Lessons Learned in Capacity Building:

A Review of the Community Development Education Projects of the Social Planning & Research Council of British Columbia

by

Danyta Leigh Welch
B.A., University of Victoria, 1999

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Abstract

In rural areas across British Columbia capacity building is seen as an answer to declining economic, social and ecological conditions and regional capacity building organizations are delivering community development education projects in response. However, not enough is known about how community development education projects or regional organizations contribute to capacity building in rural regions. The intent of this thesis is to learn from the experience of Social Planning & Research Council of BC (SPARC BC) about the ways regional capacity building organizations can use community development education to positively impact capacity building in rural regions such as those in BC.

A review of SPARC BC materials was conducted to locate SPARC BC within capacity building typologies identified in the literature. A questionnaire was administered to SPARC BC's project participants to gain an understanding of how its approaches to community development education impacted capacity building. Questionnaire findings were interpreted in consultation with SPARC staff.

This thesis draws conclusions at three levels. First, the questionnaire highlights the experience of community members and demonstrates that SPARC BC's workshops were well-received, with the most impact being seen at the level of community relationship building. Second, by combining these findings with evaluations of two other projects, a number of themes are exposed, including the need for understanding community context, providing follow-up, and recognizing the diversity of each community. Third, the questionnaire and themes are used to explore the lessons that have been learned and which inform regional capacity building organizations providing community development education. Two of the lessons, encouraging community ownership and recognizing the iterative nature of capacity building, speak directly to the long-term nature of delivering community development education, while the lessons of diversity and transparency suggest
improvements to how regional organizations work with communities. The final lessons of reflection and collaboration speak to the internal operations of capacity building organizations.

Overall, the lessons learned from SPARC BC suggest that regional capacity building organizations have an important role to play and that increased reflection on both the process and outcomes of capacity building projects could strengthen community development education in rural regions.
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Chapter 1: Introduction

In communities across British Columbia, from remote villages to vast agricultural regions and scattered small towns, capacity building has become a catchphrase for promoting economic growth, social vibrancy, quality of life and local development. The federal government has come to realize that “strong rural areas are the result of long-term capacity building that empowers community members” (Policy Research Initiative, 2004) and the 2002 National Rural Conference raised awareness of the need for government sponsored capacity building programs to be made more accessible (Rural Secretariat, 2004). The reasons for this are multiple and complex, but in many cases the push for community capacity building has grown out of the realization that individual communities can no longer rely on local, provincial or federal levels of government to provide social, economic and ecological well-being. This is seen in two recent provincial government changes. First, BC’s 2003 Community Charter legislation induced “uncertainty regarding the scope and control over service delivery” in the province (Long, 2004), and, secondly, the Core Review process, in which the provincial government re-examined their role in service provision, resulted in the abandonment of many community-based services which the government identified as no longer being within the provincial mandate. As well, the increased use of “third party governance” (the delivery of services by a third party, instead of the provincial and federal governments) over the past decade (Joyce, 2004:6) and the increased downloading and offloading of service delivery to local organizations has greatly changed the context of how communities are supported in BC.

In concert with provincial changes, development at the global scale is also impacting BC communities. For example, the growing domination by the global market, the trends of under- and unemployment and quickening pace of the world economy have placed “additional burdens on community service workers” and “altered the context for the practice of community development” (Hudson, 2004:253). As seen in numerous single-industry towns in BC, increased dependence on global markets has resulted in decreased resilience and has
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highlighted the extent to which even small, rural and often remote locations have become entangled in global economic structures and how “once vibrant and vital places” are now “on the edge of survival” (Ronaghan, 2003).

Within communities and community organizations, numerous trends have also been identified which add to the challenge of community sustainability and of the ability of local organizations to take on increased capacity building activities. For example, research by the Social Planning and Research Council of BC (SPARC BC) with numerous northern and rural communities in BC indicated that:

- Some communities were losing their populations so quickly that there were not enough people to engage in community development projects.

- The dependence on volunteers and the issue of volunteer turnover made some organizations unsure if they were able to take on a social planning function.

- Competition with other organizations, and in some cases with local First Nations, funding cut-backs, and the recent trend towards funding that is tied to service-delivery is impeding funding opportunities for community development (SPARC BC, 2004a).

Within the province, the need for community development has become associated with numerous sectors of the population, often in rural locations. For example, province-wide dialogues have identified that people with disabilities (Elshibli, 2002), First Nations (Canadian Rural Partnership, 2002b), youth (BC Youth Network, 2003) and women (BC Women's Rural Project, 2001) each have particular needs and that significant gaps exist in terms of service provisions for these populations. As well, the need for community development has been defined geographically, and research by SPARC BC (2004a) has determined that the regional coverage of community development education programs and services are unevenly dispersed across the province, especially in rural and remote areas. Significant gaps have been identified in numerous regions of the province,
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including the North West (Prince George, Fort St. John/Dawson Creek), Cariboo North (Williams Lake), Okanagan (North, Central, and South), Boundary (Grand Forks), Kootenay West (Nelson), and North Vancouver Island (Courtenay/Comox Valley and Port Alberni).

As well, many communities are beginning to identify their specific needs in terms of programming for community development. Dempsey (2001) has demonstrated that community development learning is in demand across the province to improve current practices, disseminate the 'community development ethic', and bring more people into the field of community development. Her research has also identified that community development education and training needs to be delivered in the community rather than the classroom; be financially and geographically accessible at a variety of skill levels; include mentorship by experienced practitioners; and include a large portion of practical, hands-on experience. Similarly, the need to “democratize learning by engaging in real partnerships with communities and their grass roots development organizations to take learning to those with least opportunities” was identified by participants at the Best Practices in Learning Communities workshop (Skills Development Canada, 2004). Thus, even with the diverse geographic and population spectrum of community planning need across the province, it is becoming apparent that many communities require similar support for capacity building: a set of tools they can “use to plan their own processes for dealing with a changing array of complex, conflict-producing problems and crises” (Boothroyd, 1991:3).

The good news is that people in rural communities appear to be up to the challenge and small communities themselves appear to be ripe grounds for community initiatives. In the 2003 General Survey on Social Engagement, 68% of British Columbians stated they had a somewhat or very strong sense of belonging in their community, as well as high levels of belonging in the province (75%) and the country (87%). This research also showed that those living in rural areas or small towns reported a higher sense of belonging to their community than those living in cities or metropolitan areas (Schellenberg, 2004:18). As well, the
province is peppered with local and regional community development organizations and the non-profit sector is thriving in many small towns. For example, BC boasts 33 Community Futures agencies (Community Futures website, Accessed May 2005), 45 community-based social planning focused organizations, 20 municipal advisory committees which incorporate social planning and a strong assortment of learning communities, community networks and other community development organizations throughout the province (SPARC BC, 2004d).

With all factors combined, many smaller communities in British Columbia have turned to capacity building projects as a first step in community development, survival and re-growth. But what is capacity building exactly? For many, it is both an ends and means to community development. Then, what is community development? We seem to know that it has something to do with “voluntary and healthy interdependence, mutual benefit and shared responsibility” (Frank, 1999) and a review of the literature by Hudson (2004:255) demonstrates that academia tends to place a “strong focus on social justice and local communities” when describing community development. However, there is no single definition for either term. Nor is there a meaningful and widely accepted evaluation scheme for community development projects. The sheer volume of projects which have at one point in time been defined as ‘community development’ or ‘capacity building’ and the wide array of academic literature which tends to continuously broaden the scope of these terms also makes defining the concepts difficult.

For the purpose of this research, an exact or exhaustive definition of community development is not required. The focus is on how communities acquire the skills and capacities required to maintain or re-establish the economic, social and ecological integrity of their communities and the well-being of those who reside within. This focus raises such questions as: How does community capacity building contribute to community development? How do communities develop capacity? And, perhaps more importantly, how do communities know which capacities they need to develop, who is the appropriate teacher, and what does community development education look like?
To a large extent, answers to these questions can be found in the field of social planning. According to Bromley (2003) ‘social’ is “one of the widest and most ambiguous of the adjectives that can precede and define planning,” however, it is partly within the community social planning sector that community development and community capacity building have entered the planning agenda in British Columbia. Community social planning can be defined as “a continuous cycle of developing visions of what citizens would like their community to be, making choices and selecting goals for achieving the visions” (Seebaran, 2003:3). Organizations in this field work in communities to support this cycle by providing training, workshops, supports and other services; the breadth of which is considered to be community development education. In the case of regional organizations, such as SPARC BC, this often means working in numerous communities at the same time and balancing the diverse needs of different communities within a common framework of community development education.

However, the provision of community development education does not necessarily translate into the community capacity building, especially when little or no evaluation or analysis of community development education projects is undertaken. For example, there is a general sense in BC that many organizations providing capacity building programs are struggling with many of the same issues, but are not working together to address them. This was recently captured as “are others struggling with the same issues and design challenges?” in the recent report, *CED Leadership* (Colussi, 2005a:6); suggesting that the provincial community development sector is not effectively documenting, analyzing or sharing their experiences in delivering community programs. Overall, it appears that not enough is known about how community development education projects contribute to local capacity building in rural and remote regions of BC.

To add to this gap, there is also not enough known about the effectiveness of regional organizations in contributing to capacity building in the communities in which they visit to deliver services. For example, although SPARC BC undertakes evaluations of each workshop it delivers and evaluation reports have been written
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for at least two of its community development education projects in recent years, a systematic review of its community development education approach, and its impact on community capacity building, has not been undertaken.

The intent of this thesis is to learn from the experience of SPARC BC about ways regional capacity building organizations can use community development education programs to positively impact capacity building in small towns and rural communities in BC, or in similar regions. In particular the research will examine the opportunities and constraints facing organizations like SPARC BC in undertaking community development education programs for capacity building and explore the lessons to be learned for regional capacity building organizations through a number of SPARC BC’s community development education programs.

Initially SPARC BC was chosen as the focus of the research because I had the opportunity to work with the organization as part of an internship in the summer of 2004 and had attended another of its community development events, the Community Development Institute (Comox Valley), as a participant in 2000. During the internship, I worked on the Community Development Education Pilot project, SPARC BC’s newest community development education endeavour. As part of the internship I assisted with the development of the project, as well as with the application stage and selection of the first five communities to work with SPARC BC under the pilot. This experience allowed me to gain first hand knowledge about the experience of many community development focused organizations in rural and northern regions of BC and to start to develop a number of questions about the use of community development education as a capacity building tool. Additionally, it provided me the opportunity to develop working relations with the staff at SPARC BC, as well with some of the rural organizations, and to learn more about the other SPARC BC community development education approaches that are explored in this thesis.

As well, the history, structure and programming of SPARC BC made it a useful and informative source for this research for numerous reasons. First, the organization
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has a lengthy history of providing support and guidance to small and rural regions of BC, in part through its priority activity of strengthening smaller, localized community social planning organizations in the province. This is evidenced in part by support networks SPARC BC has established, such as the Community Social Planning network. Second, SPARC BC has undertaken ample research to advance the credibility of community social planning and mobilize solutions to the community issues and challenges of accessibility, income security and community development. Because of this, the organization is well informed about community issues in the province as well as many of the responses and community development projects that have taken place.

Finally, SPARC BC has established itself as a leader in the provision of community development education programs and the opportunity to continue this work in BC is ripe. According to a SWOT analysis undertaken by the organization in 2002 (see Appendix 1) these opportunities are as follows:

- There is tremendous demand for community development education and training in all parts of the province (including the rural areas outlined above), especially for low cost options.

- There is need for an easily accessible, up to date directory or inventory of community development education/training opportunities in BC.

- Community development education is very broad and can include a number of topics or core competencies (Modified from SPARC BC, 2004a).

With a lengthy history in community social planning, experience as a regional organization serving communities throughout the province, and a commitment to and established leadership role in community development education, the experience of SPARC BC is a solid foundation on which to explore how community development education programs can positively impact capacity building in small town and rural BC. From SPARC BC’s experience, lessons can be distilled about how community development education impacts communities and a contribution
can be made to the understanding of how regional organizations impact capacity building in local communities.
Chapter 2: Defining the Issues

An important first step in exploring the capacity building potential of community development education programs is to examine the relationship between the model that is used to facilitate a community process (e.g. community social planning), community development education and capacity building. As seen in Figure 2.1, this relationship can be presented in a linear fashion.

![Diagram of relationship between facilitating organization, community development education, and community capacity building](image)

**Figure 2.1: Relationship of Elements**

In this research, the facilitating organization is SPARC BC, a regional capacity building organization which uses the community social planning model. The scale that SPARC BC works at is an important element. In BC there are numerous community social planning councils and organizations which work in their respective local communities to promote community development. In the case of SPARC BC, the focus is not on one local community, but on numerous communities throughout the province. In order to manage this large scale, one of the foundations of regional service delivery is the encouragement of community participation in program delivery.

Community development education, through specific programs offered by organizations like SPARC BC, is one vehicle by which participation can be encouraged and is how regional organizations can undertake localized projects. Building community capacity is the goal of providing community development education. In many cases, capacity development is a long-term goal, sometimes taking years or even generations to achieve, and often requiring iterative and
multiple processes. To some, this makes it a "continuous and never-ending" process (Human Resources Development Canada, 1998:2). Due to this time requirement, it cannot be assumed that community development education programs always lead to immediate capacity building. Thus in Figure 2.1 capacity building is considered to be the ultimate, but not guaranteed, destination point.

Another important consideration relevant to Figure 2.1 is the ample literature debating the merits of capacity building as an ends or a means. For example, Frankish (2003) suggests that community capacity building is an iterative and cyclical process which should be considered a means of achieving community goals and not simply an ending point. Boothroyd (1991:8) adds that "the planning process itself has impacts on the community: both the process and the product are important." In agreement with both, in this research community social planning, community development education and capacity building are being considered in terms of both process and outcomes.

In order to better understand the relationship of the three components outlined in Figure 2.1 it is useful to define the key issues relating to how facilitating organizations deliver community development education in order to positively impact community capacity. In the following sections the concepts of community social planning, community development education and community capacity building are introduced. For each, a review of the literature is included to define the concept and provide context. Additionally, information relating to SPARC BC is provided when appropriate to provide the historical and organization background in which SPARC BC operates.

**Community Social Planning & SPARC BC**

In this research, the intent is to increase the understanding of how regional capacity building organizations can use community development education programs to positively impact capacity building in rural regions of BC. Not all regional organizations use the community social planning model to underpin their
efforts. However, as SPARC BC is the focus of this research, it is useful to explore community social planning in more detail and as an example of an approach available to regional capacity building organizations for the delivery of community development education.

The Social Planning & Research Council of BC (SPARC BC) is a non-profit community social planning organization which has operated in British Columbia since 1966. It has a Board of Directors drawn from across the province and extensive experience in research, advocacy and social policy in the areas of income security, accessibility and community development. SPARC BC’s mission is to “work with communities in building a just and healthy society for all” and its programming has included a number of community development education projects throughout the province, each of which has included a relatively high level of community participation and a focus on capacity building. This is demonstrated clearly in one of the guiding principles of its most recent program, which states that community development education activities “build capacity beyond the education delivery in the host community and among participants to become more self-reliant and able to participate in community development process” (SPARC BC, 2004a). As well, the values of SPARC BC speak to its commitment to the community social planning model:

- Social Justice: We strive for a just and healthy society, in which social, economic, and environmental well-being are indivisible, through advocating for equality, fairness, and dignity for all.

- Inclusion: We are committed to achieving access and full participation and engagement of all in our diverse society by fostering communication, leadership, partnership, and collaboration.

- Integrity: We are independent, accountable, and non-partisan.
Chapter 2: Defining the Issues

- Learning: We seek, develop and share knowledge and understanding, which encourages citizen participation and informs innovative, effective planning and decision-making (SPARC BC website, 2005).

As seen in this list of SPARC BC’s values, a key defining factor, which separates community social planning from other planning endeavours is the higher level of community participation that community social planning encourages and relies on. This typically happens in one of two ways: 1) residents and supporting agencies create or lead a planning process, or 2) an external agency enters a geographic community to guide a participatory process of on-going community development (Seebaran, 2003:3). The programs and mission of SPARC BC fall clearly into the latter category.

Insights into community social planning can also be drawn from the broader domain of social planning. Bromley (2003), in his review of social planning literature, provides a good overview of the possible categories in which social planning can be envisioned and which illuminates the wide array of activities undertaken under the banner of social planning. His breakdown is useful in locating a regional capacity building organization, like SPARC BC, and the community social planning model, within the social planning spectrum:

1. Societal transformation - a top-down approach where social planning aims at the remodelling and transformation of society as a whole, often in cases of economic struggle, such as poverty, and military threat.

2. Redistribution - a socio-economic approach to reducing inequalities and thereby limiting poverty, economic stagnation and social unrest.

3. Participation - social planning by the people and for the people wherein social planners provide skills in “monitoring public opinion, encouraging public awareness and participation in government decision-making, and supporting grass-roots initiatives through community planning workshops, petitions, counter proposals, and the support and proliferation of a wide range of local
development organizations, advocacy and lobbying organizations, and community-based social service providers” (822).

4. Social sectors - planning in the social sectors of the economy, with sectoral development in profitable areas (e.g. agriculture or forestry) and the provision of social services, such as health care and education.

5. Social services - the social welfare approach to planning wherein disadvantaged community members who cannot otherwise access services are provided for, by the government, non-profit agencies, or a combination of both.

Using Bromley’s criteria, community social planning, as practiced by SPARC BC, would fall under the participatory category. This is because SPARC BC operates as networker, broker, advocate and community development facilitator and tends to be a starting point for broader community development activities in the communities in which they work. For this reason, it can be considered to be a community catalyst. Frank (1999) describes a community catalyst as “an individual or group who believes change is possible and is willing to take the first steps that are needed to create interest and support.” She continues, “community development catalysts create a vision of what is possible. They ask questions and promote discussion among community members. By creating interest, energy and motivation for action, the catalyst makes community development come alive.” Although using different language, Frank’s description mirrors Bromley’s description of participatory social planning.

As agents of community change, community social planning organizations and facilitators have the ability to create tremendous impacts - both positive and negative. Because “community development is understood and practiced within a particular context,” (Hudson, 2004:250), and is certainly not practised in a vacuum (Seebaran, 2003) it is valuable to briefly examine the factors which can affect community social planning, and, by extension, the application of community development education to capacity building. To do so, Hudson (2004) employs the
concept of filters. These include the influences, factors and variables which shape communities, community development practitioners and the projects they undertake, as well as variables at a larger scale, such as political or economic climate. They include:

1. Individual filter - the “complex combination of values, beliefs, language and ideas acquired through socialization, formal training, academic interpretations, work experience, political views and so forth” (258) that impact and influence the community practitioner and how s/he operates in the community.

2. Organizational filter - the relationship between the community practitioner and the organization s/he ultimately represents. This can include the more formal influences of the mission and values of the organization or the organizational structure and power hierarchy. However, it can also include a worker’s loyalty or sense of accountability to the organization, as well as the “location, purpose and culture of the organization” (262).

3. Societal filter - how macro-level influences, such as “political imperatives, community expectations, culture and social ideology” (259) impact the way in which community development is conceived and carry out.

The importance of Hudson’s filters is that they remind community facilitators that numerous influences are always at play and that individual, organizational and societal trends can impact community work. One way to counter such influences (or at least mitigate their effects) is to incorporate guiding principles into program delivery. In the case of community social planning organizations, this is done by adhering to the larger values of community social planning. Seebaran (2003:5), in his description of the community social planning model, suggests six values or guiding principles for entering a community in order to deliver education or training. These are:

- Community accessibility to the social planning process, at all stages.
Chapter 2: Defining the Issues

- Inclusiveness of different segments of the community.
- Respect for diversity, including both interest and cultural groups.
- Transparent process.
- Regular accountability to the community.
- Consent of the community to carry out a community social planning process.

In the case of SPARC BC, these six principles are useful in beginning to illustrate how the process of the community social planning model is operationalized into community development education program delivery. They help to set standards to ensure that each aspect of community social planning is included in program delivery and also mark the bridge between process and the outcomes of capacity building. Through the use of guiding principles, organizations working at the regional level, such as SPARC BC, have a set of standards by which to deliver community development education projects in diverse communities in the province which promotes individual workshop content to be customized as needed while the general process and intent remains consistent.

Community Development Education

Some have argued that education is inextricably tied to community development. For example, Lovett (1997) states “community education and learning are integral to community development; without these there can be no movement, no progress, even no development.” In Europe, a monitoring project of fourteen pilot projects, “concerned with exploring the role of education in tackling social and economic deprivation in disadvantaged groups and communities,” found that “community education and community development are two sides of the same process” (Lovett, 1997). Clearly, community social planning organizations and practitioners have a role to play as community educators through the development and delivery of community development education programs. It is through these
programs that organizations like SPARC BC can play its role as “convenors, disseminators, catalysts, facilitators, and policy formulators” (Spruill, 2001) and aim to contribute to capacity building at a regional scale.

For the purpose of this research, community development education can be considered to be the education processes by which community participants come together to learn about community issues and processes of addressing challenges or problems, under the guidance and support of a facilitator. In British Columbia, this has been approached using numerous models of community learning, such as:

- Institute and conference models - Langara College Summer School on Building Community, Nelson’s Summer of Learning, and SPARC BC’s Community Development Institute.
- Learning Communities - active in Lillooet, Lumby and Whistler.
- Vibrant Communities - developed by the Tamarack Institute and used by the Community Social Planning Council of Greater Victoria.
- Network models which support affiliated organizations - such as the BC and Canadian CED Networks, Community Social Planning Network and others.
- Formal institutional models - such as Simon Fraser University’s CED program and the University College of the Cariboo Management Centre.
- Specific skill development programs - Community Futures’ board development program, Kootenay Leadership program, and Volunteer Vancouver leadership program.

Drawing on the theory of social capital, community development education can also be seen as opportunistic for developing the networks and relationships that support community members to collectively create the values and norms which contribute to a sense of belonging. In this vein, community development education and capacity building are linked because “community development is
generally defined as a social learning process; a learning process which serves to empower individuals and social groups by involving them as citizens in collective activities aimed at socio-economic regeneration, development and change” (McClenaghan, 2000:566).

To a large extent, the relationship between community social planning (especially in the context of regional capacity building organizations), community development education and capacity building cannot be found in the planning literature. This has meant that alternative literatures need to be explored. In the following sections, a number of themes related to the link between community development education and community capacity building are drawn from other fields. These are presented below as the purpose of community development education and the role of the community development educator and are followed by a brief overview of SPARC BC’s approaches to community development education.

**Purpose of Community Development Education**

Community and adult education is largely rooted in the belief that education is the first step towards increased well-being for both individuals and communities. It includes a concerted attempt to “support a variety of social movements attempting to redress social, economic, cultural and political disadvantage” (Lovett, 1997) and argues that education is a needed step in any community development process.

An important distinction within community and adult education is the classification of the purpose of the education process itself. Lovett (1997) uses three models for this purpose: 1) education for the community, 2) education about the community, and 3) education with the community. For the most part, education for the community deals with the provision of basic adult education and is therefore not specifically interested in community development. However, the second two models warrant a closer look:
Chapter 2: Defining the Issues

- In *education about the community* classroom style education is the focus, but the community is engaged in a dialogue to decide on the topics which will be addressed. Often, this results in classes related to a specific social, economic or cultural issues and while community development may not be the explicit goal, education about the community can operate as a stepping stone towards increased community engagement.

- *Education with the community* can be considered an infusion of all three approaches, with the role of the community educator being that of catalyst for active community development. An important aspect of this model is that it recognizes that community development involves life-long learning and often involves “challenging and changing social relations.”

For the most part, it is fair to characterize regional-serving community social planning organizations like SPARC BC in the third category, again because of its role as community catalyst. This is an important categorization for a regional capacity building organization. In BC rural leaders have began to identify “the importance of asking communities what they want and need to know instead of telling communities what they want and need to know” (Vancouver Foundation, 2004:4) and thus education with the community appears to be the desirable model within BC’s rural regions.

**Role of Community Development Educator**

There are also a number of important considerations on the role of the community educator. Tett, Crowther and O'Hara (2003) have developed a classification scheme for community educators, including universal, reformist and radical traditions. For the purpose of this research, the radical model is useful. In this model, a community educator is described as an “an agent of social change, who does not separate the process of learning from social action.” Much like the education with the community model, the radical education process is seen as a “purposeful educational intervention in the interests of social and political
Chapter 2: Defining the Issues

change: change towards more justice, equality and democracy through being responsive to community priorities and needs identified with people rather than for them" (38). Drawing on its mission statement and values, it is easy to situate SPARC BC and its regional capacity building efforts in the reformist model:

“Our long term strategic goals are to increase the capacity of SPARC BC to achieve our mission, to work with communities to increase the collective capacity to build a just and healthy society, and to achieve a just and healthy society with focusing on promoting income security, community capacity building and accessibility” (SPARC BC website, 2005).

Substantive considerations are also critical in exploring the role of community development educators. This includes the topics that are included in community development education programs as well as the skills that educators bring to and model within in the process. Similar to the guiding principles Seebaran developed for community social planning, Lovett (1997) has detailed five necessary skills for community educators:

1. Networking skills.
2. Group and facilitating skills.
3. Curriculum development.
4. Educational Guidance (at the group level).
5. Tutoring skills (at the individual level).

Overall, Lovett’s list suggests that effective community development educators are capable of bringing diverse groups together (networking) to work cooperatively on a common issue (facilitation) with the support of materials and resources either brought in by the educator or provided by the community (curriculum). Added to this is the ability to teach community members the skills which are collectively deemed necessary (educational guidance) as well as to provide support for
Chapter 2: Defining the Issues

individuals (tutoring). The importance of these skills are straightforward, however, for regional capacity building organizations they do raise questions of how a third party from outside the community can best incorporate such skills, while providing education with the community, within a reasonable timeframe and with a high level of community participation.

Community Development Education at SPARC BC

At SPARC BC, community development education is considered a social justice tool and draws from both the model of education with the community and the role of the radical community educator. This approach “builds upon the experience and knowledge of participants, and encourages mutual learning, collective analysis and solidarity” (SPARC BC, 2002b:2). It is also envisioned as a creative path to community building which is grounded in the values of inclusion, respect and personal and professional growth. Its aim is to create an “environment in which a diversity of perspectives, ideas, and opinions are heard and respected” and to acknowledge the fact that “each community is unique.” As a regional organization, SPARC BC’s community development education approaches also recognize that, although the workshop content may not change significantly across communities, each “begins at a different starting point and ends with a unique set of conclusions” (SPARC BC, 2002a:4).

Over the past 10 years, SPARC BC has undertaken four larger-scale community development education projects, each of which has included workshops in rural areas and small towns in BC. The first undertaking of this kind was the 1995 Community Development Institute (CDI); a week-long workshop-based event in which SPARC BC partnered with a local host organization and participants came from the local community and the province at large. By 2002 seven CDIs were held, however, the financial sustainability of a week-long event was proved to be unworkable at this point and CDI was discontinued.
Chapter 2: Defining the Issues

The second approach was just starting as the last CDI ended. This was a series of Population Health workshops which were held in 14 communities in 2001/2002. This was followed by the Creating Collaborative Communities project in 2003 which brought crime prevention through social development focus to four communities in BC. On the surface, this new undertaking may have appeared to be far removed from previous Population Health focus, but a close examination of the curricula for each reveals that both were heavily focused on increasing capacity building through an increased awareness of community social planning and encouraging communities to explore partnerships and collaboration as a foundation for community development.

The fourth approach was the Community Development Education pilot project which SPARC BC began visioning for in 2003 and delivered in 2004/2005. In part, the pilot was a replacement for the discontinued CDI, but it was also a continuation of the foci developed for the Population Health and Collaborative Communities projects. Over the course of the fall of 2004 and winter/spring of 2005, workshops were delivered in five communities in BC. It is interesting to note that the CDE Pilot was the first time SPARC BC provided community development education in rural First Nation communities, with two of the five participant communities being either a First Nations government or organization.

In order to gain a better understanding of SPARC BC's approaches to community development education, these projects are examined in more detail below and Table 2.1 provides a summary of the purpose, activities and participants of each.

Community Development Institute

The Community Development Institute (CDI) was a week-long event, hosted by SPARC BC and a local host organization. It was developed in 1994 in order to help communities increase their understanding and analysis of social, economic and environmental issues, to share strategies and ideas and to improve their skills in community development. It was conceived as a forum for people working on any
aspect of community development to exchange information and ideas and to develop understanding, knowledge and skills related to community development. The objectives were to:

- Develop participants' capacity for critical thinking and collective analysis of social, economic and environmental issues.
- Enhance participants' understanding of social change and their ability to take action at a local, regional, national and global level.
- Improve the effectiveness of community organizations in local planning and decision-making.
- Develop participants' knowledge and skills related to governing and operating non-profit organizations and community boards and councils.
- Enhance participants' knowledge of community self-reliance approaches (e.g., community land trusts, financing vehicles, community investment strategies, etc.) to assist them in applying relevant approaches to their own communities.
- Develop ongoing opportunities for information and skills exchange among community development practitioners.

In 1995, the first CDI was held in Salmon Arm. This was followed by Nelson (1996), the Sunshine Coast (1997), East Vancouver (1998), Chilliwack (1999), Comox Valley (2000) and Prince George (2002). At each gathering, the focus of CDI was on providing information, training, networking opportunities and skill development in community economic development, youth issues, social service provision, community social planning, environmental sustainability, community and regional health planning, social justice and community arts (SPARC BC, 2002b). After the 2002 CDI in Prince George, SPARC BC decided the ability of CDI to be self-sustaining through available funding was not possible and therefore, its impact on the organization as a whole was too high. The program was discontinued for this reason.
### Chapter 2: Defining the Issues

#### Table 2.1: Summary of SPARC BC's CDE Programs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program &amp; Purpose</th>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Key Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Community Development Institute (1995 - 2002)</strong></td>
<td>- Workshops, fieldtrips, forums, showcases, displays and social events and celebrations</td>
<td>- Local host organizations in Salmon Arm, Nelson, the Sunshine Coast, East Vancouver, Chilliwack, Comox Valley, Prince George</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To enhance the capacity of citizens, voluntary organizations and public and private institutions in order to develop resilient, sustainable communities.</td>
<td></td>
<td>- Participants from across the province</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Community Building for Population Health (2001/2002)</strong></td>
<td>- Presentation on the population health approach</td>
<td>- Cariboo (Williams Lake, Quesnel, 100 Mile House and Bella Coola)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To assist communities to develop the capacity to address diabetes and other chronic diseases by promoting collaboration and partnership building within the context of the population health approach.</td>
<td>- Presentation and exercises on partnership development</td>
<td>- Prince George area (Burns Lake, Prince George, Fort St. James and Vanderhoof)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Brainstorm session to identify key players and activities</td>
<td>- Peace-Liard (Dawson Creek)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Vancouver Island (Nanaimo, Victoria, Comox Valley, Mt. Waddington, Port Hardy)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Creating Collaborative Communities (2003/2004)</strong></td>
<td>- Two workshops and associated materials which reflect community needs, interests and assets</td>
<td>- Canadian Mental Health Association - Cranbrook</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To support a crime prevention through social development approach with a focus on creating inclusive and secure communities through increasing community capacity and awareness.</td>
<td>- Three visits in each community, linking the activities to a program or process already underway.</td>
<td>- Anti-Poverty Society, Prince Rupert</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Sunshine Coast Social Planning Council</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Social Planning Advisory Network, Williams Lake</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Community Development Education pilot (2004/2005)</strong></td>
<td>- Facilitator travels to each community</td>
<td>- Kelmuc Circle of Friendship, Chase</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To work with community-based organizations in rural and northern regions of BC which have the capacity to undertake community development education and have the community support to do so.</td>
<td>- Introductory workshop on community development themes and issues identified by the community</td>
<td>- Laxgalts'ap Village Government, Greenville</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Free or low-cost access to SPARC BC's publications and resource library.</td>
<td>- Kitimat Social Planning Committee</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Slocan Valley ABCD Project, Winlaw</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- ?Akisqnuk First Nation, Windermere</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Community Building for Population Health

In late 2001 and early 2002 SPARC BC held community building workshops in 14 locations across British Columbia on the topic of Community Building for Population Health. The workshops were designed to “assist communities to develop the capacity to address diabetes and other chronic diseases by promoting collaboration and partnership building within the context of the population health approach” (SPARC BC, 2002a:3).

Funding came from Health Canada’s Diabetes Contribution Program and was intended to promote community action to address diabetes issues. The workshops used a format that had been developed in the spring of 2001 in partnership with the Canadian Diabetes Association and each session included a presentation on the population health approach, a presentation and exercises on partnership development, and a brainstorm session to “identify key players and to begin to put the principles into action” (SPARC BC, 2002a:3). The population health focused workshops were particular to a funded project and have not been repeated since this initial project. However, the workshops have provided the common base of community partnership development that has been reprised in other projects and is a recurring theme in SPARC BC’s community development education.

Creating Collaborative Communities

The Creating Collaborative Communities project (CCC) began in 2003, with funding through the Community Mobilization Program, of the National Crime Prevention Centre, and as part of the National Strategy on Community Safety and Crime Prevention. As such, the focus of the program is on crime prevention through social development. This approach “suggests that crime can be prevented by addressing issues such as child abuse, inadequate education and housing, unemployment and health problems” (SPARC BC, 2004b:1) and it is grounded in the belief that community and multi-sectoral partnerships offer a foundation on which to build community capacity. Due to the priorities of the National Crime
Prevention Centre, SPARC BC’s CCC project was required to place an emphasis on children, youth, women and Aboriginal peoples and communities.

However, the priority foci of the funder did not detract from SPARC BC’s ability to incorporate a social planning and community development education component into the project. This is seen in the focus statement used by SPARC BC which highlights “creating inclusive and secure communities through increasing community capacity” in the areas of partnerships and collaborations among “diverse members of the community including community social planning/service agencies, business/economic sector, and local/regional government,” and the “integration of social planning and community economic development” (SPARC BC, 2004b:1).

Differing from the CDI and Population Health project formats, CCC incorporated multiple visits to each of the four communities and included preliminary work such as pre-workshop reporting, which was used to help determine workshop content and required follow-up, as well as to link SPARC BC’s community development education to processes that were already underway in the community. As a project funded undertaking, CCC was a one-time activity and, unless subsequent funding is realized, will not be specifically continued. However, the lessons learned from CCC continue to inform the ongoing work of SPARC BC.

Community Development Education Pilot

In the summer of 2004, SPARC BC launched its Community Development Education Pilot project to “support communities in working together to address local issues, to provide free or low-cost assistance in building local assets, and to develop strong community networks to address social issues” (SPARC BC, 2004a). The project was initially envisioned as a response to the cancellation of the CDI, and was planned as a core activity for the organization, meaning it was funded entirely by SPARC BC’s own resources. A Task Force was struck to help SPARC BC design the new program and consultation and research was carried out with CDI 2004
applicant communities, members of the Social Planning Network list serve and key community development education and training organizations over a period of five months (SPARC BC, 2004a). From this, nine guiding principles were developed. Of relevance to the focus on community capacity building, are the following principles enunciated for the CDE Pilot:

- Be provincially available and that activities are conducted in areas of BC where there are demonstrated needs/gaps in opportunity.
- Facilitate peer and mutual learning and provide opportunities for communities to learn from each other’s experiences and knowledge.
- Include community-based partnerships and grassroots participation, including partnerships primarily with community-based organizations.
- Be responsive to expressed or identified community needs.
- Be inclusive, diverse and accessible to people who may face barriers to participation (financial, physical, gender, language etc.)
- Build capacity beyond the education delivery in the host community and among participants to become more self-reliant and able to participate in community development process.
- Raise awareness of the importance and strength of community development (Modified from SPARC BC, 2004a:2).

The intent of the Community Development Education pilot is to develop it into a long-term program of SPARC BC and thereby continue to work with rural, northern and remote communities in BC. To do so, SPARC BC is in the process of hiring a new Community Development Educator to support this endeavour, with the intent of filling the position in the summer of 2005 (SPARC BC, 2005b).
Community Capacity Building

Community capacity is the third dimension introduced in Figure 2.1. It has been defined in various ways across numerous disciplines, including community and social planning, health promotion, adult and community education, resource management, community economic development, and other fields. In part evolving from socialist origins, as well as having roots in the professional domains of social work, ecology, economics, urban planning, and international aid programs (Spruill, 2001), the goal of the capacity building is “to make people the central actors in their own lives” (Silver, 2004:36). From the community perspective, capacity building is also sometimes conceptualized as a return to strengths on which a local community was founded, or a rediscovery of the people and history of that area (Human Resources Development Canada, 1998). For the purpose of this research, Health Canada’s definition has been adopted: community capacity is “the characteristics of communities that affect their ability to identify, mobilize, and address social and public health issues of concern” (Frankish, 2003).

Numerous outcomes have been attributed to capacity building projects. For example, Frank (1999) assembled a lengthy list of such outcomes, including:

- Stronger community relationships and safer, welcoming communities with healthier people and caring families.
- Increased number of community-based opportunities identified.
- Enhanced ability of community members to share their ideas on a course of action and increased competency in setting and realizing common goals.
- Expanded intuition in sensing what to do, when to do it and when to quit.
- Enhanced respect for limited resources, including people, so that shortages, duplication or waste are minimized.
Chapter 2: Defining the Issues

- Increased awareness of the importance of protecting, advocating for and improving the conditions for vulnerable people, distinct cultures, floundering economies and environments.

- Skilled leadership and an increased interest from young people to become future leaders.

- Increased ability to handle disappointment, threats and hazards to community pride and well-being.

As well, a number of trends regarding community capacity have been captured in the literature. A common start in most research in this area is the recognition that the concept of community capacity is very difficult to define in a consistent and meaningful way. This has numerous consequences:

- **Measurement and Evaluation** - Chaskin (2001), Frankish (2003), Labonte and Laverack (2001) and others acknowledge that the lack of a common definition of community capacity hinders measurement and evaluation. One of the most significant problems with this is that it hinders those providing capacity building projects, like SPARC BC, from assessing or comparing its work to like projects. And while authors like Frank (1999) state that “experience tells us that the results of building or increasing capacity can be measured” they tend not to provide advice or methods as to how this can or should be done.

- **Identifying Synergistic Components** - Frankish (2003) also cautions that without a common definition of capacity building, there is no way to capture and measure the subcomponents of capacity building, such as the synergy between individual and organizational capacity. As well, Laverack (2001:144) suggests that while all domains of community empowerment are inter-related, “it is not known if there is a hierarchy of importance or if a combination has more of an influence.” The lack of knowledge about the synergy of capacity building makes it difficult to replicate projects that
were successful in one location or to use a single framework for multiple locations. This is of consequence for regional capacity building organizations who work in diverse communities on multiple topics.

- **Multiple Indicators & Lack of Focus** - the absence of a definition contributes to a trend towards one-off definitions of community capacity and an increasing number of indicators being used for measurement. To this end, Frankish (2003) has developed a list of more than 800 community capacity indicators within the population health literature alone. At SPARC BC, the list of possible capacity building focal points has grown to include: non-profit development or management, organizational development, project development and/or management, advocacy, research, external communication skills, volunteerism and management of volunteers, community economic development and social enterprise, community capacity building and self-reliance, social planning, and environmental education (SPARC BC, 2003a).

- **Confusion with other Concepts** - The literature also highlights the extent to which the concept of community capacity overlaps, and is often indistinguishable from, other community development terminology. This includes terms such as community development, community economic development, social capital, and social inclusion and/or cohesion. Frank (1999) cautions that while no absolute definition can exist for each term, the important part is “learning better ways to express ourselves,” (3) with these or new words. This is echoed by Colussi and Mulkey (2005a) who caution community development educators to be careful of what terminology they use simply because of the connotations some communities hold for different terms. Again, this raises the importance of regional capacity building organizations working in multiple communities which may not all use or understand the same vocabulary.
Chapter 2: Defining the Issues

Regardless of the lack of a unitary definition of community capacity, researchers tend to agree that capacity building projects involve a number of common elements. For Chaskin (2001:293), these include people, organizations and financial resources, networks of community relationships, leadership and support for a process of participation by community members; or what he simply refers to as “collective action and problem solving.” To this list Frank (1999) adds some macro-level considerations, such as the need for infrastructure, supporting institutions, physical resources, economic and financial resources, and enabling policies and systems.

The literature also raises a number of important points of concern regarding community capacity building initiatives. First, Labonte and Laverack (2001) identify the extent to which influences outside of the control of an individual neighbourhood or community can constrain individuals and organizations in everyday life. Similar to Hudson’s (2004) use of filters to describe the potential influences on the community educator (ranging from the individual and organizational level to broader societal considerations), Labonte and Laverack’s influences include local economic downswings, community health issues or access to education or training. Although outside the scope of this thesis, these elements of community psychology can represent significant barriers and are thus important considerations when embarking on capacity building.

Secondly, Shirlow and Murtagh (2004), and John Forrester in his interview of Wendy Sarkissian (2004), suggest that the approach and tone of some capacity building projects can serve to stigmatize communities by assuming that the identification of capacity building projects implies no local capacity exists in the first place. In such cases, previous efforts of the community can be devalued. This concern also touches on the issue of community development ‘experts’ descending on communities and bringing concepts, but not empowering community members to become local leaders and actors in their own development. Reardon (2003) raises this issue in his work in East St. Louis; reminding aspiring planners and community educators that capacity building work is only effective if it builds
Chapter 2: Defining the Issues

the skills and resources of community members to undertake on-going community
development activities, eventually without the support of a third party.

A third concern raised in the literature speaks to the assumption some community
planners make that communities have a singular or shared interest or value system
which dictates what capacity building initiatives are appropriate. To this extent
Briggs (in Shirlow, 2004:60) states that “there is a particularly strong tendency
among community planners and their bosses to find idealized members of
disadvantaged communities as representing unitary, simple interests.” The
problem, as echoed by McClenaghan (2000:571), is that “communities are rarely
discrete entities” and that “communities exist within communities and some
communities have greater power to define and legitimize meaning, values, norms
and practices than others.” This issue of power is also raised by Labonte and
Laverack (2001), who caution that capacity building projects run the risk of
building the capacity of some sectors of a community, while disadvantaging
others.

Finally, there are a number of specific considerations for undertaking capacity
building projects in the rural context. Perhaps the most of obvious of these is the
fact that many planning practices have been developed based on urban
experiences and issues and therefore do not match the scale or scope or rural
challenges (Hodge, 2003). As well, there are disparities in the level of community
planning and economic development planning that take place in rural communities
in BC and which “affects the capacity of the community members to be involved in
planning” (Canadian Rural Partnership, 2002b). Additionally, Simpson, Wood and
Daws cite the extent to which small communities tend towards ‘governing through
community’ to maintain community assets such as social and recreational
opportunities and community services. The point they raise is that small and/or
rural communities tend to have high levels of community participation simply to
maintain daily networks and services and that the imposition of a new capacity
building initiative can overtax an already highly involved community. To this
extent they state the challenge of rural capacity building as encouraging
“participation and community ownership without creating unreasonable pressures on the time, personal energy and finances of residents of rural communities” (284).

In the previous sections, the concepts of community social planning, community development education and community capacity building have been introduced and linked to regional capacity building organizations like SPARC BC where possible. As well, four of SPARC BC’s community development education projects were introduced. The intent has been to show the connectivity of the three concepts as well as to introduce some key considerations for undertaking projects of this type. In the following sections, these considerations are revisited in specific relation to the community development education projects of SPARC BC.
Chapter 3: Methods & Framework of Analysis

The intent of this thesis is to learn from the experience of SPARC BC how organizations can use community development education programs to positively impact capacity building in small town and rural BC. This is undertaken at three levels: 1) through a close examination of two of SPARC BC’s community development education programs, 2) by exploring the themes that have emerged from SPARC BC’s ten year experience in service delivery, and 3) by distilling the lessons that can be learned from SPARC BC’s experience for regional capacity building organizations. In the following two sections, the methods that were utilized are explained in detail and the framework of analysis is introduced.

Methods

In order to gain a better understanding of the relationship between a facilitating organization such as SPARC BC, community development education and capacity building, as well as the opportunities and constraints facing regional capacity building organizations, information was collected in a variety of ways:

- **Literature Review:** As presented in Chapter 2 above a literature review was conducted on community social planning, community development education and capacity building. This review was useful for situating SPARC BC within the academic literature and also to distil the key characteristics for successful capacity building projects, both in terms of process and outcomes. These characteristics are presented in Table 3.1.

- **Document Review:** Review of SPARC BC’s websites, materials and reports for organizational background, project backgrounds, and program delivery (including presentations and materials developed for each workshop). As well, application materials (CDE Pilot), pre-workshop reports (CCC), SPARC BC workshop evaluations (CDE Pilot and CCC) and other research undertaken by SPARC BC were reviewed. The Community Development Institute evaluation (Stierhoff, 1999) and the evaluation of the Community Building
Chapter 3: Methods & Framework

for Population Health workshops (SPARC BC, 2002a) were other key documents for this part of the research.

- **Program Participant Questionnaire**: 3 participants in each of 10 communities in the CDE Pilot, CCC and 2002 CDI were asked to complete a 25-question survey regarding capacity building at the individual, organizational, community relationship and community level. The intent of the survey was to gain a better understanding of how the different approaches to community development education impacted capacity building in each community and to gain insight into the perception of participants in terms of the opportunities and constraints for SPARC BC continuing this work. Surveys were returned from 11 CDE Pilot participants, 8 CCC participants and 1 CDI 2002 participant for a total of 20 surveys. The questionnaire and a summary of the findings are included in Appendices 2 and 3 respectively.

- **Presentation and Discussion of Findings with SPARC BC**: Having worked with SPARC BC in the summer of 2004 (on the CDE Pilot) I felt it was important to take the initial findings back to the staff and to provide an opportunity to discuss the results to date and ask for feedback regarding how the information would be used to inform the final chapters of the thesis. As such, the findings of the questionnaire, as well as other research to date, were presented to staff and committee members at SPARC BC in early May 2005. The Executive and Assistant Executive Director, Project Managers (for both the CDE Pilot and CCC projects) and a member of the CDE Task Force attended the meeting. In addition, a series of comments and questions related to themes emerging from SPARC BC’s experiences were presented and discussed by those present. See Appendix 4 for a list of these questions and Appendix 5 for a summary of the responses from SPARC BC. Overall, this presentation helped to directly inform the opportunities and constraints which are explored in Chapter 5 as well as the lessons which are presented in the final chapter of this thesis.
Chapter 3: Methods & Framework

**Framework of Analysis**

It is important to note that, as an intern who worked on the CDE Pilot with SPARC BC, as well as a participant at the 2000 CDI, I have experienced first hand the extent to which SPARC BC impacts individuals and communities through its community development education projects. These experiences helped me to see that SPARC BC is capable of generating change, but left me questioning the exact impact its programs had and at what level(s) of community development. These considerations played an important role in the construction of a framework of analysis for this thesis.

In order to distil the themes emerging from the experience of SPARC BC, and the lessons learned that are applicable to regional capacity building organizations in general, it is important to first determine the key characteristics which mark the successful application of community development education programs to capacity building. The intent here is not to quantify SPARC BC’s experience, nor to provide an organizational or program evaluation. Instead, drawing on the literature review above and my personal experience with the organization and the communities with which it works, the key components of capacity building have been highlighted to produce of matrix of characteristics against which to explore the questionnaire findings. As seen in Table 3.1, these characteristics apply to the process (community social planning and community development education) as well as the outcomes of capacity building projects. Table 3.1 also introduces capacity building at four discrete levels. In order to better understand these four dimensions, a further review of the literature is required.

The deconstruction of the concept of capacity building is commonly used in academic research. For example, Gibbon, Labonte and Laverack (2002) do this through the use of multiple ‘domains,’ such as participation, problem assessment and program management. Alternately, Laverack (2001:135), in his review of community empowerment literature, suggests that a continuum approach to understanding the process is very typical and tends to range from “individual
empowerment; small groups; community organization; partnerships; [to] political action.” Finally, community guidebooks often present change processes like capacity building in discrete sections. For example, the Community Resilience Manual uses people, organizations, resources and processes as its four key areas of analysis (Centre for Community Enterprise, 2000).

At SPARC BC, the concept of community capacity is also commonly broken down into discrete levels, usually to separate individual skill development from broader community impacts. To that extent, the evaluations SPARC BC staff use for all workshops in their community development education projects include questions at numerous scales of capacity. For example, the evaluations ask participants to indicate the degree to which they “were introduced to new ideas,” “gained a greater understanding,” or “gained new tools and/or skills”; each of which indicates capacity building at the individual scale. At the level of community relationship building, questions ask participants to assess the effectiveness of the workshop in “building new relationships or strengthening existing relationship in [the] community” (SPARC BC, 2004c).

For the purpose of data collection and analysis in this research, capacity building has been broken down into four layers: individual development, organizational development, community relationship building and community development. These layers were chosen for two reasons. First, SPARC BC staff tend to vision its community development education projects having impacts in each of these levels, although the organization has not tended to label them as such. The inclusion of the ‘community relationship building’ layer was especially relevant to SPARC BC, given its long-standing focus on partnership building, collaboration and community networking. For this reason, ‘community relationship building’ was differentiated from ‘community development’ which deals more with community perceptions of change and long-term impacts.

Second, as evidenced by the literature, individual, organizational and community aspects of capacity building are commonly cited as key levels at which capacity
must be addressed. In order to distil comprehensive and meaningful lessons from the experience of SPARC BC, which are generalizable to the experience of other regional capacity building organizations, it was important to approach capacity building in a holistic fashion and from each dimension.

In the following sections, each of these four dimensions of community capacity is briefly examined in more detail and literature is reviewed to develop specific characteristics for each. Table 3.1 summarizes both the characteristics related to the four layers of capacity as well as the process-oriented characteristics related to community social planning and community development education (introduced in Chapter 2).

**Individual Development**

Throughout the literature, it is common to see individual development listed as a cornerstone of community capacity building (Gibbon, Labonte and Laverack, 2002; Frank, 1999). Indeed, the “heart of capacity building” is often cited as “the people” (Frank, 1999). One commonality raised in the literature is that individual development best takes place in community or group settings. For example, Nyerere states that people “can only develop themselves by participating in activities which affect their well-being” (In SPARC BC, 2002a:4). Similarly, Dempsey (2001) argues the appropriate place for community development is in the community, not the classroom, and the literature from adult and community education introduced above details the importance of a balance between personal and community learning.

Chaskin (2001:297) defines the individual level of community capacity building as “the skills, knowledge, and resources of individual residents in the community and their participation in community-improving activities.” In typical capacity building guidebooks, such as the Safe Communities Capacity Building Handbook (Gudz, 2004), the individual component largely includes skill-building, such as leadership, negotiation, problem solving and team building. However, the individual
dimension of capacity building also includes less tangible aspects of community building such as personal commitment, responsibility and a sense of ownership of both community issues and their solutions. Community pride, optimism, and attachment are also important (Centre for Community Enterprise, 2000). Although much harder to document and measure, these indirect aspects of capacity building are important considerations (Stierhoff, 1999) which "empower [community members] to take responsibility for [their] own community's development" (Human Resources Development Canada, 1998:2).

Organizational Development

The organizational level of community capacity building recognizes the important role that organizations play in supporting local residents and community processes and activities. Laverack (2001) suggests one important dimension of this is the role organizations play in linking the individual or interpersonal elements of community empowerment to the "contextual elements" of politics, culture and economics. As such, organizational capacity building can include skills such as conflict resolution, organizational (re)structuring, marketing, volunteer recruitment and/or management and financial management, as well as increasing the ability of an organization to undertake strategic planning, leadership, resource development or other skills building (Gudz, 2004). Others capacities, such as problem assessment, asking why, and program development are also commonly considered under the organizational level of capacity building (Laverack, 2001).

To this list, Chaskin (2003), Laverack (2001) and others add the important role that organizations play in providing linkages to supports outside of the community, including other organizations, agencies and all levels of government. Indeed, the need for "specific government structures, policies, and initiatives" to strengthen the relationship between the government and the numerous organizations in BC's voluntary sector is becoming recognized in the province (Joyce, 2004:2). However, organizations, and the people who make them, must also develop the needed skills and capacities to ensure these relationships are formed. To this end,
the Centre for Non-Profit Management has identified “access to training, tools, and resources [to] build community voluntary sector’s organizational capacity and stability” as a key long term goal in BC (Joyce, 2004:3).

Leadership, mentioned above as one dimension of organizational capacity, has recently been explored in the context of a number of organizations in BC and findings suggest that leadership is “at the core of capacity building for rural economic diversification” (Colussi, 2005a:1). What remains questionable is if leadership is best developed at the organizational or individual level. For example, the Rural Secretariat (of the Government of Canada) is working at the individual level to “develop strategies and acquire the skills and tools to increase youth leadership involvement in their communities” while at the same time is also working with “stakeholder organizations as a means of exploring ways of developing leadership skills” (Rural Secretariat, 2004:3).

Community Relationship Building

The recent and growing interest in social capital has generated much literature and debate on both civic and social engagement. However, the lack of research until recent years means we know little about how social engagement impacts communities. What we do know is that “…how we associate with each other, and on what terms, has enormous implications for our well-being” (Schellenberg, 2004:16).

Community relationship building includes the development of community connections, such as networking, partnerships, collaboration, and resource sharing. It increases the number of opportunities for community members to share their ideas regarding local issues (Frank, 1999) and contributes to the development of common principles, values and vision. Thus it occurs when “the right people are brought together in constructive ways and with the appropriate information” to “not only create authentic visions and strategies for addressing their joint
Chapter 3: Methods & Framework

**Table 3.1: Characteristics of Capacity Building**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Process</th>
<th>Characteristics</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community social planning</td>
<td>1. High level of community participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Catalyzing effect/ability of facilitator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Acknowledgement of outside factors/filters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. Use of guiding principles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community development education</td>
<td>1. Educating <em>with</em> the community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Skilled community educator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outcomes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual Development</td>
<td>1. Personal skill development</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Exposure to group processes</td>
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<td></td>
<td>3. Increased connection to community/indirect elements</td>
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<tr>
<td>Organizational Development</td>
<td>1. Professional skill development</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2. Link to external organizations and agencies</td>
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<td>3. Leadership</td>
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<tr>
<td>Community Relationship Building</td>
<td>1. Increased community connections and partnerships</td>
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<td>2. Increased collaborative approaches</td>
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<tr>
<td>Community Development</td>
<td>1. Increased understanding of interconnectedness or</td>
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<td></td>
<td>'systems understanding' of local issues</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Increased community trust, sense of 'belongingness'</td>
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<td></td>
<td>or other indirect elements</td>
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*Source: Modified from literature presented in Chapter 2.*

problems but also, in many cases, overcome their limited perspectives of what is possible” (London, 1995).

For the most part, community relationships are the support webs that weave community members and organizations together into a functional whole. The intent of such relationships is to “bring individuals and members of communities, agencies and organizations together in an atmosphere of support to systematically solve existing and emerging problems that could not be solved by one group alone”
Chapter 3: Methods & Framework

(National Network for Collaboration., 1995). One important aspect of community relationship building is moving beyond simple partnerships to processes of collaboration. This is because collaboration is a means of working collectively on a local issue, often in situations where: many stakeholders have a vested interest, power, and expertise; access to information is not balanced among the stakeholders; local issues involved require technical skills; differing perspectives on the problems could lead to adversarial relationships among the stakeholders; and existing processes for addressing the problems have proved insufficient (London, 1995). And while not every community issue will have this degree of complexity, collaborative approaches remain an important element of engaging diverse members and sectors of the community.

Community Development

Friedmann defines community development as “structural, system-wide change” (Spruill, 2001:110) and in doing so introduces the basic premise of systems theory: it is impossible to understand the operations and subtle nuances of complex systems by dissecting them into discrete piece. For this reason, capacity building was explored at a fourth level as well: the community at large. For the purpose of this research, systems theory is useful because thinking in this way “is a necessary component of any effective community intervention if we wish to connect learning and development;” (Spruill, 2001:108) in this case, it helps to link the ways in which community development education facilitates community capacity building.

Systems theory helps to remind community workers that community development is not simply the sum of the individual, organizational and relational parts; instead it is something larger. It includes the perceptions of community members as to how they fit into their community, as well as concepts of social inclusion, reciprocity, trust and the general sense of ‘belongingness.’ Although often invisible, these indirect aspects are palpable influences in community life and community development efforts. Much like the indirect aspects of individual
capacity building, these are important, but intangible aspects of community development which deserve consideration.

This section introduced the methods used to collect information on SPARC BC as well additional information on the four dimensions of capacity building being explored in this thesis: individual development, organizational development, community relationship building and community development. Table 3.1 was introduced to summarize the key characteristics for capacity building in terms of both process and outcomes. In the former, insights were drawn from the literature on community social planning and community development education and used to explore how community members, facilitators, and education models come together in capacity building. In the latter, the dimensions of capacity building were surveyed and a series of characteristics were distilled to highlight the necessary components in capacity building. The overall purpose of Table 3.1 is to build a foundation of characteristics against which the community development education approaches of SPARC BC could be examined. This is undertaken in the following chapter.
Chapter 4: Questionnaire Findings

This chapter details the findings from the questionnaire administered to 20 participants in SPARC BC's community development education programs in combination with workshop evaluations and a review of the participant communities. The characteristics from Table 3.1 are used as to focus the findings and a number of insights into the relationship between community social planning, community development education and community capacity building are highlighted.

It is important to note that the survey process returned only one response from the CDI program. Because of this, anecdotal information is used from this survey, but it is not included in general findings. For this reason, the total number of respondents is referred to as nineteen. As well, one CDE Pilot community, the Laxgalts'ap Village Government in Greenville, BC was unable to participate in the research due to pressing community issues. Therefore the 11 CDE Pilot respondents came from the remaining four CDE Pilot communities.

It is also important to note the limitations to the data collection. In the case of each of the community development education projects undertaken by SPARC BC in the last 10 years, time is a factor in efforts of evaluation. As reported for earlier CDI events, "it is entirely possible that its programs have set in motion many things that are not particularly visible or measurable in the short term" (Stierhoff, 1999:8). This is also true of the CCC and CDE Pilot projects. For this reason, the long-term aspects are largely left unexplored, except for perceptions of community members regarding the future of their community.

In the following sections the findings from the survey are presented in two sections: process and outcomes. Process encompasses the characteristics raised in Table 3.1 in relation to community social planning and community development education and Outcomes refer to the four dimensions of capacity building.
Chapter 4: Findings

Process

The literature on community social planning and community development education both include numerous considerations in terms of how capacity building programs are delivered in communities, especially in the case of an outside organization acting as the educator. In Table 3.1 six important characteristics are listed, the first four relating to community social planning and following two relating to community development education. In the following sections, the findings from the survey are explored in relation to each of these six characteristics and the evaluations undertaken by SPARC BC at each workshop are used for additional information and context. As well, the review of SPARC BC materials is utilized to help better understand how the organization developed its community development education programs.

Community Participation

The first characteristic of capacity building outlined in Table 3.1, and a key characteristic of community social planning, is a high level of community participation. This could be explored in numerous ways. For example, participation at the workshop itself could be used as an indicator and attendance sheets could be used to gauge participation. Unfortunately, attendance lists were not available from each of the CDE Pilot and CCC workshops, so a comprehensive review is not possible. However, questionnaire respondents do indicate that of the nineteen respondents 13 were non-profit representatives and 5 came from municipal, regional or First Nation governments; suggesting that local organizations and government participated in the workshops.

A second aspect of participation is how community members perceived the workshops increased participation in local community development efforts. This is explored in more detail in the following section on the capacity building outcomes of the CCC and CDE Pilot project workshops.
Catalyzing Effect/Ability of Facilitator

The ability to act as a community catalyst was drawn from the review of literature related to community social planning and was listed as a key characteristic in Table 3.1. Questionnaire responses regarding the style of facilitation and the attitude of the facilitator at the workshops speak to this. For example, one participant noted that the “facilitator [was] good at pulling out ideas and letting people share.” Others commented that “good group exercises” were used, that “[the facilitator] was very open and accepting of our ideas” and that “[s/he] was a wonderful addition to our process.”

Perhaps the catalyzing effort was best captured in the general comments about SPARC BC’s workshops in each community, which one respondent stated was “a fundamental activity in moving the community forward.” The catalyzing ability was also indicated by five questionnaire respondents who stated they felt that the project with SPARC BC was a good first step in developing participation and relationships in the community, by increasing community connections. However, it also offset by an additional four questionnaire respondents who stated that the project with SPARC BC has not yet increased community participation. These responses are explored in more detail in the outcomes sections below.

Many respondents also shared general observations about the structure and timing of the workshops, some suggesting it was too long, others wishing it were longer. Regardless of overall length of the workshop, many participants felt that there was not enough time to talk with the facilitator or to absorb the many concepts and ideas; a feeling one respondent captured as “not enough breathing time.”

Acknowledgement of Outside Factors

Outside factors, such as Hudson’s (2004) individual, organizational and societal filters, can affect community development education projects, especially when the facilitator or facilitating organization are outsiders to the local communities. This was experienced to some extent in both the CCC and CDE Pilot projects. A
number of questionnaire respondents indicated they felt SPARC BC would benefit from knowing more about their community (2 responses) or that a local facilitator would have been helpful (6). Respondents also suggested the need for SPARC BC to better understand the local context of the communities they work in as well as to incorporate local (and/or rural) facilitation. To this end, one participant stated the need for rural facilitation “so we don’t have to educate the city folks on rural issues before anything can go forward.” This could suggest that SPARC BC facilitators possess “values, beliefs, language or ideas” (Hudson, 2004: 258) which do not necessarily reflect rural communities or that the urban location of SPARC BC affects its program delivery in non-urban locations. The questionnaire results do not provide definitive answers, but do suggest that SPARC BC could work to better understand the rural context(s) in which it works.

Use of Guiding Principles

Guiding principles were the fourth characteristic garnered from the community social planning literature and relevant to capacity building. The importance of such principles is that they provide an intentional framework for community development education service delivery which is consistent across communities in terms of process, but flexible in allowing for workshop content to be customized in each community.

SPARC BC was careful and deliberate in developing and documenting guiding ideas. This is clearly seen in the work of the Community Development Education Task Force, which developed a set of nine such principles, and in the funders’ description and criteria for CCC. For example, the principle of provincial availability especially in the areas with the highest demonstrated need was translated directly into the CDE Pilot application criteria that communities must be located in rural or northern regions of the province. Additionally, CDE Pilot applicants were asked to demonstrate the extent to which they has community support by naming other organizations with which they had strong ties; satisfying
the guiding principle that the CDE Pilot focus on community-based partnerships and grassroots participation.

A review of the workshop selection for the CDE Pilot communities and the pre-workshop reports for the CCC communities demonstrates that guiding principles were allowed flexibility within the larger framework of advancing community social planning and partnership development for capacity building. In part this was done by offering workshops in modules. Through this approach SPARC BC was able to customize the level or volume to which each topic was introduced. For example, Introduction to Social Planning could be condensed in a half day module, perhaps coupled with a second topic, or offered as the full-day workshop topic. In the CCC and CDE Pilot projects, the following modules were delivered:

- Creating Collaborative Communities - Introduction to Social Planning (2), Building Economic and Social Security in our Communities (4), Community Building through Partnerships (1)

- Community Development Education Pilot - Community Building Through Partnerships (4), Introduction to Social Planning (3), Building Economic and Social Security in our Communities (1)

Additionally, a mixture of SPARC BC presentations and exercises, local panels, facilitated and open discussions, small group sessions, plenary sessions, next-step brainstorming sessions and other components were utilized by SPARC BC at each workshop. Workshops were also combined with local events, such as a Community Dialogue and an Affordable Housing Forum and the SPARC BC facilitator often attended other community events, such as organization meetings, a community dance, the opening of a local co-op, a meeting with a provincial Minister, and individual meetings with local agency representatives.

The important consideration relating to demonstrated flexibility of SPARC BC’s approach and facilitators is that it was balanced with a clear focus on community social planning and partnership development as tools for capacity building that
were derived directly from the organization’s values. This balance is what allows a regional organization like SPARC BC to work in multiple communities under a common framework and demonstrates the strength of developing and adhering to guiding principles in order to deliver consistent but locally-appropriate community development education.

**Education with the Community**

The first of two characteristics derived from the community development education literature is the concept of education with the community. One element of this is allowing community groups to create their own agenda. In both the CDE Pilot and CCC project this was accomplished by allowing participant communities to choose the workshop that was to be delivered, at times combining modules of different topics into locally appropriate hybrid presentations. As outlined above, this method allowed the community to play an active role in the education process, making the workshops an example of educating with the community.

Education with the community also raises the important element of life-long learning. This is because this model of education is premised on the interconnection of education and community development and recognizes that changing social structures, building capacity and empowering communities is a life-long process. Overall, the most common feedback received in the questionnaire was the need for follow-up, additional workshops or on-going communication from SPARC BC. Over 1/3 of the questions (9/25), or over 30 instances, induced answers which indicated that more support or assistance from SPARC BC was required or desirable for future activities to occur. The need for follow up was also indicated at different levels of capacity, with only 3 of the 19 respondents indicating that follow-up was relevant to their individual or organizational development and only one respondent indicating that follow-up was relevant to either community relationship building or community development.
Comments such as “SPARC BC does a wonderful job at getting people started, however there needs to be a local paid facilitator position to keep lobbying the local business and government to get involved in social planning and stay involved” and “lots of good intentions, but haven’t moved forward” echo the need for follow up. It was also suggested by one respondent that the lack of follow-up meant that local activity would eventually cease; a decline s/he described as akin to a “flame with no wood.” Overall, it appears that while SPARC BC is adhering to the model of education with the community in its workshops, the provision of long-term support (such as follow-up, additional workshops or on-going communication with SPARC BC) is not always meeting community expectations.

**Skilled Community Educator**

Table 3.1 indicates that the importance of the skills of the community educator. Feedback from workshop evaluations and the questionnaire suggest that the community education facilitation provided by SPARC BC covered the majority of Lovett’s (1997) skill criteria for community educators including group and facilitating skills (as evidenced in comments regarding the catalyzing ability of the facilitator), curriculum development and educational guidance.

In terms of curriculum development, in both the CDE Pilot and CCC programs, questionnaire respondents indicated the support materials were relevant and comments such as “[the facilitator] made material come alive,” “the materials were very good,” and the “handouts gave time for individual work as well as pooling resources through brainstorming and sharing” were returned.

Support materials, supplied during or after the workshop, were also considered relevant (11/19, 11/19, 9/19, 11/19 respectively). The reasoning behind this scoring was captured in comments provided by respondents, including, the “workshop provided ideas on how process can work, what steps are involved, facilitator provided time to share, handouts gave time for individual work as well as pooling resources through brainstorming and sharing.”
Chapter 4: Findings

In terms of educational guidance, the important aspect according to Lovett (1997) is that educators must be able to recognize what groups need and either provide the appropriate skill or expertise or locate it in another person or resource. The selection of workshop topics or modules by the community and the use of good supporting materials are important elements of ensuring the community receives what it needs, however, these steps are not always adequate in ensuring that program delivery is appropriate.

For example, one respondent in the CDE Pilot suggested that the workshop that was delivered was not what the community was expecting or what had been advertised. Although the respondent was ultimately satisfied with the content that was delivered, as were the other questionnaire respondents from that community, s/he raised concerns of credibility (both her/his own and that of the organization s/he was representing) and of importance of the local organization being able to trust an outside facilitator to deliver content and materials as outlined. However, this situation also provided SPARC BC with an opportunity to demonstrate its strength in educational guidance: the facilitator in this case changed the presentation on the fly and adapted as best as possible to the needs of the community (SPARC BC staff, 2005a).

**Capacity Building Outcomes**

Questions related to the outcomes of the workshops also yielded interesting findings. The majority of questionnaire respondents felt the workshop presentations in both the CDE Pilot and CCC projects were relevant to the development of capacity in each of the four dimensions of capacity building: individual development (12 of 19 respondents), organizational development (11/19), community relationship building (14/19) and community development (15/19). The questionnaires and workshop evaluations also provided additional insight into the four aspects of capacity building. The following sections present these insights, again using the characteristics of Table 3.1 to focus the findings.
**Individual Development**

In the questionnaire, individual development was defined as the personal development of skills and knowledge as well as increased connectedness in the community. The majority of respondents felt that SPARC BC’s project contributed to the development of such skills, thus satisfying the characteristic that community development education projects contribute to personal skill development. The most common responses included increased understanding of the social planning process (5/19), increased insight into local issues (5/19) and a sense of increased community connections and sharing (5/19). As well, 16 of the 19 respondents indicated that the project helped them to “identify contacts in the community that I can work with” and 15 replied that they learned more about “how my community can work together.” These responses indicate that SPARC BC also satisfied the characteristics of using group process and linking people to their community.

Suggestions for improving SPARC BC’s contribution to individual capacity building ranged from delivering additional workshops or providing further support (5 respondents) to including more of SPARC BC’s research into the workshop sessions (1) or providing seed funding (1).

**Organizational Development**

One of the goals of SPARC BC’s community development education programs is to increase the organizational capacity of social planning organizations in the province. Due to this, the audience at most of the workshops included representatives of non-profit and social service organizations. Indeed, as is common in small towns and rural regions, many participants in the workshops participated both as community members and as representatives of local organizations, often more than one. For example, although 13 questionnaire respondents indicated they were representing an organization, 17 organizations were referenced. These organizations included environmental NGOs (2), services for children and youth (3), social service providers (3) and others.
In the questionnaire, organizational development was defined as the development of professional skills, such as communications, partnership development, community relations and non-profit organization management, which affect an organization's ability to work in the community. Nearly half of the respondents (9) identified partnership and/or collaboration development and management as a skill learned during the workshop. This was followed by increased communications and/or community relation skills (5) and reducing judgement or stereotyping (3). Clearly this satisfied the characteristic of contributing to professional skill development raised in Table 3.1. The impact of this skill development included providing a structure (community social planning model) for future activities (4), increasing local cooperation and focus (4) and increasing community networking (2). Respondents also identified specific skill development (e.g. survey development or holding focus groups) as well as additional support in general as additional support SPARC BC could provide for organizational development.

It would appear that the CDE Pilot and CCC project only had moderate impact in assisting communities to link with external agencies; the second characteristic raised in relation to organizational development in Table 3.1. Although only 3 respondents indicated that there had been increased collaboration with provincial or regional organizations, and an additional 3 stated that initial discussions were now occurring, 6 respondents indicated that nothing had happened to better link them to external agencies.

Leadership is the third characteristic in Table 3.1. Unfortunately, the questionnaire did not induce answers related to organizational leadership, although a sense of increased individual leadership ability was indicated by one respondent.

**Community Relationship Building**

Increased community connections and partnerships was the first of two characteristics of community relationship building raised in Table 3.1. In terms of
community connections, four respondents indicated that the project with SPARC BC has not yet increased community participation. However, five respondents did feel that the project with SPARC BC was a good first step in developing participation and relationships by increasing community connections. Feedback from respondents indicated that some felt uncomfortable speculating on the impacts for the community at large. One participant noted, “participation happens one person at a time” and suggested that this can be a barrier to measuring at the community level.

Workshop evaluations undertaken by SPARC BC also capture the participants’ opinions on increased community connections. When asked to indicate the effectiveness of the workshop in building new relationships in the community, or strengthening existing ones, respondents stated that the workshops: “renewed old ties and brought many people together with common goals;” the workshop was “strengthening” and “brought the community closer together;” and that “connecting with other people in the community” was the “best aspect” of the day. However, it appears the workshops were less successful at helping community members to develop bonds of trust (6) or to finds new ways to share information or resources (6).

The questionnaire also addressed partnerships. Overall, respondents indicated that the workshops helped them to better understand how partnerships and collaboration work (13) and to identify possible partnerships to address local issues (14). This had numerous results in the communities. For example, in one community in the CDE Pilot program, the economic development and advisory committees have since joined the local interagency committee. In another CDE Pilot community, a local organization has received a letter of support from both the local MLA and the Ministry of Small Business.

Many respondents also raised a similar point: the sectors and agencies they needed to be partnering with were not at the workshop. This was raised in the workshop evaluation by a participant who stated, “few key players were at the table to
share their ‘side.’” Additionally, questionnaire comments and workshop evaluations indicate that First Nations, arts and culture groups, construction industry, business sector, youth and numerous government agencies were “missing” from a number of the workshops. Respondents indicated that SPARC BC could increase their contribution to community relationship building by providing additional workshops and support (5) and by finding ways to engage the business and economic sectors and government agencies (4).

Collaboration was an important characteristic raised in Table 3.1. Unfortunately, the questionnaire did not differentiate enough between ‘partnership’ and ‘collaboration’ and thus the findings do not indicate if communities were able to achieve collaborations.

Community Development

Table 3.1 suggests that understanding community interconnectedness and increasing aspects of indirect capacity are important characteristics of community development. In terms of community understanding, a number of respondents (7) indicated that the workshop with SPARC BC increased awareness about social planning and/or local issues, but some felt the impact would only be temporary (3 of the 7). Similarly, 4 respondents felt that the project did not or had not yet increased the community’s capacity to deal with local issues, although 3 other respondents felt the potential did exist as awareness of local issues had been increased and community members appeared more willing to work together. To this end, one participant noted that the workshop helped to “identify some people to invite and got people thinking in broader way about their community projects.” As far as next steps were concerned, 8 participants indicated their communities were in the process of initiating a local project and only 3 respondents indicated that nothing had happened.

The main suggestion for SPARC BC to improve their contribution to community development was to offer additional workshops or support (2) and to provide
funding or support for local and/or rural facilitators (2). This was echoed in the responses to how SPARC BC could help communities in the future: 7 respondents indicated additional workshops or support and 2 suggested local facilitation.

Overall, it appears that the workshops for both the CDE Pilot and CCC were well-received in the communities and that they had impact at each level of capacity building. As well, the majority of the characteristics outlined in Table 3.1 were satisfied, although the structure of the survey made it difficult to determine how leadership, collaboration and some of the indirect elements of capacity building were addressed. However, by expanding the scope of focus to include other community development education projects of SPARC BC, some of these outstanding issues can be addressed. This is undertaken in the following chapter which explores the themes which have emerged over SPARC BC's ten year experience in delivering community development education programs.
Chapter 5: Emerging Themes, Opportunities & Constraints

Table 3.1 and the findings outlined in Chapter 4 helped to explore the extent to which SPARC BC’s delivery of the CDE Pilot and CCC project adhered to the key characteristics of community social planning, community development education and community capacity building and to explore how community members perceived SPARC BC’s impact. This helped to increase the understanding of how SPARC BC has used community development education to increase community capacity at four distinct levels. However, before moving on to a general discussion of how SPARC BC’s experience provides lessons for other regional capacity building organizations, it is useful to look at some of the themes which have emerged across SPARC BC’s experience of community development education project delivery in the past 10 years. As well, a look at the opportunities and constraints for SPARC BC in continuing to evolve its community development education projects is valuable.

In this section, the findings of the CDE Pilot and CCC questionnaire presented in Chapter 4 provide a foundation and the evaluations of CDI and the Population Health workshops are used to extend the focus to SPARC BC’s community development education approach more generally. As well, the findings of the questionnaire were presented to SPARC BC in early May 2005. At this meeting, numerous insights into themes and trends emerging from its programming were highlighted and discussion ensued on opportunities and constraints for SPARC BC to continue its community development education programs as a capacity building tool. The presentation and discussion are also used to inform this section (See Appendix 5 for a summary). Where possible, comparisons are drawn across SPARC BC’s projects and literature is re-introduced to help situate the experience of SPARC BC in a larger context and to draw out the themes which appear to endure across its capacity building projects.
Chapter 5: Emerging Themes

Understanding Community Context

In Chapter 4, the findings from the CCC and CDE Pilot project questionnaires indicated that while the workshop experiences were generally positive, some negative comments focused on the need for locally-based community knowledge to make the community education process more genuine. This raises the question of how a province-wide, but Vancouver-based, organization like SPARC BC can best support community capacity building and sustain community development momentum in rural and remote regions of the province. In the CDE Pilot and CCC project experience, this was largely framed as the need for SPARC BC to know more about the community in which they are working (2 responses) or that a local facilitator would have been helpful (6).

Shirlow and Murtagh (2004) raise the concern of assuming no capacity exists in a community when ‘capacity building’ projects are identified or undertaken. This is related to the issue of how much a community development educator should know about a community before embarking on work in that area. The ability to know the community is also constricted by the “location, purpose and culture” of the regional organization; this is the organization filter described by Hudson (2004: 262).

The need to understand community context is a consistent theme raised in SPARC BC’s community development education program workshop evaluations; seen in comments such as “we are working in population health and community development successfully, and I believe we have more to teach you than the other way around” (SPARC BC, 2002a:17). The following are a number of issues related to the topic:

- Balancing Facilitator & Community Expertise - SPARC BC has been deliberate in its attempt to enter communities as experts in community social planning, but not as experts on each community. This approach has allowed workshop participants the opportunity to reflect on and share their understandings of their community and to open a dialogue between
community members who may not have been in communication previously. However, questionnaire responses indicate that this approach may also be somewhat problematic when participants do not understand why SPARC BC facilitators have not chosen to learn more about the community before delivering the workshop.

- **Recognizing Outsider/Insider Divide** - Similar to the question of expertise is the issue of the urban/rural or insider/outside divide. This was clearly raised by the CDE Pilot and CCC questionnaire respondents as well as in the Population Health workshops. In the former, one respondent commented on the need to educate city facilitators before they can adequately address rural situations. In the latter, issues of mistrust were identified in some of the workshop and comments such as “the Family Services Coordinator could have done this better (and for a lot less expense) rather than a stranger to the community” and “I believe I would recommend this workshop for urban centres, but not for rural, remote and northern communities” were returned. This respondent continued by stating “the reality of community development ... [is] substantially different in the north. Workshops designed by and from the urban centres tend to miss the mark for what we need” (SPARC BC, 2002a: 16).

- **Building an Inventory of Ideas and Experience** - By allowing the time for community members to share their experiences, SPARC BC has had the opportunity to learn from each community and to develop an inventory of the challenges, successes, projects, programs and other efforts being undertaken across the province. Respondents in both the CDE Pilot and CCC project workshops indicated their appreciation of this knowledge and ways in which it was shared by the facilitator. This was also captured in the evaluation of the 2001/02 Population Health workshops where it was determined that “the success of future efforts in this area will depend on our ability to understand the unique needs of the variety of regions in the province.” The report continued, “it will be essential to develop ongoing
relationships with key players and to become more familiar with local issues if we wish to continue our involvement in communities around the province. The development of effective partnerships, the establishment of advisory committees, and the maintenance of communication networks are all important methods for building and maintaining contact with the various communities in British Columbia" (SPARC BC, 2002a:23).

- **Incorporating Local Coordination** - The recent *CED Leadership Report* found that "on-site partners and promotion are critical" in community programming (Colussi, 2005a:6). The CDI program and Population Health workshops both made use of local coordination through a host organization. The strength of such arrangements was captured in the Population Health evaluation: "Our experience confirmed that this relationship is critical to the success of the workshops. In most cases the Local Coordinators helped gather an enthusiastic and knowledgeable group of participants in an organized and timely way. Most also followed up quickly and efficiently with the distribution of meeting notes to participants" (SPARC BC, 2002a:20). In CCC and the CDE pilot projects local organizations were identified and worked with, but the arrangement was much less formal. Respondents in these programs indicated that they felt local coordination could have been better incorporated.

It is likely that the perceptions of the rural/urban, insider/outsider disconnect, if not the actual realities of this divide, will be an enduring constraint in the delivery of rural community development education projects by urban-based organizations. However, there are numerous opportunities to bridge this gap as well. For example, SPARC BC could aim to be more explicit about its goals in delivering community development education workshops, perhaps including a purpose statement at the beginning of each session. This would help to better introduce SPARC BC to each community it visits as well as to increase transparency regarding its deliberate stance on the role of the expert.
Another opportunity is for SPARC BC to use pre-workshop reports to help better understand local context, key players, and issues and to better connect with current processes and activities in the local community. In the CCC project, such reports were used for each community in order to detail, and to some extent validate, the local efforts that had been taken to address local issues before the capacity building workshops were delivered. The reports included the community groups which have been active, local municipal efforts (including reports, actions plans and policies), and relevant regional, provincial or federal involvement. The reports also indicated explicitly what SPARC BC planned to deliver in each community (i.e. what workshops, which topics, when, etc) and a clear relationship between past efforts and SPARC BC’s contribution was established. Such reports were not used for the CDE Pilot.

However, it is unclear the extent to which these reports lessened the insider/outsider divide. An equal number of respondents from the CCC and CDE Pilot projects commented on the need for increased connection to community by SPARC BC (1 in each). Three respondents from the CCC project indicated the need for local and/or rural facilitation, yet only one CDE Pilot respondent indicated this need. CDE Pilot respondents commented more on the need for workshops to incorporate real situations or use examples of concern to local people (1 response each), but, overall, the differences in experience between and CDE Pilot and CCC appear negligible.

Finally, the opportunity exists to use more local facilitation, without embarking upon co-facilitation. One constraint to this is the challenge of training facilitators in each community. This was realized through the delivery of CDI 2002. According to a representative of the local host organization that year: “to train and educate new communities each time,” adds to the already “expensive, detailed and onerous” task of holding an event. Clearly, this suggests that while SPARC BC handled the challenge “incredibly well and with a continued level of commitment and respect for each of the communities they work with” that local facilitation
Chapter 5: Emerging Themes

requires an additional step in preparing a community for a capacity building project.

At the presentation of findings, a SPARC BC staff member suggested local facilitation or coordination could be as simple as asking community members to invite a person who has the capability to act as a future coordinator to attend the workshop session. This could also include providing simple guidebooks for the local resource people, as was done for CDI (see SPARC BC, 1996 and 2000). Alternately, SPARC BC could provide train-the-trainer sessions, separate from its community development education workshops, to help increase the level of leadership in the communities in which they work.

Providing Adequate & Responsive Follow-up

As identified by Dempsy (2001) and Colussi and Mulkey (2005a) community development education programs need to be delivered in the community if the relationships and networking required for action are to be established. Moreover, Colussi and Mulkey (2005a) continue that “the programs that seem most successful at impacting community change are those that integrate the training with other forms of referral, technical assistance or interventions that support community action or problem-solving once the training is completed.” Clearly this raises the issue of follow-up.

The most common feedback from respondents in both the CDE Pilot and CCC projects was the need for follow up, additional sessions and/or on-going communication with SPARC BC. However, this is an area of both projects which was ranked very low in the questionnaire, with few respondents indicating satisfaction with the level of follow up to date. This indicates a disconnect between what community members perceive as their needs in order to build capacity and the level or continuity of service that SPARC BC is providing.

Additionally, the desire for follow-up represents a second disconnect. As outlined in the section on 'Understanding Community Context' above, community members
want organizations like SPARC BC to better understand their community and have the potential to tend toward a resentment of outside expertise. At the same time, the questionnaire findings demonstrate that communities also want follow-up from the outside organization. A SPARC BC staff member captured this as the "it could be done better locally, but come back and do more of it" attitude.

Returning to Table 3.1 it is interesting to examine this second disconnect in terms of process and outcomes. It appears that workshop participants are generally satisfied with the process aspect of the CCC and CDE Pilot projects, but frustration is apparent at the level of outcomes. This may be because the workshops were successful in introducing participants to the potential of community change, and some of the tools for achieving it, but could not induce immediate change. Thus, it is possible that some participants left the workshops with a desire for outcomes at some or all of the levels of capacity building and saw the lack of follow-up as a failure of the education process and therefore a failing of SPARC BC.

One opportunity for addressing this tension is to educate community members about the difference between process and outcomes: that it is a function of SPARC BC to educate with community and that capacity building outcomes represent a long-term change that can be inspired or catalyzed by education, but not immediately created by it. As demonstrated by Figure 2.1, capacity building needs to be considered the ultimate goal of community development education, but not assumed to be the immediate response. In terms of providing adequate and responsive follow-up to the CCC and CDE Pilot projects, this could mean providing more long-term support for the change process that directly relates to outcomes.

A similar constraint raised by SPARC BC staff at the presentation of findings is the simple fact that experience has more than demonstrated that communities always have the desire for more follow-up and ongoing community development than is available, regardless of how much has been built into the project. This is seen in the requests for follow-up in the CCC and CDE Pilot questionnaires, which ranged
from requests for general support in fostering acceptance of or engagement in community social planning to requests for specific assistance in developing concrete partnerships or undertaking projects. It was also captured in the comment, the “community is still waiting for someone else to do the work”; a statement which implies that the respondent did not feel the community was yet ready or motivated to take on community work on its own.

There are numerous opportunities for increasing the quantity and quality of follow-up provided by SPARC BC. One option, which SPARC BC is currently pursuing, is to have a staff person whose key responsibilities include providing support to the communities SPARC BC delivers workshops in. This Community Development Educator will be responsible for the “design and implementation of the SPARC BC’s community development education activities,” related research concerning community development and Canadian social policy, and will “further develop and deliver the CDE program” (SPARC BC, 2005b). The concept is to have the Community Development Educator available to play a mentor role to communities, and to be available for advice, directions to other resources, or other necessary assistance, as defined by the community.

SPARC BC could also incorporate a Learning Communities component into its community development education workshops to provide a framework for communities to develop the capacity to learn on their own after the project with SPARC BC. This was the case in one Population Health workshop, where, without explicit impetus from SPARC BC, workshop attendees later formed a steering committee, “made plans to explore and develop the concept of a learning community” and held a second workshop on the topic (SPARC BC, 2002a:12).

As well, there is a tremendous opportunity for the communities in which SPARC BC works to support each other. The Government of Canada’s Rural Secretariat has identified that “communications among rural communities should be improved and encouraged” (Rural Secretariat, 2004:5) and SPARC BC could play a significant role in catalyzing this communication. Participant community networks, utilizing
conference calls, or encouraging participation in SPARC BC’s Community Social Planning or other list serves, would be one option; simply providing contact names in other communities would be another. This could also be addressed by scaling up the stories that SPARC BC shares from other communities to include documents or relevant contact information or by providing its publication, Social Planning Contacts for BC (See SPARC BC, 2004d) to each community in which it works.

**Recognizing & Valuing Diversity of Community Interests**

At the presentation of findings, one theme that SPARC BC staff appeared to be clearly aware of is that communities are not uni-dimensional and that multiple and diverse interests can be found in small, remote communities; a point which McClenaghan (2000) phrases as communities existing within communities. This is also an important consideration raised in the literature, including Seebaran’s (2003) guiding principle of respect for diversity, including both interest and cultural groups.

In the recent CED Leadership Report, which included SPARC BC, three key findings were raised in relation to community diversity. These included: 1) cross-sectoral, diverse cohorts are central to building local synergies and impacts; 2) recruitment and selection of participants must be proactive in order to ensure the diverse cohort, and; 3) it is vital to have involvement of municipal and community organization staff (Colussi, 2005a:4). To add to this list, the host organization at CDI 2002 realized that there are many organizations and agencies which they had not “considered ‘natural’ partners in community development” including the local police department and employment counsellors.

In the questionnaire, respondents from the CDE Pilot and CCC projects identified partnership skills most often as a skill they developed or increased as a result of the workshop. Yet, many also stated that those they most need to partner with (such as business and economic sector and government agencies) were not at the workshops. The Population Health workshops had similar findings, with comments
such as “the diversity of the people who came was limited to health, social services related people, and primarily women. I don’t know how to try and entice economic and government folks to come as well.” This participant also noted that there were significant barriers to getting participation from outside the health and social services sector: “they perceive this issue as a ‘health’ issue and cannot see their role, until they attend the session” (SPARC BC, 2002a:7).

A number of issues were raised relating to the need for diverse audiences and community engagement:

- **Encouraging Participation Across Sectors** - One issue that was common to a variety of locations in the Population Health, CCC and CDE Pilot workshops was the difficulty of involving specific sectors in the workshop. The business community, economic development agencies, service clubs, and municipal government were commonly cited as missing. One participant speculated in a Population Health workshop that this was because “representatives from these groups may not feel comfortable taking part in a discussion on social services and may perceive that the discussion about population health is not relevant to their interests” (SPARC BC, 2002a:24).

- **Encouraging Participation Across Community Members** - Laverack (2001) cautions that capacity building projects run the risk of building the capacity of some community members, while disadvantaging others. This raises the issue of which community members attend the workshops. The questionnaire respondents identified community members they believed should have attended, such as youth and First Nations, but were absent. It was suggested by one respondent that including such audiences would increase “focus, energy, vision and depth.” In one location in the CDE Pilot project it was also suggested that the workshop could have been an opportunity to increase intergenerational connectivity by including both seniors and youth.
Chapter 5: Emerging Themes

The uniqueness of diversity in each small town or rural region makes opportunities and constraints to encouraging broader participation and engagement seemingly endless. To this end, one respondent summarized the need for broad participation as "meeting face to face with diverse groups of people, who may be your neighbours, always open doors ..." However, there are a number of considerations which are relevant across locations and community contexts. For example, one opportunity is to develop and deliver workshops for specific target audiences, such as the local Chamber of Commerce or Community Futures organization, as was done at a less formal scale in one community in the CCC project. One respondent in a Population Health workshop suggested that "it may be more effective to prepare a formal presentation on population health to be made to services clubs, Chambers of Commerce and municipal councils to explain how the principles of population health apply to them" (SPARC BC, 2002a:24).

Within the CDE Pilot and CCC questionnaires, a respondent also commented that s/he was "impressed by facts, figures, stats and hard numbers" which "make the presentation more credible." The respondent also suggested, "if the message is to get across to business community, [SPARC BC] will need this type of information.” This presents the opportunity to incorporate additional “hard” numbers into the workshops, perhaps using cost/benefit and other traditional economic models in addition to current information.

The discussion of tailoring presentations to the audience speaks to issues of the model of education raised in Table 3.1. If SPARC BC is to pursue specific presentations, it will be important to cultivate relationships with the audiences beforehand to ensure that their workshop delivery remains at the level of education with the community and that they are able to provide responsive educational and tutoring guidance.
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Sharing Best Practises & Research

Many respondents felt that stories and examples from other communities, and research undertaken by SPARC BC, were a valuable aspect of the workshops and would like to see more of this. A clear constraint to this was raised by SPARC BC staff at the presentation of findings and is similar to the constraint raised in relation to follow-up: community members may never perceive that they have enough information and may always insist that more stories and research are necessary before taking action. However, there are numerous opportunities for increasing how stories and research are shared by SPARC BC.

For example, there is increasing opportunity for SPARC BC to play a role as an information clearinghouse to help collect and share stories across the province. The organization has a lengthy history of publishing community development articles and guidebooks and, with some updating and potential translation into other languages, these could serve as a solid foundation of educational materials. One questionnaire respondent recalled the numerous “good publications” that SPARC BC offered, but worried that the cost of purchase was prohibitive for some.

One possible way to get away from purchasing hard copy resources would be for SPARC BC to use its website as an electronic source of information. The CDE Pilot Report (SPARC BC, 2004a) includes a list of resources which could be made available electronically and the ability to link to numerous other information sources or agencies would be valuable. However, SPARC BC’s community development education SWOT analysis (see Appendix 1) suggested that Internet connection availability and speed could be a weakness in using e-information sources with rural communities, so the organization would have to be cognizant of the impacts of the digital divide between urban and rural BC.

Another benefit of developing an inventoried resource and story collection is the opportunity for SPARC BC to work closer with other community development education practitioners and organizations in the province in order to share insights, materials and resources for curriculum development. The need for “co-
ordination of research, curriculum design, and management efforts bringing potential to increase innovation, impact and cost recovery” was raised in a recent report (Colussi, 2005a:8) and suggests that SPARC BC could play a leadership role in bringing organizations together through the sharing of stories and other materials.

Addressing Dimensions of Capacity Building

In the questionnaire, capacity building was explored at the levels of individual and organizational capacity, relationship building and community development. In his review of community empowerment literature, as it relates to organizational development, Laverack (2001:142) raises a number of interesting questions regarding the various dimensions or levels of community work. For example, are some dimensions more important for others for empowerment? Is it necessary for all dimensions to be strengthened for empowerment of communities? Can all dimensions be equally supported by an outside agent? As well, on the ground, the recent CED Leadership Report also raised the specific question of how to better incorporate personal or individual aspects of leadership into local programs (Colussi, 2005a:8). Clearly, other sectors are struggling with the question of how to address differing layers of capacity building.

Of the four dimensions of capacity building that were explored in the questionnaire, respondents’ answers suggest that SPARC BC is having the most impact in creating community connections. Clearly, there are constraints to attempting to scale-up education around the other three dimensions. This would require a major review of the curriculum that SPARC BC has developed for its community development educations workshops and, ultimately, an investment of time and money to revamp their approach. However, because capacity building is a difficult concept to measure, and the synergy between components is not understood, it may be that SPARC BC’s perceived impact at the level of community relationship building is a function of measurement (i.e. relationships are easier to measure that individual or organizational development). Additionally, it could be
true that impacting at one level of capacity ultimately is affecting each of the other levels. With this much uncertainty, it is difficult to see opportunities. However, what is important is to understand that achieving a higher level of impact in one dimension of capacity building does not necessarily mean that the other levels are failing. Instead, any contribution to capacity building should be considered a success, and efforts should be made to better understand the intricacies of how the dimensions of capacity building are interrelated.

However, there are other opportunities aside from revamping its approach to community development education. Perhaps the most effective of these would be to establish partnerships with other provincial organizations that work in rural and small town BC and deliver programming aimed at capacity building. This would have three major benefits. First, it could positively impact curriculum and material development by reducing the temptation of SPARC BC to re-invent the wheel by developing fresh materials and resources. Working collaboratively could instead allow learning from, and perhaps collaboration with, well-established programs which are effective in capacity building initiatives and could encourage an integrated approach to curriculum development.

Second, it would allow SPARC BC to increase their knowledge of what community development opportunities exist in BC; an opportunity indicated in its SWOT analysis of community development education in BC. By incorporating this knowledge into its approach to capacity building, which recognizes that communities need to move through stages of development and identify its own assets and needs, SPARC BC would be able inform communities of the opportunities which are available to them and which address different, or complementary, aspects of capacity building to what SPARC BC is currently providing. In this way, the multi-dimensionality of capacity building could be better addressed and the unique needs of rural communities could be met by a spectrum of capacity building organizations at different stages of community development.
Third, working with other regional organizations, especially in the areas where SPARC BC is attempting to encourage multi-sectoral collaboration in the communities in which they work, such as bridging economic and social sectors, would serve to model such partnerships and would provide communities with concrete examples of cross-sectoral partnership development.

**Changing Community Perceptions**

The final theme that emerged from the four SPARC BC community development education approaches is that of changing community perceptions, or impacting capacity at the indirect level. In the evaluation of the Community Development Institute, it was reported that participants gained capacity in specific areas such as individual and organizational skills, but that they also experienced indirect capacity building. This was defined as “gaining or recharging energy, motivation, and inspiration as well as a sense of ‘community’ and ‘belongingness;’ broadening one’s understanding of certain issues; and gaining new insight into how to approach a particular problem” (Stierhoff, 1999:7). A participant in the Comox Valley CDI in 2000 captured this sentiment by stating, “I learned, but not in the way I expected. I was challenged by my own questions, encouraged to come up with some of my own answers” (SPARC BC, 2002b: 6). In the CDE Pilot, CCC and Population Health workshops, similar responses were seen, some of which are worth exploring in more detail:

- **Reducing Stereotypes & Judgment** - In the CDE Pilot and CCC questionnaires a small number of responses (5) indicated that the workshop helped to change the way the respondents viewed other people in their community. For example, comments like “learning not to characterize people,” to be “non-judgemental,” “I learned to listen to people more” and “I am not as judgemental” indicated that respondents were learning the value of reducing stereotypes and being less judgemental of fellow community members.
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- **Shifting Notions of Responsibility** - A change in attitude in terms of taking responsibility for community development was also indicated by a number of respondents. One Population Health participant suggested that the workshop “helped break a lot of us out of the ‘government helps’ mode into the ‘we can work together, too’” (SPARC BC, 2002a:12). Sentiments of this kind were also seen in the CCC project. For example, one respondent phrased this as the feeling of being more aware of need to take personal responsibility and contribute to the community and another simply stated, “I look at our community in a better way.”

- **Changing Attitudes Towards Social Planning** - One CCC project respondent stated that “some people in the community view projects like SPARC BC’s as ‘soft’ or ‘socialist’” and consider such projects to be “frivolous and unnecessary.” S/he continued, “[The facilitator] and the workshop pointed out the economic benefits of social planning and showed [that] it wasn’t so soft.” In terms of community relationship building, one CCC participant stated the workshop “enhanced involvement and collaboration between sectors around an issue that affects the whole community but many have perceived as simply ‘another poor people’s problem.’” Similarly, another respondent stated the workshop “may have changed negative expectations between sectors.”

- **Increasing Awareness of Issues** - Some participants suggested they had gained “more awareness of issues in communities that are more isolated in our region” or that they had gained a greater understanding of First Nations and or local health issues (SPARC BC, 2002a:12). Within the CDE Pilot and CCC questionnaires comments such as the workshop made “us more aware of community issues” were also common.

These indirect aspects of capacity building have clearly impacted community members in significant and rich ways, and, in doing so, have addressed the key characteristics of ‘increasing community trust, a sense of ‘belongingness’ or other
indirect elements’ of community development listed in Table 3.1 (and which were not visible in the questionnaire findings alone). This makes the difficulty of measuring such impacts that much more frustrating. This is especially true in regard to Frankish’s comment about the synergistic aspects of capacity building work. For example, it is hard to know if the opportunity for dialogue and interaction in SPARC BC’s workshops has had the greatest impact on changing perceptions of community members, or if the focused exercises, diverse attendance and participation, or the community planning process of developing a common vision is the agent that is spurring such change. Or is it the synergy of all techniques combined that create a space in which change is possible?

It is also difficult to think in terms of opportunities and constraints for intangible concepts such as personal attitude, outlook and opinions. However, it appears that there is a ripe opportunity for SPARC BC to increase the time for dialogue and community interactions in their workshops, as recent experience in dialoguing community issues has demonstrated its strength in influencing community perceptions (SPARC BC staff, 2005a).

These emerging themes increase the understanding of SPARC BC’s experience in delivering community development education projects in rural areas of BC in the past ten years. They help to establish the capacity building characteristics which appear to endure across SPARC BC’s program delivery and to raise issues related to the disconnect between community perceptions and SPARC BC programming. As well, by highlighting the opportunities and constraints in each thematic area, this section has helped to establish some of the key considerations for SPARC BC further evolving their approach to community development education.
Chapter 6: Lessons Learned in Capacity Building

In this chapter, the focus of exploration is expanded once more, and the broad experience of SPARC BC is used to contribute to the understanding of how regional capacity building organizations can effectively use community development education to positively impact capacity building in the communities in which they work.

Capturing the lessons that have been learned from SPARC BC’s experience helps to address many of the gaps in measurement of capacity building projects raised by Chaskin (2001), Frankish (2003), Labonte and Laverack (2001) and others in the literature review. As well, it helps to re-iterate the many cautionary notes about the delivery of capacity building projects in rural areas. For example, the respondents in the CCC and CDE Pilot project perceived that SPARC BC could learn more about their communities and questioned the role of the outside ‘expert.’ This speaks to Shirlow and Murtagh’s (2004) warning about stigmatizing or devaluing communities when entering to undertake a capacity building project and Reardon’s (2003) experience of providing community development but not local empowerment. Understanding diversity and the need for cross-community participation directly supports McClenaghan’s argument of “communities existing within communities” and the high level of community participation outlined by Simpson, Wood and Daws (2003) is echoed by the questionnaire respondents themselves, who attended SPARC BC’s workshops as community members and representatives of local organizations, sometimes more than one.

In the following section, the lessons learned in capacity building are presented and the implications for those working in community development and/or social planning are explored. Capacity building literature is re-introduced from Chapter 2 to help solidify the lessons and findings from the recent CED Leadership Report, as well as numerous reports on community development in rural BC and Canada, are used to help expand the focus to regional capacity building organizations.
Community Ownership is Essential

At the Best Practices Workshop on Learning Communities “grass-roots, ground-up, community-led learning and development with local leadership and lifelong learning development efforts” was identified as a key approach to community development (Skills Development Canada, 2004). Clearly, capacity building organizations, as catalysts and community development educators, have a significant and important role to play supporting this approach, but ultimately communities must support themselves to make effective use of their capacity to achieve the community transformations to which they aspire.

Themes emerging from the experience of SPARC BC, such as understanding community context, providing follow-up, addressing the dimensions of capacity building and changing community perception all speak to some extent to the need for a community to have ownership of the change process if it is to continue after receiving support from an outside capacity building organization. This is especially important in the case of regional organizations, where the distance between the organization and participant community can be a significant barrier to repeated visits.

Creating community ownership is a step in the capacity building process. As argued by Boothroyd, it can be a frustrating undertaking, but one that is worth the time and energy:

“People can successfully and enjoyably plan for themselves. They discover that planning is a fine art that takes practice, reflection and use of techniques, but that it is not an esoteric art. Like any other creative work, planning is often frustrating and time-consuming, but ultimately richly satisfying” (Boothroyd, 1991:8-9).

The experience of SPARC BC speaks to the importance of balancing the catalyzing effect of community development education with responsive and adequate follow-up and support. The implication for other regional capacity building organizations
is to be alive to this balance and to plan for on-going support which assists a local community in taking on capacity building efforts on their own. In other words, planners working in this field need to remember that “learning is a process, not an event!” (Aherne, 2002) and therefore help communities to find ownership of the process so that it can continue beyond a single community development education workshop and be translated into action and outcomes.

**Capacity Building is Iterative**

Related closely to community ownership is the understanding that capacity building is an iterative process. Boothroyd reminds planners that “planning may result in the decision to continue planning, but planning should not cease until there is action” (Boothroyd, 1991:8); a statement which speaks to iterative nature of capacity building as well as the realistic expectation of action. This builds on the notion that learning is a process, and not simply an event. Thus, “as people grasp the way in which knowledge can improve their lives, they are encouraged to seek out new knowledge and become agents of change themselves” (Spruill, 2001:106); and to continue the iterative cycle of capacity building.

In Chapter 2, a linear diagram was introduced to help explain how regional capacity building organizations like SPARC BC, community development education and community capacity building are related. However, this diagram was limited in its ability to represent the cyclical nature of capacity building that Frankish (2003) and others refer to. Instead, Figure 2.1 could be drawn as Figure 5.1.

In Figure 5.1, the feedback loop of capacity building becomes apparent: a community starts with a facilitated process which incorporates community development education as a means to achieve capacity and then re-iterates the process, only this time under their own guidance and support. In which case the facilitated process moves from being that of one provided by a third party such as a regional capacity building organization to being a process designed and delivered within the community.
However, this is not to say that after the community takes charge, there is no room for provision of community development education by outside parties. The intent of Figure 5.1 is to suggest that a community’s ability to enunciate and define its needs, which may be an element of capacity in and of itself, is increased by moving through the cycle and that the need for outside assistance is lessened as the community moves through iterations of community development education.

In SPARC BC’s experience, this was evidenced by the communities which took on capacity building processes after SPARC BC’s workshop; for example, the community which took a Learning Community approach and the partnerships developed in some locations which helped to keep the capacity building process going. These examples demonstrate the increased ability of a community to plan
for itself after a catalyzing workshop from an outside organization and in no way preclude the return of a third party if the community identifies this as a necessary or desirable step.

Clearly, community ownership is a critical element in moving a community through this cycle and life-long learning is an important dimension of capacity building. For regional capacity building organizations, this raises the question of how an organization can encourage community ownership to the extent that the capacity building cycle continues without the direct intervention of an outside organization, while at the same time offering an element of life-long learning. The implication for planners is thus to respectful of a community’s need to take ownership, while at the same time understanding that on-going, but perhaps less direct, support will be required. In other words, regional organizations need to be aware of considerations in the realms of both process and outcomes and to help the community to differentiate between the two. Additionally, the iterative nature of capacity building speaks to the necessity of the outside organizations being constant learners as well in order to be able to provide increasing levels of sophistication and complexity in their training and to meet the more complicated and particularized needs of communities.

**Diverse Participation needs to be Encouraged**

A consistent element in the capacity building literature is partnerships. The need for “effective partnerships at the local level with governments, Aboriginal organizations, business, labour and informal groups of active citizens” has been identified as a key approach to community development (Skills Development Canada, 2004). As well, in its evaluation of numerous rural community development projects, the Canadian Rural Partnership identified the trend of getting “the cooperation and support” of local groups as a problematic, yet recurring necessity in their pilot projects (Canadian Rural Partnership, 2002a:4).
Consistent throughout SPARC BC's approaches to community development education has been the challenge of getting multiple sectoral interests at the workshops. In SPARC BC's experience, it has been the economic and business communities that have been hard to engage. However, other regional capacity building organizations have reported this same challenge. For example, one of the agencies in the CED Leadership Report stated, "municipal leaders are key. We must speak their language and sit in their shoes. Research and data helps get their attention" (Colussi, 2005b: 15).

The question of how regional capacity building organizations can best broker cross-sectoral participation (i.e. if, for example, one large community process is useful or whether separate processes for each sectoral audience are more beneficial) looms large. However, in the experience of SPARC BC, community members are not only identifying missing community sectors, but are also aware that these are the representatives they need to work in partnership with for long-term community development. This suggests that capacity building organizations may have a greater role to play prior to the delivery of workshops in actively encouraging diverse sectors to attend and assisting local organizations in networking to ensure relationships are formed before a learning event or community process begins. Similarly, this is what Colussi and Mulkey refer to as the need for proactive "recruitment and selection of participants ... in order to ensure the diverse cohort" (2005a: 4).

As suggested earlier, one way to do this may be for regional organizations to try to increase their own scope of partnerships and collaborations, so that the established regional relationships can be called upon and exploited to support local work. However, in light of the points raised regarding community ownership and the iterative nature of capacity building, this begs the question of whether it is appropriate for outside organizations to depend on their established partnerships to encourage diverse participation in local settings, or if such organizations should support the capacity of the community to make and achieve their own connections. Ideally, the answer would be a combination of the two
approaches, although the reality of community work (time, money, etc.) may be that the ideal situation is abandoned for the sake of efficiency or moving forward.

In his guiding principles for community social planning, Seebaran (2003) raises the issue of respecting cultural and interest-based diversity in the community. The "value of diversity and the importance of inclusion of women, youth, disability and ethno-cultural learning needs" has also been identified as a cornerstone of best practices in community development work (Skills Development Canada, 2004). SPARC BC’s experience in community development education highlights the need to aware of, and sensitive to, the sometimes differing needs of community groups. For example, respondents from the CDE Pilot and CCC projects identified to varying degrees, how the workshop impacted women, youth, seniors, people with disabilities and First Nation people and communities; a trend which matches the findings from numerous research projects in BC regarding the sections of the rural population most in need of community development opportunities (See BC Women's Rural Project, 2001; Canadian Rural Partnership, 2002b; Elshibli, 2002; BC Youth Network, 2003). A consideration for regional capacity organizations is to find a means of encouraging diverse cultural and interest groups to attend community development education workshops, instead of running the risk of seeing one community group as representative of the community (Shirlow, 2004) or accidentally building the capacity of one group while disadvantaging another (Labonte, 2001). The clear implication for community development educators and others working in this field is to "always look around at the table and, most importantly, [at] who’s missing" (SPARC BC, 2003b) and to encourage community groups to constantly be aware of the need for broad community participation and to incorporate networking and active community participation into a life-long learning approach.

Participation is also an important means by which the indirect elements of capacity building are achieved, largely from the sense of belonging that can be induced by collective planning and action. In SPARC BC’s experience this is clearly
evidenced by the considerations raised under the theme of ‘Changing Community Perceptions.’ To this end Ronaghan (2003) states:

“If people feel that they are truly part of a community, that their ideas and contributions are valued and respected, and that there are resources they can utilize to help themselves, the potential is there for some wonderful results.”

Regional capacity building organizations, as the catalysts of change processes, need to recognize that not all capacity building is tangible or produces a visible result. Instead, the indirect dimensions of community pride, belongingness, trust and reciprocity need to be recognized and celebrated as key foundations of future partnerships and capacity building projects. An opportunity for capturing these indirect impacts is to include notions of belongingness and trust in evaluations of capacity building and to share stories of indirect capacity building when possible.

**Transparency is Important**

Seebaran (2003) also raises the importance of adhering to a transparent process. Transparency can be considered at numerous levels, but in the experience of SPARC BC there appears to be two key dimensions. First, a regional capacity building organization needs to be clear and open about its intent (i.e. why its workshops are being made available) with the community organizations with which it partners to deliver workshops to the broader community. In the case of CCC, the communities were expressed as partners even as the funding was being applied for, and in the CDE pilot the application clearly explained the role of the project as being the provision of support for communities, in part in light of the discontinuation of CDI. Thus, overall, it appears that SPARC BC adheres to transparency at this stage.

Second, the intent of the individual workshops need to made clear to the workshop participants, many of whom may be equally unfamiliar with the outside organization and local organization. In SPARC BC’s case, there appears to be a
perception of a lack of upfront information about the intent of its workshops, for example, explaining why partnership development is a key module or why SPARC BC facilitators use workshop time to learn more about the community, instead of ‘coming prepared.’ This has led workshop participants to question SPARC BC’s approach and to question why a local facilitator was not used instead. The emerging theme of ‘Understanding Community Context’ was a result of this and the lack of understanding of the role of SPARC BC in terms of process and community outcomes can also be considered a component of transparency.

In terms of the latter, a lesson that emerges is for regional organizations to be explicit about the fact that sustainable community development requires effort and activities over the long term, in some cases for many years after the delivery of catalyzing workshop. It needs to be made clear to workshop participants, at each session, that community development education (as a process) is an important, but distinct step on the path towards capacity building (outcomes).

A second transparency lesson emerging from SPARC BC’s experience is for regional capacity building organizations to highlight how their model differs from other models, such community economic development or municipal social planning. In doing so, the emphasis would not be solely on the models themselves but rather on the continuum of community capacity building. This would help to explain the multiple approaches to community development education as well as the far-reaching list of skills that can contribute to capacity building. In doing so, regional organizations would have the opportunity to share the reasons why they use their particular approach (i.e. community social planning) and to be upfront that there are many other approaches available.

**Action needs to be Balanced with Reflection**

Just as community development involves “action, reflection, action, and so on” (SPARC BC, 1995: i) and planning is based on the “plan-action-evaluation trinity” (Boothroyd, 1991:7) regional capacity building organizations need to incorporate
checks and balances to ensure that they are incorporating reflection into their work. This can happen in many ways, but three lessons are outlined below.

The first lesson that can be learned from the experience of SPARC BC is that regional capacity building organizations have a tremendous opportunity to learn from the communities in which community development education projects are delivered. The strength and value of collecting stories and examples from across the province, which can be used to catalyze action in other communities, was captured by the numerous CDE Pilot and CCC project respondents who indicated a high level of appreciation of and inspiration from community stories. Burby (2003:44) states that “the key is for planners to work hard to both educate and learn from citizens” and the implication for regional capacity building organizations is to incorporate a mutual learning perspective into community development education projects. However, as raised in the transparency lesson above, it is also important for community educators, especially those who are outsiders in the community, to be explicit about their mutual learning approach in each workshop that is delivered. Regional capacity building organizations need to explain to participants that their knowledge is not simply be extracted, but that they are being invited to share their experience in the spirit of expanding community development learning across the province.

The second lesson that can be garnered from SPARC BC’s experience is that evaluation of community development education approaches is a critical component in capacity building. Evaluation needs to include a defined approach to measuring the impact of community capacity in order to build knowledge concerning how to impact outcomes and how to define the synergistic elements that support capacity building.

In the literature it has been established that evaluation is important to better compare and learn from capacity building efforts and also to identify how synergistic components contribute to community development (Frankish, 2003). From SPARC BC’s experience, it is apparent that evaluations of past community
development education approaches (Population Health and Community Development Institute) have helped to create new capacity building programs, although increased evaluative efforts are needed.

Additionally, at the CED Leadership Forum in March 2005, the Executive Director of Eugene, Oregon’s Rural Development Initiatives stated, “evaluation is an essential component for program sustainability. It measures cause and effect; it asks the question ‘do you see a relationship with the actions/outcomes and the training.’” And yet evaluation is not being done in a comprehensive manner in BC. For example, of the nine leadership organizations identified in the CED Leadership Report, including SPARC BC, “several use databases to track course evaluations and results but only [two organizations] are doing longer term community impact assessments with participants” and only one group uses an external evaluation scheme on a yearly basis (Colussi, 2005: 8).

The CED Leadership Report also raised the important consideration of the usefulness of evaluations in attracting and maintaining funding. It is common for many capacity building organizations to rely on external funders for some portion of their program development and delivery. In SPARC BC’s experience this is evidenced by the fact that the first three of community development education projects all depended on external funders, to some extent, for program development and delivery. Clearly, evaluations do not ensure funding, especially in the current context in which new and innovative projects are encouraged but sustained funding, even for successful projects, is difficult to come by. However, evaluations do play an important role in demonstrating the effectiveness of successful programs and, perhaps more importantly, offer an important learning tool from which organizations can evolve.

If regional capacity building organizations are to understand the link between their programs and community development, and, perhaps more importantly, relate these impacts to funders, comprehensive, long-term evaluations must be incorporated into the balance of action and reflection. Concurrently, it will be
Chapter 6: Lessons Learned

necessary to develop sustained funding so that projects can be run over a longer periods of time which is long enough to observe, record and evaluate community change along the slow path of social transformation.

Third, while reflection and adaptation are good things, the use of guiding principles and values also appear to be a critical element in balancing action and reflection. Indeed, it has been stated that “to revitalize a community from the inside, we must ensure that there exists certain values and principles - of inclusion, mutual respect and equitable access to community resources” (Ronaghan, 2003). Burby (2003) also argues that good plans involve an adherence to guiding principles, such as fairness, access to information, and the representation of disadvantaged groups.

The experience of SPARC BC in developing and documenting guiding principles for their community development education programs indicates the usefulness of these tools in project development. This is because guiding principles allow flexibility to be mixed with consistent and intentional values, and assists in the delivery of locally appropriate workshops without reinventing the curriculum for each location. The implication for regional capacity building organizations is the need to take the front-end time to develop values and principles in order to deliver programs that are consistent with the organization mission or purpose and which address community need.

Organizations can Benefit from Collaboration

The Government of Canada’s Rural Secretariat has identified that “innovative community development approaches should be identified and shared” and have made a concerted effort at the national level to open dialogue and link rural communities and the organizations working within them (Rural Secretariat, 2004:3-4). This is seen in the current activities of the Fraser Basin Council which has compiled a preliminary list of networks supporting rural areas of the province and plans to use “as a catalyst to initiate more formal networking among BC rural
organizations” (Fraser Basin Council website, 2005). As well, one recommendation arising from the Best Practices of Learning Communities Workshop was to “expand co-operation between NGOs from different sectors to enhance the inclusiveness and relevance of their efforts” (Skills Development Canada, 2004).

Recognizing this and the fact that “regional partnerships and alliances create more opportunities and resources” (Colussi, 2005b: 24), collaboration within the capacity building sector is a goal worth consideration. Yet, like evaluation, this does not appear to be happening at a significant scale. To this end, in the Interview Notes from the CED Leadership Report, one agency representative states “it is frustrating not knowing what else is going on out there and how all the pieces might fit together” (Colussi, 2005b:9).

The experience of SPARC BC, including a number of the findings in Chapter 4 and opportunities outlined in Chapter 5, suggest the value of both encouraging and modeling collaboration. Moreover, the literature on organizational development suggest that creating linkages to regional or other outside organizations is a key characteristic of capacity building. In SPARC BC’s experience, the opportunities for increased collaboration could include creating better linkages between local and regional organizations, finding common ground between different capacity building approaches (e.g. community social planning and community economic development) and finding networking mechanisms for all organizations to come together. In the case of the latter, perhaps a forum for that brings capacity building organizations together, similar to how CDI brought individuals together, is required.

The good news is that leadership agencies in BC which deliver capacity building projects appear to welcome the opportunity for collaboration. At the CED Leadership Forum in March 2005 comments such as, “it would be good to have a referral system that we all use,” that “...common goals might be around evaluation, funding and train the trainer activities”, and that “there is an opportunity for synergy between leadership program delivery agents in BC”
suggest that increased alliances may be forthcoming, or in the least are desirable. The outstanding issue is providing a forum for this to happen. It is simply not enough that "participants express a strong interest to bring the group together again; to 'invest in dialogue' as a way of increasing collaboration" (Colussi, 2005c:6); instead leadership must be taken in networking the regional capacity building organizations in BC.

SPARC BC's community experience, wherein communities are seeking better relationships with provincial Ministries, Health Authorities and other government agencies, or are embarking on issues of provincial or federal jurisdiction, such as education, health care or child or youth services, suggest that collaboration with provincial and federal government initiatives could be a significant means of increasing capacity building support in rural regions. For example, Rural Teams work in each province and territory with community groups to "strengthen partnerships, networks and alliances to address local rural development priorities" (Rural Secretariat, 2004:2). Additionally, at the policy level, the Rural Secretariat (Government of Canada) is developing "a national rural policy framework aimed at community capacity building, renewing the social and economic base of communities, and increasing governmental collaboration for community planning, priority setting and designing programs" (Rural Secretariat, 2004:2). The opportunity may be available for regional capacity building organizations to join the efforts of these federal initiatives to strengthen the delivery of capacity building in BC and to take a first step in building linkages across non-profit and government agencies.

Again, there is promising news. In 2002 recommendations were made to federal government, including the need to "recognize the expertise of community practitioners and development organizations and investing in their capacity for research and development" and "build on programs that work to support long-term community learning outcomes" (Skills Development Canada, 2004). At all levels of cooperation and collaboration, the implication for regional capacity building organizations is to be aware of the vast expertise available in BC to
address the capacity building needs of local communities. By working with other organizations, and reaching out to provincial and federal agencies, at both the policy and programming level, there is tremendous opportunity to increase the supports available to rural regions and small towns. SPARC BC offers lessons regarding the significant need to both model and facilitate partnership and collaboration development and the need for shared effort in “research, curriculum design, and management efforts” (Colussi, 2005a:9) across regional capacity building organizations have been identified.

The preceding lessons learned, from the experience of SPARC BC and research into rural capacity building in BC and Canada, highlight numerous insights into how regional capacity building organizations can best use community development education to positively impact capacity building in small towns and rural communities in BC, or in similar regions. The intent has been to show the established relationship between regional organizations and local capacity building as well as to suggest opportunities to increase the ability of BC’s community development organizations to contribute to capacity building in rural areas and small towns. The lessons suggest this could occur at three levels: 1) how regional capacity building organizations approach community development education (community ownership and iterative nature of capacity building), 2) how regional capacity building organizations work with communities (participation and transparency), and 3) how regional capacity building organizations operate internally and with similar organizations (reflection and collaboration). Overall, the lessons learn demonstrate that regional capacity building organizations play a vital role in positively impacting capacity building in the communities in which they work, but that the process of delivering community development education could be improved to better accommodate the needs and perceptions of rural communities.
Chapter 7: Conclusion

The experience of SPARC BC provides a window into the relationship between facilitated community processes, community development education and community capacity building. The opportunities and constraints for regional capacity building organizations to best undertake community development education projects in rural areas and small towns in BC have also been highlighted by SPARC BC’s experience. Its experience raises many similar considerations regarding capacity building work as those raised in the literature, including the difficulties of addressing capacity building across the dimensions of individuals, organizations, community relationships and the community at large; the specific considerations for undertaking rural capacity building, and; the intricacies of providing successful community development education through a skilled community educator.

This thesis has increased the understanding of community capacity building in rural areas of BC at three levels. First, the questionnaire findings suggested that SPARC BC is positively impacting the capacity of rural communities and small towns in BC, largely through its role as a catalyst and networker. By focusing directly on two of its community development education approaches, the Community Development Education Pilot and Creating Collaborative Communities projects, the questionnaire supplied information for improving SPARC BC’s contribution to capacity building, as well as identifying a number of constraints. This approach also made it possible to gauge and summarize how these projects are being received on the ground in communities and how they are perceived to have, or have not, contributed to local capacity building.

The questionnaire findings suggested that SPARC BC is having the most impact at the level of community relationship building, but gains in individual, organizational and community development were also apparent. It is interesting to note the extent to which the questionnaire identified how much indirect capacity building
was fostered by SPARC BC's work and how, ideally, the sentiments of belonging and trust play a significant role in the iterative cycle of capacity building.

Second, by expanding the focus to include two other community development education projects, this thesis highlighted a number of themes and trends emerging from SPARC BC's ten year experience of community development education. The themes helped to identify the opportunities for SPARC BC to strengthen their programming and to address the gaps and constraints which still remain. This could mean increased efforts to articulate its deliberate approach of mutual learning in order to reduce the perception that SPARC BC needs to increase its understanding of community context. Providing additional, or more responsive, follow-up also emerged as a theme consistent across SPARC BC's community development education processes as well as recognizing the diversity of each community in which it works, with a particular emphasis on cross-sectoral participation. SPARC BC's ten years of experience also raised the need for the organization to play a greater role in sharing community stories and best practices across the province. As well, attempting to address capacity across all dimensions of capacity building and changing community perceptions were raised as important elements of SPARC BC's work.

Emerging across these themes are also a number of trends in terms of opportunities and constraints. For example, increased collaboration with other capacity building organizations to support curriculum development and research and the opportunity to create synergistic relationships in delivering community development education projects were raised as an opportunity in a number of the themes. Providing a clear differentiation between its role in process and outcomes was also raised as an issue and opportunity across SPARC BC's experience. As well, the potential for communities to identify the need for ongoing support for community development was identified as a constraint in two of the themes.
Third, a number of lessons that were learned from the experience of SPARC BC were presented, including the implications for regional capacity building organizations. Evolving from the experience of SPARC BC, but informed considerably by research into rural community development in Canada and the recent CED Leadership Report, these lessons point to the ways in which regional capacity building organizations can increase their ability to serve rural regions of BC and help these regions to serve themselves. Encouraging community ownership and recognizing the iterative cycle of capacity building were similar lessons raised in this section; both of which suggest that life-long learning opportunity must be coupled with local initiatives if capacity building is to succeed.

The lesson of actively encouraging participation builds directly off the theme of ‘Respecting Community Diversity’ in Chapter 5. The commonality between the two is the focus on cross-community and cross-sectoral participation. Following the perception of SPARC BC as not always understanding the context of the communities in which they work, and the complicated, and often misunderstood, role of an outside organization in providing a process to encourage outcomes (but not the outcomes necessarily), is translated into the lesson of transparency. The suggestion for regional capacity organizations is to be as explicit as possible regarding both the process and content of community development education programs, and its connection to outcomes, and to establish a mutual learning relationship which encourages community members to share with and learn from other attendees as well as the facilitator.

The final two lessons, balancing action with reflection and collaboration amongst regional capacity building organizations, both speak to the organizational considerations, such as the use of evaluations or guiding principles and the establishment of partnerships and collaboration. As well, they both suggest that regional capacity building organizations have a role to play in modeling best practices from which local community organizations can learn. Overall, the lessons learned from the experience of SPARC BC provide a seed from which new
Chapter 7: Conclusion

Ideas can germinate and regional capacity building organizations can adapt to best suit the needs of rural BC.

Community development education is a viable means of increasing the capacity of BC’s rural areas and small towns. Regional capacity building organizations such as SPARC BC have a tremendous opportunity to positively impact capacity building in these regions and to build the community development field in BC. By moving through an examination of two of SPARC BC programs to an exploration of themes which have emerged from its ten years of service delivery, a foundation was established from which to distil a number of lessons that can be applied to regional capacity building in general. This thesis has provided a starting place for a continued and expanded examination of capacity building efforts in rural BC and has, overall, made the case for continued community development education projects to be undertaken by regional capacity building organizations.
Appendix 1: SWOT Analysis of CDE by SPARC BC

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role of SPARC BC</th>
<th>Strengths</th>
<th>Weaknesses</th>
<th>Opportunities</th>
<th>Threats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Have a history and reputation for providing CDE. - SPARC BC’s mission and values affirm the importance of CDE.</td>
<td>Opportunities for CD education and training is lacking in some regions of the province.</td>
<td>There is tremendous demand for CD education and training from all parts of the province, especially low cost options.</td>
<td>People &amp; communities who want &amp; need CDE most are those who can least afford it.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training currently available</td>
<td>Universities/colleges are becoming more interested and committed to delivering CD and CED in BC. - There is some post-secondary collaboration among those offering CDE and CED courses.</td>
<td>Institutional based programs are traditional and often costly. - Sufficient enrolment numbers to achieve cost recovery is difficult. - CED and CDE programs are not for the most part coordinated.</td>
<td>- Need for an easily accessible, up to date directory or inventory of CD education/training in BC.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delivery of CDE programs</td>
<td></td>
<td>Web accessible resources and e-learning technologies can be one way to partially address regional gaps in access to CDE.</td>
<td>Access to internet connection is not reliable or even available in some parts of Northern BC.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community readiness</td>
<td>CD has been more able to involve and serve marginalized communities than CED.</td>
<td>Understanding of CD and its benefits varies across BC and within sectors.</td>
<td>CDE is very broad and can include a number of other topics or core competencies - CDE is very broad. - Lack of clear definition/focus could result in fundraising challenges.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Modified from SPARC BC, 2004a
Appendix 2: CDE Questionnaire

Lessons Learned in Community Development Education: A Review of the Approaches of the Social Planning and Research Council of BC.

Questionnaire

Community capacity includes any aspect of a community that affects its ability to identify, mobilize and address issues of local concern. The focus of this survey is on the impact of the capacity-building activities of the Social Planning & Research Council of BC (SPARC BC) on the development of capacity in your community, including the impacts on individual development, organizational development, community relationship building and community development.

SECTION 1

In this section, please fill in the following information. Note: For ‘Organization’ please list the name of the organization you were representing when attending the SPARC BC workshop. If you were not a representative of any group, please leave this space blank.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A. Respondent Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Organization:</strong> Type answer here</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SPARC BC Project:

- ☐ Community Development Education pilot program (Village of Laxgaltsap, Chase, Slocan Valley, ?Akisqnuk or Kitimat)
- ☐ Creating Collaborative Communities (Cranbrook, Prince Rupert, Sunshine Coast, or Williams Lake)
- ☐ Community Development Institute 2002 (Prince George)

SECTION 2

This section has 4 parts: individual development, organizational development, community relationship building and community development. Please answer each question in the space provided.
### A. Individual Development

*Individual development includes the personal development of skills and knowledge as well as increased connectedness in the community.*

1. Do you feel the project with SPARC BC contributed your individual development? If yes, how? *Type answer here*

2. Please check all boxes that apply. The project with SPARC helped me to:
   - Identify contacts (people or organizations) in the community that I can work with.
   - Learn more about how my community can work together.
   - Find ways to work with groups outside my sector.
   - Learn more about social planning/community than I knew before the project.
   - Develop better skills for doing community development work in my community. If you checked this box, please list the skills you developed: *Type answer here*
   - Other: *Type answer here*

3. What information or materials provided by SPARC BC were most relevant to your individual development of new skills or tools? Please check all that apply.
   - Workshop presentation.
   - Support materials provided during or after workshops.
   - Discussions with facilitator, both during and after workshops.
   - Follow-up communication with SPARC BC.
   - Other: *Type answer here*

4. Is there anything that you think SPARC BC could improve in helping you to gain skills and tools in this type of project? *Type answer here*

5. Is there anything else you would like to add about SPARC BC’s role in this project in relation to your development in your community? *Type answer here*

### B. Organizational Development

*Organizational development includes the development of professional skills, such as communications, partnership development, community relations and non-profit organization management, which affect your organization's ability to work in your community.*
6. Please list 3 skills your organization learned as a result of working with SPARC BC:
   1. Type answer here
   2. Type answer here
   3. Type answer here

7. Did these skills affect the ability of your organization to work in your community? If yes, how? Type answer here

8. What information or materials provided by SPARC BC were most relevant to the development of your organization? Please check all that apply.
   - Workshop presentation
   - Support materials provided during or after workshops
   - Discussions with facilitator, both during and after workshops
   - Follow up communication with SPARC BC
   - Other: Type answer here

9. Is there anything that you think SPARC BC could improve in providing information and support for organizational development? Type answer here

10. Is there anything else you would like to add about SPARC BC's role in this project in relation to organizational development? Type answer here

**C. Community Relationship Building**

*Community relationship building includes the development of community connections, such as networking, partnerships, collaboration, and resource sharing.*

11. Has the project encouraged broader participation in your community? If yes, how? Type answer here

12. Did the project contribute to increased or improved relations between your community and provincial and/or regional organizations? If yes, how? Type answer here
13. Please check all that apply. The information and support provided by the project with SPARC BC has helped our community to:
- Better understand how partnerships and collaboration work.
- Identify possible partnerships and/or collaborations for addressing local issues.
- Build broader community networks.
- Enhance the competence of community members, local organizations and/or the community at large.
- Develop bonds of trust in the community through working more closely with other community members and organizations.
- Find new ways of sharing information and resources.
- Other: Type answer here

14. What information or materials provided by SPARC BC were most relevant to community relationship building? Please check all that apply.
- Workshop presentation
- Support materials provided during or after workshops
- Discussions with facilitator, both during and after workshops
- Follow up communication with SPARC BC
- Other: Type answer here

15. Is there anything that you think SPARC BC could improve in providing information and support for community relationship building? Type answer here

16. Is there anything else you would like to add about SPARC BC’s role in this project in relation to the development of community relationships? Type answer here

D. Community Development

Community capacity building includes the development of any aspect of your community that affects its ability to identify, mobilize and address issues of local concern.

17. Did the project increase public awareness in your community about social planning, community development or local issues? How? Type answer here

18. Did the project increase your community’s capacity to deal with community issues? If yes, how? Type answer here
19. What impact did the project have on these groups:
- Children: Type answer here
- Youth: Type answer here
- Aboriginal people and communities: Type answer here
- Women (including personal security): Type answer here
- Other: Type answer here

20. Now that the project is over, what are your next steps for the community? How will the results of the project be applied? Type answer here

21. What information or materials provided by SPARC BC were most relevant to community capacity building?
- Workshop presentation
- Support materials provided during or after workshops
- Discussions with facilitator, both during and after workshops
- Follow up communication with SPARC BC
- Other: Type answer here

22. Is there anything that you think SPARC BC could improve in providing information and support for community capacity building? Type answer here

23. Is there anything else you would like to add about SPARC BC’s role in this project in relation to community capacity building? Type answer here

E. Conclusion

24. How can SPARC BC support community capacity building in your community in the future? Type answer here

25. Is there anything else you would like to add about SPARC BC or your participation in this project? Type answer here

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. If this has been completed as a telephone interview, a copy of the interviewer’s notes will be sent to you within 2 weeks. A copy of the recommendations will be available from SPARC BC in the summer of 2005. If you have any questions or comments about this survey, please contact Danyta Welch at 604 739-0495 or danytaw@interchange.ubc.ca.
## Appendix 3: Summary of Findings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>CCC (8)</th>
<th>CDE (11)</th>
<th>Overall (19)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Do you feel the project contributed to your individual development?</td>
<td>- Increased knowledge of CD/SP models and processes (3)</td>
<td>- Increased knowledge of CD/SP models and processes (2)</td>
<td>- Increased knowledge of CD/SP models and processes (5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Increased knowledge/insight of local issues (2)</td>
<td>- Increased knowledge/insight of local issues (3)</td>
<td>- Increased knowledge/insight of local issues (5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Increased community connection/sharing/dialogue (1)</td>
<td>- Increased community connection/sharing/dialogue (4)</td>
<td>- Increased community connection/sharing/dialogue (5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Increased awareness of personal responsibility to contribute in community (1)</td>
<td></td>
<td>- Other (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- No impact on individual development (1)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The project helped me to:</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>16/19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify contacts in the community that I can work with</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>15/19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Find ways to work with groups outside of my sector</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11/19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Appendix 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learn more about CD/SP than I knew before</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>13/19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop better skills for doing CD in my community</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5/19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. What information was most relevant to your individual development:</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workshop presentation</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>12/19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support materials provided during or after workshop</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11/19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion with facilitator, during and after workshops</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9/19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Follow up communication with SPARC BC</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3/19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Is there anything you think SPARC BC could improve in helping you gain skills and tools?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Need for further sessions/follow up/on going communication (1)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Need for increased connection to community by SPARC (1)</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Opportunity for local/rural facilitation (1)</td>
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<tr>
<td>• More discussion of evaluation (1)</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Need for further sessions/follow up/on going communication (2)</td>
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<td>• Need for increased connection to community by SPARC (1)</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Opportunity for local/rural facilitation (1)</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Need for content to be delivered as expected (1)</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Need for further sessions/follow up/on going communication (3)</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Need for increased connection to community by SPARC (2)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Opportunity for local/rural facilitation (2)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Other (2)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5. Anything else regarding individual development?
- Need for further sessions/follow up/on going communication (2)
- More examples/ anecdotes from SPARC BC's experience and research (1)

6. List 3 skills your organization learned
- Value of partnership and collaboration development/maintenance (2)
- Communications skills/community relations (2)
- Reducing judgement and stereotyping (2)
- Advocacy (1)
- Leadership (1)
- Clarifying goals (1)
- Research/learn from other communities (1)
- No skills (1)

7. Did these skills affect the ability of your organization to work in your community?
- Provided SP structure for future activities (2)
- By increasing cooperation/focus (4)
- No (1)

- Need for further sessions/follow up/on going communication (3)
- Revise program to remove "competition between towns (1)
- Provide seed funding (1)

- Value of partnership and collaboration development/maintenance (7)
- Communications skills/community relations (3)
- Reducing judgement and stereotyping (1)
- Importance of cooperation/community involvement (2)
- SP process (2)
- Meeting skills (1)

- Provided SP structure for future activities (2)
- To listen better/better communication (1)
- Through community networking (2)

- Need for further sessions/follow up/on going communication (5)
- Other (3)

- Value of partnership and collaboration development/maintenance (9)
- Communications skills/community relations (5)
- Reducing judgement and stereotyping (3)
- Importance of cooperation/community involvement (2)
- SP process (2)
- No skills (1)
- Other (5)
### Appendix 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>8. What information was most relevant to organizational development:</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>11/19</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Workshop presentation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Support materials provided during or after workshop</td>
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<td>8/19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Follow up communication with SPARC BC</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>3/19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>9. Is there anything SPARC BC could improve in supporting organizational development?</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Provide specific skill development (SP models) (1)</td>
<td>• Provide specific skill development (surveys, focus groups) (1)</td>
<td>• Provide specific skill development (2)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Need for further sessions/follow up/on-going communication (1)</td>
<td>• Need for further sessions/follow up/on-going communication (2)</td>
<td>• Need for further sessions/follow up/on-going communication (3)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Information on what other communities have done (1)</td>
<td>• Use real situations during workshops (1)</td>
<td>• Other (2)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>10. Anything else regarding organizational development?</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Need for further sessions/follow up/on-going communication (1)</td>
<td>• Need for further sessions/follow up/on-going communication (2)</td>
<td>• Need for further sessions/follow up/on-going communication (3)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Use concrete examples related to concerns of local people (1)</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Other (2)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Appendix 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>11. Has the project encouraged broader participation in your community?</th>
<th>Better communication from SPARC BC (1)</th>
<th>No/not yet (1)</th>
<th>Increased community connections (3)</th>
<th>Increased awareness of SP by local government (1)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No/not yet (3)</td>
<td>Increased community connections (2)</td>
<td>Less judgemental (1), Developed a community project (1)</td>
<td>Increased involvement of people not already involved (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Did the project contribute to increased or improved relations with provincial or regional organizations?</td>
<td>No/not yet (3)</td>
<td>Increased collaboration (1)</td>
<td>Catalyst for starting initial discussions (2)</td>
<td>No/not yet (6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No/not yet (3)</td>
<td>Increased collaboration (2)</td>
<td>Catalyst for starting initial discussions (1)</td>
<td>Increased community connections (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. The information and support has helped our community to:</td>
<td>Better understand how partnerships and collaborations work</td>
<td>Identify possible partnerships for addressing local issues</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Build broader community networks</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10/19</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enhance the competence of community members, local organizations, community at large</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8/19</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop bonds of trust in the community through working more closely with other community member and organizations</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6/19</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Find new ways of sharing information and resources</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6/19</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. What information was most relevant to community relationship building: Workshop presentation</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>14/19</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support materials provided during or after workshop</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9/19</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion with facilitator, during and after workshops</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5/19</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Follow up communication with SPARC BC</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1/19</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Is there anything you think SPARC BC could improve in providing support for community relationship building?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Need for further sessions/follow up/on-going communication (2)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• More engagement of business, economic, government sectors (already preaching to converted) (4)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Youth involvement (1)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Examples from communities (1)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Need for further sessions/follow up/on-going communication (3)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Need for further sessions/follow up/on-going communication (5)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• More engagement of business, economic, government sectors (already preaching to converted) (4)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Other (2)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>16. Anything else regarding community relationship building?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Helped to bring sectors/local organizations together (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Need for further sessions/follow up/on-going communication (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Helped to bring sectors/local organizations together (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Need for further sessions/follow up/on-going communication (2)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>17. Did the project increase public awareness about SP, CD or local issues?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Increased awareness of local issues (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Yes/Yes, but temporarily (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Increased opportunity/willingness to work together (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Provided model for increasing awareness (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Helped to build credibility of organization (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Increased awareness of local issues (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• No (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• only useful for those who attended, not community at large (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Increased awareness of local issues (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Yes/Yes, but temporarily (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Increased opportunity/willingness to work together (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• No (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Other (3)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
18. Did the project increase your community's capacity to deal with local issues?

- No/not yet (2)
- Increased awareness of local issues and organizations (2)
- Initiated a collaborative project (1)
- Yes (1)

19. What impact did the project have on these groups:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Children</th>
<th>Youth</th>
<th>Aboriginal people and communities</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Children</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aboriginal people and communities</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seniors</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People with disabilities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heavy users of health care system</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low-income people</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single parents</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social and economic sectors</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Most respondents did not include the impact, so the questions turned out to really ask “Did the project impact the following groups?”
# Appendix 3

## 20. Now that the project is over, what are the next steps for the community? How will the results be applied?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Initiating local project</th>
<th>No/not yet</th>
<th>Accessed funding</th>
<th>Presentations planned to other community groups</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(3)</td>
<td>(2)</td>
<td>(1)</td>
<td>(1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(5)</td>
<td>(1)</td>
<td>(1)</td>
<td>(1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(8)</td>
<td>(3)</td>
<td>(1)</td>
<td>(2)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## 21. What information was most relevant to community development:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Workshop presentation</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>10</th>
<th>15/19</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Support materials provided during or after workshop</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11/19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion with facilitator, during and after workshops</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5/19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Follow up communication with SPARC BC</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1/19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## 22. Is there anything SPARC BC could improve in supporting CD?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Need for further sessions/follow up/on-going communication</th>
<th>Need for further sessions/follow up/on-going communication</th>
<th>Need for further sessions/follow up/on-going communication</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(1)</td>
<td>(1)</td>
<td>(1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funding/support for local (rural) SP facilitator</td>
<td>Funding/support for local (rural) SP facilitator</td>
<td>Funding/support for local (rural) SP facilitator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1)</td>
<td>(1)</td>
<td>(2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More “hard numbers” to support SP</td>
<td>Continue to provide links to local education and professionals</td>
<td>Other</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Appendix 3

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **23. Anything else regarding CD?** | • Make sure to present on what community is expecting (1)  
• Increased awareness of need for SP and what is currently occurring (1) |   |
| **24. How can SPARC BC support your community in the future?** | • Need for further sessions/follow up/on-going communication (1)  
• Have SPARC facilitator more accessible or local (2)  
• Involve business sector (1)  
• Provide resources on other communities (1) | • Need for further sessions/follow up/on-going communication (6)  
• Present what community is expecting (1)  
• Continue to work with First Nations (1)  
• Provide seed funding (1) | • Need for further sessions/follow up/on-going communication (7)  
• Have SPARC facilitator more accessible or local (2)  
• Other (5) |
Appendix 4: Discussion of Findings with SPARC BC

1. The most common feedback from respondents was the need for follow up, additional sessions and/or on-going communication with SPARC BC. Yet, this is an area of both programs which was ranked very low.

What are the opportunities (or constraints) for SPARC BC to provide more follow up or provide additional support?

2. A number of respondents stressed the need for local and/or rural facilitators and the need for SPARC BC to have a better understanding of the communities in which they work.

As a Vancouver based organization, how can SPARC BC address this?

3. Respondents identified partnership skills most often as a skill they developed or increased as a result of the workshop. Many also stated that those they most need to partner with (business and economic sector and government agencies) were not at the workshops.

What can SPARC BC do to engage (or help communities to) engage these sectors? How can social planning be 'sold' to or incorporated by these sectors?

4. Many respondents felt that stories and examples from other communities, and research undertaken by SPARC BC, were a valuable aspect of the workshops and would like to see more of this.

What materials, resources or electronic sources could increase community access to SPARC BC research? Would this be valuable on its own or as part of a workshop?

5. Of the four dimensions of capacity building that were explored, respondents’ answers suggest that SPARC BC is having the most impact in creating community connections.

How can (or should) attempts be made to increase impacts on the other dimensions of capacity building?
### Appendix 5: Opportunities and Constraints for SPARC BC

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lesson</th>
<th>Opportunity</th>
<th>Constraint</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Understanding Community Context | • Use workshops to increase learning about communities  
• Increase clarity about purpose of SPARC BC approach in workshops (i.e. let people know why SPARC asks questions about the community)  
• Encourage local facilitator to attend workshop  
• Hold workshops specific for local facilitators in order to train the trainer | • Urban vs. rural debate will always exist, or at least always be perceived  
• Many capacity building models/theories were developed in larger or urban centres |
| Providing Follow-up | • Provide parallel information through written materials, website, etc  
• Hire Community Development Educator to provide additional/on-going support to communities  
• Providing one-time, free workshop (CDE Pilot model) allows SPARC BC to learn more about communities and develop partnerships for future projects | • Project funding model limits opportunity for on-going support to communities  
• Finding staff with skill set and academic background required to support communities and develop educational materials |
| Recognizing Diverse Community Interests | • Increase pre-workshop support to ensure all sectors are present at meetings  
• Provide workshops specific to different sectors (e.g. business, government) with content geared to that audience  
• Increase awareness of specific issues for each sector (business, youth, First Nations) and develop strategy to address each | • Different sectors may require different messages so convening meetings with everyone can be ineffective |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Appendix 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sharing Best Practices &amp; Research</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Connect with organizations representing other sectors (e.g. Chambers of Commerce, Community Futures, etc) to learn strategies and work together</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Redevelop website to include resources, workshop materials, key links, etc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Hire Community Development Educator to oversee material and web development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Hold workshop or presentation focused on community stories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Develop working groups within each CDE program from community participants to link people and communities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Promote CSPN bulletin board as opportunity for communities to network and share</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Promote Learning Community model within CDE programs to support communities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Addressing Dimensions of Capacity Building</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Work with, and link to, other organizations which work at other levels or specific aspects of capacity building</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- SPARC BC's CDE programs are intentionally focussed on organizational development (in order to advance community social planning organizations in BC)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Encouraging Community Acceptance and Participation</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Increase opportunity for dialogue in CDE programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Successful dialogues take time and energy to prepare for</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Bibliography


Bibliography


