisticated means of recruiting members, such as word of mouth, personal contacts among family and friends, posters, notices in newspapers, or through mail campaigns. On the other hand, Ploch (1980) and Halseth (1998) note that opportunities do exist to recruit volunteers. Notably, newcomers to a community may seek membership and positions on community boards and organizations in an effort to show commitment and involvement in their new community. They can quickly rise to leadership positions due to their education and experience.

As such, participants were asked if their organization needed to recruit new members or employees over the last year, and if so, what strategies were they using. First, approximately 66% of the organizations sampled in All 4 Sites responded that their organization needed to recruit new members or employees (Table 3.15). Across the sites, a lower proportion of organizations sampled in Wood River needed to recruit new members or employees. When the leading and lagging status was examined, a greater proportion of organizations we spoke with in lagging sites needed to recruit new members or employees over the last year.

Table 3.15: Has your organization needed to recruit new members or employees over the last year? - % of responses, by community.

Response	Mackenzie	Wood River	Tweed	Springhill	All 4 Sites
Yes	66.7	44.4	75.0	77.8	65.7
	n=9	n=9	n=8	n=9	n=35

Source: INE Innovative Services and Voluntary Organizations Survey 2005.

Second, participants were then asked how easy it had been to recruit new members or employees. When compiling the scale of responses from organizations sampled in All 4 Sites, participants indicated they felt ‘neutral’ about how difficult it had been to recruit new members or employees (Table 3.16). A slightly greater proportion of organizations sampled in Wood River had found it difficult to recruit new members or employees.

Table 3.16: If yes, has it been easy to find new members or employees? - Rating of responses, by community.

Response	Mackenzie	Wood River	Tweed	Springhill	All 4 Sites
Rating	3.33	3.50	3.00	3.00	3.20
	n=6	n=6	n=6	n=7	n=25

Source: INE Innovative Services and Voluntary Organizations Survey 2005.

Rating: 1=very easy; 2=easy; 3=neutral; 4=difficult; 5=very difficult.

Finally, in addition to asking organizations if they needed to recruit new members or employees, the organizations we spoke with were asked to describe recruitment strategies. Organizations in Mackenzie advertised in the local newspaper, the local radio station, and websites. They also advertised in similar institutions in large urban centres, hired recruiters, and used word of mouth. In Wood River, organizations used word of mouth and newsletters, and recruited volunteers from similar service providers. In some cases, no strategies were purposefully used as new members sought to join so as to access the services and benefits provided. In Tweed, organizations recruited new employees or members by using word of mouth, posters, newspaper articles and advertisements, radio advertisements, community presentations, assigned recruiters, recruiting committees, invitations to individuals, internal job postings, and a county volunteer and information database. Organizations sampled in Springhill also used a range of strategies to recruit new employees or members. These included recruitments through advertisements posted by recreational personnel, newspaper advertisements, church bulletins, websites, brochures, social events, job postings across Canada, and word of mouth. At times, individuals asked if they may provide assistance at an organization’s events, and then continued to be involved with the organization.

Recruiting New Board Members

Recruiting members for a board of directors can be more difficult than recruiting staff for an organization. Staff can be recruited and hired locally or from outside of the community, while board members are typically drawn from the local community (McCrorry 2004). Participants were asked if their organization needed to recruit new board members over the last year. In this context, just under half (46.2%) of the organizations we spoke with in All 4 Sites needed to recruit board members over the last year (Table 3.17). In particular, over 80% of the organizations in Mackenzie needed to recruit new board members.

Table 3.17: Has your organization needed to recruit new board members over the last year? - % of responses, by community.

Response	Mackenzie	Wood River	Tweed	Springhill	All 4 Sites
Yes	83.3	33.3	37.5	33.3	46.2
	n=6	n=6	n=8	n=6	n=26

Source: INE Innovative Services and Voluntary Organizations Survey 2005.

When the metro-adjacency status was compared, a greater proportion of organizations in metro-adjacent sites needed to recruit new board members compared to their non-adjacent counterparts. When the leading and lagging status was examined, a greater proportion of organizations sampled in leading sites needed to recruit new board members over the last year.

Participating organizations were also asked how easy it had been to recruit new board members. While the organizations sampled in All 4 Sites generally felt ‘neutral’ about how easy or difficult it had been to recruit new board members, there were variations (Table 3.18). Notably, organizations we spoke with in Tweed were more likely to feel that it had been easy to recruit new board members compared to their counterparts in Springhill. In terms of metro-adjacency status, organizations we spoke with in non-adjacent sites were more likely to find it difficult to recruit new board members.

Table 3.18: If yes, has it been easy to recruit new board members? - Rating of responses, by community.

Response	Mackenzie	Wood River	Tweed	Springhill	All 4 Sites
Rating	3.00	3.00	1.67	4.00	2.83
	n=5	n=2	n=3	n=2	n=12

Source: INE Innovative Services and Voluntary Organizations Survey 2005.

Rating: 1=very easy; 2=easy; 3=neutral; 4=difficult; 5=very difficult.

Organizations we spoke with also described a range of strategies used to recruit new board members. In Mackenzie, these strategies included advertisements in the local newspaper, on the community radio, pamphlets, and word-of-mouth. In Wood River, organizations we spoke with tried to recruit new board members through meetings at other community activities, meetings of the organization, and through word of mouth. Organizations sampled in Tweed utilized word of mouth and recruited people with previous experience volunteering for their organization. Furthermore, hired personnel and word of mouth were used by organizations in Springhill to recruit new board members.

Further research could be done to examine the diversity amongst board members recruited. Furry (2004) and McCrory (2004) argue that boards can become homogenous when recruiting processes focus upon asking friends or colleagues to join. This could have important implications as the diversity amongst board membership can help the community identify with the organization. Limited diversity may also impact the organization’s ability to broaden its political, social, and fundraising contacts, and may impact its resiliency during times of crisis or transition (Siciliano 1996).

Office Space

Office space may provide visibility and functionality for an organization. In the absence of office space, some organizations may use meeting rooms at public facilities, such as libraries (Bourke 2005). In All 4 Sites, approximately 43% of the organizations we spoke with had office space of their own (Table 3.19). This was followed by organizations that shared office space or had developed office space in a member’s home. Compared to 2003 (55%), approximately 10% of the organizations in our sample no longer had office space. All of these organizations were located in Springhill.

Table 3.19: Does your organization have office space? - % of responses, by community.

Response	Mackenzie	Wood River	Tweed	Springhill	All 4 Sites
Yes, our own	66.7	33.3	62.5	18.2	43.2
Yes, shared space	33.3	0.0	25.0	18.2	18.9
Yes, home office	0.0	33.3	12.5	9.1	13.5
No, but access office support	0.0	11.1	0.0	9.1	5.4
No, but used to have space	0.0	0.0	0.0	36.4	10.8
Other	0.0	22.2	0.0	9.1	8.1
	n=9	n=9	n=8	n=11	n=37

Source: INE Innovative Services and Voluntary Organizations Survey 2005.

When metro-adjacency characteristics were compared, a greater proportion of organizations interviewed in metro-adjacent sites had their own office space. These organizations were also more likely to share office space with other organizations. On the other hand, 20% of the groups sampled in non-adjacent sites no longer had access to office space.

Summary

Organizational structures are an important foundation for providing stability to innovative service providers and voluntary organizations. Such structures play an important role in shaping decision-making, communication frameworks, and funding networks. Within this context, most organizations in our sample had a leadership figure, a board of directors, office space, and staff; features that also enhance their visibility in the community. There was also a fairly even split between the representation of men and women as leadership figures or board members for their

organization.

Innovative service providers and voluntary organizations may face some critical structural challenges. Many of the organizations we surveyed remain dependent upon voluntary leadership and volunteer participation on their boards of directors. Such dependency may lead to volunteer burnout during times of economic restructuring and community change, and may influence the long term sustainability of the organization. These impacts may be particularly felt amongst organizations which lost members or employees, or where the decision-making power and responsibilities were concentrated amongst a few individuals. The organizations we spoke with are using a range of strategies to recruit new members or employees. However, a more limited set of recruitment strategies are used to recruit new board members. Furthermore, only a few of the organizations we spoke with had local leaders (i.e. industry or local government) on their boards. The presence of local leaders on an organization's board of directors can bring more networks, resources, or support to an organization.

4.0 Funding

Funding is critical for maintaining organizations and facilitating the delivery of services. Although not every service organization relies on public funding or donations, some obtain revenue from the services they provide or through products they develop. Participants were asked to identify funding sources that they have pursued, as well as sources of funding received by their organization.

Sixty percent of the sampled organizations in All 4 Sites received revenue from the services that they provide (Table 4.1). This was followed by other more prominent sources of revenue received from membership fees, fundraising in the community, personal funds from members, and private donations. There have been a number of changes in the sources of revenue since the research was conducted in 2003. While a greater proportion of the organizations we spoke with in All 4 Sites are now obtaining funding from revenues and federal government programs, fewer organizations in the sample were receiving funding from community fundraising, private donations, and other types of government programs and grants. Further research could explore if declines in private donations were due to economic declines (van der Voort and Meijs 2004), and whether declining government grants were due to changes in government policies (Hodgkinson and Nelson 2001).

Table 4.1: Changes in sources of funding – 2003/2005 – % of responses, All 4 Sites.

Response	2003	2005
Revenue from service	37.5	60.0
Membership fees	40.0	45.7
Community fundraising	50.0	34.3
Private donations	45.0	31.4
Funds from members	30.0	31.4
Provincial program	27.5	22.9
Corporate donations	22.5	20.0
Provincial grants	20.0	17.1
Municipal grants	12.5	14.3
Federal program	7.5	14.3
Federal grants	20.0	11.4
Municipal program	22.5	11.4
	n=40	n=35

Sources: Innovative Services and Voluntary Organizations Surveys 2003, 2005.

There were notable differences between the types of funding received across All 4 Sites (Table 4.2). For example, a greater proportion of organizations sampled in Mackenzie and Tweed received funding from government grants and programs. In fact, a greater proportion of the organizations we spoke with in Tweed had pursued and received revenue from a range of sources. The solid contribution of personal funds from members in Tweed may be a positive finding as personal contributions have been suggested to demonstrate faith or trust in the organization's operations (O'Regan and Oster 2002). Important sources of revenue for

organizations interviewed in Wood River and Springhill included membership fees and revenue from the services provided. Community fundraising was another important source of funding for the organizations in Springhill.

Table 4.2: Sources of revenue - % of responses, by community.

Response	Mackenzie		Wood River		Tweed		Springhill		All 4 Sites	
	Pursued	Rec'd	Pursued	Rec'd	Pursued	Rec'd	Pursued	Rec'd	Pursued	Rec'd
Revenue from service	44.4	44.4	66.7	66.7	87.5	87.5	44.4	44.4	60.0	60.0
Membership fees	33.3	33.3	44.4	44.4	75.0	75.0	33.3	33.3	45.7	45.7
Fundraising in the community	22.2	22.2	11.1	11.1	62.5	62.5	44.4	44.4	34.3	34.3
Private donations	33.3	33.3	11.1	11.1	50.0	50.0	11.1	33.3	25.7	31.4
Personal funds from members	0.0	0.0	11.1	11.1	87.5	87.5	22.2	33.3	28.6	31.4
Provincial gov't programs	44.4	44.4	11.1	11.1	25.0	25.0	11.1	11.1	22.9	22.9
Corporate donations	33.3	33.3	0.0	0.0	37.5	37.5	11.1	11.1	20.0	20.0
Provincial gov't grants	11.1	11.1	0.0	0.0	62.5	62.5	0.0	0.0	17.1	17.1
Municipal gov't grants	44.4	44.4	0.0	0.0	12.5	12.5	0.0	0.0	14.3	14.3
Federal gov't programs	11.1	11.1	0.0	0.0	37.5	25.0	22.2	22.2	17.1	14.3
Federal gov't grants	22.2	22.2	0.0	0.0	25.0	25.0	0.0	0.0	11.4	11.4
Municipal gov't programs	11.1	11.1	0.0	0.0	37.5	37.5	0.0	0.0	11.4	11.4
	n=9		n=9		n=8		n=9		n=35	

Source: INE Innovative Services and Voluntary Organizations Survey 2005.

It is important to note that in most cases, if these organizations pursued funding, they were able to receive it. There were few circumstances amongst the sampled organizations where organizations were refused funding. In general, however, very few organizations have been pursuing a range of funding opportunities, particularly from government grants and programs. Further research would be needed to inquire if this is due to lack of awareness of funding opportunities, the complicated and time consuming application processes, previous rejections from funding agencies, or a limited need to pursue funding options. In some cases, organizations in our sample received private donations even though they were not pursuing them.

When we looked at organizational structures (strictly voluntary, mixed voluntary and paid, strictly paid, and non-voluntary), there were some differences. Strictly voluntary organizations were more likely to rely on membership fees and community fundraising. Mixed voluntary and paid organizations tended to rely upon revenue from services, funds from members, corporate donations, and provincial government grants. Strictly paid organizations and non-voluntary groups tended to rely on revenue from services provided. Another prominent funding source for strictly paid organizations included corporate donations.

When the metro-adjacency status was compared, a greater proportion of organizations sampled in metro-adjacent sites had pursued and received funding from government 'grants' and 'programs'. In contrast, none of the organizations interviewed in non-adjacent sites had pursued

or received revenue from any government 'grants'. Instead, important sources of revenue for organizations in non-adjacent sites included revenue from services, membership fees, and community fundraising.

Compared to 2003, more sampled organizations in metro-adjacent sites were obtaining funds from revenues provided by services. A greater number of organizations sampled in non-adjacent sites were also generating revenue from services. But while none of the organizations in non-adjacent sites had received funding from federal government 'programs' in 2003, approximately 22% of them had done so in 2005. Fewer organizations we spoke with in non-adjacent sites, however, were receiving revenues from community fundraising, corporate donations, and other government 'programs' and 'grants'.

Organizations sampled in lagging sites were more likely to pursue and receive funding from provincial government 'grants', federal government 'programs', community fundraising, and membership fees compared to their counterparts in leading sites. Instead, a greater proportion of organizations we spoke with in leading sites received funding from municipal government 'grants' and provincial government 'programs'.

Compared to two years ago, more organizations sampled in both leading and lagging sites were obtaining revenues from services provided. In fact, more organizations sampled in leading sites in 2005 received funding from community fundraising, while a greater number of organizations sampled in lagging sites obtained funding from federal programs.

Participants were then asked to determine if their funding sources provided short-term or long-term support. Short-term funding is defined as financial support given one year or less, while long-term funding provides on-going revenue for more than one year. Overall, very few of the organizations we spoke with had received long-term funding. Two-thirds of the organizations we spoke with in Wood River had long-term revenues from services being provided. In Mackenzie, just under half of the organizations in our sample had received long-term funding from provincial government 'programs'. When short-term funding sources were examined, only organizations in Tweed had received short-term funding from private donations, personal funds from members, membership fees, revenue from services provided, and community fundraising from at least half of the organizations in that site.

In terms of metro-adjacency, a greater proportion of organizations sampled in metro-adjacent sites had received long-term funding from a range of sources compared to their non-adjacent counterparts. There is a notable exception. Revenue from services had provided a greater proportion of organizations in non-adjacent sites with a long-term source of revenue. Organizations we spoke with in leading sites were more likely to have acquired long-term funding compared to their counterparts in lagging sites. Although, it is important to note that at least half of the organizations sampled in lagging sites had acquired short-term funding from personal funds from members, membership fees, revenue from services provided, and community fundraising.

Conditions Required to Receive Funding

Previous work identified a range of conditions required to obtain funding. At times, government funding agencies require community groups to have the endorsement of their local municipality (O’Toole and Burdess 2004). Such a requirement may indicate that proposed projects have a wider appeal within the community. Other non-profit organizations may be required to adopt accounting and reporting procedures (Anheier *et al.* 1997). Organizations we spoke with were asked to describe any conditions that were required as part of their applications to receive funds. When results from All 4 Sites were compiled, prominent conditions included having a board of directors, providing services to a particular group, adopting specific regulations, and being located in a specific geographic area (Table 4.3). There were variations amongst the sites. In general, a greater proportion of organizations in Mackenzie and Tweed were required to accept a range of conditions in order to receive funding. For example, while none of the organizations we spoke with in Wood River or Springhill were required to have partnerships, these linkages were a funding condition for one-third of the organizations in Mackenzie and by approximately 62% of the organizations in Tweed. Partnerships can demonstrate legitimacy and wider appeal of proposed activities (Radin and Romzek 1996). They may also facilitate the provision of services that may require multiple services, support, and strategies beyond the capacity of any one organization (Googins and Rochlin 2000; Berman and West 1995). Very few organizations we spoke with in Wood River noted that any conditions were required to receive funds.

Table 4.3: Were any conditions required to receive funds? - % of responses, by community.

Response	Mackenzie	Wood River	Tweed	Springhill	All 4 Sites
Must have a board of directors	55.6	11.1	75.0	44.4	45.7
Provide services to a particular group	44.4	11.1	25.0	55.6	34.3
Adoption of regulations	22.2	11.1	50.0	44.4	31.4
Location in a specific geographic area	44.4	0.0	62.5	22.2	31.4
Belong to a professional / sector association	44.4	0.0	25.0	33.3	25.7
Must have charitable status	33.3	0.0	37.5	22.2	22.9
Must have a partnership	33.3	0.0	62.5	0.0	22.9
Must have private funding	22.2	0.0	25.0	22.2	17.1
A change in services provided to a group	0.0	0.0	0.0	11.1	2.9
	n=9	n=9	n=8	n=9	n=35

Source: INE Innovative Services and Voluntary Organizations Survey 2005.

When we looked at organizational structure, there were some differences. Notably, 80% of the mixed voluntary and paid organizations were required to have a board of directors to receive funding. Sixty percent of these organizations were also required to provide services to particular clients, as well as be located in a specific geographic area. Almost 60% of the strictly paid

organizations were required to belong to a professional or sector association to receive funding.

A greater proportion of groups sampled in metro-adjacent communities were required to adopt conditions in order to obtain funds. While none of the organizations sampled in non-adjacent communities needed to have a partnership to obtain funding, almost half of the organizations we spoke with in metro-adjacent sites were required to do so. Furthermore, almost 65% of the organizations sampled in metro-adjacent sites were required to adopt a board of directors to meeting funding requirements. In terms of leading and lagging characteristics, a greater proportion of organizations we spoke with in lagging communities were required to meet a range of conditions to obtain funding. In fact, almost 60% of the organizations sampled in lagging communities were required to have a board of directors in order to obtain funding.

Funding and Board of Directors

Given that almost half of the organizations in our sample were required to have a board of directors in order to obtain funding, we wanted to explore which types of funding these groups might be more likely to receive. This study reveals that a greater proportion of sampled organizations with a board of directors had received funding from provincial government ‘grants’ and federal government ‘programs’ compared to organizations without a board of directors (Table 4.4). Organizations in our sample that had a board of directors were also more likely to obtain funding from corporate donations, personal funds from members, membership fees, and revenue from services provided compared to sampled organizations without a board of directors.

Table 4.4: Sources of revenue - % of responses, by presence of board of directors.

Response	Board		No Board		All 4 Sites	
	<u>Pursued</u>	<u>Rec'd</u>	<u>Pursued</u>	<u>Rec'd</u>	<u>Pursued</u>	<u>Rec'd</u>
Revenue from service	66.7	66.7	45.5	45.5	60.0	60.0
Membership fees	54.2	54.2	27.3	27.3	45.7	45.7
Fundraising in the community	37.5	37.5	27.3	27.3	34.3	34.3
Private donations	29.2	33.3	18.2	27.3	25.7	31.4
Personal funds from members	33.3	37.5	18.2	18.2	28.6	31.4
Provincial gov't programs	25.0	25.0	18.2	18.2	22.9	22.9
Corporate donations	25.0	25.0	9.1	9.1	20.0	20.0
Federal gov't programs	25.0	25.0	0.0	0.0	17.1	19.2
Provincial gov't grants	25.0	25.0	0.0	0.0	17.1	17.1
Municipal gov't grants	16.7	16.7	9.1	9.1	14.3	14.3
Federal gov't grants	12.5	12.5	9.1	9.1	11.4	11.4
Municipal gov't programs	16.7	16.7	0.0	0.0	11.4	11.4
	n=24		n=11		n=35	

Source: INE Innovative Services and Voluntary Organizations Survey 2005.

When O'Regan and Oster (2002) explored the relationship between board practices and government funding, they found that boards were more likely to participate in government advocacy, giving the non-profit organization a greater reliance on government funding. They also found that organizations with government funding were less likely to have board participation in pursuing private donors, corporations, or fees for service. Therefore, an analysis was done to explore if organizations with both a board of directors and various types of government funding were less likely to have received other types of funding.

While the 'participation' of board members in pursuing funding activities is unknown, sampled organizations with both a board of directors and funding from provincial and municipal government 'grants', as well as municipal government 'programs' were more likely to have received private donations in comparison to all other organizations we spoke with. A greater proportion of organizations that had both a board and funding from federal, provincial, or municipal government 'grants', or federal or provincial 'programs', had received corporate donations. Personal funds from members were more likely to have been received by sampled organizations with both a board of directors and provincial government 'grants' or municipal government 'programs'. A greater proportion of sampled organizations with a board and various other types of government funding were also more likely to have received revenue from services provided, community fundraising, and membership fees. These findings contrast previous research that suggests government funding decreases the breadth of fundraising (O'Regan and Oster 2002).

Effectiveness of Boards in Pursuing Funding

Organizations that had a board of directors were asked to rate how effective board members were in pursuing funding. This rating scale ranged from 1 for 'very effective' to 5 for 'very ineffective'. When responses from All 4 Sites were considered, participants generally felt that board members were effective in pursuing funding for their organization (Table 4.5). When a cross examination of data was completed, higher ratings for board efforts were given for organizations that had received funding from federal and municipal government programs, private donations, personal funds from members, and membership fees. In terms of metro-adjacency, a greater proportion of organizations we spoke with in non-adjacent sites felt that board members were effective in pursuing funding. Further research could be done to explore the role that board members play in pursuing these funding sources.

Table 4.5: How effective were board members in pursuing funding? - Rating of responses, by community.

Response	Mackenzie	Wood River	Tweed	Springhill	All 4 Sites
Rating	2.50	2.20	2.43	2.00	2.33
	n=4	n=5	n=7	n=2	n=18

Source: INE Innovative Services and Voluntary Organizations Survey 2005.
 Rating: 1=very effective; 2=effective; 3=neutral; 4=not effective; 5=very not effective.

Summary

Innovative service providers and voluntary organizations often rely upon a core level of funding in order to carry out their activities. Changes in recent years have not only increased the level of demands on these organizations in rural and small town Canada, they have also affected their access to funding. This section of the report has examined a number of factors associated with funding and funding access.

Fewer innovative service providers and voluntary organizations have access to government support compared to two years ago, which can add pressure on local funding sources. These organizations are relying more on revenues from services provided, membership fees, and community fundraising. At the same time, however, local support enhances the legitimacy of the mandates of these organizations. This can be important as they pursue public funding sources. Limited funding sources, however, may also enhance the need for pursuing partnerships or collaboration in providing services.

5.0 Filling the Service Gaps

One challenge that innovative service providers and voluntary organizations face when they approach funding sources is the need to prove or document their significance and the distinctiveness of the services they provide to their community or client base (Osborne and Murray 2000). Yet, such groups often fill critical service gaps, reduce government costs, and tailor services to meet local needs (Te'eni and Young 2003; Gates and Hill 1995). This section explores changes to the services provided, including the changing geographical reach of activities. It also explores service gaps that have emerged over the last year in the study sites, as well as how local service providers and voluntary organizations have responded to these changes.

Service Delivery

When innovative service providers and voluntary organizations in All 4 Sites were asked if they offer or deliver services to people, approximately 97% said 'yes' (Table 5.1). In Springhill, the recent elimination of programs in an organization resulted in the discontinuation of services to people.

Table 5.1: Does your organization offer / deliver services to people? - % of responses, by community.

Response	Mackenzie	Wood River	Tweed	Springhill	All 4 Sites
Yes	100.0	100.0	100.0	90.0	97.2
No, but used to offer service to people	0.0	0.0	0.0	10.0	2.8
	n=9	n=9	n=8	n=10	n=36

Source: INE Innovative Services and Voluntary Organizations Survey 2005.

Changing Composition of Clients

Organizations that offer services to people were also asked if the composition of their client base has changed over the last year. Approximately 17% of the organizations in All 4 Sites noted that the composition of their client base had changed (Table 5.2). New clients for these organizations included residents with specific health concerns, adult offenders, youth, women, and the general public who participated in new social events.

Table 5.2: If yes, has the composition of the people your organization serves changed over the last year? - % of responses, by community.

Response	Mackenzie	Wood River	Tweed	Springhill	All 4 Sites
Yes	22.2	11.1	12.5	22.2	17.1
	n=9	n=9	n=8	n=9	n=35

Source: INE Innovative Services and Voluntary Organizations Survey 2005.

Changes with Services

When asked if there had been any changes in the services or programs offered by their organization over the last year, approximately 36% of the organizations sampled in All 4 Sites said ‘yes’ (Table 5.3). When the four sites were compared, a greater proportion of organizations in Springhill had identified changes in the services offered over the last year. In terms of metro-adjacency status, a greater proportion of organizations interviewed in non-adjacent sites identified changes to the services they offered over the last year.

Table 5.3: Have there been any changes in the services offered over the last year? - % of responses, by community.

Response	Mackenzie	Wood River	Tweed	Springhill	All 4 Sites
Yes	33.3	33.3	25.0	50.0	36.1
	n=9	n=9	n=8	n=10	n=36

Source: INE Innovative Services and Voluntary Organizations Survey 2005.

Types of Changes with Service Provision

If organizations experienced changes in their services over the last year, participants were asked to describe the types of changes. Approximately 61% of the organizations in All 4 Sites that had noted changes to services indicated that they were offering new services and programs, while less than 25% of the organizations identified changes due to service cutbacks (Table 5.4). Approximately 15% of the organizations described services or programs that closed. The organizations sampled in Tweed that had changes in the services were offering new services and programs, while two-thirds of such organizations in Wood River had identified changes due to service cutbacks. A greater proportion of organizations sampled in lagging sites described new services and programs, while a greater proportion of organizations in leading sites had experienced service cutbacks.

Table 5.4: Identify the types of changes in services / programs over the last year - % of responses, by community.

Response	Mackenzie	Wood River	Tweed	Springhill	All 4 Sites
New services / programs	33.3	33.3	100.0	80.0	61.5
Service cutbacks / fewer programs	33.3	66.7	0.0	0.0	23.1
Closure of services / programs	33.3	0.0	0.0	20.0	15.4
	n=3	n=3	n=2	n=5	n=13

Source: INE Innovative Services and Voluntary Organizations Survey 2005.

Geographic Reach

Organizations that offer services to people were also asked if the geographic area they serve had changed over the last year. In this context, approximately 17% of the organizations interviewed in All 4 Sites identified changes to the geographic reach of their services. Two-thirds of the organizations we spoke with that had changed the geographic reach of their services had expanded them to serve areas widely beyond their community. In terms of metro-adjacency, a greater proportion of organizations sampled in non-adjacent communities were now offering services widely beyond their community.

Service Downsizing and Closures

When participants were asked if any service closures were covered by local service providers or voluntary organizations over the last year, just under 20% of participants in All 4 Sites answered ‘yes’ (Table 5.5). When the sites were compared, a greater proportion of organizations in Mackenzie described service closures that were covered by other local service providers and voluntary organizations. For Wood River, St. Matthew Elementary School closed in the adjacent community of Lafleche and moved to Lafleche’s high school that is now providing these services. In Tweed, after one community access centre closed, residents could still access free Internet services through the public library. Furthermore, after Communities in Bloom ceased operations in Springhill, residents have been more involved in developing and maintaining landscaping on their properties. A review of metro-adjacency characteristics revealed that a greater proportion of organizations in metro-adjacent sites identified service closures that were covered by other local service providers and voluntary organizations.

Table 5.5: Were any local service closures covered by local service providers / voluntary organizations over the last year? - % of responses, by community.

Response	Mackenzie	Wood River	Tweed	Springhill	All 4 Sites
Yes	33.3	11.1	25.0	10.0	19.4
	n=9	n=9	n=8	n=10	n=36

Source: INE Innovative Services and Voluntary Organizations Survey 2005.

When participants were asked if their organization responded to any local service closures over the last year, just under 14% of the organizations in All 4 Sites answered ‘yes’ (Table 5.6). However, a greater proportion of organizations we spoke with in Mackenzie noted that their organizations had responded to service cutbacks or closures over the last year. When metro-adjacency characteristics were compared, only organizations sampled in metro-adjacent sites (33.3%) noted that their organization responded to service cutbacks or closures.

Table 5.6: Did your organization respond to service cutbacks or closures over the last year? - % of responses, by community.

Response	Mackenzie	Wood River	Tweed	Springhill	All 4 Sites
Yes	37.5	0.0	25.0	0.0	13.8
	n=8	n=7	n=4	n=10	n=29

Source: INE Innovative Services and Voluntary Organizations Survey 2005.

As noted earlier, organizations may need to prove the distinctiveness of the services they provide as they approach funding sources. Funders may be concerned about repetition or inefficiency. When participating organizations were asked if any service providers emerged over the last year to provide a similar service to their organization, approximately 22% answered ‘yes’ (Table 5.7). When the sites were compared, a greater proportion of organizations we spoke with in Springhill described other service providers that emerged to provide similar services.

Table 5.7: Did any service providers emerge over the last year to provide a similar service to yours? - % of responses, by community.

Response	Mackenzie	Wood River	Tweed	Springhill	All 4 Sites
Yes	11.1	22.2	25.0	30.0	22.2
	n=9	n=9	n=8	n=10	n=36

Source: INE Innovative Services and Voluntary Organizations Survey 2005.

Summary

As rural and small town places are coping with pressures from the downsizing or closure of services, some innovative service providers and voluntary organizations emerged to fill a gap. In fact, most of the organizations interviewed were providing new services and programs. These contributions were not just targeted locally, but included the wider rural region surrounding the study sites. Few organizations noted that other service providers emerged over the last year to provide similar services. This reinforces previous findings about the key role these groups play in rural and small town places (Bruce *et al.* 1999).

6.0 Organizational Operations

The operations of public, private, and non-profit organizations can vary and are influenced by a range of factors such as control over budgets and policies. As public and non-profit sectors build partnerships to deliver services, one concern is that non-profit groups may not provide the services or activities intended by political policies (Lowry 1995). As such, funding programs may be crafted to influence the form and focus of services. While some groups may exhibit a greater degree of independence, others dependent upon government funding may be effectively controlled by the public sector (Nyland 1995). In order to obtain funding, innovative service providers and voluntary organizations may be faced with the question of adapting to the policies of funding bodies (O'Toole and Burdess 2004). This section explores a number of factors that affect daily operations including control over budgets and the setting of policies.

Control Over Budgets

Participating organizations were asked to describe who has the primary control over their budget. In All 4 Sites, approximately 70% of the organizations had local control over their budgets (Table 6.1). In Wood River, a slightly lower proportion of organizations reported primary control over their budgets.

Table 6.1: Who has the primary control over the organization's budget? - % of responses, by community.

Response	Mackenzie	Wood River	Tweed	Springhill	All 4 Sites
Local body	72.7	58.3	80.0	72.7	70.5
Regional body	9.1	0.0	10.0	0.0	4.5
Provincial body	9.1	16.7	10.0	18.2	13.6
National body	9.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.3
Other	0.0	25.0	0.0	9.1	9.1
	n=11	n=12	n=10	n=11	n=44

Source: INE Innovative Services and Voluntary Organizations Survey 2005.

When organizational structures were explored, findings revealed that strictly voluntary organizations were more likely to retain local control over their budgets. This is not surprising given that these groups were also more likely to rely on membership fees and community fundraising. Mixed voluntary and paid, as well as strictly paid organizations, were more likely to have shared control over their organization's budgets. As noted earlier, these organizations were more likely to rely on funding from the provincial government, as well as corporate donations. Non-voluntary organizations tended to have local control by local bodies and business owners.

Previous literature suggests that a board of directors can enhance the accountability of an organization through monitoring activities (Scott 2004; Werther and Berman 2004; O'Regan and Oster 2002; Moore and Whitt 2000; Kluger and Baker 1994). As such, we wanted to explore if organizations with a board of directors would be more likely to retain local control over their budgets. There was little difference, however, between groups sampled with or without a board

of directors and whether organizations were more likely to retain local control over their budgets. This is considerably different from findings in 2003 when approximately 70% of organizations with a board retained local control over their budgets, but only 46% of organizations without a board were able to do so. The relationship between control over budget distribution and access to government funding was also explored. Organizations that received revenues from private donations, provincial and municipal government ‘programs’, membership fees, and community fundraising were more likely to have retained local control over the distribution of their budgets.

Control Over Setting Policies

Participants were also asked to describe who has primary control for setting major policies. Just over half of the organizations sampled in All 4 Sites had retained local control over policy setting (Table 6.2). When responses were compared across the sites, a greater proportion of organizations interviewed in Tweed had local control, while organizations in Springhill were more likely to share control for setting policy with national bodies.

When organizational structures were examined, non-voluntary organizations were more likely to retain local control over setting major policies. Approximately half of all other organizational types shared control over setting major policies between local and non-local bodies. In terms of metro-adjacency, a greater proportion of organizations interviewed in metro-adjacent sites had local control over setting major policies, while organizations sampled in non-adjacent sites were more likely to share control with provincial, national, and other bodies.

Table 6.2: Who has the primary control for setting major policies? - % of responses, by community.

Response	Mackenzie	Wood River	Tweed	Springhill	All 4 Sites
Local body	55.6	58.3	88.9	25.0	54.8
Regional body	11.1	0.0	11.1	8.3	7.1
Provincial body	11.1	16.7	0.0	16.7	11.9
National body	22.2	0.0	0.0	33.3	14.3
Other	0.0	25.0	0.0	16.7	11.9
	n=9	n=12	n=9	n=12	n=42

Source: INE Innovative Services and Voluntary Organizations Survey 2005.

We also explored if there was a relationship between the presence of a board of directors or funding and whether an organization retained local control over setting policies. While 69.2% of the sampled organizations with a board of directors retained local control over setting major policies, just 31.3% of the organizations without a board had local control. When the relationships between funding sources and control over setting policies was explored, a greater proportion of organizations that received revenue from private donations, provincial government ‘grants’, municipal government ‘programs’, personal funds from members, membership fees, revenue from services provided, and community fundraising had retained local control for setting policies.

Summary

The operations of innovative service providers and voluntary organizations will be influenced by a range of factors including control over the distribution of funds in their budgets and control over setting major policies governing their activities and services. This has produced a complex and, at times, frustrating relationship between funding agencies and local organizations. Most organizations interviewed in this project retained local control over the distribution of their budgets. In particular, strictly voluntary and non-voluntary organizations were more likely to retain local control over their budgets. However, unlike two years ago, there was little difference between organizations with or without a board of directors in terms of retaining local budget control. With the exception of provincial and municipal government programs, organizations that drew from private donations, membership fees, and community fundraising were more likely to retain local budget control.

Just over half of the organizations studied had exclusive local control over setting major policies. In this context, sampled organizations with a board of directors were also more likely to retain local policy control. This may be attributed to funding guidelines as government bodies encourage the development of boards to ensure that a management structure is in place to monitor organizational activities and enhance accountability. Participating organizations that received private donations, provincial government 'grants', municipal government 'programs', personal funds from members, membership fees, revenue from services provided, and community fundraising had also retained local control for setting policies.

7.0 Sources of Information

Diversity of knowledge is critical for problem solving, something which is increasingly required in the global marketplace (Hage 1999). Furthermore, inter-organizational cooperation and partnerships involve processes of sharing information to build relationships and deliver services (Keast *et al.* 2004; Radin and Romzek 1996). Innovative service providers and voluntary organizations may draw from many sources of information, such as government departments, members of the private sector, or universities (Doloreaux 2002; Nishide 2002; Al-Kodmany 1999; Gadowski *et al.* 1997; Hinnant 1995). In this section, participants were asked about the sources of information they used to conduct daily organizational activities and to deliver services.

Organizations sampled in each community described the sources of information that their organization draws upon for its mandate or to deliver services. When findings from All 4 Sites were considered, there was a wide range of sources of information utilized (Table 7.1). At least half of all organizations accessed family and friends, management, general media, the Internet, customers, staff, and federal and provincial government departments for a range of information needs. When the sites were compared, organizations in Mackenzie and Tweed were more likely to have utilized the range of sources identified, although a greater proportion of organizations in Springhill used the business community as well as family and friends.

Table 7.1: Does your organization use the following sources of information for its mandate or to deliver services? - % of responses, by community.

Response	Mackenzie	Wood River	Tweed	Springhill	All 4 Sites
Family and friends	77.8	55.6	75.0	90.0	75.0
Management	100.0	44.4	100.0	40.0	69.4
General media	100.0	33.3	87.5	50.0	66.7
Customers	88.9	33.3	100.0	40.0	63.9
Internet	88.9	22.2	100.0	50.0	63.9
Staff	77.8	44.4	62.5	50.0	58.3
Federal / provincial government dep'ts	88.9	33.3	75.0	20.0	52.8
Business community	66.7	11.1	37.5	70.0	47.2
Universities / colleges / research centres	77.8	11.1	50.0	30.0	41.7
Local government	66.7	0.0	62.5	30.0	38.9
Sector associations	44.4	11.1	50.0	30.0	33.3
Financial institutions	33.3	11.1	37.5	10.0	22.2
Other	11.1	11.1	12.5	40.0	19.4
	n=9	n=9	n=8	n=10	n=36

Source: INE Innovative Services and Voluntary Organizations Survey 2005.

There were some differences when we examined organizational structures. Strictly voluntary organizations utilized a more limited range of sources of information. Notably, only family and friends, management, the general media, and the Internet were used by at least half of these organizations. However, all of the mixed voluntary and paid organizations used management, general media, customers, the Internet, staff, and federal and provincial government departments as sources of information. Furthermore, over half of these organizations also utilized family and friends, universities, colleges, research centres, and sector associations. All of the strictly paid voluntary organizations used staff. At least half of these organizations also used family and friends, management, general media, customers, federal and provincial government departments, the business community, and the local government as sources of information. The non-voluntary organizations tended to rely on family and friends, management, general media, customers, the Internet, staff, federal and provincial government departments, and the business community for information.

In terms of metro-adjacency status, a greater proportion of the organizations we spoke with in metro-adjacent sites used a variety of sources of information. Only family and friends were used by at least half of the organizations interviewed in non-adjacent sites.

The relationship between the presence of a board of directors and the use of information sources was also examined. In this context, sampled organizations with a board of directors were more likely to use management, customers, local government, federal and provincial government departments, financial institutions, the Internet, and the general media.

Data was also examined to explore the relationship between sources of information and funding that was received. Findings indicated differences between the use of public institutions for information and funding received. A greater proportion of sampled organizations with corporate donations, any type of government 'grant' or 'program' funds, or personal funds from members used the local government as a source of information. Federal and provincial government departments, as well as universities, colleges, or research institutions, were more likely to be used by organizations with corporate donations or any type of government 'grant' or 'program'.

Summary

An important component of innovation is obtaining knowledge through the sharing of information that can lead to the adoption of new ideas and processes. Utilizing a range of sources of information will increase the potential for groups to acquire the knowledge needed to address the challenges they face. Within this context, mixed voluntary and paid organizations, as well as organizations we spoke with in metro-adjacent sites, have taken advantage of a range of sources for many organizational activities. Participating organizations that had a board of directors, and organizations that received funding from government 'grants' and 'programs' were more likely to have used a wider range of information sources. This may indicate a broader engagement with networks and partnerships.

8.0 Use of Communications & Technology

Innovative service providers and voluntary organizations may contribute to community capacity building through communications and networking. Access to communication tools plays a role in the formation of partnerships and networks, and they also play an important role in developing new services and attracting economic development (Hare 2001). Communication tools can provide opportunities for routine social interaction, can help build common values and beliefs, and can create social cohesion (Miller-Millesen 2003). Previous work has identified a range of tools that have been drawn upon to provide services, as well as to communicate with clients, members, funders, and partners. Examples of these tools have included meetings, posters, brochures, newsletters, radio announcements, media stories, window displays, speaking engagements, workshops, and mail outs (Bourke 2005; O'Toole and Burdess 2004; Scott 2004; Borgen 2000; Gadomski *et al.* 1997; Huxham and Vangen 1996). Personal forms of communications, such as personal contact and face to face meetings, have been important to develop new ideas and relationships (Maddock and Morgan 1998). Some of these forms of communications, such as websites, can be expensive to maintain, and require technical expertise, although the Internet is offering innovative service providers and voluntary organizations new opportunities for fundraising through e-philanthropy (Hodgkinson and Nelson 2001). In this section, participants were asked to identify the communication tools their organization used to communicate with clients, members, funders, and partners. The importance which participants place on adopting new technology and using the Internet to meet their organization's needs is also examined.

Tools for Communication - Clients

When examining communication with clients, six forms of communication were used by half of the organizations interviewed in All 4 Sites (Table 8.1). These included word of mouth, personal contact, brochures, media advertisements, posting notices, and stories in the media. For example, stories were submitted to local media to promote an awareness week for issues targeted towards an organization's clientele. Another organization created a rewards incentive program to encourage clients to attend workshops. If clients attended a minimum number of workshops over a year, they would be entered into a draw to win a trip. The travel package was donated by sponsors out-of-town. When organizations sampled in each site were compared, findings indicated that organizations in Tweed were more likely to draw upon a range of communication tools for organizational activities targeted towards their clients.

An analysis of metro-adjacency identified that organizations in metro-adjacent sites were more likely to use newsletters, websites, e-mail, posting notices, brochures, media stories and advertisements, the telephone, and workshops to communicate with clients. In terms of leading and lagging status, organizations sampled in lagging communities were more likely to utilize newsletters, e-mail, word of mouth, personal contact, posting notices, brochures, media stories and advertisements, and public rallies to communicate with their clients. These findings identify notable increases in the use of more personal forms of communication since 2003.

Table 8.1: How does your organization communicate with CLIENTS? - % of responses, by community.

Response	Mackenzie	Wood River	Tweed	Springhill	All 4 Sites
Personal contact	77.8	66.7	87.5	90.0	80.6
Word of mouth	77.8	66.7	87.5	90.0	80.6
Brochures	66.7	33.3	75.0	50.0	55.6
Posting notices	55.6	22.2	87.5	50.0	52.8
Advertise in media	66.7	22.2	75.0	50.0	52.8
Run stories in media	66.7	0.0	87.5	50.0	50.0
Website	44.4	33.3	62.5	30.0	41.7
Telephone	77.8	22.2	25.0	20.0	36.1
E-mail	33.3	11.1	50.0	20.0	27.8
Newsletter	11.1	11.1	37.5	10.0	16.7
Workshops	44.4	0.0	12.5	10.0	16.7
Public rally	0.0	11.1	37.5	10.0	13.9
Conferences	11.1	11.1	12.5	0.0	8.3
Reports	22.2	0.0	0.0	10.0	8.3
	n=9	n=9	n=8	n=10	n=36

Source: INE Innovative Services and Voluntary Organizations Survey 2005.

When we examined the organizational structures, there were differences between the types of organizations in the study. Strictly voluntary organizations utilized a more limited range of communication tools to interact with clients. Only informal communication methods, including personal contact and word of mouth, were used by at least half of these organizations. On the other hand, mixed voluntary and paid organizations used the widest range of sources of information to interact with clients. All of these organizations used personal contact, word of mouth, brochures, and advertisements in the media. Further, the mixed voluntary and paid organizations also used posted notices, media stories, websites, telephone calls, e-mail, and newsletters, while strictly paid organizations tended to rely on media advertisements, word of mouth, personal contact, brochures, posted notices, websites, and telephone calls. Moreover, with approximately 43% of these strictly paid voluntary organizations, this was the only group to use reports to interact with clients. Non-voluntary organizations tended to rely on personal contact, word of mouth, brochures, and posted notices to communicate with clients.

The relationship between government funding and communication tools was also explored. Organizations with federal and provincial government ‘grants’ were more likely to have used newsletters, websites, e-mail, word of mouth, posting notices, brochures, and media stories and advertisement to correspond with clients. It is possible that such funding provides organizations with the resources needed to develop a range of communication tools to promote their services to their clients.

Tools for Communication - Members

Participants indicated a range of tools used to communicate with members or employees (Table 8.2). For example, workshops provided training for volunteers. Recruitment brochures were used to attract new members. Regional leadership conferences were attended by managers to communicate and interact with other leaders in rural and small town places. Overall, though, only personal contact, word of mouth, the telephone, and e-mail were used by at least half of the organizations in All 4 Sites to communicate with members. When the four sites were compared, a greater proportion of organizations in Tweed and Mackenzie used a range of tools for contacting members. In particular, organizations sampled in these sites were more likely to have used printed materials to correspond with members. While prominent communications methods used by sampled organizations in Wood River tended to be more personal, at least half of the organizations we spoke with in Springhill were also using e-mail and websites to interact with members.

Table 8.2: How does your organization communicate with MEMBERS? - % of responses, by community.

Response	Mackenzie	Wood River	Tweed	Springhill	All 4 Sites
Personal contact	100.0	66.7	100.0	60.0	80.6
Telephone	88.9	44.4	100.0	80.0	77.8
Word of mouth	88.9	55.6	100.0	70.0	77.8
E-mail	100.0	0.0	75.0	70.0	61.1
Advertise in media	77.8	11.1	62.5	30.0	44.4
Brochures	66.7	0.0	87.5	30.0	44.4
Run stories in media	77.8	0.0	87.5	20.0	44.4
Website	55.6	0.0	75.0	50.0	44.4
Newsletter	33.3	22.2	75.0	40.0	41.7
Posting notices	77.8	22.2	62.5	10.0	41.7
Workshops	55.6	11.1	87.5	20.0	41.7
Conferences	55.6	11.1	62.5	20.0	36.1
Reports	55.6	11.1	25.0	20.0	27.8
Public rally	11.1	11.1	37.5	0.0	13.9
	n=9	n=9	n=8	n=10	n=36

Source: INE Innovative Services and Voluntary Organizations Survey 2005.

There were significant differences found between tools used to communicate with members amongst organizations sampled in metro-adjacent versus non-adjacent sites. In fact, while almost all of the tools were utilized by half of the organizations in metro-adjacent sites, only word of mouth, personal contact, and the telephone were used by organizations in non-adjacent sites to interact with their members. Again, the most substantial change in communication methods used with members was the telephone. In this case, there was an increase in telephone communications amongst sampled organizations in metro-adjacent sites from 45% in 2003 to 94.1% in 2005. When leading and lagging status was compared, a greater proportion of the organizations we spoke with in lagging sites used newsletters, websites, e-mail, word of mouth, brochures, media stories, the telephone, and workshops to communicate with their members.

There were also differences between the communication methods used to interact with members by organizations with different types of structures. In addition to using informal methods of communication, including telephone calls, personal contact, and word of mouth, strictly voluntary organizations also used e-mail to interact with members. Mixed voluntary and paid organizations used the widest range of communication tools to interact with members. All of these organizations used personal contact, telephone calls, word of mouth, and brochures. At least half of these organizations also used e-mail, media advertisements, websites, workshops, media stories, and newsletters. With the exception of newsletters and public rallies, all of the listed communication tools were used by at least half of the strictly paid voluntary organizations to interact with members. Non-voluntary organizations tended to rely on personal contact, telephone calls, media stories, newsletters, and conferences to interact with members.

The relationship between government funding and communication tools used to interact with members was also explored. Again, it is clear that government funding provides organizations in our sample with the resources to develop a range of communication methods for interacting with members.

Tools for Communication - Funders

Participants were also asked to describe how their organization communicates with funders. When findings from All 4 Sites were considered, personal contact was used to communicate with funders by half of the organizations in our sample (Table 8.3). Other prominent forms of communication with funders included word of mouth, reports, media stories, and e-mail. Some organizations we spoke with used less formal methods to interact with funders. For example, one organization hosts social events to gather funders, partners, and board members in one place to discuss programs and achievements.

There were differences between the communication tools used to correspond with funders when comparing sampled organizations in each site. For example, organizations in Mackenzie were more likely to have used e-mail, the telephone, and reports to communicate with funders, while a greater proportion of groups in Tweed used newsletters, websites, word of mouth, personal contact, brochures, public rallies, and media stories and advertisements. Organizations in Wood River and Springhill used a more limited range of tools to correspond with funders.

When different types of organizational structures were examined, findings revealed that strictly voluntary organizations used a limited range of communication methods to interact with funders. Only personal contact was used by at least half of these organizations. On the other hand, a greater proportion of mixed voluntary and paid organizations used a range of communication methods to communicate with funders. Notably, personal contact, reports, and word of mouth were used by 80% of these organizations to communicate with funders. At least half of these organizations also used media stories, e-mail, brochures, websites, and newsletters. Strictly paid voluntary organizations tended to rely on reports and websites to communicate with funders. None of these communication tools were utilized by at least half of non-voluntary organizations, which tended to rely on revenue from services provided.

Table 8.3: How does your organization communicate with FUNDERS? - % of responses, by community.

Response	Mackenzie	Wood River	Tweed	Springhill	All 4 Sites
Personal contact	77.8	11.1	87.5	30.0	50.0
Reports	88.9	11.1	62.5	0.0	38.9
Run stories in media	44.4	0.0	87.5	30.0	38.9
Word of mouth	66.7	0.0	87.5	10.0	38.9
E-mail	66.7	0.0	62.5	0.0	30.6
Telephone	77.8	22.2	12.5	0.0	27.8
Advertise in media	33.3	0.0	62.5	10.0	25.0
Brochures	33.3	0.0	62.5	10.0	25.0
Website	44.4	0.0	62.5	0.0	25.0
Newsletter	11.1	0.0	50.0	0.0	13.9
Posting notices	11.1	0.0	25.0	10.0	11.1
Public rally	0.0	0.0	37.5	0.0	8.3
Workshops	22.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.6
Conferences	11.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.8
	n=9	n=9	n=8	n=10	n=36

Source: INE Innovative Services and Voluntary Organizations Survey 2005.

There were notable differences between the range of tools used to communicate with funders by organizations sampled in metro-adjacent versus non-adjacent sites. Organizations in non-adjacent communities used a more limited range of communications methods to correspond with funders. On the other hand, at least half of the organizations in metro-adjacent sites used websites, e-mail, word of mouth, personal contact, and media stories. In terms of leading and lagging status, there were a few differences between the communications tools used to correspond with funders. In leading sites, a greater proportion utilized reports and the telephone, while more organizations in lagging sites were using brochures, media stories, and advertisements.

Compared to two years ago, there was an increase in the use of reports by organizations sampled in leading sites from 15% in 2003 to 50% in 2005. A common requirement for obtaining funding is to report program activities back to the funding agency as a form of accountability. Therefore, certain types of communication tools, such as reports or on-line accounting, may be a requirement for obtaining resources. When the relationship between government funding and communication tools was explored, findings suggested that a greater proportion of organizations in our sample with various types of government funding used a wider range of communication tools to interact with funders.

Tools for Communication - Partners

Finally, innovative service providers and voluntary organizations were asked to describe how they communicate with partners. When All 4 Sites are considered, the most prominent communications methods included personal contact, e-mail, and word of mouth (Table 8.4).

Organizations we spoke with in Mackenzie and Tweed were more likely to employ a range of methods to communicate with partners.

There were differences between the communication tools used to communicate with partners by the different types of organizations. None of the communication methods were used by at least half of the strictly voluntary organizations to interact with partners. However, at least 80% of the mixed voluntary and paid organizations used personal contact, word of mouth, and reports to communicate with partners. Further, e-mail, media stories, brochures, websites, and newsletters were used by at least half of these organizations. Strictly paid voluntary organizations tended to rely on personal contact, e-mail, telephone calls, and websites to communicate with partners. Only personal contact, e-mail, and media stories were used by at least half of the non-voluntary organizations to communicate with partners.

Table 8.4: How does your organization communicate with PARTNERS? - % of responses, by community.

Response	Mackenzie	Wood River	Tweed	Springhill	All 4 Sites
Personal contact	100.0	44.4	87.5	10.0	58.3
E-mail	88.9	0.0	87.5	20.0	47.2
Word of mouth	66.7	22.2	87.5	10.0	44.4
Reports	66.7	11.1	62.5	10.0	36.1
Run stories in media	66.7	0.0	75.0	10.0	36.1
Telephone	88.9	33.3	12.5	0.0	33.3
Brochures	33.3	0.0	75.0	20.0	30.6
Website	55.6	0.0	62.5	10.0	30.6
Advertise in media	55.6	0.0	50.0	10.0	27.8
Posting notices	22.2	0.0	62.5	10.0	22.2
Workshops	44.4	11.1	12.5	10.0	19.4
Newsletter	0.0	0.0	62.5	0.0	13.9
Public rally	11.1	11.1	37.5	0.0	13.9
Conferences	22.2	0.0	25.0	0.0	11.1
	n=9	n=9	n=8	n=10	n=36

Source: INE Innovative Services and Voluntary Organizations Survey 2005.

When the metro-adjacency status was compared, organizations in metro-adjacent sites were more likely to incorporate all of the listed communication tools for communicating with partners. There were a few notable differences between communications tools used with partners across leading versus lagging sites. For example, organizations interviewed in leading sites were more likely to use personal contact, the telephone, and workshops, while organizations in lagging sites were more likely to use newsletters, notices, and brochures.

Organizations with more resources may also be able to develop more opportunities to interact with partners to develop service delivery options. In this context, there appeared to be a positive relationship between funding from government programs and communication tools used by organizations.

Adopting New Technology

Respondents were asked about the importance of adopting new technologies for a range of activities that contribute to capacity building. When findings from All 4 Sites are compiled, organizations we spoke with felt that adopting new technologies was more important to access information, develop expertise, access funding, and address training needs (Table 8.5). There were considerable variations amongst the four sites in the study. In Mackenzie, organizations adopted new technology to access information and funding, as well as to develop new products and recruit new employees or volunteers. In Wood River, new technology was viewed to be more important to help develop more expertise. Organizations in Springhill felt that adopting new technology was particularly important to recruit new employees and volunteers, as well as to address training needs.

When metro-adjacency status is compared, a greater proportion of organizations sampled in metro-adjacent sites felt that it was important to adopt new technologies to access information and funding. Organizations in non-adjacent sites were more likely to feel that adopting new technology was more important to develop expertise, to meet the needs of clients served by the organization, to use new equipment, and to develop new products and services.

Table 8.5: What importance do you place on adopting new technologies for each of the following points? - Rating of responses, by community.

Response	Mackenzie		Wood River		Tweed		Springhill		All 4 Sites	
	Rating	n=	Rating	n=	Rating	n=	Rating	n=	Rating	n=
To access information	1.25	8	2.33	6	2.50	8	2.00	8	2.00	30
To develop more expertise	2.13	8	1.80	5	2.75	8	1.83	6	2.19	27
To access funding	1.50	6	5.00	2	2.63	8	1.67	6	2.27	22
To address training needs	2.00	6	3.60	5	2.75	8	1.60	5	2.50	24
To meet needs of people organization serves	1.86	7	2.33	6	3.63	8	2.14	7	2.54	28
To recruit new employees / staff / volunteers	1.83	6	3.80	5	3.25	8	1.40	5	2.63	24
To use new equipment	2.43	7	2.60	5	3.38	8	2.25	4	2.75	24
To develop new products / services	1.83	6	3.20	5	3.75	8	2.00	5	2.79	24

Source: INE Innovative Services and Voluntary Organizations Survey 2005.

Rating: 1=very important; 2=more important; 3=important; 4=less important; 5=not important.

When we examined organizational structures, there were some differences. Adopting new technology to access information was deemed to be very important for mixed voluntary and paid organizations, as well as strictly paid voluntary organizations. Further, strictly paid organizations felt that adopting new technology was very important to develop more expertise and address training needs.

When leading and lagging status was compared, a greater proportion of organizations in leading sites felt that adopting new technology was more important to access information, to develop expertise, to meet the needs of clients, to develop new products and services, and to use new equipment. On the other hand, a greater proportion of organizations we spoke with in lagging sites felt that adopting new technology was more important to address training needs and to recruit new employees and volunteers.

Participants were then asked if their organization had adopted any new technology to meet a range of activities. Overall, few participating organizations had adopted new technology over the last year (Table 8.6). When the four sites were compared, a greater proportion of the organizations we spoke with in Mackenzie had adopted new technology for a range of organizational activities.

Table 8.6: Has your organization adopted new technology for the following reasons? - % of responses, by community.

Response	Mackenzie	Wood River	Tweed	Springhill	All 4 Sites
To develop new products / services	50.0	0.0	0.0	20.0	17.1
To use new equipment	37.5	22.2	0.0	20.0	20.0
To meet needs of people organization serves	62.5	22.2	12.5	30.0	31.4
To access funding	37.5	0.0	0.0	10.0	11.4
To access information	37.5	0.0	12.5	10.0	14.3
To recruit new employees / staff / volunteers	50.0	0.0	12.5	30.0	22.9
To develop more expertise	62.5	11.1	12.5	20.0	25.7
To address training needs	75.0	0.0	0.0	30.0	25.7
	n=8	n=9	n=8	n=10	n=35

Source: INE Innovative Services and Voluntary Organizations Survey 2005.

When different types of organizational structures were examined, findings revealed that at least half of the strictly paid organizations adopted new technology to use new equipment, to meet the needs of clients, to recruit new employees, staff, and volunteers, to develop more expertise, and to address training needs. At least half of the non-voluntary organizations had adopted new technology to meet the needs of the clients served, as well as to develop more expertise. Few strictly voluntary and mixed voluntary and paid organizations adopted new technology for a range of organizational activities.

In terms of metro-adjacency, a greater proportion of organizations sampled in metro-adjacent sites had adopted new technology for a variety of organizations' activities. An analysis of leading and lagging characteristics indicated that a greater proportion of organizations we spoke with in leading sites had adopted new technology over the last year for a range of organizational activities.

Innovative service providers and voluntary organizations were also asked to describe the technology that has been used. In Mackenzie, organizations were using online accounting programs, the Internet, PowerPoint, Intranet, e-mail, teleconferencing, Microsoft Publisher, scanners, voice mail, and new equipment pertaining to their service sector. Organizations in Wood River that had adopted new technology were using a digital camera and new equipment pertaining to their sector. In Tweed, a new computer was purchased.

Importance of the Internet

The Internet is changing the patterns of communication and social interaction. However, access to the Internet is not uniform across populations (Florida 2005; Te'eni and Young 2003). While the Internet can present an overload of information, it gives innovative service providers and voluntary groups an opportunity to collect information, develop services, and share information on service availability with clients, members, funders, and partners. Given that the Internet is an important tool for rural and small town places increasingly affected by globalization, respondents were asked if the Internet improved their access to information and their relations with people both inside and outside their community.

Across All 4 Sites, participants felt that the Internet was more important to improve access to general information, to improve relations outside of the community, and to improve access to government information (Table 8.7). There were notable differences, with organizations in Springhill and Mackenzie being more likely to place a higher rating of importance of the Internet for improving access to information or improving local or non-local relations. When findings were compared with responses in 2003, there was an increase in the proportion of organizations we spoke with that felt the Internet was becoming more important to improve relations in town.

When organizational structures were examined, findings revealed that mixed voluntary and paid organizations, as well as strictly paid voluntary organizations, felt that the Internet was very important to improve access to general information. On the other hand, strictly paid voluntary organizations also felt that the Internet was very important to have a positive impact on relations both inside and outside of the community, as well as to improve access to government information.

When the metro-adjacency status is reviewed, a greater proportion of organizations in metro-adjacent sites felt that the Internet improved access to information and relations inside and outside of the community. In fact, compared to 2003, organizations in metro-adjacent sites felt that the Internet was increasingly important to improve relations outside of the community. Furthermore, organizations in lagging sites were more likely to feel that the Internet was more important for meeting a range of needs, and that the Internet was increasingly important to improve relations with people inside of their community compared to responses in 2003.

Table 8.7: What is the importance of the Internet for your organization for the following? - Rating of responses, by community.

Response	Mackenzie		Wood River		Tweed		Springhill		All 4 Sites	
	Rating	n=	Rating	n=	Rating	n=	Rating	n=	Rating	n=
To improve access to general information	1.25	8	4.50	4	2.13	8	1.71	7	2.11	27
Positive impact on relations outside of community	1.43	7	3.80	5	2.50	8	1.60	5	2.28	25
To improve access to gov't information	1.75	8	5.00	3	2.75	8	1.00	4	2.39	23
Positive impact on relations in our community	2.00	7	5.00	3	2.88	8	1.40	5	2.57	23

Source: INE Innovative Services and Voluntary Organizations Survey 2005.

Rating: 1=very important; 2=more important; 3=important; 4=less important; 5=not important.

Summary

Communication is an essential component for building relationships and common values, as well as networks and partnerships. When innovative service providers and voluntary organizations were asked about how they communicate with clients, members, funders, and partners, the results showed that personal forms of communication (including word of mouth and personal contact) were more prominent overall. However, some communication tools were more likely to be used to correspond with certain groups. For example, telephone and e-mail were used to contact members. Reports, media stories, and e-mail were used to communicate with funders and partners. Mixed voluntary and paid organizations used a wider range of communication tools to interact with clients, members, funders, and partners. A greater proportion of organizations in metro-adjacent sites used a range of tools to communicate with clients, members, funders, and partners. Sampled organizations in lagging sites were more likely to have used a range of communication tools to correspond with clients, members, and funders.

Funding may play an important role in providing resources for the development and use of communication tools. Groups with funding from federal, provincial, and municipal governments were more likely to use a range of communication tools to connect with clients, members, funders, and partners. In particular, these groups were more likely to use websites and e-mail, as well as more costly printed materials, such as newsletters, brochures, and media advertisements. They were also more likely to use conferences and public rallies to interact with others (events which take considerable human and financial resources).

Organizations that place high levels of importance on adopting new technologies for a range of needs may indicate that these groups are 'ready' to embrace opportunities for innovation. In this context, most of the sampled organizations in All 4 Sites felt that adopting new technology was important to access information, develop expertise, access funding, and address training needs. Organizations sampled in leading sites placed more importance on adopting new technology for a range of needs. Innovative service providers and voluntary organizations in our sample continued to view the Internet as an important tool for improving access to information and enhancing relations both inside and outside of the community.

9.0 Partnerships

In providing for local needs, innovative service providers and voluntary organizations confront problems that may require multiple services, coordination, public support, and a variety of strategies (Berman and West 1995). Such responses may be beyond the capacity of individual organizations, especially when those organizations are also confronting government cutbacks and declining human resources. Within this context, networks and partnerships may emerge as groups do not have the necessary resources to respond to multi-dimensional problems (Scott 2004).

Public and private partnerships are becoming increasingly common (O'Toole and Burdess 2004; Googins and Rochlin 2000; Maddock and Morgan 1998; Lowry 1995). Through partnerships, an organization may obtain new knowledge or skills, or adopt technologies or different styles of management. Relationships and partnership building are also important for building organizational capacity because they can help develop leadership, build networks through relationships with community stakeholders, as well as share information, expertise, and resources (Radin and Romzek 1996; Nyland 1995). Important resources for building partnerships may include cash assets, facilities and equipment, donor relations, and expertise and capacity through volunteers, management, and staff (Lesky *et al.* 2001). With this broader knowledge base, rural and small town decision-makers will have an opportunity to be better informed about possible options and choices. Partnerships can also help to demonstrate the legitimacy of an organization both within and outside of the community (Radin and Romzek 1996).

Partnerships are developed through relationships and maintained through routine social interaction and trust, which are components of social cohesion and social capital. In these respects, partnerships may be a surrogate measure of community capacity. This section will explore the development of partnerships with organizations, businesses, government, and other institutions both within and outside of the four study sites. Since government policies have been advocating the use of partnerships in order for groups to obtain funding, the research also explored if groups with partnerships were more likely to also have government funding. Since communication is an important component to building relationships, networks, and subsequently partnerships, this section will also describe the use of communication tools employed by organizations that have partnerships.

The Importance of Partnerships

Partnerships can provide a range of benefits for the organizations involved, for clients, and for members (van der Voort and Meijs 2004). Participants were asked to rate the importance their organization places on developing partnerships. The rating scale varied from 1 for very important partnerships to 5 for types of partnerships that were not deemed to be important for that organization.

When considering the responses from All 4 Sites, the most important partnerships identified by organizations we spoke with included municipal government, local businesses, the provincial government, local service providers, and local voluntary groups (Table 9.1). There were

considerable differences in responses across each site. While partnerships with municipal government were particularly important for organizations in Springhill, local voluntary groups were considered to be the most valued partners amongst organizations in Tweed. In Mackenzie, organizations placed a high importance on developing partnerships with the provincial government.

Table 9.1: What importance do you place on the following types of partnerships? - Rating of responses, by community.

Response	Mackenzie		Wood River		Tweed		Springhill		All 4 Sites	
	Rating	n=	Rating	n=	Rating	n=	Rating	n=	Rating	n=
Municipal government	1.56	9	2.43	7	2.00	8	1.00	6	1.77	30
Local businesses	2.11	9	2.86	7	1.75	8	1.75	8	2.09	32
Provincial government	1.38	8	3.29	7	2.25	8	2.00	6	2.21	29
Local service provider	2.22	9	2.13	8	2.50	8	2.00	7	2.22	32
Local voluntary groups	2.63	8	3.50	6	1.38	8	2.13	8	2.33	30
Other municipalities	3.14	7	3.50	4	3.13	8	1.83	6	2.88	25
Federal government	2.67	6	5.00	4	2.88	8	2.50	6	3.08	24
Non-local serv. provider	3.29	7	3.00	7	3.63	8	3.67	6	3.39	28
Non-local businesses	3.43	7	4.33	3	3.13	8	4.00	7	3.60	25
Non-local voluntary grps	3.60	5	3.80	5	3.50	8	3.86	7	3.68	25

Source: INE Innovative Services and Voluntary Organizations Survey 2005.

Rating: 1=very important; 2=more important; 3=important; 4=less important; 5=not important.

When organizational structures were examined, there were differences. Strictly voluntary organizations, as well as strictly paid voluntary organizations, tended to feel that partnerships with municipal governments and local businesses were more important. Mixed voluntary and paid organizations placed more importance on developing partnerships with the provincial government, followed by local voluntary groups, local government, and local businesses. Non-voluntary organizations placed more importance on developing partnerships with the provincial government and local service providers.

When comparing organizations sampled in metro-adjacent versus non-adjacent sites, a greater share of organizations in metro-adjacent sites felt that developing partnerships with the provincial government, local voluntary groups, and the federal government were more important. Organizations in non-adjacent sites were more likely to place more importance on developing partnerships with local service providers and other municipalities. In terms of leading and lagging status, organizations sampled in lagging sites were more likely to place a higher level of importance on developing partnerships with the municipal government, local business, and local voluntary groups.

Partnerships with Organizations Outside of the Community

Findings indicated that 75% of the organizations sampled in All 4 Sites have partnerships with voluntary groups, businesses, institutions, or government agencies outside of their community

(Table 9.2). In fact, all of the organizations we spoke with in Mackenzie and Tweed identified that they had partnerships with groups outside of their community. Compared to 2003, more organizations in Mackenzie, Wood River, and Tweed now had partnerships with groups outside of their community.

Table 9.2: Does your organization have partnerships with voluntary groups, businesses, institutions, government OUTSIDE of the community? - 2005 - % of responses, by community.

Response	Mackenzie	Wood River	Tweed	Springhill	All 4 Sites
Yes	100.0	66.7	100.0	40.0	75.0
	n=9	n=9	n=8	n=10	n=36

Source: Innovative Services and Voluntary Organizations Survey 2005.

In terms of organizational structures, findings revealed that all of the mixed voluntary and paid organizations had partnerships with other voluntary groups, businesses, institutions, or government agencies outside of the community. Approximately 85% of the strictly paid voluntary organizations had developed partnerships outside of their community. Further, two-thirds of strictly voluntary organizations, as well as non-voluntary organizations, had developed partnerships with groups outside of their community.

When metro-adjacency status was compared, all of the organizations in metro-adjacent sites had partnerships with outside groups, while just over half of the organizations we spoke with in non-adjacent sites had such partnerships. When leading and lagging status was compared, a greater proportion of the organizations interviewed in leading sites had partnerships with groups outside of their community.

When participants were asked if their organizations formed new partnerships with groups outside of the community over the last year, just over one-third of the innovative service providers and voluntary organizations in All 4 Sites answered 'yes' (Table 9.3). There were differences between the sites. While half of the organizations in Tweed developed new external partnerships over the last year, just over 10% of the groups in Wood River had done so.

Table 9.3: Has your organization formed partnerships with groups outside of the community over the last year? - % of responses, by community.

Response	Mackenzie	Wood River	Tweed	Springhill	All 4 Sites
Yes	33.3	11.1	50.0	44.4	34.3
	n=9	n=9	n=8	n=9	n=35

Source: INE Innovative Services and Voluntary Organizations Survey 2005.

When organizational structures were compared, there were differences. At least half of the mixed voluntary and paid organizations, as well as the strictly paid organizations, had developed partnerships with groups outside of their community over the last year. By comparison, less than one-quarter of the strictly voluntary and non-voluntary organizations had developed partnerships outside of the community of the last year.

In comparing innovative service providers and voluntary organizations in metro-adjacent versus non-adjacent sites, a greater proportion of organizations in metro-adjacent sites had developed new partnerships with groups outside of their community over the last year. When leading and lagging status was compared, a greater proportion of organizations we spoke with in lagging sites had developed new partnerships with outside groups.

Findings also indicated that a greater proportion of sampled organizations with a board of directors had developed partnerships outside of their community (87.5%) compared to groups without a board (50.0%). In this context, participants were also asked to describe if local board members had used their networks to develop any partnerships outside of the community. In All 4 Sites, approximately 35% of organizations that also had a board of directors had local board members use networks to develop such partnerships (Table 9.4).

Table 9.4: Did local board members use networks to develop partnerships outside of the community? - % of responses, by community.

Response	Mackenzie	Wood River	Tweed	Springhill	All 4 Sites
Yes	25.0	20.0	75.0	25.0	35.3
	n=4	n=5	n=4	n=4	n=17

Source: INE Innovative Services and Voluntary Organizations Survey 2005.

When organizational structures were examined, at least half of the mixed voluntary and paid organizations, as well as the strictly paid organizations, had local board members use networks to develop partnerships outside of the community. When metro-adjacency status was compared, a greater proportion of innovative service providers and voluntary organizations sampled in metro-adjacent sites had local board members use their networks to develop partnerships outside of their community. In terms of leading and lagging status, organizations in lagging sites were more likely to have had assistance from local board members in developing outside partnerships.

Participants were also asked to rate the effectiveness of their partnerships with groups outside of their community. The rating scheme ranged from 1 for very effective to 5 for very ineffective partnerships. Findings from All 4 Sites indicate that most of the organizations found that their partnerships with outside groups were very effective (Table 9.5). In fact, all of the organizations we spoke with in Springhill that had partnerships with groups outside of their community found them to be very effective.

Table 9.5: How would you rate the effectiveness of your partnerships / linkages outside of the community? - Rating of responses, by community.

Response	Mackenzie	Wood River	Tweed	Springhill	All 4 Sites
Rating	1.43	1.56	1.21	1.00	1.31
	n=21	n=9	n=29	n=5	n=64

Source: INE Innovative Services and Voluntary Organizations Survey 2005.

Rating: 1=very effective; 2=effective; 3=neutral; 4=not effective; 5= very not effective.

When we compared organization structures, findings revealed that non-voluntary organizations, as well as mixed voluntary and paid organizations, rated their partnerships with groups outside of the community to be very effective. Strictly voluntary organizations and strictly paid voluntary organizations also rated their partnerships outside of the community to be effective.

When innovative service providers and voluntary organizations in our sample were asked if any partnerships with groups outside of the community had been terminated, approximately 11% said 'yes'. In fact, one-third of the groups we spoke with in Springhill identified partnerships with non-local groups that had been terminated.

Partnerships with Local Groups

Approximately 61% of the organizations sampled in All 4 Sites had local partnerships with voluntary groups, businesses, institutions, and government agencies (Table 9.6). There were notable differences between the sites. While all of the organizations we spoke with in Tweed had local partnerships, just 10% of the organizations in Springhill had partnerships with local groups. In comparison to 2003, more organizations we spoke with in All 4 Sites now have partnerships with local groups.

When organizational structures were examined, findings indicated that a greater proportion of mixed voluntary and paid organizations (80%) had developed local partnerships with voluntary groups, businesses, institutions, and government groups. However, at least half of the strictly voluntary groups, as well as the strictly paid voluntary and non-voluntary groups, had local partnerships.

Table 9.6: Does your organization have local partnerships with voluntary groups, businesses, institutions, government INSIDE the community? - 2005 - % of responses, by community.

Response	Mackenzie	Wood River	Tweed	Springhill	All 4 Sites
Yes	88.9	55.6	100.0	10.0	61.1
	n=9	n=9	n=8	n=10	n=36

Source: Innovative Services and Voluntary Organizations Survey 2005.

In terms of metro-adjacency, while almost 95% of the organizations sampled in metro-adjacent sites had partnerships with other groups in their community, less than 32% of the organizations in non-adjacent sites had local partnerships. When leading and lagging status was compared, a greater proportion of organizations interviewed in leading sites had local partnerships.

When participants were asked if their organization had formed any new partnerships with local groups over the last year, approximately 25% said ‘yes’ (Table 9.7). There were some differences between the sites as over 60% of the organizations in Tweed reported developing new partnerships with local groups over the last year.

When organizational structures were compared, findings revealed that two-thirds of non-voluntary organizations had developed partnerships over the last year. However, less than 25% of other types of organizations had developed new local partnerships.

Table 9.7: Has your organization formed partnerships with local groups over the last year? - % of responses, by community.

Response	Mackenzie	Wood River	Tweed	Springhill	All 4 Sites
Yes	22.2	11.1	62.5	11.1	25.7
	n=9	n=9	n=8	n=9	n=35

Source: INE Innovative Services and Voluntary Organizations Survey 2005.

If organizations had formed partnerships with local groups over the last year, we wanted to explore whether organizations that had local board members were more likely to develop partnerships using their contacts. In this context, more of the organizations we spoke with that had a board of directors had developed local partnerships (70.8%) compared to groups without a board (41.7%). While none of the sampled organizations with a board in non-adjacent sites had used contacts to develop local partnerships, over half of the organizations with a board sampled in metro-adjacent sites had done so. When leading and lagging characteristics were compared, a greater proportion of organizations in lagging sites noted that local board members had used their contacts to develop local partnerships over the last year.

Participants were also asked to rate the effectiveness of their local partnerships and linkages. Overall, organizations in All 4 Sites found that local partnerships were effective (Table 9.8). When the four sites were compared, a greater proportion of the organizations in Springhill found their local partnerships to be very effective.

In terms of organizational structures, findings indicated that strictly paid voluntary organizations in our sample tended to rate local partnerships to be very effective, while other types of organizations overall rated their local partnerships to be effective.

Table 9.8: How would you rate the effectiveness of your local partnerships / linkages? - Rating of responses, by community.

Response	Mackenzie	Wood River	Tweed	Springhill	All 4 Sites
Rating	1.48	1.80	1.84	1.00	1.61
	n=48	n=5	n=32	n=4	n=89

Source: INE Innovative Services and Voluntary Organizations Survey 2005.

Rating: 1=very effective; 2=effective; 3=neutral; 4=not effective; 5= very not effective.

When participants were asked if any local partnerships had been terminated over the last year, only 1 answered 'yes'. Such a termination only occurred in Springhill.

Previous studies have identified a number of outcomes stimulated by partnerships. These include, but are not limited to, increased local trust, new players, spin off projects and relationships, increasing knowledge and expertise by members, sharing of information, change in allocation of resources, changes to administrative structures, new accounting or reporting demands, and collaborative problem solving (Deakin 2004; O'Toole and Burdess 2004; Scott 2004; Pongsiri 2002; Radin and Romzek 1996).

Organizations in our sample were asked to describe if any of their partnerships had led to a range of outcomes or changes for their organization. It appears that partnerships had not led to a wide spread adoption of changes (Table 9.9). The most prominent changes adopted due to partnerships included expanded networks, changes in products and services, and new expertise. There were variations in responses amongst the four sites. For example, while few organizations in Wood River adopted any measures, over 60% of the organizations we spoke with in Mackenzie and Tweed noted that partnerships had led to the expansion of networks for their organizations.

Table 9.9: Have any partnerships led to the adoption of the following changes or benefits? - % of responses, by community.

Response	Mackenzie	Wood River	Tweed	Springhill	All 4 Sites
Expansion of networks	66.7	0.0	62.5	14.3	36.4
Change in products / services	44.4	11.1	25.0	28.6	27.3
New expertise	44.4	0.0	37.5	14.3	24.2
Change in administration / org structure	22.2	0.0	12.5	28.6	15.2
New technology	22.2	0.0	0.0	14.3	9.1
Change in regulations	0.0	0.0	25.0	0.0	6.1
Change in mandate	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	n=9	n=9	n=8	n=7	n=33

Source: INE Innovative Services and Voluntary Organizations Survey 2005.

There were differences between the various types of organizations in our study and the changes and benefits adopted as a result of partnerships. Notably, 80% of the mixed voluntary and paid organizations felt that partnerships led to an expansion of networks. At least half of these organizations also felt that partnerships led to new expertise. By comparison, approximately 43% of strictly paid organizations felt that their partnerships led to the expansion of networks and changes in products and services.

When metro-adjacency status was compared, a greater proportion of organizations we spoke with in metro-adjacent sites described changes experienced by their organizations as a result of developing partnerships. In this context, almost 65% of the organizations sampled in metro-adjacent sites expanded their networks after developing partnerships. Furthermore, over 40% of these organizations also acquired new expertise. In terms of leading and lagging status, there were very few differences between organizations in leading versus lagging sites.

Partnerships and Funding

With government cutbacks and restructuring throughout the 1980s and 1990s, governments moved towards strategic partnerships with voluntary organizations and service providers. Groups were encouraged to develop partnerships with other non-governmental groups to demonstrate that they were showing initiative and proposing activities that had appeal in the larger community, including with local businesses. Partnerships provided a way to demonstrate local support and legitimacy. Therefore, we wanted to explore whether groups with local or external partnerships were more likely to access government funding.

While few organizations received funding from government ‘grants’, findings indicate that a greater proportion of organizations with local and external partnerships received grant revenues (Table 9.10). In fact, none of the organizations without external partnerships had received government ‘grants’.

Table 9.10: Partnerships and Access to Government Grants - 2005

Response	<u>Local Partnerships</u>				<u>External Partnerships</u>			
	% with local partner	n=	% with no local partner	n=	% with external partner	n=	% with no external partner	n=
Provincial grants	22.7	22	7.7	13	22.2	27	0.0	8
Municipal grants	18.2	22	7.7	13	18.5	27	0.0	8
Federal grants	13.6	22	7.7	13	14.8	27	0.0	8

Source: Innovative Services and Voluntary Organizations Survey 2005.

When we explored the presence of partnerships and access to funding from government programs, findings indicated that organizations in our sample with either local or external partnerships were more likely to have access to government programs (Table 9.11). Again, none

of the organizations without external partnerships had access to such funds.

Table 9.11: Partnerships and Access to Government Programs - 2005

Response	<u>Local Partnerships</u>				<u>External Partnerships</u>			
	% with local partner	n=	% with no local partner	n=	% with external partner	n=	% with no external partner	n=
Provincial program	31.8	22	7.7	13	29.6	27	0.0	8
Federal program	23.5	17	11.1	9	23.8	21	0.0	5
Municipal program	18.2	22	0.0	13	14.8	27	0.0	8

Source: Innovative Services and Voluntary Organizations Survey 2005.

Partnerships and Networking

Even though communications in a partnership may be time consuming, these activities will be important for building and maintaining the relationship, as well as for developing trust and detecting any disagreements amongst those involved (Googins and Rochlin 2000; Huxham and Vangen 1996). An analysis was also done to explore the use of communication tools and whether or not organizations belonged to partnerships. When communication methods with clients were explored, a greater proportion of the sampled organizations that had local partnerships used media stories, the telephone, e-mail, newsletters, public rallies, workshops, conferences, and reports to correspond with clients (Table 9.12). Of interest, there are more notable differences between communication methods used and whether or not innovative service providers and voluntary organizations had developed external partnerships. In this context, organizations we spoke with that had external partnerships were more likely to use a wide range of communication tools to reach clients.

Table 9.12: Partnerships and Use of Communication with CLIENTS - 2005

Response	<u>Local Partnerships</u>				<u>External Partnerships</u>			
	% with local partner	n=	% with no local partner	n=	% with external partner	n=	% with no external partner	n=
Personal contact	81.8	22	78.6	14	81.5	27	77.8	9
Word of mouth	77.3	22	85.7	14	81.5	27	77.8	9
Brochures	59.1	22	50.0	14	63.0	27	33.3	9
Stories in media	59.1	22	35.7	14	63.0	27	11.1	9
Advertise in media	54.5	22	50.0	14	66.7	27	11.1	9
Posting notices	54.5	22	50.0	14	59.3	27	33.3	9
Telephone	45.5	22	21.4	14	44.4	27	11.1	9
E-mail	40.9	22	7.1	14	33.3	27	11.1	9
Website	40.9	22	42.9	14	51.9	27	11.1	9
Newsletter	22.7	22	7.1	14	22.2	27	0.0	9
Public rally	22.7	22	0.0	14	14.8	27	11.1	9
Workshops	22.7	22	7.1	14	22.2	27	0.0	9
Conferences	13.6	22	0.0	14	7.4	27	11.1	9
Reports	13.6	22	0.0	14	11.1	27	0.0	9

Source: Innovative Services and Voluntary Organizations Survey 2005.

There were also differences between the presence of partnerships and communication methods used to reach members. A greater proportion of organizations sampled with either local or external partnerships used a range of tools to communicate with members compared to organizations without partnerships (Table 9.13).

Table 9.13: Partnerships and Use of Communication with MEMBERS - 2005

Response	<u>Local Partnerships</u>				<u>External Partnerships</u>			
	% with local partner	n=	% with no local partner	n=	% with external partner	n=	% with no external partner	n=
Personal contact	95.5	22	57.1	14	96.3	27	33.3	9
Word of mouth	86.4	22	64.3	14	88.9	27	44.4	9
Telephone	81.8	22	71.4	14	81.5	27	66.7	9
E-mail	68.2	22	50.0	14	70.4	27	33.3	9
Brochures	59.1	22	21.4	14	59.3	27	0.0	9
Posting notices	59.1	22	14.3	14	51.9	27	11.1	9
Stories in media	59.1	22	21.4	14	55.6	27	11.1	9
Workshops	59.1	22	14.3	14	55.6	27	0.0	9
Advertise in media	54.5	22	28.6	14	55.6	27	11.1	9
Conferences	50.0	22	14.3	14	44.4	27	11.1	9
Newsletter	50.0	22	28.6	14	48.1	27	22.2	9
Website	50.0	22	35.7	14	55.6	27	11.1	9
Reports	36.4	22	14.3	14	33.3	27	11.1	9
Public rally	22.7	22	0.0	14	18.5	27	0.0	9

Source: Innovative Services and Voluntary Organizations Survey 2005.

When organizations with or without partnerships in our sample were compared, findings indicated that a greater proportion of those having local or external partnerships used a wider range of communication tools to correspond with their funders (Table 9.14).

Table 9.14: Partnerships and Use of Communication with FUNDERS - 2005

Response	<u>Local Partnerships</u>				<u>External Partnerships</u>			
	% with local partner	n=	% with no local partner	n=	% with external partner	n=	% with no external partner	n=
Personal contact	63.6	22	28.6	14	55.6	27	33.3	9
Word of mouth	59.1	22	7.1	14	48.1	27	11.1	9
Reports	54.5	22	14.3	14	51.9	27	0.0	9
Stories in media	50.0	22	21.4	14	40.7	27	33.3	9
E-mail	45.5	22	7.1	14	40.7	27	0.0	9
Telephone	40.9	22	7.1	14	37.0	27	0.0	9
Advertise in media	36.4	22	7.1	14	29.6	27	11.1	9
Brochures	36.4	22	7.1	14	29.6	27	11.1	9
Website	36.4	22	7.1	14	33.3	27	0.0	9
Newsletter	22.7	22	0.0	14	18.5	27	0.0	9
Posting notices	13.6	22	7.1	14	11.1	27	11.1	9
Public rally	13.6	22	0.0	14	11.1	27	0.0	9
Workshops	9.1	22	0.0	14	7.4	27	0.0	9
Conferences	4.5	22	0.0	14	3.7	27	0.0	9

Source: Innovative Services and Voluntary Organizations Survey 2005.

Summary

As communities cope with service cutbacks and closures, partnerships are increasingly becoming an important component of the daily operations and delivery of services for these organizations. In particular, respondents allocated a high level of importance to developing local partnerships with businesses, voluntary organizations, service providers, and the local government. Both local and external partnerships were particularly well developed amongst the organizations we spoke with in Mackenzie and Tweed. Local and non-local partnerships were also well developed amongst mixed voluntary and paid organizations. In addition, few of the organizations we spoke with had terminated partnerships within or outside of the community over the last year. Organizations we spoke with also noted that partnerships had led to expanded networks, new products and services, and new expertise. This was particularly the case for mixed voluntary and paid organizations, as well as strictly paid voluntary organizations.

Despite the importance assigned by respondents to developing local partnerships, a greater proportion of sampled organizations had developed non-local partnerships. In fact, a greater proportion of organizations in our sample had formed partnerships with groups outside of their community over the last year. Non-local partnerships were also generally found to be more effective than local partnerships amongst the organizations we spoke with. Future research could explore why fewer local partnerships are being formed in comparison to non-local partnerships. Despite their importance, has it been more difficult to form local partnerships, and if so, why? Is it due to the instability of local groups or challenges with human resources? Furthermore, in contrast to previous research, few organizations with a board of directors had developed local or non-local partnerships as a result of board contacts. Future research could be done to explore the role of boards versus staff or volunteers in developing partnerships or networks in these rural and small town contexts. These networks may explain why partnering organizations are accessing a wider range of corporate and public funding.

Finally, the use of a range of communication tools appears to have made an important contribution to the development and maintenance of partnerships. Sampled organizations with non-local partnerships were more likely to have used a range of communication tools to interact with clients, members, and funders. Similarly, organizations we spoke with that had local partnerships were more likely to use Internet technology and a range of print media to correspond with members and funders. As multiple partnerships develop in the community over time, it may collectively build expertise, leadership, and capacity to support a community's ability to cope with the challenges associated with social and economic restructuring.

10.0 Social Cohesion and Social Capital

Social and economic restructuring has led to the downsizing and closure of services in rural and small town places. Service pressures have emerged at the same time that communities face increased service demands. In response, relationships and routine social interaction have provided an important foundation to build the networks and trusting relationships that might allow a collective response to economic, social, political, or environmental stresses (Reimer 2002; Beckley 1994).

In a rural and small town context, innovative service providers and voluntary organizations provide focal points for citizens to engage in routine social interaction (Potapchuk *et al.* 1997; Krout *et al.* 1994; Robinson 1990). These networks, and the forms of trust they generate, may then be mobilized as social capital to help communities cope with social and economic stressful events (Keast *et al.* 2004; Lowndes 2004; Bruce and Halseth 2001; Korsching *et al.* 2001; Wall *et al.* 1998). In this context, innovative service providers and voluntary organizations have emerged from these networks to fill service gaps and to help communities cope with social and economic change. To explore the development of social cohesion and social capital, participants were asked to describe short-term and long-term stressful events that occurred in their community over the past five years. This included a description of the role local organizations had in assisting residents to recover from these events. Exploring short-term events allows us to explore how residents mobilize, while long-term events enable us to explore how local relationships, efforts, and partnerships may be sustained over longer periods of time. It can be difficult to sustain local efforts during long-term events as groups cope with job losses, out-migration, increased demands for services, and volunteer burnout.

Mackenzie, British Columbia

In Mackenzie, participants described two stressful events that had occurred over the last five years. These included deaths in the community and changes in the forest industry. The deaths were high profile short-term events within the community. These included residents lost to accidents, as well as the loss of a young boy who had battled leukemia. While residents felt a loss on each occasion, residents were particularly affected by the loss of the young boy. His funeral was held at the high school gym. All of the Christian ministers attended the funeral. Residents made donations to the family. The Scotiabank set up a fund for him. The Grumpy Old Men raised money for his treatment and funeral. The business community also provided food for the funeral. RCMP Victim's Services, the Living Joy Church, Mackenzie Counselling Services, and a home care nurse provided the family with additional support.

In addition to these short-term events, residents discussed a series of long-term stressful events associated with the restructuring in the forest industry. These included job reductions at local mills, strikes, and an uncertain economic climate generated from the unresolved softwood lumber agreement. For some participants we spoke with, these stresses led to an increase in houses for sale, out-migration, and declining enrolment rates in schools. There was also a perception that there was resignation amongst residents and that these stresses were normal. Workers impacted by job reductions at local mills received support from the Employee Family

Assistance Program, Mackenzie Counselling, and the Mackenzie Employment and Career Centre. Care and Share and churches were busier providing food baskets for families. Others pursued new education opportunities at the college campus in Mackenzie. Time and resilience were other important factors in helping residents to recover from these stresses.

Wood River, Saskatchewan

Participants in Wood River described two stressful events that occurred over the last five years. These included the loss of older residents in the community, and pressures associated with the agricultural industry. In terms of short-term stressful events, there were a number of deaths of older residents, including five funerals last year. Some residents lost their spouse, a parent, or a good friend. For older residents, these deaths were particularly painful as they were losing their friends as they get older. Because there are no professional counselling services available locally, residents had to rely on family and friends. In addition to general community support, voluntary groups rallied and provided support for their own members in times of need.

Changes and pressures associated with the agricultural industry has been a long-term stressful event in Wood River. Low grain prices have compounded stress on farmers as expenses for agricultural inputs have increased. Due to the BSE crisis, cattle farmers have been unable to sell their cattle. Furthermore, the farming community has experienced poor crops due to frost or too much moisture during the past two years. For example, crops on the ground could not be combined due to too much moisture. This poor weather produced poor quality crops that were difficult to sell. Farmers have been able to cut their transportation costs for shipping wheat by using services provided by the Producer Car Cooperative. Banks extended lines of credit to help some farmers, although there is a perception this will just compound the problem over the long term.

These problems impacting agricultural production have also impacted local businesses as families are spending less. Other residents have moved away from the community. Farmers feel that no one is helping them or that others do not understand the scope of the crisis. There was a perception that there has been poor support from social services. Most of this service is provided over the phone. Mental health services are also generally provided to those in extreme crisis. Having fewer support or counselling services for farmers to relieve stress has left some feeling that they are on their own. There was also a perception that farmers are not telling their children to stay on the farm, but are instead encouraging them to leave. This will impact the rural municipality as families move away. Some residents have accepted that they will have a lower income. Overall, there was a feeling that residents have not recovered from these stressful events.

Tweed, Ontario

Two stressful events that were identified by participants in Tweed during the last five years included deaths in the community, and a decline in businesses in Tweed over a longer period of time. Many residents in the community were shocked by several drownings that took place near the dam, as well as by the loss of a local youth who passed away due to a brain tumour. Before

this youth died, his parents partnered up with various service clubs, such as the Kiwanis, Lions, Kinsmen, several churches, and the health centre, to organize a community fundraising dinner to provide his family with financial assistance for the cost of living and medication. Family and friends also provided a lot of support. In response to the drownings, there were letters written to the editor of the local newspaper, and memorial benches and a table were put in place near the dam. The municipality also placed tributes on the bridge near the dam. Churches and schools provided additional assistance and support to the family and friends affected. The school teachers, counsellors, the Gateway Community Health Centre, and the regional health unit all provided grief counselling support. A memorial garden was also installed to commemorate all Tweed residents who have passed away. Such assistance and time was important to help residents recover from these short-term stressful events.

In terms of a long-term stressful event, some participants were concerned with a general decline in businesses in Tweed. For example, Barnett's clothing store closed after 38 years of business. Furthermore, the closure of Value Mart meant that the community was left with one grocery store. Residents were frustrated as the downtown core was unable to sustain these businesses. In particular, residents were concerned about losing competitive prices for groceries. Residents either continued to shop at the local IGA grocery store or left Tweed to shop in Belleville. There is a perception that residents have not recovered yet. These closures have not just led to out-of-town shopping, but also impact options for tourists visiting Tweed. In response, the IGA expanded and renovated their store to deter people from shopping out-of-town. The Chamber of Commerce has also been trying to attract new businesses and promote economic development through its participation in the Comfort Country initiative to improve tourism infrastructure. The Ministry of Rural Affairs and Community Futures have also provided financial assistance for development initiatives in Tweed.

Springhill, Nova Scotia

In Springhill, two stressful events that were discussed by participants included the lack of coordination for fundraising events and the collapse of the arena. In terms of a lack of coordination of fundraising events, some participants noted that various organizations planned fundraising events during the same weekend. These events were considered to be key funding drives for organizations and impacted their revenues for providing services and activities throughout the year. Having multiple events during the same time period adds stress on organizers looking for volunteers and reduces the amount of funds that they are able to raise. Many organizations and supporters in the community have been annoyed with this problem. Organizations must explore other ways to raise money, resulting in more volunteer hours for planning such events. Some residents refuse to support either event due to a lack of personal funds. Groups have been encouraged to use the community calendar on the town's website. A paper copy of the community calendar has also been maintained by municipal staff and updated regularly.

When the roof of the local arena caved in, it left the community and surrounding areas without an arena for several years. While many residents were shocked, they were also relieved that people were able to escape from the ice without injuries. Residents initially wondered where the

money would come from to rebuild the arena. Due to distress and a lack of confidence in the local council, only two councillors were re-elected in the municipal elections. Residents recovered through fundraising initiatives by several committees and active volunteers who collected donations. For example, the Springhill Heritage Group donated items for an auction. The hospital foundation also raised money for a walking track inside of the arena. The provincial and federal government also provided assistance, along with the media which publicized activities. The arena has been rebuilt, and residents have recovered from this long-term stressful event.

Evaluating Stresses and Reactions

Socially and economically stressful events provide opportunities for groups to test how they may work together, share values, and develop trust that may be mobilized in the future through other collaborations or partnerships (van der Voort and Meijs 2004; Osborne and Murray 2000). When participants were asked if local organizations were more able to work effectively together as a result of these stresses, approximately 54% said ‘yes’ (Table 10.1). Participants felt this enhanced ability was demonstrated during times of community loss, cutbacks, or downsizing as organizations must be creative and know other groups to collaborate with in order to provide services. There was an increased awareness about who does what in the community. There was also a perception that when people have a common goal and a project that is important to everyone, they are able to work effectively together.

Table 10.1: As a result of these stresses and reactions, do you think local organizations are more able to work effectively together? - % of responses, by community.

Response	Mackenzie	Wood River	Tweed	Springhill	All 4 Sites
Yes	66.7	42.9	50.0	57.1	53.6
No	33.3	42.9	50.0	42.9	42.9
Same	0.0	14.3	0.0	0.0	3.6
	n=6	n=7	n=8	n=7	n=28

Source: INE Innovative Services and Voluntary Organizations Survey 2005.

However, some participants felt that people were burned out and that there were fewer volunteers and board members involved with organizations. There was also a perception that confidence is influenced by a lack of knowledge of what needs to be done. Some organizations did not work effectively with others because they had their ‘own agendas’ or were unwilling to adapt to work with others. Furthermore, controversial issues had created clearly established boundaries and alliances within the community.

In terms of metro-adjacency status, there were few differences between organizations sampled in metro-adjacent versus non-adjacent sites and whether or not organizations were more able to work effectively together after social or economic crises. There were also few differences between organizations we spoke with in leading and lagging sites and whether or not

organizations were perceived to be able to work effectively together as a result of these stresses.

Social capital is built on delivering on ‘promises’, a prerequisite to developing trust (van der Voort and Meijs 2004). As such, participants were asked if the local community had increased or decreased trust and confidence in the groups that helped out with stresses. In response, approximately 54% of the participants we spoke with in All 4 Sites said ‘yes’ (Table 10.2). There were differences across the four sites. Notably, while all of the participants in Mackenzie felt that the community had increased confidence in the groups responding to stress, almost 63% of the participants in Tweed felt that trust and confidence had remained the same. Furthermore, half of the participants in Springhill felt that there was decreased trust and confidence in the groups that helped out.

Participants felt that increased trust and confidence was built as organizations worked with other people and organizations, and through completed projects and services provided to the community. Local service providers and voluntary organizations were viewed to have increased trust and confidence as they responded to those in need in rural and small town places. It was also built through an increased awareness about what was being done to respond to these stressful events.

Table 10.2: As a result of these stresses and reactions, do you think the local community has increased or decreased trust and confidence in these groups that helped out? - % of responses, by community.

Response	Mackenzie	Wood River	Tweed	Springhill	All 4 Sites
Increased	100.0	40.0	37.5	50.0	54.2
Decreased	0.0	20.0	0.0	50.0	16.7
Same	0.0	40.0	62.5	0.0	29.2
	n=5	n=5	n=8	n=6	n=24

Source: INE Innovative Services and Voluntary Organizations Survey 2005.

When the metro-adjacency status was compared, a greater proportion of the organizations sampled in adjacent sites felt that there was increased trust and confidence in groups that helped out. When leading and lagging status was compared, a greater proportion of participants in leading sites felt that there was increased trust and confidence in the groups that helped out with these stresses.

When participants were asked if people have confidence in their organization to do activities and projects, almost all of them answered ‘yes’. Confidence has been built through on-going activities, the provision of new or expanded services, and the acquirement of new equipment. Some of the organizations we spoke with have a long-term track record of following through on promised activities. Others noted that confidence is demonstrated through repeated demand and positive feedback received for their products and services.

To demonstrate this confidence, participating innovative service providers and voluntary organizations were also asked to give examples of people relying on their organization for help, support, or advice. Generally, people relied on these organizations for donations, supplies, transportation, information, training, support, and advice. These organizations were also called upon to organize or host social events or workshops, provide volunteer support, or provide services specific to each of these organizations. In some cases, organizations took on events or services formerly provided by another group.

Participants were also asked to rate the effectiveness of various people and groups in supporting their community. Ratings ranged from 1 for very effective to 5 for groups that were deemed to be very ineffective in supporting their community. Overall, participants in both sites rated the most effective groups to be voluntary groups, the mayor, and service providers (Table 10.3). There were some differences amongst the four sites. Notably, while a greater proportion of organizations sampled in Mackenzie and Tweed felt that service providers were effective in supporting their community, a greater proportion of organizations we spoke with in Springhill felt that their elected provincial and federal government representatives were effective in supporting their community.

Table 10.3: How effective are each of the following people or groups in supporting your community? - Rating of responses, by community.

Response	Mackenzie		Wood River		Tweed		Springhill		All 4 Sites	
	Rating	n=	Rating	n=	Rating	n=	Rating	n=	Rating	n=
Voluntary groups	2.00	8	2.00	9	1.50	8	2.57	7	2.00	32
Mayor	1.88	8	1.89	9	2.88	8	1.50	8	2.03	33
Service providers	1.88	8	2.78	9	2.00	8	2.86	7	2.38	32
Municipal councillors	2.25	8	2.11	9	2.63	8	3.22	9	2.56	34
Local business leaders	2.25	8	2.78	9	3.00	7	2.56	9	2.64	33
Chamber of Commerce	2.50	8	2.67	9	2.50	6	2.88	8	2.65	31
Provincial elected rep	2.44	9	4.63	8	2.63	8	1.78	9	2.82	34
Federal elected rep	3.14	7	4.63	8	3.29	7	2.22	9	3.29	31

Source: INE Innovative Services and Voluntary Organizations Survey 2005.

Rating: 1=very effective; 2=effective; 3=neutral; 4=not effective; 5=very ineffective.

Summary

During socially and economically stressful events, participants described a range of service providers, voluntary organizations, government departments, businesses, and citizens that emerged to provide donations, services, and support to those in need. There was a range of stressful events such as deaths in the community, job losses and reduced incomes stemming from industrial restructuring, and the loss of businesses. These events had provided residents with opportunities to engage with each other and build relationships that may be mobilized in the future. As such, most participants felt that local organizations were more able to work effectively together. There had been an increase in the trust and confidence with the groups that helped out during these stressful events as groups were able to deliver on their promises to

provide services to those in need. Groups that had been particularly supportive within the community included voluntary organizations, innovative service providers, and the local government representatives. However, participants described some important challenges that may inhibit the effectiveness of working relationships. These included volunteer burnout, limited expertise, and, at times, an unwillingness to work together as some service providers may be protective over the boundaries of their services.

11.0 Challenges for Innovative Service Providers and Voluntary Organizations

Service providers, businesses, and voluntary organizations face increased demands for services and a range of challenges in delivering those services. At times, they have insufficient human resources as indicated through limited staff, limited participation by members, the loss of staff and volunteers due to physical and psychological burnout, and difficulty in recruiting or motivating volunteers (Barr *et al.* 2004; Deakin 2004; Bruce and Halseth 2001; Bruce *et al.* 1999; Marshall 1999; Huxham and Vangen 1996). Public and non-profit sectors may also face financial challenges stemming from cutbacks in budgets or limited funding options (Hughes and Luksetich 2004; Wall and Gordon 1999; Anheier *et al.* 1997). Furthermore, innovative service providers and voluntary organizations may face challenges in developing networks and partnerships as a result of limited infrastructure, communication tools, or a lack of understanding about how these tools can be effectively used (Korsching *et al.* 2001; Halseth and Arnold 1997). This section explores a range of challenges associated with funding, human resources, organizational operations, networks and communications, and infrastructure.

Funding Challenges

Participants were asked to describe the challenges that their organization faced over the last year. When results from All 4 Sites were combined, funding challenges did not appear to be a significant concern overall (Table 11.1). Compared to two years ago, there have been a couple of changes in the funding challenges faced by the innovative service providers and voluntary organizations participating in our study. While 30% of organizations sampled in 2003 felt that government cutbacks were a concern, just 16.7% were now faced with this challenge. Across the four sites, funding was cited as a concern for 60% of the organizations in Springhill and 75% of the organizations in Tweed.

Table 11.1: What are the challenges facing your organization - Funding Challenges - % of responses, All 4 Sites.

	2003	2005
No funding	35.0	38.9
Lack of local support	17.5	27.8
Government cutbacks	30.0	16.7
	n=40	n=36

Source: Innovative Services and Voluntary Organizations Survey 2003, 2005.

There were differences when various types of organizations were examined. For example, 60% of the mixed voluntary and paid organizations were concerned about a lack of funding, while half of the non-voluntary organizations were concerned about a lack of local support.

When metro-adjacency status was explored, a greater proportion of organizations sampled in metro-adjacent sites were concerned about a lack of funding. This is a change from two years ago when the most prominent concern for participating organizations in metro-adjacent sites was

government cutbacks (55%). In 2005, only 17.6% of organizations in metro-adjacent sites were concerned about government cutbacks. A growing concern for organizations in non-adjacent sites is a lack of local support. While just 15% of organizations in non-adjacent sites were concerned about a lack of local support in 2003, this had risen to approximately 31% in 2005.

In terms of leading and lagging status, a greater proportion (66.7%) of organizations we spoke with in lagging communities identified lack of funding as a challenge. This is an increase from 2003 when 45% of lagging community organizations identified this as a concern.

Participants identified a range of strategies being used by their organizations to cope with funding challenges. In Mackenzie, strategies included working with the municipal government to pursue funding opportunities, writing grants for more funding, or even aggressively pursuing clients locally and non-locally. In Wood River, organizations were receiving donations and revenue from publication products sold. Due to government cutbacks, they were also working with other service providers to provide training. They were also trying to maintain local support by communicating with locals at social events. Organizations in Tweed noted that they continued to fundraise and apply for funding. In Springhill, sampled organizations were pursuing donations, funding from publications, and fundraising projects, including social events.

Challenges with Human Resources

When organizations in our sample were asked to describe challenges with human resources, half of the organizations in All 4 Sites identified concerns with a lack of members (Table 11.2). Other prominent concerns included volunteer burnout and little participation by members. Limited members and limited participation can affect the support available to conduct fundraising activities or to deliver services. These findings indicate that while fewer organizations in All 4 Sites were concerned about psychological burnout compared to 2003, there have been increases in concerns associated with little participation of members and declining enrolments in the services or programs offered by these organizations.

Table 11.2: What are the challenges facing your organization - Challenges with Human Resources - % of responses, All 4 Sites.

	2003	2005
Lack of members	47.5	50.0
Volunteer burnout	32.5	41.7
Little participation by members	22.5	36.1
Psychological burnout	40.0	27.8
Out-migration	17.5	22.2
Declining enrolments	10.0	22.2
Lack of new leadership	15.0	19.4
Difficulty getting staff	7.5	11.1
	n=40	n=36

Source: Innovative Services and Voluntary Organizations Survey 2003, 2005.

There were differences in the challenges identified across the four sites (Table 11.3). For example, organizations we spoke with in Mackenzie were more likely to be concerned about out-migration, psychological burnout, and difficulty getting staff. On the other hand, organizations in Springhill were more likely to be concerned about volunteer burnout, limited participation by members, and declining enrolments. Also of interest, while none of the organizations interviewed in Mackenzie and Wood River were concerned about a lack of new leadership, approximately 40% of organizations in Tweed and Springhill faced this challenge. As noted earlier, leadership figures in Mackenzie and Wood River were more likely to be paid or receive compensation for costs incurred. Such benefits can be an incentive to attract or keep leaders (Markham *et al.* 2001).

Table 11.3: What are the challenges facing your organization - Challenges with Human Resources - % of responses, by community.

Response	Mackenzie	Wood River	Tweed	Springhill	All 4 Sites
Lack of members	55.6	44.4	50.0	50.0	50.0
Volunteer burnout	44.4	0.0	37.5	80.0	41.7
Little participation by members	33.3	11.1	50.0	50.0	36.1
Psychological burnout	44.4	22.2	25.0	20.0	27.8
Out-migration	55.6	33.3	0.0	0.0	22.2
Declining enrolments	22.2	11.1	12.5	40.0	22.2
Lack of new leadership	0.0	0.0	37.5	40.0	19.4
Lack of expertise	33.3	11.1	12.5	10.0	16.7
Difficulty getting staff	44.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	11.1
Discrimination	0.0	0.0	0.0	10.0	2.8
	n=9	n=9	n=8	n=10	n=36

Source: INE Innovative Services and Voluntary Organizations Survey 2005.

Differences were identified between various types of organizations. Notably, strictly voluntary organizations tended to be concerned about lack of members and volunteer burnout. Mixed voluntary and paid organizations also tended to be concerned about a lack of members. Strictly paid voluntary organizations tended to be most concerned about volunteer burnout. In contrast, non-voluntary organizations tended to be concerned about psychological burnout and out-migration.

Organizations sampled in metro-adjacent sites were more likely to be concerned about limited participation by members, out-migration, psychological burnout, difficulty getting staff, and lack of expertise. Compared to 2003, there has been a decline in concern about psychological burnout from 60% to approximately 35% in 2005. For organizations in non-adjacent sites, approximately 26% face declining enrolments, an increase from just 5% in 2003.

An analysis of leading and lagging variables indicated that a greater proportion of organizations interviewed in lagging sites were concerned about lack of new leadership, volunteer burnout, limited participation by members, and declining enrolments in programs. As noted earlier, more

organizations sampled in lagging sites relied upon voluntary leadership. Furthermore, problems associated with lack of members and limited participation may explain why more than 75% of organizations in lagging sites needed to recruit new general members or employees. Organizations in leading sites were more likely to be concerned about out-migration, psychological burnout, difficulty getting staff, and lack of expertise.

Participants described a range of strategies that were initiated to cope with these challenges. While one organization we spoke with in Mackenzie was successful in hiring employees, others noted that recruiting is an ongoing activity. The issue of burnout was identified by some as an on-going issue, and that one just “learns to deal with it”. It was also noted that it can be difficult to build expertise with high turnover. In one case, training has been taking place amongst staff to build capacity. In Wood River, one organization was comparing their services to other providers to evaluate their competitiveness. Other strategies included word of mouth and inviting members to annual general meetings to encourage them to become more active. However, another challenge emerged as older members had difficulty recruiting younger members due to a generation gap. To encourage new leadership, some organizations in Wood River changed their regulations to make leadership change mandatory every couple of years. Organizations sampled in Tweed noted that recruiting is an ongoing activity for their organization. Other strategies included volunteer training sessions to motivate people. In one organization, the number of board members has been expanded to reduce the individual workload and psychological burnout. Recovery time between events was also described as an important strategy for reducing volunteer burnout. In Springhill, some of the organizations were recruiting new members through word of mouth, open houses, or ‘fun nights’. In another circumstance, burnout was producing pressure to close programs. In some cases, no strategies had been developed to cope with human resource challenges in these four sites.

Challenges with Organizational Operations

In general, few organizations in All 4 Sites were concerned about challenges with organizational operations (Table 11.4). When specific sites were examined, though, almost half of the organizations sampled in Mackenzie identified a need to revisit objectives. A greater proportion of organizations in Springhill identified poor management as a concern. Of interest, none of the organizations in Tweed identified any organizational operation challenges.

Table 11.4: What are the challenges facing your organization - Challenges with Organization Operations - % of responses, by community.

Response	Mackenzie	Wood River	Tweed	Springhill	All 4 Sites
Need to revisit objectives	44.4	0.0	0.0	30.0	19.4
Poor management	22.2	0.0	0.0	30.0	13.9
Ambitious objectives	22.2	11.1	0.0	10.0	11.1
	n=9	n=9	n=8	n=10	n=36

Source: INE Innovative Services and Voluntary Organizations Survey 2005.

There were different responses when comparing various types of organizations. In fact, none of the mixed voluntary and paid organizations expressed concerns about organizational operations. By contrast, approximately 43% of strictly paid voluntary organizations felt there is a need to revisit objectives. One-third of non-voluntary organizations were also concerned about the need to revisit objectives, as well as ambitious objectives.

Strategies were devised by some organizations to cope with operational challenges. For example, in Mackenzie, some organizations were re-evaluating their objectives through meetings, and in some cases, a provincial government body mandated that their services be reduced. In Wood River, one organization noted changes had occurred in management and board positions. In Springhill, a strategy utilized by one organization to cope with poor management entailed additional duties being assumed by the personnel operating the programs. At times, there were no strategies yet developed to cope with operational challenges in these four sites. Instead, the status quo path was being maintained.

Challenges with Networks, Partnerships, and Communications

Previous research suggests a range of barriers with networks, partnerships, and communications. Organizations may have limited experience or knowledge about partnering. In turn, this may impact their perceptions about the benefits of partnering and they may perceive it to be difficult to contact potential partners. Furthermore, potential partners coming from the corporate or voluntary sectors may consist of very different organizational and cultural differences, or use a different language (Deakin 2004). At times, partnerships between the private and non-profit sectors may develop slowly. Googins and Rochlin (2000) explain that the infrequent interaction between these two sectors is reinforced as businesses have associations where they gather, such as the Chamber of Commerce, and non-profit organizations have their own circles as well. Voluntary organizations may also have limited partnerships with corporations if they fail to recognize that companies may play a bigger role than just offering money (van der Voort and Meijs 2004).

In contrast to previous research, few organizations sampled in this study identified concerns associated with networks or communications. When considering the responses from All 4 Sites, there have been few changes in the challenges associated with networks and communications since 2003 (Table 11.5). Across the sites, a slightly greater proportion of organizations interviewed in Mackenzie and Springhill were concerned about communication problems. However, when specific sites were further explored, there was a decrease in organizations in Mackenzie concerned about limited partners or outside networks from 50% in 2003 to 22.2% in 2005. There has also been a decline in organizations in Tweed that felt they needed more networks from 30% in 2003 to just 12.5% in 2005. In terms of communication, while none of the organizations interviewed in Wood River in 2003 were faced with communication problems, approximately 22% of them were now coping with this problem. Further, a greater proportion of organizations we spoke with in Springhill were now concerned with communication problems (compared to just 10% in 2003).

Table 11.5: What are the challenges facing your organization - Challenges with Networks and Communications - % of responses, by community.

Response	Mackenzie	Wood River	Tweed	Springhill	All 4 Sites
Communication problems	33.3	22.2	0.0	30.0	22.2
Few partners / outside networks	22.2	11.1	12.5	0.0	11.1
	n=9	n=9	n=8	n=10	n=36

Source: INE Innovative Services and Voluntary Organizations Survey 2005.

There were some differences between the concerns expressed by various types of organizations. While less than 20% of strictly voluntary, mixed voluntary and paid, and non-voluntary organizations were concerned about communication problems and limited partners and outside networks, approximately 43% of strictly paid organizations were concerned about communication problems.

In terms of metro-adjacency status, organizations in non-adjacent communities were more likely to be concerned about communication problems. When leading and lagging status was explored, organizations we spoke with in leading sites were more concerned with limited partners and networks, as well as with communication problems.

Coping with network and communication challenges can be difficult. In Mackenzie, one organization wanted to create networks in northern B.C. so that others could learn about their programs. In another case, an organization hoped to create a partnership to provide services by supplying space and materials. However, there continue to be communication challenges with partners outside of the community. In Wood River, new networks were being developed to give service providers access to other professionals. In Tweed, an organization we spoke with created a local sub-group to address service provision issues. Furthermore, when the Canadian Rural Revitalization Foundation held its conference in Tweed in 2004, it received tremendous response and support from many local voluntary organizations in the community. Although this event took place outside the realm of this study, it is important to note that a local, voluntary radio group was able to broadcast events and interviews with researchers, decision-makers, and community representatives from across Canada to residents in Tweed. Furthermore, many members of the local Chamber of Commerce were active in organizing the conference and networked with many other local groups, including many other non-profit organizations and businesses in the community were able to organize field trips and provide meals for conference participants. In Springhill, some of the organizations were struggling to respond to communication problems due to a lack of interest or limited use of e-mail by members. One organization we spoke with responded by hiring new management to improve communications.

Challenges with Infrastructure

Findings indicated that few of the organizations we spoke with in All 4 Sites identified infrastructure problems as a challenge facing their organization (Table 11.6). When exploring

problems with infrastructure in each site, only organizations in Mackenzie and Springhill identified them as a challenge.

Many organizations we spoke with in Mackenzie, Wood River, and Springhill described other challenges, however. For example, in Mackenzie one organization was concerned about the centralization of federal services to be delivered by bigger contractors located in large urban centres. This trend streamlines the number of contractors that the federal government needs to interact with. There were also concerns about high union wages, a lack of referrals to support programs, keeping up-to-date with new client needs, lack of time, and a lack of public understanding about the service provided. In Wood River, there was a concern about time management due to demands for services, health problems, aging membership, knowing how to market services beyond the community, disagreements about additional charges of services provided to members, disagreements about proposed activities, and regulations that limit the services that can be provided by certain professionals. Furthermore, there were concerns about a lack of control over resources. In Springhill, other concerns were expressed about limited acceptance of certain professions, difficulty keeping up with service demands by those in need, and changes in times that services were delivered.

Table 11.6: What are the challenges facing your organization - Challenges with Infrastructure - % of responses, by community.

Response	Mackenzie	Wood River	Tweed	Springhill	All 4 Sites
Building deterioration	33.3	0.0	0.0	20.0	13.9
Lack of meeting space	0.0	0.0	0.0	20.0	5.6
Other	44.4	55.6	0.0	30.0	33.3
	n=9	n=9	n=8	n=10	n=36

Source: INE Innovative Services and Voluntary Organizations Survey 2005.

While tackling infrastructure problems can be a difficult challenge, some of the organizations we spoke with were able to find solutions. In Mackenzie, some organizations spoke about repairs that had been done. Others noted that there is limited funding to do repairs. Lack of meeting space was not a problem for participating organizations without office space as they were able to use the office space of other service providers for free. In Springhill, organizations concerned about building deterioration could not do anything since the responsibility for building repairs belonged to another owner or service provider. Personal home space of members has been used to cope with limited access to meeting space.

Summary

Innovative service providers and voluntary organizations face a number of challenges to meet the increasing demands for services in rural and small town places. Lack of members, volunteer burnout, limited funding, and little participation by members were important challenges. Combined, this places considerable pressure on members in these groups to take on additional

duties. If these challenges persist, they may lead to service cutbacks or closures. If these organizations are going to maintain their services, they will need to find innovative ways to have them delivered, which may include the development of networks and partnerships to develop the necessary human and financial resources.

12.0 Lessons Learned

Social, political, and economic restructuring has led to the downsizing and closure of many services in rural and small town places. In turn, industrial and business closures, accompanied by the displacement of workers, have produced additional pressure on services during these restructuring periods. Together, this places more pressure on local voluntary groups and service providers to fill service gaps. The loss of support services often affects the most vulnerable residents, such as seniors or those living in poverty. In the absence of employment, education, health, or counselling services, commuting and out-migration become real problems affecting the viability of rural and small town places. Under the pressure of limited resources, residents must search for new ways to deliver important services in their community.

This study explored how innovative service providers and voluntary organizations are structured and how they continue to sustain their services over time. The study tracked organizations sampled in Mackenzie, British Columbia, Wood River, Saskatchewan, Tweed, Ontario, and Springhill, Nova Scotia. To explore what may make these groups successful, the research looked at human resources, financial resources, and communication tools used by these organizations to build capacity, as well as the presence of partnerships to sustain services. Innovative service providers and voluntary organizations in our sample identified a range of ways by which they sustain themselves over time.

Building Organization Stability

Most organizations have a stable structural framework that included staff, office space, and a board of directors. These features enhanced the visibility of organizations in their communities. Organizations exhibited an equal gender distribution amongst leadership positions and on the board of directors. This is important as men and women bring different experiences and networks to an organization that may be drawn upon over time or during times of stress. Boards of directors were also prominent requirements for some organizations to obtain funding. In fact, organizations we spoke with that had a board were more likely to obtain government funding, as well as private donations, personal funds from members, and membership fees. When organizations needed to recruit new general members or employees, they utilized a wide range of strategies.

Enhancing the Legitimacy of the Organization through Local Support

Organizations we spoke with were relying less on government funding compared to two years ago. This change did not appear to stem from a lack of success with funding applications. Instead, fewer organizations were pursuing government funding. They were relying more on local funding sources, including revenues from services provided, membership fees, and community fundraising. Funds from membership fees or personal contributions may indicate faith or trust in the organization's operations (O'Regan and Oster 2002). Local support may also enhance the legitimacy of the organization's efforts if they wish to pursue public funding in the future.

Enhancing the Legitimacy of an Organization through Partnerships

To accomplish their goals, innovative service providers and voluntary organizations have developed partnerships both within and outside of their community. Through these partnerships, organizations are strengthening the legitimacy and support for their ongoing activities. This can provide an important foundation when these organizations pursue funding. In fact, organizations with local or non-local partnerships were more likely to have pursued and received funding from government grants and programs. Through partnerships and shared knowledge, service providers, voluntary organizations, and decision-makers will learn more about options for delivering services that may not otherwise exist.

Developing Relationships, Networks, Knowledge, and Expertise through Information Sources

Organizations we spoke with were also using a wider range of sources of information. At least half of all organizations accessed family and friends, management, general media, the Internet, customers, staff, and federal and provincial government departments for a range of information needs. This provides an opportunity to increase the potential to interact with diverse groups, to develop new relationships, and to acquire new knowledge and expertise that can enhance the resiliency of an organization. Participating organizations that received funding from government ‘grants’ and ‘programs’ were more likely to have used a wider range of information sources.

Using Communication Tools to Improve Relations Locally and Non-Locally

Face-to-face contact, or word of mouth, continues to be an important communication method to interact with clients, members, funders, and partners. At the same time, however, more participating organizations were using print materials and Internet technology for communication. Furthermore, most organizations felt that the Internet was becoming an increasingly important tool for improving access to information and improving relations locally and non-locally. Organizations that place high levels of importance on adopting new technology may indicate that they are ‘ready’ to embrace opportunities for innovation.

Developing Trust and Confidence in Organizations

Many respondents noted how organizations in these rural and small town places have responded to stressful events over the last five years; demonstrating their value and importance. Groups that responded to these pressures included various levels of government, churches, schools, voluntary organizations, service providers, the business community, and even general citizens. Most felt that there was increased local ability to work together, and increased levels of trust and confidence as groups delivered on what they promised they could do. Such responses provide an important foundation upon which partnerships and linkages can be created.

Overcoming Challenges - Coping with Limited Human and Financial Resources

Service providers and voluntary organizations are facing a number of challenges to meet increasing demands for services in these rural and small town places. Many of the organizations we spoke with continued to rely on voluntary leadership and voluntary participation of board members. At the same time, many of these organizations expressed concerns about lack of members, little participation by members, and volunteer burnout, as well as a need to recruit new members or employees. This places additional pressure on remaining members or employees to take on additional duties. In such circumstances, burnout may lead to service cutbacks or even closures of services if new ways to deliver such services are not found. Furthermore, few of the organizations with a board of directors had involved local leaders, such as industry or local government representatives. These leaders, though, can bring important networks, support, and resources. To cope with limited human resources, organizations were utilizing a range of strategies to recruit new members or employees. Organizations were also expanding the number of board members, as well as expanding the recovery time between events, to reduce workloads and volunteer burnout.

To overcome limited funding, government cutbacks, and lack of local support, organizations were working with local governments to pursue new funding opportunities. Having support or partnerships with local government can also enhance the legitimacy of an organization's efforts when pursuing other funding sources. Organizations were partnering with other service providers to provide training and share space. Service providers and voluntary organizations were also maintaining support through communication and networking at local events. Organizations were also expanding their networks to learn about other programs and have access to a broader range of professional expertise.

Future Research

This project has explored many issues associated with an organization's structure that may impact the daily and long-term activities. Further research, however, could explore additional aspects that impact stability, including how the roles and activities of leaders and board members change as demands and pressures for service providers and voluntary organizations change. More specifically, what roles do leaders and board members have in developing new networks and partnerships for service delivery in rural and small town places?

Given the concerns expressed by some organizations about lack of members, limited participation, volunteer burnout, and lack of expertise, it will be important to explore the benefits or drawbacks that residents perceive to being involved with service providers and voluntary organizations as members, staff, volunteers, leaders, or board members. This is critically important since such benefits or drawbacks may impact their involvement and commitment over time, and may influence the overall stability of the organization. It would also be useful to explore the skills that leaders and members develop through their participation, as well as how they transfer or share their skills with other members in their organization or with other groups in rural and small town places. Such processes of transferring knowledge and skills will help to build institutional memory and local capacity, which may help these organizations to be resilient

during transition periods. Research could also explore how effective recruiting strategies are for employees, members, and board members in rural and small town places.

Moreover, while our research found that men and women have equal opportunities to be involved with service providers and voluntary organizations as leaders and board members, further research could explore what attracts women to these leadership positions. How many paid versus voluntary leadership opportunities do women have compared to men? How are women's leadership opportunities changing as they are impacted by other aspects of their lives (i.e. shift work for partners, paid employment opportunities, the number of children they have, other commitments)?

Demonstrating that proposed activities and programs have a broader appeal in the community will continue to be important for service providers and voluntary organizations in rural and small town places. One way that this may be achieved is through board representation that covers a broad scope of interests in the community. Drawing from a wide range of interests and sectors in the community may also broaden the networks of an organization and strengthen its resiliency. Further research, however, is needed to explore how boards of innovative service providers and voluntary organizations represent community interests, as well as how such representation may contribute to building social cohesion and social capital in the community. This may include examining how local leaders are incorporated into boards of directors, and the assets that these local leaders bring to these organizations in terms of networks, partnerships, expertise, funding, or other forms of support.

Given that fewer organizations were pursuing or relying on government funding, further research could explore why there has been a change in funding strategies. Is it because of a cutback in government funding programs, inappropriate requirements of funding programs, lack of resources to pursue funding programs, or simply a lack of need for government funding? In terms of developing and supporting funding strategies, what role do board members play in pursuing funding? How are board members effective or not effective in pursuing funding?

While findings identified many benefits received by organizations participating in a partnership, further research is needed to explore why partnerships were being formed in the first place. What attracts organizations to create a partnership? What does each partner bring to the table? What are the challenges to developing and maintaining partnerships both locally and non-locally in a rural and small town setting? How long do partnerships take to develop? Moreover, research is needed to explore what makes partnerships successful, as well as why some partnerships are not successful. Further work in the communities could also be done to explore the role that partnerships and innovative services play in retaining residents who may otherwise feel pressured to commute to access such services.

In supporting the community, findings revealed the most effective groups to be voluntary groups, the mayor, and service providers. But what activities were performed by these groups that made them particularly effective? Furthermore, while findings suggest that funding may provide service providers and voluntary groups with the resources to use a wider range of communication tools, research could explore how these tools impact their connections with members, funders,

and partners, and the delivery of services to clients.

Our results suggest that there may be some relationships between different types of organizations and the issues explored in this study. For example, strictly voluntary organizations were more likely to rely on revenue from services provided, as well as community fundraising. As such, these organizations were also more likely to retain local control over their budgets. However, these organizations used a more limited range of communication tools to interact with clients, members, funders, and partners. In terms of challenges, strictly voluntary organizations were more likely to be concerned about a lack of members and volunteer burnout.

Mixed voluntary and paid organizations were more likely to rely on a wider range of sources of funding. A greater proportion of these organizations were also required to adopt conditions in order to obtain funding, including a board of directors, providing services to a particular client, as well as being located in a specific geographic area. A greater proportion of mixed voluntary and paid organizations used a variety of sources of information for organizational activities. Mixed voluntary and paid organizations were also more likely to use a wider range of communication methods to interact with clients, members, funders, and partners. Mixed voluntary and paid organizations placed a higher level of importance to developing partnerships with the provincial government and local voluntary groups. Moreover, a greater proportion of these organizations had developed partnerships with groups inside and outside of the community. Such partnerships had led to the expansion of networks and new expertise for at least half of these organizations. However, mixed voluntary and paid organizations were more likely to be concerned about a lack of funding and a lack of new leadership.

A greater proportion of strictly paid voluntary organizations were required to belong to a professional or sector association to obtain funding. Strictly paid organizations were also more likely to use reports to communicate with members compared to other types of organizations. They were also more likely to use e-mail and websites to communicate with partners. In fact, strictly paid voluntary organizations placed more importance on adopting new technology for organizational needs. They also placed more importance on the Internet to improve access to general and government information, as well as to improve relations both inside and outside of the community. Strictly paid voluntary organizations placed a higher level of importance on developing partnerships with the municipal government, local businesses, and the federal government compared to other types of organizations. In pursuing these partnerships, a greater proportion of board members belonging to these organizations had used their networks to develop partnerships compared to other types of organizations. In this context, however, a greater proportion of strictly paid voluntary organizations were concerned about volunteer burnout, a need to revisit objectives, and communication problems.

Further, non-voluntary organizations were more likely to rely on revenue from services provided. These groups were also more likely to retain local control over their budgets. Non-voluntary organizations also used a more limited range of communication tools to interact with clients, members, funders, and partners. Non-voluntary organizations were more likely to be concerned about a lack of local support, psychological burnout or frustration, and out-migration. Further research is needed to explore the relationships with these different organizational structures.

Findings indicated that there may be some relationships between service providers and voluntary organizations in metro-adjacent versus non-metro adjacent sites and the adoption or use of a variety of assets that help them to sustain services over time. Organizations we spoke with in metro-adjacent sites were more likely to have a board of directors, local leaders on their board of directors, staff, and office space. They were also more likely to have pursued and received government funding. A greater proportion of organizations sampled in metro-adjacent sites used technology and printed materials for communicating with clients, members, funders, and partners, as well as a variety of sources of information. In fact, a greater proportion of these groups felt that the Internet was important for improving access to information, as well as relations inside and outside of the community. They were also more likely to have partnerships both locally and non-locally. Organizations we spoke with in non-adjacent sites, however, were more likely to view the Internet to be important to develop expertise, to meet the needs of clients served by the organization, to use new equipment, and to develop new products and services.

In terms of challenges, organizations in metro-adjacent sites were more likely to need to recruit new board members. Organizations we spoke with in metro-adjacent sites were also more likely to have concerns about a lack of funding, limited participation by members, out-migration, psychological burnout, difficulty getting staff, and lack of expertise. On the other hand, a greater proportion of organizations we spoke with in non-adjacent sites were concerned about communication problems. Participating organizations in non-adjacent sites were also more likely to rely on voluntary leadership, as well as revenue from services provided, membership fees, and community fundraising. This is particularly problematic as there is a growing concern about a lack of local support. These organizations also used a more limited range of information sources. Further research is needed to explore both of these early trends and why these relationships exist.

Findings also indicated that there may be some strong relationships between service providers and voluntary organizations in leading versus lagging sites and the adoption or use of a variety of assets that help them to sustain their services over time. A greater proportion of groups we spoke with in leading sites have women in leadership positions and local leaders on their board of directors. These organizations were more likely to have partnerships both inside and outside of their community. They were also more likely to view adopting new technology to be important to access information, to develop expertise, to meet the needs of clients, to develop new products and services, and to use new equipment. By comparison, organizations we spoke with in lagging sites were more likely to have a board of directors, as well as new services and programs. A greater proportion of these organizations also used technology and printed materials for communicating with clients, members, funders, and partners. They were also more likely to view the Internet to be important for meeting a range of needs.

Organizations we spoke with in leading sites were more likely to need to recruit new board members. A greater proportion of these organizations experienced cutbacks in services and programs, and held concerns about limited partnerships, networks, and communication problems. On the other hand, organizations sampled in lagging sites were more likely to rely on voluntary leadership, as well as to need to recruit new employees and general members. These

organizations were also more likely to have concerns about a lack of funding; lack of new leadership, volunteer burnout, limited participation by members, and declining enrolments. Again, further research is needed to gauge the relationship between characteristics of leading and lagging sites and a range of variables that contribute to local capacity.

This study examined the structure, roles, and capacity of innovative service providers and voluntary organizations in four rural and small town places across Canada. The communities of Mackenzie, British Columbia, Wood River, Saskatchewan, Tweed, Ontario, and Springhill, Nova Scotia provided representation across different regions and characteristics in which to explore the different capacity and opportunities for these organizations. We hope that the information provided in this report will help decision-makers, service providers, businesses, and voluntary organizations in these communities as they continue to build capacity, plan service delivery and programs, and overcome challenges facing their organizations.

Bibliography

- Al-Kodmany, K. 1999. University-community partnerships: Unleashing technical and local expertise. *Journal of Urban Technology* 6 (2): 39-63.
- Anheier, H., S. Toepler, and S. Sokolowski. 1997. The implications of government funding for non-profit organizations: three propositions. *International Journal of Public Sector Management* 10 (3): 190-213.
- Apedaile, P. 2004. The new rural economy. In *Building for Success: Explorations of Rural Community and Rural Development*, edited by Greg Halseth and Regine Halseth, 111-136. Brandon, Manitoba: Rural Development Institute and Canadian Rural Revitalization Foundation.
- Ashburner, L. 1993. Women on boards and authorities in the national health service. *Women in Management Review* 8 (2): 10-16.
- Barr, C., L. McKeown, K. Davidman, D. McIver, and D. Lasby. 2004. *The Rural Charitable Sector Research Initiative: A Portrait of the Non-profit and Voluntary Sector in Rural Ontario*. Prepared for the Foundation for Rural Living. Toronto, Ontario: Canadian Centre for Philanthropy.
- Beckley, T. 1994. Community stability and the relationship between economic and social well-being in forest dependent communities. *Society & Natural Resources* 8: 261-266.
- Beckley, T. and T. Burkosky. 1999. *Social Indicator Approaches to Assessing and Monitoring Forest Community Stability*. Information Report NOR-X-360. Edmonton, Alberta: Canadian Forest Service - Northern Forestry Centre.
- Beckley, T. and A. Sprenger. 1995. Social, political and cultural dimension of forest-dependence: The communities of the Lower Winnipeg Basin. In *The Economic, Social, Political and Cultural Dimensions of Forest-Dependence in Eastern Manitoba*, 22-61. Brandon, Manitoba: The Rural Development Institute, Brandon, University.
- Berman, E. and J. West. 1995. Public-private leadership and the role of non-profit organizations in local government: The case of social services. *Policy Studies Review* 14 (1/2): 235-246.
- Bluestone, B., and B. Harrison. 1982. *The Deindustrialization of America: Plant Closings, Community Abandonment, and the Dismantling of Basic Industry*. New York: Basic Books.
- Borgen, W. 2000. Developing partnerships to meet clients' needs in changing government organizations: A consultative process. *Journal of Employment Counseling* 37: 128-142.
- Bourke, C. 2005. Public libraries: Building social capital through networking. *Aplis* 18 (2): 71-75.

- Bourke, L. and A. Luloff. 1997. Women and leadership in rural areas. *Women and Politics* 17 (4): 1-23.
- Bradbury, J. and I. St. Martin. 1983. Winding down in a Quebec mining town: A case study of Schefferville". *The Canadian Geographer* 27 (2): 128-144.
- Bradford, N. 2003. Public-private partnership? Shifting paradigms of economic governance in Ontario. *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 36 (5): 1005-1033.
- Bruce, D. and G. Halseth. 2001. *The Long Run Role of Institutions in Fostering Community Economic Development: A Comparison of Leading and Lagging Rural Communities*. Montreal, Quebec: Canadian Rural Restructuring Foundation, Concordia University.
- Bruce, D., P. Jordan, and G. Halseth. 1999. The role of voluntary organizations in Rural Canada: Impacts of changing availability of operational and program funding. In *Voluntary Organizations in Rural Canada: Final Report*, edited by Bill Reimer, 2.1-2.52. Montreal, Quebec: Canadian Rural Restructuring Foundation, Concordia University.
- Burke, R. 2003. Do gender proportions matter? *Women in Management Review* 18 (5): 267-275.
- Callen, J., A. Klein, and D. Tinkelman. 2003. Board composition, committees, and organizational efficiency: The case of non-profits. *Non-profit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly* 32 (4): 493-520.
- Carter, H. 1990. *Urban and Rural Settlements*. London: Longman Group UK Limited.
- Cater, J. and T. Jones. 1989. *Social Geography: An Introduction to Contemporary Issues*. London: Routledge, Chapman and Hall.
- Cloke, P. 1994. Rural. In *The Dictionary of Human Geography*, edited by R. Johnston, D. Gregory, and D. Smith, 536-537. 3rd edition. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.
- Deakin, N. 2004. Aspects of partnership in England. *The Nonprofit Review* 4 (1): 1-7.
- Doloreaux, D. 2002. What we should know about regional systems of innovation. *Technology and Society* 24: 243-263.
- Florida, R. 2005. The World is spiky: Globalization has changed the economic playing field, but hasn't leveled it. *The Atlantic Monthly* October: 48-51.
- Furry, D. 2004. Building capacity. *Association Management* 56 (1): 64-68.
- Gadomski, A, D. Wicks, K. Abernethy, C. Lewis, and T. Pearson. 1997. Providing preventive services in a rural area through a public-private partnership. *American Journal of Public Health* 87 (8): 1375-1376.

- Gates, S. and J. Hill. 1995. Democratic accountability and governmental innovation in the use of non-profit organizations. *Policy Studies Review* 14 (1/2): 137-148.
- Gilchrist, V. 1999. Key informant interviews. In *Qualitative Research: Volume One*, edited by A. Bryman and R. Burgess, 354-371. London: SAGE Publications Ltd.
- Gill, A. 1990. Friendship formation in a new coal-mining town: Planning implications. *SSR* 74 (2): 103-109.
- Gill, A. and G. Smith. 1985. Residents' evaluative structures of northern Manitoba mining communities. *The Canadian Geographer* 29 (1): 17-29.
- Googins, B. and S. Rochlin. 2000. Creating the partnership society: Understanding the rhetoric and reality of cross-sectoral partnerships. *Business and Society Review* 105 (1): 127-144.
- Hage, J. 1999. Organizational innovation and organizational change. *Annual Review of Sociology* 25: 597-622.
- Halseth, G. 1999. "We came for the work": Situating employment migration in B.C.'s small resource-based, communities. *The Canadian Geographer* 43 (4): 363-381.
- Halseth, G. 1998. *Cottage Country in Transition: A Social Geography of Change and Contention in the Rural-Recreational Countryside*. Montreal, Quebec: McGill-Queen's University Press.
- Halseth, G., D. Bruce and L. Sullivan. 2004. Leading and lagging: The long run role of institutions and social capital in fostering community economic development. In: *Building for Success: Explorations of rural community and rural development*, edited by Greg Halseth and Regine Halseth, 309-336. Brandon, Manitoba: Rural Development Institute and Canadian Rural Revitalization Foundation.
- Halseth, G. and D. Arnold. 1997. *Community (Internet) Access Groups: Case Studies from rural and small town British Columbia, Canada*. Vancouver, British Columbia: Community Economic Development Centre, Simon Fraser University.
- Halseth, G., L. Sullivan, and L. Ryser. 2003. Service provision as part of resource town transition planning: A case from Northern British Columbia. In *Opportunities and Actions in the New Rural Economy*, edited by D. Bruce and G. Lister, 19-46. Sackville, New Brunswick: Rural and Small Town Studies Programme.
- Halseth, G. and L. Sullivan. 1999. Report on the new rural economy: Government funding of community based organizations, Mackenzie and Tumbler Ridge, British Columbia. In *Voluntary Organizations in Rural Canada: Final Report*, edited by Bill Reimer, 4.37-4.61. Montreal, Quebec: Canadian Rural Restructuring Foundation, Concordia University.

- Hare, W. 2001. Rural telecommunications: Partnerships bridge the digital divide. *Public Management* July: 12-14.
- Hinnant, C. 1995. Non-profit organizations as inter-regional actors: Lessons from southern growth. *Policy Studies Review* 14 (1/2): 225-234.
- Hodgkinson and Nelson. 2001. Major issues facing America's nonprofit sector. *The Nonprofit Review* 1 (2): 113-118.
- Hughes, P. and W. Luksetich. 2004. Non-profit arts organizations: Do funding sources influence spending patterns? *Non-profit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly* 33 (2): 203-220.
- Huxham, C. and S. Vangen. 1996. Working together: Key themes in the management of relationships between public and non-profit organizations. *International Journal of Public Sector Management* 9 (7): 5-17.
- Hycner, R. 1999. Some guidelines for the phenomenological analysis of interview data. In *Qualitative Research: Volume One*, edited by A. Bryman and R. Burgess, 143-164. London: SAGE Publications Ltd.
- Keast, R., M. Mandell, K. Brown, and G. Woolcock. 2004. Network structures: Working differently and changing expectations. *Public Administration Review* 64 (3): 363-371.
- Kluger, M. and W. Baker. 1994. *Innovative Leadership in the Non-profit Organization*. Washington, D.C.: Child Welfare League of America.
- Korsching, P., S. El-Ghamrini, and G. Peter. 2001. Rural telephone companies: Offering technology innovations to enhance the economic development of communities. *Technology and Society* 23: 79-91.
- Krout, J., M. Williams, and O. Owen. 1994. Senior centers in rural communities. In *Providing Community-Based Services to the Rural Elderly*, edited by J. A. Krout, 90-110. Thousand Oaks, California: SAGE Publications.
- Lesky, S., E. O'Sullivan, and B. Goodman. 2001. Local public-non-profit partnerships: Getting better results. *Policy & Practice* September: 28-32.
- Liu, L., J. Hader, B. Brossart, R. White, and S. Lewis. 2001. Impact of rural hospital closures in Saskatchewan, Canada. *Social Science & Medicine* 52: 1793-1804.
- Lowndes, V. 2004. Getting on or getting by? Women, social capital and political participation. *British Journal of Politics and International Relations* 6: 45-64.
- Lowry, R. 1995. Non-profit organizations and public policy. *Policy Studies Review* 14 (1/2): 107-116.

- Maddock, S. and G. Morgan. 1998. Barriers to transformation: Beyond bureaucracy and the market conditions for collaboration in health and social care. *International Journal of Public Sector Management* 11 (4): 234-251.
- Markham, W., J. Walters, and C. Bonjean. 2001. Leadership in voluntary associations: The case of the “International Association of Women”. *International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations* 12 (2): 103-130.
- Marshall, J. 1999. Voluntary activity and the state: Commentary and review of the literature relating to the role and impact of government involvement in rural communities in Canada. In *Voluntary Organizations in Rural Canada: Final Report*, edited by Bill Reimer, 1.1-1.36. Montreal, Quebec: Canadian Rural Restructuring Foundation. Concordia University.
- McCrary, K. 2004. Look beyond tradition to diversify your board. *Nonprofit World* 22 (4): 10-11.
- McLaren, L. 2002. Information and Communication Technologies in Rural Canada. Rural and Small Town Canada Analysis Bulletin. Vol. 3. No. 5. Catalogue no. 21-006-XIE. 1-26.
- Miller-Millesen, J. 2003. Understanding the behaviour of non-profit boards of directors: A theory-based approach. *Non-profit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly* 32 (4): 521-547.
- Moore, G. and J. Whitt. 2000. Gender and networks in a local voluntary-sector elite. *International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations* 11 (4): 309-328.
- Nishide, Y. 2002. University-community partnerships: Cases from the U.S. and Japan. *The Nonprofit Review* 2 (2): 95-109.
- Nyland, J. 1995. Issue networks and non-profit organizations. *Policy Studies Review* 14 (1/2): 195-204.
- O’Brien, D., E. Hassinger, R. Brown, and J. Pinkerton. 1991. The social networks of leaders in more and less viable rural communities. *Rural Sociology* 56 (4): 699-716.
- O’Regan, K. and S. Oster. 2002. Does government funding alter nonprofit governance? Evidence from New York City nonprofit contractors. *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management* 21 (3): 359-379.
- Osborne, S. and V. Murray. 2000. Collaboration between non-profit organizations in the provision of social services in Canada: Working together or falling apart? *The International Journal of Public Sector Management* 13 (1): 9-18.
- O’Toole, K. and N. Burdess. 2004. New community governance in small rural towns: the Australian experience. *Journal of Rural Studies* 20: 433-443.

Pettigrew, A. 1995. Longitudinal field research on change: Theory and practice. In *Longitudinal Field Research Methods: Studying Processes of Organizational Change*, edited by G. P. Huber and A. H. Van de Ven, 91-125. Thousand Oaks, California: SAGE Publications.

Phillips, S. 2001/2000. More than stakeholders: Reforming state-voluntary sector relations. *Journal of Canadian Studies* 35 (4): 182-202.

Plas, J. and S. Lewis. 2001. *Person-Centered Leadership for Non-profit Organization: Management that Works in High Pressure Systems*. London: SAGE Publications.

Ploch, L. 1980. Effects of Turnaround Migration on Community Structure in Maine. In *New Directions in Urban-Rural Migration: The Population Turnaround in Rural America*, edited by D.L. Brown and J.M. Wardwell. New York: Academic Press.

Pongsiri, N. 2002. Regulation and public-private partnerships. *The International Journal of Public Sector Management* 15 (6/7): 487-495.

Potapchuk, W., J. Crocker, and W. Schechter. 1997. Building community with social capital: Chits and chums or chats with change. *National Civic Review* 86 (2): 129-139.

Radin, B. and B. Romzek. 1996. Accountability expectations in an intergovernmental arena: The National Rural Development Partnership. *Publius* 26: 59-81.

Reimer, B. 2002. A sample frame for rural Canada: Design and evaluation. *Regional Studies* 36 (8): 845-859.

Rindfleish, J. and A. Sheridan. 2003. No change from within: Senior women managers' response to gendered organizational structures. *Women in Management Review* 18 (5/6): 299-310.

Robinson, G. 1990. *Conflict and Change in the Countryside*. New York: Belhaven Press.

Rural Development Commission. n.d. *Research Findings: The Joint Provision of Rural Services*. Summary of Findings. Report 34, n.p.

Scott, M. 2004. Building institutional capacity in rural Northern Ireland: The role of partnership governance in the LEADER II programme. *Journal of Rural Studies* 20: 49-59.

Sheridan, A. and G. Milgate. 2003. "She says, he says": Women's and men's views of the composition of boards. *Women in Management Review* 18 (3/4): 147-154.

Siciliano, J. 1996. The relationship of board member diversity to organizational performance. *Journal of Business Ethics* 15 (2): 1313-1320.

Statistics Canada. 2001. <http://www.statcan.ca/english/census96/define.html>.

Sullivan, L. and G. Halseth. 2004. Responses of volunteer groups in rural Canada to changing funding and service needs: Mackenzie and Tumbler Ridge, British Columbia. In *Building for Success: Explorations of Rural Community and Rural Development*, edited by Greg Halseth and Regine Halseth, 337-362. Brandon, Manitoba: Rural Development Institute and Canadian Rural Revitalization Foundation.

Te'eni, D. and D. Young. 2003. The changing role of non-profits in the network economy. *Non-profit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly* 32 (3): 397-414.

Tupper, A. 2000/2001. The contested terrain of Canadian public administration in Canada's third century. *Journal of Canadian Studies* 35 (4): 142-160.

van der Voort, J. and L. Meijs. 2004. Partnerships in perspective: About sustainable relationships between companies and voluntary organizations. *The Nonprofit Review* 4 (1): 9-18.

Wall, E. 1999. *Tweed and Blenheim, Ontario*. In *Voluntary Organizations in Rural Canada: Final Report*, edited by Bill Reimer, 4.17-4.36. Montreal, Quebec: Canadian Rural Restructuring Foundation. Concordia University.

Wall, E., G. Ferrazzi, and F. Schryer. 1998. Getting the goods on social capital. *Rural Sociology* 63 (2): 300-322.

Wall, E. and T. Gordon. 1999. Voluntary organizations in rural Canada: An education strategy. In *Voluntary Organizations in Rural Canada: Final Report*, edited by Bill Reimer, 3.1-3.30. Montreal, Quebec: Canadian Rural Restructuring Foundation. Concordia University.

Wallis, A. 1998. Social capital and community building: Part two. *National Civic Review* 87 (4): 317-336.

Werther, W. and E. Berman. 2004. Leading the transformation of boards. *Nonprofit World* 22 (2): 9-13.

Appendix A

	Page Number
Consent Form	92
Innovative Services and Voluntary Organizations Interview Guide	93

Interview Consent Form

Purpose - Restructuring of rural and small town service provision has occurred in concert with restructuring of resource-based industries, with the result that many places have lost services and local residents must now travel to adjacent centres to access services. The implications for community sustainability are clear, as households requiring services will consider relocating. Therefore, the purpose of this research is to learn more about innovative and voluntary services offered to meet local needs.

How Respondents Were Chosen - The survey participants were chosen on the basis that they were residents of the community and have interacted with our research team before as local key contacts for various groups and organizations.

Anonymity And Confidentiality - All information shared in this interview will be held within strict confidence by the researchers. All records will be kept in a locked research room at UNBC. The information will be kept until the final report of the project is complete. After this time, shredding will destroy all related to the interview.

Potential Risks And Benefits - This project has been assessed by the UNBC Research Ethics Board. We believe that this interview process poses no risks to individuals, and we hope that by participating you will have a chance to provide input into how your quality of life is affected by services in your town, and to voice some of your own personal needs for the community.

Voluntary Participation - Your participation in the research project is entirely voluntary and, as such, you may chose not to participate. If you participate, you have the right to terminate the interview at anytime.

Research Results - In case of any questions that may arise from this research, please feel free to contact Dr. Greg Halseth in the Geography Program at UNBC (250) 960-5826. Please feel free to also contact Dr. Halseth to inquire about obtaining a copy of the final research results. Upon completion of a public presentation in community X, the final research report will be donated to the public library.

Complaints - Any complaints about this project should be directed to the Office of Research and Graduate Studies, UNBC (250) 960-5820

I have read the above description of the study and I understand the conditions of my participation. My signature indicates that I agree to participate in this study.

(Name -please print)

(Signature)

(Date)

**Innovative Service Providers and Voluntary Organizations in Rural and Small Town
Places:**

A Survey for the Building Rural Capacity in the New Economy Project

**Greg Halseth, Canada Research Chair
Rural and Small Town Studies Program
University of Northern British Columbia**

2005

Innovative Service Providers and Voluntary Organizations in Rural and Small Town Places

GENERAL

There is a need to learn more about innovative service providers and voluntary organizations in rural and small town places. Organizations providing local services play an important role in building the social capital and social cohesion necessary to respond to forces of change. Such services are important during periods of transition, and can improve interactions and quality of life. Such services can also provide a foundation for retaining and attracting businesses and residents.

Please note that the use of the word organization is meant to be all encompassing. It can include volunteer, for-profit, and non-profit groups.

UPDATE

Last year, we conducted an interview with your organization as part of a project tracking voluntary and / or innovative service organizations. This year, we wish to check back with you about any notable changes that have occurred over the past 12 months.

This year, we are also interested in learning about the role that gender may play in your organization. Gender may affect participation in your organization (i.e. who talks, who listens, who is responsible for what), or affect availability due to differing levels of other commitments (i.e. family, work, or other responsibilities).

This survey has twelve sections: background information on the organization, structure, demographics, clients, logistical operations, changes to service delivery, networks and relationships, social capital and social cohesion, funding, general organization profile, technology, and personal information on the interviewee.

Please answer sections that you feel are relevant to your organization, and **thank you for your time.**

Your participation in this survey is strictly voluntary. You may withdraw from the interview at anytime.

Section A: Background Information On The Organization.

In this first section of the survey, we would like to ask about your organization and the goals that it has set up.

A1. Name of organization: _____

A2a. Has the focus of your organization changed **over the last year**?

1. Yes
2. No

A2b. If yes, please indicate the new focus of your organization? (*Please select all that apply*).

1. Environment & Wildlife
2. Multi-domain
3. Arts & Culture
4. Health
5. Law & Justice
6. Social Services
7. Foreign & International Organizations
8. Sports & Recreation
9. Society & Public Benefit
10. Religious Organization
11. Education & Youth Development
12. Employment & Economic Interests
13. Women
14. First Nations
15. Other (*Please specify*): _____

A3. Does your organization **still** have a mission statement?

1. Yes
2. No

A4. If your mission statement is new or has changed **over the last year**, can you please state it?

Section B: Structure

In this section, we would like to ask if the structure of your organization has changed during the past year.

B1a. Does your organization **still** have a president/chairperson/owner?

1. Yes (*please go to question B1b*)
2. No, but used to have one (*please go to question B1g*)
3. No, our organization never had one (*please go to question B2a*)

B1b. If yes, what is the gender of the president / chairperson / owner?

1. Male
2. Female

B1c. If yes, is the leader **still** elected?

1. Yes (*please go to question B1e*)
2. No (*please go to question B1d*)

B1d. If no, can you please explain?

B1e. If yes, by whom are they elected?

B1f. If yes, is this leadership position **still** a voluntary or paid position?

1. Voluntary
2. Paid
3. Other (*Please specify*): _____

B1g. If your organization no longer has a leader, can you please explain why?

B2a. Does your organization **still** have a board of directors?

1. Yes (*please go to question B2b*)
2. No, but used to have one (*please go to question B2g*)
3. No, our organization never had one (*please go to B3*)

B2b. If yes, how many board members are male or female?

1. Number of male board members _____
2. Number of female board members _____

B2c. If yes, are they **still** elected or appointed?

1. Elected
2. Appointed
3. Mix of elected and appointed

B2d. If yes, are they **still** voluntary or paid positions?

1. Voluntary
2. Paid
3. Other (*Please specify*): _____

B2e. If yes, are there any local leaders (i.e. mayor, councillors, local industry leaders) on your board of directors?

1. Yes
2. No

Please list the types of local leaders on your organization:

B2f. Please identify any reasons why your organization originally adopted a board of directors?

1. In response to regulation requirements
2. In response to funding requirements
3. Mandate of the organization expanded
4. Growth in the organization
5. Accountability
6. Other: please explain _____

B2g. If your organization no longer has a board of directors, can you please explain why?

B3. How many members (*defined as those assisting in some way in making decisions, delivering a service, etc*) **currently** make up your organization?

Total _____

B4a. **Over the past year**, have there been any changes in the number of core / active members in your organization? (*Note to interviewer: allow the respondent to define for themselves what they consider to be a core or active person*)

1. Yes
2. No

B4b. If yes, please indicate the number of core / active people _____

B5. Of the decisions that are made by your organization, how many people would you say hold the main decision making power and responsibilities?

1. 1-2 people
2. 3-5 people
3. 6-10 people
4. More than 10 people
5. Evenly divided amongst all members

Section C: Demographics Of Your Organization

In this section, we would like to explore if the demographics of your organization has changed over the last year, so that we can get a better understanding of who you are working with.

C1. If your organization has lost members/employees **over the last year**, please circle all of the reasons why you think that loss happened?

1. Chose to retire due to age
2. Chose to retire because of lengthy service to our organization
3. Lost interest
4. Moved away
5. No longer agree with mission/goals
6. Lack of time or ability to participate
7. Personality conflicts
8. Family / personal reasons
 - Childcare
 - Caring for elderly relatives
 - Health
 - Mental health
 - Other family / personal reasons (please specify): _____
9. Other (*Please specify*): _____

C2a. Has your organization needed to recruit new board members **over the last year**?

1. Yes (*please go to question C2b*)
2. No

C2b. If yes, has it been easy to find new board members?

Very Easy	Easy	Neutral	Difficult	Very Difficult
1	2	3	4	5

C2c. Over the past year, what specific steps have you taken to recruit **new board members**?

C3a. Has your organization needed to recruit new general members or employees **over the last year?**

1. Yes (*please go to question C3b*)
2. No

C3b. If yes, has it been easy to find new general members/employees?

Very Easy	Easy	Neutral	Difficult	Very Difficult
1	2	3	4	5

C3c. Over the past year, what specific steps have you taken to recruit **new members /employees?**

Section D: Clients

In this section, we would like to ask you about changes in the people and areas that your organization serves.

D1a. Does your organization **continue** to offer/deliver services to people?

1. Yes
2. No, but used to offer service to people (*Please go to D2a*)
3. No, our organization never offered services to people (*Please go to D2a*)

D1b. If yes, has the composition of the people your organization serves changed **over the last year**?

1. Yes
2. No

D1c. If yes, please describe the people who benefit from the service(s)?

D2a. Has / have the geographic “reach” of your service(s) changed **over the last year**?

1. Yes
2. No (*please go to question D3*)

D2b. If yes, please specify the **new** area that your organization serves:

1. This community only (*use site boundaries*)
2. This community and the immediate surrounding communities(*list*):_____
3. Widely beyond this community (*list*):_____
4. Other (*Please specify*):_____

D3. Over the past year, have there been any changes in the forms of communication that your organization used to communicate with the people it services? With members, funders, partners? Place a check in all the columns that apply. (*Note to interviewer: it will be important to know how this matrix was completed last year.*)

Form of communication	Clients	Members	Funders	Partners	Comments
Newsletter					
Website					
E-mail					
Word of mouth/ use other organizations					
Personal contact					
Post notices in prominent places					
Information brochures					
Reports given to other organizations					
Run stories in media					
Advertise in media					
Telephone chain					
Conferences					
Workshops					
Public rally					
Other (please specify)					

Section E: Logistical Operating Questions

In this section, we would like to ask about the operation of your organization.

E1a. Does your organization **still** have office space?

1. Yes, our own
2. Yes, shared with other organizations or businesses
3. Yes, we use home office space (i.e. a member's kitchen, den or home office space that is primarily used for other matters)
4. Yes, we have specific home office space (dedicated primarily to the organization)
5. No, but a business/organization provides us with some office support
6. No, but used to have office space
7. No, never had any office space
8. Other (*Please specify*): _____

E1b. Have there been any changes in the number of staff **over the last year**?

1. Yes
2. No, number of staff has remained the same
3. No, organization did not have any staff

E1c. If yes, please indicate the current staffing levels of your organization:

Paid:

1. Full-time paid staff (20 hours / week or more). # **male** _____
2. Full-time paid staff (20 hours / week or more). # **female** _____
3. Part-time paid staff (19 hours / week or less). # **male** _____
4. Part-time paid staff (19 hours / week or less). # **female** _____

Volunteer:

5. Full-time vol. staff (20 hours / week or more). # **male** _____
6. Full-time vol. staff (20 hours / week or more). # **female** _____
7. Part-time vol. staff (19 hours / week or less). # **male** _____
8. Part-time vol. staff (19 hours / week or less). # **female** _____
9. Occasional vol. staff (a few hours / week). # **male** _____
10. Occasional vol. staff (a few hours / week). # **female** _____

E2. Please describe any challenges that your organization has faced over the last year?
(Note to interviewer: check against last year's responses.)

Challenge	E2a. Yes / No	E2b. How has your organization responded to these challenges?
No funding		
Government funding cut backs		
Lack of members		
Little participation by members		
Declining enrollments		
Building deterioration		
Lack of meeting space		
Difficulty getting staff		
Lack of local support		
Out-migration		
First objectives were too ambitious		
Poor management		
Lack of new leadership		
Lack of partners or outside networks (isolation)		
A need to revisit objectives		
Psychological burnout		
Communication problems		
Volunteer burnout		
Lack of expertise		
Discrimination		
Other (please specify)		

E3. Who has primary control over the organization's budget (*annual amount*)?

1. Local people
 2. Regional body
 3. Provincial body
 4. National body
 5. Other (*Please explain*):
-

E4. Who has primary control over how the budget is distributed across different line items of expenditure?

1. Local people
 2. Regional body
 3. Provincial body
 4. National body
 5. Other (*Please explain*):
-

E5. Who has primary control for setting the major policy (*the primary objectives*) and program (*which programs and services are delivered*) directions of your organization?

1. Local people
 2. Regional body
 3. Provincial body
 4. National body
 5. Other (*Please explain*):
-

Section F: Changes to Service Delivery by Volunteer Organizations & Innovative Services

In this section, we are interested in the changes in services that are provided by your organization and other groups in your community.

F1. Have there been any changes to your organization's services offered **over the past year**?

1. Yes (please go to F2)
2. No (please go to F4)

F2. If yes, can you please identify the types of changes in services or programs offered **over the last year**? (Note to interviewer: check against list from last year's list of services)

1. New services / programs offered
2. Service cutbacks / fewer programs offered
3. Closure of services / programs
4. Other: please explain: _____

F3. Can you please explain why there were changes in services or programs offered over the past year?

F4. Have any local service closures been covered by any **local** service providers / voluntary organizations?

1. Yes
2. No

If yes, please explain: _____

F5. Did your organization respond to any service cut backs or closures over the last year?

1. Yes
2. No

If yes, please explain: _____

F6. Did any service providers or voluntary organizations emerge over the past year to provide a similar service to your organization during the last year?

Section G: Networks and Relationships

In this section of the survey, we are interested any changes in how your organization networks.

G1. What importance do you place on developing the following types of partnerships? (*Please circle the appropriate number*)

	Very Important	More Important	Important	Less Important	Not Important	Does Not Apply
Municipal government	1	2	3	4	5	6
Provincial government	1	2	3	4	5	6
Federal government	1	2	3	4	5	6
Other municipalities	1	2	3	4	5	6
Local businesses / corporations	1	2	3	4	5	6
Non-local businesses / corporations	1	2	3	4	5	6
Local voluntary groups	1	2	3	4	5	6
Non-local voluntary groups	1	2	3	4	5	6
Local service providers	1	2	3	4	5	6
Non-local service providers	1	2	3	4	5	6
Other: please identify _____	1	2	3	4	5	6

G2a. Has your organization **formed** partnerships with volunteer groups, businesses, institutions, government **outside of the community over the last year?**

1. Yes
2. No (*If no, please move onto question G2g*)

G2b. If yes, please list the names and location of any **new** partnerships developed **over the last year.**

G2c. If your organization has a board of directors, did local board members use their contacts / networks to develop any partnerships **outside** of the community?

1. Yes
2. No

G2d. If your organization has a board of directors, did non-local board members use their contacts / networks to develop any partnerships **outside of the community?**

1. Yes
2. No

G2e. Please list all of the partnerships your organization has with groups outside of the community.	G2f. How would you rate the effectiveness of these linkages or partnerships with groups outside of the community?					
	Very Effective	Effective	Neutral	Not Effective	Very Not Effective	Don't Know
1.)						
2.)						
3.)						
4.)						
5.)						

G2g. Have any partnerships with volunteer groups, businesses, or institutions **outside of the community been terminated **over the last year**?**

1. Yes
2. No (*please go to question G3a*)

G2h. If yes, please list the names and location of these partnerships, as well as the circumstances of the termination of the partnership:

G3a. Has your organization formed partnerships with **local** volunteer groups, businesses, institutions, government etc. **over the past year?**

1. Yes
2. No (*please move on to question G3g*)

G3b. If yes, please list the names and location of any new local partnerships developed **over the last year.**

G3c. If your organization has a board of directors, did **local** board members use their contacts / networks to develop any **local** partnerships in the past?

1. Yes
2. No

G3d. If your organization has a board of directors, did **non-local** board members use their contacts / networks to develop any **local** partnerships in the past?

1. Yes
2. No

G3e. Please list all of the partnerships your organization has with local groups of the community.	G3f. How would you rate the effectiveness of these linkages or partnerships with local groups of the community?					
	Very Effective	Effective	Neutral	Not Effective	Very Not Effective	Don't Know
1.)						
2.)						
3.)						
4.)						
5.)						

G3g. Have any partnerships with **local** volunteer groups, businesses, or institutions been terminated **over the last year**?

1. Yes
2. No (*please go to question G4*)

G3h. If yes, please list the names and location of these partnerships, as well as the circumstances of the termination of the partnership:

G4. Have any of the partnerships your group has led to the adoption of any of the following:

	Yes	No
Change in regulations	1	2
Change in mandate	1	2
Change in administration / organizational structure	1	2
Change in products / services	1	2
New technology	1	2
New expertise	1	2
Expansion of networks	1	2

G5. Please describe how your relationships with other **local** volunteer groups, businesses, and institutions have **changed over the last year**. Do you work well together to provide services, share space, etc.? (*Please give examples*)

G6. Has your relationship with the municipal government **changed over the last year**? Do you receive funding, information, resources, or moral support? (*Please explain*)

G7. Over the last year, are there any interesting things have you done together with other groups/organizations in order to deliver programs or services? (*Examples might be: the building is open to the public after hours, special programs, co-op work placement for students in local businesses, local government speaks in the classroom, etc.*) Please name the groups and describe the innovations.

1. With **local businesses**.

2. With **businesses outside** the community.

3. With other **organizations within** the community.

4. With **organizations outside** the community.

5. With **local government**.

6. With **other** levels of government.

7. With other **community members**.

G8. Over the last year, have there been any changes in the sources of information your organization used? (Check as many as apply). (Note to Interviewer: check against list from last year).

Source	To help make important decisions	To obtain advice and guidance	To identify mandate/service options	To collect information	For other reasons
Management					
Staff					
Customers					
Local government					
“Sector” associations (i.e. Rotary, Lion’s)					
Universities, colleges, research centres					
Federal/ Provincial Government departments					
Financial institutions					
Business community					
Family and friends					
Internet					
General media					
Other (please specify)					

Section H: Social Capital and Social Cohesion

In this section, we would like to better understand the interactions your organization had working with other organizations in the past, and how these relationships have impacted your decisions to work with them again in the present or future.

H1. Do you think people have confidence in your organization to carry through with promised activities / projects?

1. Yes
2. No
3. Don't Know

Explain:

H2a. Do you think people in your community have trust / confidence in the organization?

1. Yes
2. No
3. Don't Know

H2b. If yes, how can you tell?

H3. Can you give any examples of people relying on your group / organization for help / support / advice?

H4a. If you or your organization needed help / support / advice, what groups would you trust?

H4b. How effective are each of the following people or groups in supporting your community?

Person / Group	Very Effective	Effective	Neutral	Not Effective	Very Not Effective	Don't Know
Mayor	1	2	3	4	5	6
Municipal councillors	1	2	3	4	5	6
Local business leaders	1	2	3	4	5	6
Elected provincial representation (MLA)	1	2	3	4	5	6
Elected federal representation (MP)	1	2	3	4	5	6
Chamber of Commerce	1	2	3	4	5	6
Service providers	1	2	3	4	5	6
Voluntary groups	1	2	3	4	5	6

H5a. Can you think of any **socially stressful** events that have occurred in your community during the past five years? (probe: i.e. an accident or social loss)

H5b. From the above list, what would you classify as the top two **socially stressful** events that occurred in your community during the past five years?

#1 Socially Stressful Event

#2 Socially Stressful Event

H5c. Please describe if you agree or disagree with whether the following events that occurred in your community's history were **socially stressful** to local residents.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
Socially Stressful Event #1 _____						
Socially Stressful Event #2 _____						

H6a. Can you think of any **economically stressful** events that have occurred in your community during the past five years? (probe: i.e. closure of a business or an industry, cutbacks, or layoffs)

H6b. From the above list, what would you classify as the top two **economically stressful** events that occurred in your community during the past five years?

#1 Economically Stressful Event

#2 Economically Stressful Event

H6c. Please describe if you agree or disagree with whether the following events that occurred in your community's history were **economically stressful** to local residents.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
Economically Stressful Event #1 _____						
Economically Stressful Event #2 _____						

H7. What do you recall was the initial reaction of local residents to these four (two social, two economic) stressful events?

#1 Socially Stressful Event - _____

H7a. How did residents recover from these stressors?

H7b. How did your organization initially react to the stressors?

H7c. Did your organization play a role in helping residents recover from the stressful events?

H7d. What other organizations played a central role in helping residents recover from the stressful events?

H8. What do you recall was the initial reaction of local residents to these four (two social, two economic) stressful events?

#2 Socially Stressful Event - _____

H8a. How did residents recover from these stressors?

H8b. How did your organization initially react to the stressors?

H8c. Did your organization play a role in helping residents recover from the stressful events?

H8d. What other organizations played a central role in helping residents recover from the stressful events?

H9. What do you recall was the initial reaction of local residents to these four (two social, two economic) stressful events?

#1 Economically Stressful Event - _____

H9a. How did residents recover from these stressors?

H9b. How did your organization initially react to the stressors?

H9c. Did your organization play a role in helping residents recover from the stressful events?

H9d. What other organizations played a central role in helping residents recover from the stressful events?

H10. What do you recall was the initial reaction of local residents to these four (two social, two economic) stressful events?

#2 Economically Stressful Event - _____

H10a. How did residents recover from these stressors?

H10b. How did your organization initially react to the stressors?

H10c. Did your organization play a role in helping residents recover from the stressful events?

H10d. What other organizations played a central role in helping residents recover from the stressful events?

Section I: Funding

In this section, we would like to identify any **changes** in funding that supports your organization. (This section is specifically for volunteer services.)

II. What sources of funding / revenue has your organization pursued / applied for and received **over the last year**? Please describe the nature of the funding/programs. (*Note to interviewer: check against information provided last year*).

Source	Pursued / Applied For Yes / No	Funds Received Yes / No	Comment/Description
Private donations			
Corporate donations			
Government grants - Federal			
Government grants - Provincial			
Government grants - Municipal			
Government program - Federal			
Government program - Provincial			
Government program - Municipal			
Personal funds from members			
Membership fees			
Revenue from service provided			
Fundraising in the community			
Other (Please specify)			

I2. If you obtained funding, were any of the following conditions required to receive funds?

	Yes	No
Private funding	1	2
Must have charitable status	1	2
A partnership	1	2
A board of directors	1	2
Belong to a professional / sector association	1	2
Adoption of regulations	1	2
Provide services to a particular group / client base	1	2
A change in services provided to a particular groups / client base	1	2
Location in a specific geographic area	1	2
Other: please explain _____	1	2

I3. Is the funding short-term or long term?

Source	Short-Term (Less than 1 Year) Yes / No	Long-Term (Multiple Years) Yes / No	Comment/Description
Private donations			
Corporate donations			
Government grants - Federal			
Government grants -Provincial			
Government grants - Municipal			
Government program - Federal			
Government program - Provincial			
Government program - Municipal			
Personal funds from members			
Membership fees			
Revenue from service provided			
Fundraising in the community			
Other (Please specify)			

I4. If your organization has a board of directors, how effective were board members in pursuing / obtaining funding?

Very Effective	Effective	Neutral	Not Effective	Very Not Effective	Don't Know
1	2	3	4	5	6

Section J: General Organization Profile

In this section, we are interested in some background information on your organization.

J1a. Is your organization **still** primarily:

1. Voluntary
2. Non-profit
3. Cooperative (*Co-op*)
4. Business
5. Government

J1b. Does your organization have charitable status?

1. Yes
2. No

J1c. If a business, has the ownership structure of your business changed **over the last year**?

1. Yes (*please go to question J1d*)
2. No (*please go to question J1e*)

J1d. If yes, please indicate the new ownership structure of your organization:

1. I am the sole owner.
2. I own the business in partnership with other(s) in my family
3. I own the business in partnership with other(s)
4. Other (*please specify*): _____

J1e. If this is a Co-op, what is the total membership? _____

Section K: Technology

This section is on technology. Technology can be used by all organizations, voluntary and non voluntary.

K1a. What importance do you place on adopting new technologies for each of the following points? *(Please circle the appropriate number)*

	Very Important	More Important	Important	Less Important	Not Important	Does Not Apply
To develop new products/services	1	2	3	4	5	6
To use new equipment	1	2	3	4	5	6
To better meet the needs of the people your organization serves	1	2	3	4	5	6
To access funding	1	2	3	4	5	6
To access information	1	2	3	4	5	6
To recruit new employees/staff/volunteers	1	2	3	4	5	6
To develop more expertise	1	2	3	4	5	6
To address your training needs	1	2	3	4	5	6
For other reasons <i>(please specify):</i> _____	1	2	3	4	5	6

K1b. Over the past year, has your organization adopted any technology to do the following tasks? *(Please circle the appropriate number)*

	Yes	No
To develop new products/services	1	2
To use new equipment	1	2
To better meet the needs of the people your organization serves	1	2
To recruit new employees/staff/volunteers	1	2
To access funding	1	2

	1
	2
To access information	
	1
	2
To develop more expertise	
	1
	2
To address your training needs	
	1
	2
For other reasons	
	1
	2
<i>(please specify):</i> _____	

K1c. If yes, can you please describe the technology that has been used?

K2. What is the importance of the internet for your organization? (*Please circle the appropriate number*).

	Very Important	More Important	Important	Less Important	Not Important	Does Not Apply
The Internet has improved access to the information we need	1	2	3	4	5	6
The Internet has improved our access to government information	1	2	3	4	5	6
The Internet has had a positive impact on our relationships with people in our community	1	2	3	4	5	6
The Internet has improved our relationships with people outside our community	1	2	3	4	5	6

Section L: Personal Information On The Interviewee

In this section, we are interested in who you are, so that we can have an understanding of who is in your community.

L1a. In which of the following categories is your age:

1. Under 15 years
2. 16-25 years
3. 26-44 years
4. 45-64 years
5. 65 years or more

L1b. What is your gender?

1. Male
2. Female

L2. What is your current occupation?

L3. Where is your place of work?

1. In this community
2. In another community (*Please state distance away _____ km*)
3. Currently not employed

L4. How long have you been with your current community group?
_____ years.

L5. For how many more years do you hope to remain with this community group?
_____ years.

L6. Are you involved in any other public or voluntary organizations in the community?

1. Yes
2. No

L7. If you answered yes to the last question, would you please list the organizations.

L8. Is there any thing else about your community organization and the services that it provides that you would like to add?

Thank you for your time and assistance.