Initiative on the New Economy Project

Innovative Services and Voluntary Organizations: Interim Report

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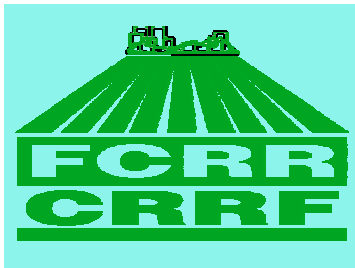**Prince George, B.C.**

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Tables

ABOUT THE INNOVATIVE SERVICES AND VOLUNTARY ORGANIZATIONS PROJECT

The "Building Rural Capacity in the New Economy" project, funded by Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council's (SSHRC) Initiative on the New Economy program, works closely with innovative service providers and voluntary organizations to explore the changing capacity and roles of these groups. The research is organized by the Canadian Rural Revitalization Foundation (CRRF) and carried out by members of its New Rural Economy (NRE) initiative. The sites participating in this project provide representation from regions across Canada. In selecting these sites, a number of factors in the NRE sampling frame matrix were considered including low global exposure versus high global exposure, fluctuating versus stable economies, non-adjacent to metro areas versus metro adjacent, high capability versus low capability, and leading versus lagging (Reimer 2002a).

In the summer of 2003, researchers visited 4 sites to conduct a total of 40 interviews with key service providers and voluntary organizations. Data were collected to examine:

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

Introduction

Service delivery is a challenge across rural and small town Canada. Many small places are finding ways to overcome the challenges of distance and the high costs of delivering services to low population density areas. They are also finding ways to deliver services in a way that reflects the rural context, values, needs, and abilities of rural and small town places, so that they may be maintained over time. There are a range of ways in which services can be re-conceptualized and re-organized. These include cooperation between services, clustering of services, and innovative public-private-volunteer partnerships. Fitchen (1991: 279) notes, "to survive, [small] communities will have to generate determination, innovative ideas, and energy from within, as these are unlikely to be delivered to them from state and federal governments."

The purpose of this research is two-fold. First, we will explore the changing capacity and roles of voluntary organizations in rural and small town Canada. This includes examining the implications of the changing capacity and roles of these groups on vulnerable populations such as women and the elderly, as well as individuals living in poverty. Second, we will focus on innovations in service delivery that have emerged as a result of the changing conditions in rural and small town areas. We will track innovative services designed to build a foundation for retaining and attracting businesses and residents.

This report outlines the results from the first year of tracking innovative services and voluntary organizations in rural and small town places. It begins by providing background information about changes in service provision and the socioeconomic pressures confronting rural and small town Canada. This is followed by a discussion about how voluntary organizations and innovative services exhibit components of social cohesion and social capital that help to build capacity within a place. Previous work about the challenges facing innovative services and voluntary organizations is also explored. The study's methodology to explore these organizations in four sites across Canada is outlined.

The structure of participating innovative services and voluntary organizations is examined to provide a foundation for building the capacity of these groups. Many of these organizations provide services that would not otherwise exist, and their contributions to their communities are outlined. In addition, budgets, policies, and sources of information used are examined. Our findings also compare the challenges facing these organizations. Furthermore, this report included a discussion about the use of communication tools, networks, and partnerships to deliver services in these rural and small town places.

Change in Rural and Small Town Places

Rural and small town places are experiencing an accelerating pace of change (Halseth 2004). Such change provides both opportunities and challenges for households. Yet, as residents are coping with economic and social restructuring, a foundation of services to help them cope with transition and build towards revitalization is being withdrawn. This withdrawal of services only intensifies household stress, which may exacerbate the out-migration of residents. It has become clear that many rural and small town places will have to explore new options for service delivery. Within this context, volunteer organizations and innovative services are two ways for rural and small town places to move forward in the transition to the new economy. This section will explore the pressures stemming from social and economic restructuring in rural and small town places and how services and voluntary organizations help communities respond to such pressures.

Impacts of Changes on Service Provision in Rural and Small Town Places

Within the context of global economic restructuring, rural and small town places tend to be more vulnerable than their urban counterparts as their economies tend to be less diversified and are often controlled by decision-makers outside of these places (Apedaile 2004; Halseth 1999). A distinguishing feature of many rural economies is a dependence on a single-industry, something that creates vulnerability under changing market conditions (Beckley and Burkosky 1999). For the most part, rural places have little control over decisions affecting single-industry restructuring or closures that can have significant impacts on the provision of services (Bradbury and St. Martin 1983).

Rural and small town places also tend to be more vulnerable due to an unstable or transient population. For example, single-industry towns characterized by a mobile workforce may create social and economic problems as workers migrate in and out of the community (Halseth 1999; Gill 1990). Fitchen (1995) notes that out-migration may increase rural poverty because those with the least amount of education and job skills tend to stay behind. Bluestone and Harrison (1982) also note the impact of plant closures on displaced workers and services. With the loss of jobs and family wealth, there is an increase in the demand for welfare and support services. Moreover, impacts on physical and mental health ranging from high blood pressure, ulcers, depression, and anxiety are coupled with the loss of health benefits. Bluestone and Harrison (1982) and Gill and Smith (1985) further note family and social relationships are strained. All of these put pressure on the demand for rural services during economic and social restructuring.

However, at the same time that social and economic restructuring is taking place; services are also being restructured (Cater and Jones 1989). Examples include the withdrawal of service provision from rural areas. Such losses have ranged from transportation services (Rural Development Commission n.d.), to government offices (Halseth *et al.* 2003), to health care services such as hospitals. Cutbacks in service provision from federal and provincial governments in Canada have been taking place since the 1980s. During this period, the federal government sought to withdraw post offices, employment insurance offices, and human resource

offices from rural and small town places (Halseth *et al.* 2003). Cutbacks in transfer payments from the federal to the provincial governments for health and education resulted in reduced service levels in smaller communities (Halseth *et al.* 2003). In the 1990s, the provincial governments initiated funding changes that resulted in service closures for health, education, and ministry offices.

The Services Team of the Building Rural Capacity in the New Economy Project has been tracking services in 22 rural and small town places across Canada since 1998. Only 24 out of 116 (20.7%) services were available in more than half of the sites. However, what is of particular concern is that 63.5% of services previously tracked have declined in the sites examined (Halseth and Ryser 2004). This places pressures on residents and businesses who must travel to nearby centres to access needed services. It also limits the contributions which service providers and service delivery can make to local capacity as well as the construction / maintenance of social cohesion and social capital.

Such closures have profound impacts on the most vulnerable residents of the community, while at the same time; they can affect the very viability of rural places. For example, the closure of post offices tends to have the greatest effects upon pensioners and young families who obtain social assistance through the post office (Robinson 1990). The impact is particularly difficult for the elderly, who are challenged financially and physically, who may be facing longer distances and more costs to access services (Carter 1990). Hospital closures and the centralization of physical and mental health services have also been particularly difficult on the elderly and the poor (Liu *et al.* 2001) who do not have access to a vehicle and who live in a place with limited transportation services (Robinson 1990).

The closure of small primary schools has similar effects, as without schools it becomes difficult to retain and attract young families or businesses to rural areas. Halseth and Sullivan (2002) note that in the early stages of development in Schefferville, Québec, the absence of a local high school was a key reason why young families were not planning to stay. However, since many service sites (ie. school buildings) act as multi-functional spaces for different groups, they can also have impacts on a range of local groups and services. All of these closures and changes in service provision have reduced the places and opportunities for routine social interaction, which ultimately affect the formation of relationships and social cohesion.

If residents of small places wish to retain these services, they will have to find new ways to have them delivered. Within this context, voluntary organizations and innovative service providers have emerged to fill the void of services that may not otherwise exist. It is important to explore how these organizations emerge, what makes them successful, and how they sustain themselves during periods of transition. Social cohesion and social capital are two concepts that help to explore the successful developments of innovative services and voluntary organizations during restructuring periods.

Social Cohesion

Social cohesion generally refers to the extent to which a geographical place achieves 'community' in the sense of shared values, cooperation, and interaction (Beckley 1994). Reimer (2002b: 13) builds on this notion of cooperation by defining social cohesion as "the extent to which people respond collectively to achieve their valued outcomes and to deal with the economic, social, political, or environmental stresses (positive or negative) that affect them.

Social cohesion is achieved through social interaction. Such social interactions provide the basis for bonds among individuals and are produced through interactions in daily life (Potapchuk *et al.* 1997). In rural and small town Canada, public services act as focal points for engaging in routine local social interaction. For example, some village post offices operate in conjunction with private businesses such as grocery shops or news agents, thus becoming a key focal point for daily interaction (Robinson 1990). Schools also serve multi-functions, providing a place for 'assembly' activities such as aerobics classes, Scouts and Guides groups, parent-teacher associations, community councils, art and music groups, recreation organizations, as well as seniors' and women's groups. Rural seniors' centres can similarly serve as such multi-function resources for the entire community (Krout *et al.* 1994).

However, interaction in rural and small town places can also be difficult. This is because the vulnerability and crisis of resource-based economies can contribute to declining community cohesion (Reed 1995). In resource towns, for example, high labour turnover and transience act as barriers to forming social ties and friendships (Halseth 1999; Gill and Smith 1985).

Social Capital

Social capital refers to social assets, either with respect to the source of investment or with the goods or services produced (Reimer 2002b). Social capital is treated either as stock (networks, institutions) or flow (social participation, collective action) components (Reimer 2002b). Social capital also encompasses other features of social organization, "such as networks, norms and trust that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefits" (Korsching *et al.* 2001: 81). This foundation of trust and prior relationships is thus a resource drawn upon to accomplish things for these individuals or groups such as the provision of services to meet local needs (Keast *et al.* 2004; Bruce and Halseth 2001; Wall *et al.* 1998).

Voluntary Organizations

The definition of voluntary organizations is fraught with overlapping meanings (Barr *et al.* 2004). Characteristics of voluntary organizations may include that they are organized, non-governmental, non-profit, self-governing, and voluntary (unpaid). Marshall (1999) concludes that they generally serve a public benefit; depend upon volunteers, at least for their governance; obtain financial support from individuals; and experience limited direct control by governments,

other than in relation to tax benefits. This definition excludes universities and hospitals that might have large numbers of volunteers, but includes organizations that may not qualify for charitable status, such as recreational associations, service clubs, and advocacy groups.

Sullivan and Halseth (2004: 339) use the definition of voluntary organizations to encompass "organizations that people belong to part time and without pay, such as clubs, lodges, good-works agencies and the like', and which an individual joins by choice." They also describe two types of volunteering: formal and informal. Formal volunteering refers to activities conducted in or through formally organized groups, which typically contribute to a collective good. Informal volunteering, however, is "more private, not organized, and often refers to helping friends, neighbours, and kin outside the household" (Sullivan and Halseth 2004: 339). This report focuses upon formal volunteer organizations.

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

The Role of Voluntary Organizations During Social / Economic Restructuring

An important component of a community's capacity to respond to social and economic restructuring lies within its community-based volunteer organizations (Halseth and Sullivan 1999; Beckley and Sprenger 1995). Volunteering develops social cohesion as it provides a way to meet people, develop relationships, build skills, and participate in the community (Phillips 2001/2000; Marshall 1999). Therefore, during times of crisis or restructuring, people know who to turn to because they have worked together on many things.

Voluntary organizations can provide a range of services that are important during periods of transition. Voluntary organizations often respond to crisis or conditions of stress such as rising unemployment, government cutbacks, limited services, or increased use of emergency shelters (Keast *et al.* 2004; Berman and West 1995). Despite this importance, voluntary organizations are often in a precarious position. Organizations have identified that if they ceased to exist, there would likely be no other organization to step in and fill the void (Bruce *et al.* 1999).

Within this context, volunteer organizations may face challenges in mobilization. Rural voluntary organizations have experienced increased demands for services and assistance (Wall and Gordon 1999), while having fewer full-time staff or specialized skills compared to urban voluntary organizations (Barr *et al.* 2004). They may lack members, have members who offer little participation, or they may not have adequate training to carry out their activities (Bruce and

Halseth 2001; Bruce *et al.* 1999; Marshall 1999). People may not be able to participate due to work schedules, lack of resources, racial discrimination, costs, distance, and a lack of education. For example, shift work in resource communities makes community participation difficult (Everitt and Gill 1993). An inability to find child care which meets shift work schedules similarly limits people's ability to participate (Preston *et al.* 2000). This will have an impact on voluntary organizations that depend on local participation to deliver services.

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

Another challenge faced by voluntary organizations surrounds limited financial resources (Barr *et al.* 2004; Wall 1999; Wall and Gordon 1999). Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, the Canadian government reduced core funding available to voluntary organizations under the premise that they should "succeed or fail in the 'marketplace' of ideas and funding" (Phillips 2001/2000: 185). If non-profit groups wished to obtain funding, they were encouraged to develop partnerships (Lesky *et al.* 2001). These cuts, however, took place at the same time that voluntary organizations were increasingly pressured to fill the gaps for providing services formerly offered by the government.

Within this context, voluntary organizations face challenges to obtaining funding to provide these services. One challenge involves finding out about available grants, as many small places felt that information about programs and grants is not disseminated to them (Wall 1999; Wall and Gordon 1999). Organizations found it difficult to meet deadlines involved with the application process for government funding (Halseth and Sullivan 1999). They also found the process complicated and time consuming. Volunteer organizations have faced greater demands for accountability in reporting back to funding agencies. These demands have only been intensified by publicity at Human Resources Development Canada in 2000 (Phillips 2001/2000). Consequently, there has been an increase in the auditing of funds to third parties. Furthermore, successes of project funding are determined by outcomes after a short-term funding period. However, the effects of the project may take years to be felt. In other cases, organizations did not hear back from the funding agency until 6 months after their programs had started. At times, funding agencies reduced the voluntary organization's budget so much that the programs could not run. Another finding indicated difficulty obtaining funding as the local volunteer organization could not raise matching funds themselves (Halseth and Sullivan 1999).

Funding challenges have also emerged within communities. For example, people are donating smaller amounts, and more groups are competing for limited community funds (Bruce *et al.* 1999: 2.18). Cutbacks and amalgamation of local governments (stemming from federal and

provincial constraints) have also led to less support or assistance from local government for voluntary organizations because the resources are not there or municipal officials are now too busy to meet with third sector groups (Wall and Gordon 1999). Consequently, some organizations must move to a 'user-pay' system of service delivery (Bruce *et al.* 1999). In other cases, some non-profit organizations have moved towards for-profit legal status and are operating business ventures to compensate for lack of funding to be able to provide services (Hughes and Luksetich 2004).

Aside from attempts to obtain funding through grants and contribution agreements, voluntary organizations have faced challenges in obtaining charity status (Phillips 2001/2000). This impacts the ability of organizations to obtain public support in the form of tax expenditures. Charitable status also provides organizations with legitimacy for obtaining access to lottery funds or other types of fundraising. There are four acceptable purposes of charity including: relief of poverty, advancement of education, advancement of religion, and other purposes beneficial to the community. These guidelines were established in the 1960s based upon England's 1601 Statute of Elizabeth and a legal interpretation from the 1890s and may not reflect present day needs. Canada Customs and Revenue Agency is responsible for deciding if an organization provides other services beneficial to the community. As such, political think tank organizations have been approved for charitable status, but some immigrant or minority groups have not been approved based upon the assumption that not all immigrants or minorities are in need of assistance. Attempts to revise the definition face financial and political barriers as expanding the definition to encompass other organizations would significantly impact the 'public purse'.

Volunteer organizations have also had difficulty making impacts on policies. Many government agencies and processes lack transparency and are closed to the public and voluntary organizations. Therefore, they do not benefit from input by voluntary organizations that have first hand knowledge of community needs (Phillips 2001/2000).

Innovative Services

Public and private services also help to build capacity by providing opportunities for building relationships, partnerships, and trust, which subsequently can lead to new partnerships and innovative ways for delivering services where they might otherwise not exist. Such services can enhance local quality of life and reduce out-migration from rural and small town places. This project focuses upon innovative services that may include one-stop shops, networks, partnerships, new ways of delivering products and services, and the use of technology. For example, one-stop service outlets have been developed to provide mental health, public health, and social services in one location (Lesky *et al.* 2001).

Defining Innovation

There are numerous studies that explore outcomes of innovation, but defining innovation is more difficult. Hage (1999) notes that even though innovations are critical to how organizations

respond to technological or market challenges, organizational innovation has not been central to organizational theory. Within this context, however, there are different perceptions of innovation. Hage (1999: 599) defines organizational innovation as "the adoption of an idea or behaviour that is new to the organization." For Van de Ven *et al.* (1999), innovation is more encompassing and includes the process of developing and implementing new ideas. It may also combine old ideas, schemes that challenge the present order, or a unique approach that is perceived as new by the individuals involved, regardless whether or not the idea may exist elsewhere. Sundbo (1998) further affirms that a key element of defining innovation is ensuring that the concept that is introduced is accepted. Innovation may include a new product, a new service, different administrative practices, new technology, new behaviours, knowledge, or new strategies (Keast *et al.* 2004).

Components of Innovation

Previous studies have described innovative services that bridge social capital primarily through networking, partnerships, and the application of technology that are not necessarily constrained by place (Wallis 1998; Nyland 1995). Being innovative is also influenced by the 'potential' for interaction, as well as the transfer and adoption of knowledge (Doloreax 2002; Sundbo 1998). The interest is with linkages between groups and organizations that form a network of support, information, and resources (Bruce and Halseth 2001). Networking refers to connections made through meetings, conferences, or through communication (Keast *et al.* 2004). Networks occur when links between individuals or organizations become formalized as links are maintained over time. Networks may be created as government bureaucrats have prior membership in voluntary groups, through meetings with policy advisors (formally or informally), and through maintaining relationships developed between public, private, and non-profit groups over time (Nyland 1995). Network structures emerge when partners agree to commit resources over a period of time (Keast *et al.* 2004). Within this context, partnerships may be defined where "partners cooperate to achieve a specific purpose, specify each organization's rights and responsibilities, and agree on how to make decisions" (Lesky *et al.* 2001: 32).

Partnerships can help innovative service organizations to share experience and expertise; increase networks to access more information; provide in-kind services in the form of volunteer hours and office supplies; promote the organization's goals; and to demonstrate their legitimacy within and outside of the community (Keast *et al.* 2004; Wall and Gordon 1999: Nyland 1995). Partnering with government, universities, and industrial research partners can also provide a framework for stable social interactions (Doloreax 2002). Such networks can provide information about how other groups or places are arranging or providing needed services. With a broader knowledge base, rural and small town decision makers will have an opportunity to be better informed about options and choices.

For example, the Comox Valley Centre in BC has a partnership with an advisory committee made up of 'ordinary' community members. This allows the nursing centre to develop according to community needs, values, beliefs, and visions (Ritchie *et al.* 1995). Another innovative partnership was developed between the Canadian Cancer Society, the Telemedicine Centre at

Memorial University in Newfoundland, and numerous elementary schools, high schools, hospitals, and medical clinics to provide an audio teleconferencing support group for rural women with breast cancer (Curran and Church 1998). The network encompasses about 150 communities throughout the province. A variety of topics are discussed including detection, exercise and prevention of recurrences, coping with chemotherapy, family support, and bereavement.

Crises in service provision can provide a motivating pressure for residents to take action to meet community needs. Krout *et al.* (1994) recognize the importance of seniors' centres as places for rural elders to engage in social, recreational, and volunteering activities. Eight rural seniors' centers in northern Alabama were faced with local government funding cuts. Subsequently, the DeKalb County Council's director formed a not-for-profit corporation to employ seniors to pair and package socks for local sock mills. The program generates money for rural seniors' centers, and provides employment for older persons in an area where such opportunities are limited. It has also helped to fund the construction of a new center in the largest community in the area. The new center offers programs involving nutrition, transportation, health education, and employment.

Local government, and other public and private bodies, can also facilitate the building of partnerships and networks. Such local institutions have the ability to sponsor dialogues and develop policy that encourage collaborative decision-making that can build social capital (Potapchuk *et al.* 1997; Berman and West 1995). Halseth and Arnold (1997) provide an example of the formation of partnerships with local government assistance through the development of an Internet Society in a rural community. In order for the Internet Society to arrange Internet access in their community, they had to develop a set of partnerships. These partnerships included Industry Canada (Community Access Program funds), local educational institutions and businesses, the public library, local community groups, as well as the local government. Through building a broad base of social capital, the Internet Society now provides affordable access to the Internet through a high speed data transfer system. It continues to successfully deliver Internet services in a setting that private sector providers say is not viable.

Thompson (2002) provides an example of how technology has been used in a new way by local government. He describes how Tôwa-chô, Japan is using e-government to recruit 'cyber townspeople'. These people become honorary citizens and interact with local residents on a consistent basis through the municipal homepage. Some of these honorary residents are former residents of Tôwa-chô. Cyber townspeople officially sign up and receive special notices and bulletins. This initiative helps the community build networks with increased contacts and material resources outside of their community. As the number of cyber townspeople is increasing, so is the number of local residents accessing the Internet and the on-line Bulletin Board Forum. The website emphasizes community features that are sought after by urban residents, which is starting to increase local tourism. However, the initiative has required the town to redesign its staffing, funding, and management structures to enhance the role of employees with Internet knowledge.

In Canada, the government has been encouraging the use of Internet in rural and small town places. SchoolNet is a collaborative initiative led by Industry Canada, in partnership with provincial and territorial governments, the education community, and the private sector. The program provides computers to schools and libraries, enabling these services to be connected to SchoolNet and the Community Access Program (HRDC 2002; Wall and Gordon 1999). These examples demonstrate the important role that governments can have in developing innovative solutions to local problems.

Innovation strategies, including partnerships, for some organizational types have been mandated to them through government policy. With government cutbacks and restructuring throughout the 1980s, governments moved towards strategic partnerships with service providers and voluntary organizations (Tupper 2000 / 2001). Within this context, groups were encouraged to develop partnerships with other non governmental groups "to demonstrate the voluntary association is showing initiative and proposing activities that have appeal in the larger community, including business corporations" (Wall and Gordon 1999: 3.3).

There are several issues and constraints to building effective partnerships and networks that ultimately contribute to social capital. Korsching *et al.* (2001: 88) note "many rural community leaders do not understand the potential of telecommunications, or they lack vision for its innovative application". In some communities, telephone company personnel are involved in local development activities and are often included among local leaders. On the other hand, the lack of involvement of technology leaders in economic development activities in some communities translated into the adoption of fewer innovative telecommunications services.

Furthermore, while partnerships involve the building of relationships and trust over time (Keast *et al.* 2004), it is difficult to determine how long this will take to develop. Yet, government funding is often restricted to short time periods (Phillips 2001/2000). At times, with low levels of funding and loss of key staff, there may be little incentive to continue collaboration (Lesky *et al.* 2001). To encourage the development of innovative partnerships, Phillips (2001/2000) suggests that new funding instruments be designed to provide stable funding over a multi-year period. She also suggests the government should allow "co-ordinated reporting to multiple funders of a collaboration so that voluntary organizations do not need to waste administrative time filling out different forms at different times for different funders with the same information" (Phillips 2001/2000: 194).

Furthermore, certain service areas that are not classified as non-profit or voluntary have been facing increasing financial pressures. Notably, public broadcasting has not only faced significant government cutbacks, but also greater competition (Hughes and Luksetich 2004). This competition comes from other media sources including cable, satellite T.V., digital broadcasting, radio, and the Internet. Such public service providers may pursue a greater diversity of funding sources. However, this will also require greater managerial efforts and expertise.

Access to knowledge is also important in the formation of partnerships and networks. The Internet has been a useful tool for overcoming access to information barriers in rural and small town places (Halseth and Arnold 1997). Yet, some rural residents may be excluded from using

the Internet because of technophobia, specialized vocabulary, lack of availability, and costs. They may also lack the typing or literacy skills to function in this text based environment.

Summary

Social and economic restructuring has led to downsizing, and at times, closure of services in rural and small town places. These service pressures have emerged as communities have faced increased demand for services by vulnerable sectors of society, such as seniors, women, the disabled, the unemployed, or those living in poverty. To cope with these pressures, rural and small town places are using innovative services and voluntary organizations to fill service gaps left by the private and public sectors. Relationships and routine social interaction has provided an important foundation to build networks and for citizens to become engaged in voluntary organizations. These networks and forms of trust are then mobilized during times of transition. Mobilization of these groups may involve new services, the adoption of new processes, networks, and partnerships, as well as technology. However, innovative service providers and voluntary organizations face a range of challenges in delivering these services. Such challenges include limited financial and human resources. This report explores the changing capacity and roles of these groups to provide a foundation for retaining and attracting businesses and residents.

2.0   METHODOLOGY

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

A compilation of innovative services and voluntary organizations was made for each study site that participated in the NRE surveys conducted in 2000. From this compilation, four sites were selected in accordance with the best fit for regional representation, as well as for representation of NRE sampling matrix variables (Riemer 2002a). These variables include: high global exposure versus low global exposure; stable economy versus fluctuating economy; metro adjacent versus non-metro adjacent; high capability versus low capability; and lagging versus leading. The number and range of innovative services and voluntary organizations in each site was also considered.

Site Selection

The sites selected for the Innovative Services and Voluntary Organizations study included Mackenzie, B.C., Wood River, Saskatchewan, Tweed, Ontario, and Springhill, Nova Scotia (Table 2.1). This provides the study with representation in regions across Canada, although no French Canadian sites from New Brunswick or Québec are included. Balance is obtained for representation between certain NRE matrix variables including low global exposure versus high global exposure, non-adjacent to metro areas versus metro adjacent, and leading versus lagging. Less balance, but still representation, is obtained for sites with stable versus fluctuating economies. Unfortunately, no representation is obtained for sites with low capability.

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

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

Furthermore, it is equally important that we obtain sites with innovative services and voluntary organizations that can provide us with information for all parts of our interview guide. All of these sites selected provide us with examples of places with voluntary organizations or innovative services that at some point have had a voluntary component. Mackenzie, Tweed, and Springhill provide us with examples to explore networking and technology through their participation in the Community Access Program. Mackenzie, Wood River, Tweed, and Springhill allow us to explore services targeted at vulnerable populations. Springhill and Wood River allow us to explore questions for innovative businesses. Finally, Wood River provides us with an opportunity to explore the roles for co-ops.

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

Selection of Participants

In each study site, participants were strategically chosen as people who occupy roles in the community as leaders or key contact personnel in voluntary and innovative services (Gilchrist 1999; Hycner 1999; Pettigrew 1995). At the beginning of each interview, respondents were informed that their participation was strictly voluntary. They were free to withdraw from the interview process at any time. Overall, forty interviews were conducted in four sites. This included ten interviews conducted in Springhill, ten interviews conducted in Tweed, ten interviews conducted in Wood River, and ten interviews conducted in Mackenzie (Table 2.2).

Table 2.2: Interview Respondents

Place	Mackenzie	Wood River	Tweed	Springhill	Total
Respondents	10	10	10	10	40

Source: Innovative Services and Voluntary Organizations Survey 2003.

Evaluative Variables / Confidentiality

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

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

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

A copy of the fact sheet, consent form and survey is attached (Appendix 1).

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

Leading versus Lagging

Leading and lagging variables identify the capacity of a place to respond to social and economic restructuring (Halseth *et al.* 2004; Reimer 2002a). Leading sites are typically identified by characteristics such as low unemployment, high

percentage of income from employment, higher levels of education, lower housing costs, high rates of home ownership, and low levels of divorce and separation rates. Lagging sites may be characterized by high unemployment, low percentage of income from employment, low levels of education, low rates of home ownership, and high levels of divorce rates. Mackenzie and Wood River were classified as leading sites, while Tweed and Springhill were classified as lagging sites.

Metropolitan Adjacency

This variable explores the relationship between survey data and the proximity of selected sites to metropolitan areas. This evaluative variable is based on Census Sub-Divisions from Statistics Canada (Reimer 2002a). Mackenzie and Tweed were classified as sites adjacent to metropolitan areas, while Wood River and Springhill were classified as sites not adjacent to metropolitan areas.

Voluntary Profile

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

Not all of the evaluative variables are reported for each question in the survey. This happens when there is relatively little difference in the distribution of respondents across the categories. Only notable differences are highlighted.

3.0   STRUCTURE

Organizational structures provide a foundation for stability and the capacity of an organization to conduct its activities. Organizational structures are also important to facilitate communication and decision making (Lesky 2001; Hinnant 1995). They are also important determinants of processes of innovation (Hage 1999).

This section will be divided into two parts. The first part will explore the structure of the innovative services and voluntary organizations. Within this context, structural components including leadership, a board of directors, staff, and office space will be identified. From this analysis, the second part of this section will classify services and organizations across the various types of voluntary characteristics of strictly voluntary organizations, mixed voluntary and paid organizations, strictly paid voluntary organizations, and organizations that are not voluntary.

Leadership

Leadership is important to developing a common vision within the organization and for ensuring that an organization fulfills its mandate (Plas and Lewis 2001). Leaders also ensure that operations and procedures are fulfilled, and that sufficient funding exists to allow the organization to sustain activities (Kluger and Baker 1994). They are also instrumental in planning organizational activities and are responsible for communication within and outside of the organization. Leaders may also be empowered to make decisions on behalf of their organizations (Plas and Lewis 2001). Leaders, such as agency directors or mayors, may also play important roles in developing public-private partnerships with voluntary groups to deliver services (Berman and West 1995).

Just under 75% of all services and organizations have volunteer leadership (Table 3.1). Organizations in Springhill are particularly dependent upon voluntary leadership, while organizations in Mackenzie are the least dependent upon voluntary leadership. This can have important implications for organizations as paid leadership can devote more time to organizational activities. Some leaders of organizations are not voluntary or paid as they receive compensation for costs incurred with their work.

Table 3.1: Organization's Leadership 2003 - % of responses, by community.

Response	Mackenzie	Wood River	Tweed	Springhill	Total
Voluntary	55.6	83.3	70.0	90.0	74.3
Paid	33.3	16.7	20.0	10.0	20.0
Other	11.1	0.0	10.0	0.0	5.7
	n=9	n=6	n=10	n=10	n=35

Source: Innovative Services and Voluntary Survey 2003.

When the metro-adjacency of groups was examined, a greater proportion of organizations in non-adjacent sites relied upon voluntary leadership (Table 3.2).

Table 3.2: Organization's Leadership 2003 - % of responses, by adjacency.

Response			
Adjacent	**Non-Adjacent**	**Total**	
Voluntary	63.2	87.5	74.3
Paid	26.3	12.5	20.0
Other	10.5	0.0	5.7
	n=19	n=16	n=35

Source: Innovative Services and Voluntary Survey 2003.

Furthermore, there were differences with leadership amongst leading and lagging sites. Findings showed that a greater proportion of organizations in lagging sites relied upon voluntary leadership (Table 3.3).

Table 3.3: Organization's Leadership 2003 - % of responses, by leading/lagging.

Response	Leading	Lagging	Total
Voluntary	66.7	80.0	74.3
Paid	26.7	15.0	20.0
Other	6.7	5.0	5.7
	n=15	n=20	n=35

Source: Innovative Services and Voluntary Survey 2003.

Leaders carry a wide range of responsibilities for their organization's activities. In the rural and small town places studied, many organizations depend upon voluntary leadership. Reliance upon voluntary leadership was particularly strong in non-adjacent and lagging sites. Organizations depending upon voluntary leadership may be susceptible to leadership burnout and turnover. These pressures may be particularly problematic in places where services have either been downsized or closed. It will be important for future work to explore the relationship between the voluntary nature of leadership and leadership responsibilities, burnout, and turnover as this can impact the long term sustainability of groups.

Board of Directors

Previous studies have explored the role that boards of directors play in private, public, and non-profit organizations. A board of directors may have the responsibility to set policies and hire executive personnel (Hinnant 1995; Kluger and Baker 1994). Boards may also focus on the

ability to acquire and manage organizational assets and resources. Through membership, boards can access diverse sources of information and reduce organizational uncertainty by developing relationships with external organizations (Miller-Millesen 2003). Research has noted that larger boards with more external contacts can help the organization to obtain resources (Callen *et al.* 2003). In fact, boards of directors or advisory groups with appropriate representation from the community are also strongly encouraged by government or other funding agencies. Some organizations attract influential community leaders to their boards to enhance their potential to increase organizational effectiveness and influence funding sources.

When looking at the four study sites, just over two-thirds of the organizations have a board of directors (Table 3.4). A board of directors was more common in Mackenzie and Tweed.

Table 3.4: Does your organization have a board of directors - % of responses, by community.

Response	Mackenzie	Wood River	Tweed	Springhill	Total
Yes	80.0	40.0	90.0	60.0	67.5
No	20.0	60.0	10.0	40.0	32.5
	n=10	n=10	n=10	n=10	n=40

Source: Innovative Services and Voluntary Survey 2003.

There were also large differences between adjacent and non-adjacent sites (Table 3.5). While half of the organizations in non-adjacent sites had a board of directors, 85% of groups in metro-adjacent sites had a board of directors.

Table 3.5: Does your organization have a board of directors - % of responses, by adjacency.

Response	Adjacent	Non-Adjacent	Total
Yes	85.0	50.0	67.5
No	15.0	50.0	32.5
	n=20	n=20	n=40

Source: Innovative Services and Voluntary Survey 2003.

When differences are explored between leading and lagging sites, a greater proportion of organizations in lagging sites have a board of directors (Table 3.6). This may be somewhat surprising given that places with economic restructuring and unemployment may experience high labour turnover, household anxiety, stress, and loss of human capital (Halseth 1999; Fitchen 1995; Gill and Smith 1985; Bluestone and Harrison 1982). These factors may act as barriers to forming social ties and friendships and limit the pool of volunteers for boards of directors.

Table 3.6: Does your organization have a board of directors - % of responses, by leading/lagging.

Response	Leading	Lagging	Total
Yes	60.0	75.0	67.5
No	40.0	25.0	32.5
	n=20	n=20	n=40

Source: Innovative Services and Voluntary Survey 2003.

Participants were also asked to describe if board members were voluntary or paid. Most of the organizations which have a board of directors rely on voluntary support (Table 3.7). In fact, none of the organizations examined have paid board members. Some organizations compensate board members for costs incurred or provide honorariums. When exploring the four sites, the greatest presence of voluntary membership on boards occurred in Springhill.

Table 3.7: Organization's Board of Directors 2003- % of responses, by community.

Response	Mackenzie	Wood River	Tweed	Springhill	Total
Voluntary	75.0	75.0	88.9	100.0	85.2
Paid	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Other	25.0	25.0	11.1	0.0	14.8
	n=8	n=4	n=9	n=6	n=27

Source: Innovative Services and Voluntary Survey 2003.

In exploring differences between metro-adjacent and non-adjacent sites, there were few differences in the voluntary nature of boards of directors (Table 3.8).

Table 3.8: Organization's Board of Directors 2003 - % of responses, by adjacency.

Response	Adjacent	Non-Adjacent	Total
Voluntary	82.4	90.0	85.2
Paid	0.0	0.0	0.0
Other	17.6	10.0	14.8
	n=17	n=10	n=27

Source: Innovative Services and Voluntary Survey 2003.

There were variations between the voluntary nature of board members in leading and lagging sites (Table 3.9). Organizations in lagging sites were more likely to rely on voluntary

membership for their boards. Some of these leading site organizations provided board members with compensation or honorariums.

Table 3.9: Organization's Board of Directors 2003 - % of responses, by leading/lagging.

Response	Leading	Lagging	Total
Voluntary	75.0	93.3	85.2
Paid	0.0	0.0	0.0
Other	25.0	6.7	14.8
	n=12	n=15	n=27

Source: Innovative Services and Voluntary Survey 2003.

Boards of directors can play important roles in innovation processes as each member brings contacts with other community members, as well as with organizations inside and outside of the community. As such, there is great potential for organizations to learn new or different administrative processes or even fundraising methods. Governments have also been encouraging communities to adopt board of directors with appropriate representation, emphasizing the importance of these contacts. With over two-thirds of the organizations adopting a board of directors, these organizations have demonstrated the importance of these boards to their structure. Boards of directors were more prominent with organizations in metro-adjacent and lagging sites. However, most of these organizations, especially in lagging sites, also rely on voluntary membership for their boards of directors. Further research should explore the stability of board membership, particularly during times of restructuring. As with leadership, board members could experience burnout over time. Unfortunately, when board members leave an organization or even the community, they may take critical contacts locally and non-locally with them.

Organizations with Staff

In addition to carrying out an organization's activities, staff operate regularly in close contact with clients and other services and organizations (Hinnant 1995). Through their regular commitment to an organization's activities, staff also provide an important element of stability.

Findings indicated that 83.3% of the services and organizations have either paid or voluntary staff (Table 3.10). This bodes well as staff support is important to help organizations deliver services and activities, as well as conduct administrative duties or pursue financial resources. When the four sites were compared, organizations in Tweed were the most likely to have staff, while organizations in Springhill were the least likely to have staff. Since many of the groups in Springhill also rely on voluntary support, they may be particularly susceptible to volunteer burnout.

Table 3.10: Does Your Organization Have Staff? - % of responses, by community.

Response	Mackenzie	Wood River	Tweed	Springhill	Total
Yes	90.0	77.8	100.0	57.1	83.3
	n=10	n=9	n=10	n=7	n=36

Source: Innovative Services and Voluntary Survey 2003.

When metro-adjacent and non-adjacent sites were examined, almost all organizations sampled in metro-adjacent sites had staff and just under 70% of respondents from non-adjacent sites noted that their organization had staff (Table 3.11).

Table 3.11: Does Your Organization Have Staff? - % of responses, by adjacency.

Response	Adjacent	Non-Adjacent	Total
Yes	95.0	68.8	83.3
	n=20	n=16	n=36

Source: Innovative Services and Voluntary Survey 2003.

When leading and lagging sites were explored, there was little difference in the availability of staff (Table 3.12).

Table 3.12: Does Your Organization Have Staff? - % of responses, by leading/lagging.

Response	Leading	Lagging	Total
Yes	84.2	82.4	83.3
	n=19	n=17	n=36

Source: Innovative Services and Voluntary Survey 2003.

Staff in innovative services and voluntary organizations compliment and support the important roles delivered through leadership. They provide an important form of stability for the clientele that the organization serves. Organizations in this study have demonstrated that staff are an important component to their organization, particularly in metro-adjacent communities.

Office Space

Office space may provide visibility and functionality for an organization within the community. However, just over half of all those interviewed had access to their own space (Table 3.13).

Most of these organizations are located in Mackenzie or Tweed. Half of the groups in Wood River also have their own office space. Of interest, few organizations without office space of their own are taking the opportunity to share space. About 12% of organizations are taking advantage of operating out of a home office. Organizations with no office space were more prevalent in Springhill. It is important to note, though, that in the absence of their own office space, some of the groups in Springhill were finding new ways to conduct their operations either through shared office space or access to office support in other organizations or service providers. In some cases, organizations noted that their activities did not require office space. Instead, these organizations only needed meeting space.

Table 3.13: Does Your Organization Have Office Space? - % of responses, by community.

Response	Mackenzie	Wood River	Tweed	Springhill	Total
Yes, our own	80.0	50.0	70.0	20.0	55.0
Yes, shared space	0.0	0.0	0.0	10.0	2.5
Yes, home office	10.0	10.0	20.0	10.0	12.5
No, but access office support	0.0	0.0	0.0	10.0	2.5
No	0.0	20.0	0.0	40.0	15.0
Other	10.0	20.0	10.0	10.0	12.5
	n=10	n=10	n=10	n=10	n=40

Source: Innovative Services and Voluntary Survey 2003.

When the metro-adjacency of organizations was examined, there were large differences between the sites (Table 3.14). While 90% of organizations in adjacent sites had office space in some form, only half of the organizations in non-adjacent sites had office space.

Table 3.14: Does Your Organization Have Office Space? - % of responses, by adjacency.

Response	Adjacent	Non-Adjacent	Total
Yes, our own	75.0	35.0	55.0
Yes, shared space	0.0	5.0	2.5
Yes, home office	15.0	10.0	12.5
No, but access office support	0.0	5.0	2.5
No	0.0	30.0	15.0
Other	10.0	15.0	12.5
	n=20	n=20	n=40

Source: Innovative Services and Voluntary Survey 2003.

When comparing across leading and lagging sites, a slightly greater proportion of groups in leading sites had access to office space (Table 3.15).

Table 3.15: Does Your Organization Have Office Space? - % of responses, by leading/lagging.

Response	Leading	Lagging	Total
Yes, our own	65.0	45.0	55.0
Yes, shared space	0.0	5.0	2.5
Yes, home office	10.0	15.0	12.5
No, but access office support	0.0	5.0	2.5
No	10.0	20.0	15.0
Other	15.0	10.0	12.5
	n=20	n=20	n=40

Source: Innovative Services and Voluntary Survey 2003.

Most of the organizations studied have some form of office space. This space not only enhances the visibility of an organization within the community, but may also facilitate the organization's operations and delivery of services. Some organizations have overcome the obstacles of developing their own office space by sharing space, developing home office space, or by accessing office support from other service providers.

Funding

Funding is obviously critical to maintain the stability of these organizations, as well as to facilitate the delivery of services. Although, not every service organization relies on public funding or donations, some obtain revenue from services they provide or through products they develop. Overall, prominent sources of funding for these services and voluntary organizations include private donations and community fundraising (Table 3.16). This can provide a foundation when pursuing government funding as they can demonstrate local support and legitimacy. Furthermore, this finding may bode well against earlier findings that in some small communities there were more organizations competing for limited funding pools (Bruce *et al.* 1999). However, as Hughes and Luksetich (2004) point out, government cutbacks and limited funding may force organizations to more actively pursue private funding and community fundraising. Such changes may influence service provision to be more compatible with donor preferences.

There were differences in the range of funding sources pursued between the sites. Most notably, there were wide discrepancies between organizations in Mackenzie and Wood River, as a greater proportion of organizations in Mackenzie obtained funding from private donations, as well as government grants and programs.

The range in funding sources appears to correspond with the level of sophistication of the organization. For example, organizations in Wood River and Springhill were the least likely to have access to a range of funding sources. However, these sites were also more likely to rely on voluntary leadership, as well as have fewer organizations with staff and office space. Further,

fewer organizations in these sites had a board of directors. Overall, organizations with a board of directors were more likely to receive provincial grants, as well as funding from federal and provincial programs. As such, the support provided from board of directors, staff, and office space appears to impact the capacity of an organization to pursue funding sources.

Table 3.16: Sources of Funding – 2003 – % of responses, by community.

Response	Mackenzie	Wood River	Tweed	Springhill	Total	n=
Private donations	71.4	25.0	60.0	50.0	51.4	35
Corporate donations	28.6	0.0	40.0	30.0	25.7	35
Federal grants	42.9	12.5	40.0	0.0	22.9	35
Provincial grants	60.0	0.0	40.0	10.0	24.2	33
Municipal grants	33.3	12.5	20.0	0.0	14.7	34
Federal program	28.6	0.0	10.0	0.0	8.6	35
Provincial program	57.1	12.5	40.0	20.0	31.4	35
Municipal program	16.7	25.0	50.0	10.0	26.5	34
Funds from members	16.7	12.5	50.0	50.0	35.3	34
Membership fees	33.3	37.5	70.0	30.0	43.2	37
Revenue from service	33.3	37.5	70.0	20.0	40.5	37
Community fundraising	57.1	37.5	60.0	70.0	57.1	35

Source: Innovative Services and Voluntary Survey 2003.

There were also large differences in the funding sources pursued between organizations in metro-adjacent sites and non-metro adjacent sites (Table 3.17). In every case, a greater proportion of organizations in metro-adjacent sites accessed private and public sources of funding.

Table 3.17: Sources of Funding – 2003, by adjacency.

Response	Adjacent	Non-Adjacent	Total	n=
Private donations	64.7	38.9	51.4	35
Corporate donations	35.3	16.7	25.7	35
Federal grants	41.2	5.6	22.9	35
Provincial grants	46.7	5.6	24.2	33
Municipal grants	25.0	5.6	14.7	34
Federal program	17.6	0.0	8.6	35
Provincial program	47.1	16.7	31.4	35
Municipal program	37.5	16.7	26.5	34
Funds from members	37.5	33.3	35.3	34
Membership fees	52.6	33.3	43.2	37
Revenue from service	52.6	27.8	40.5	37
Community fundraising	58.8	55.6	57.1	35

Source: Innovative Services and Voluntary Survey 2003.

In comparing leading and lagging sites, a greater proportion of groups in lagging sites accessed a range of funding sources (Table 3.18). In particular, organizations in lagging sites had accessed more corporate donations, revenue from the service provided, fundraising in the community, membership fees, and personal funds from members. This is a positive finding for lagging sites. There were few differences in access to public funds between organizations in leading and lagging sites.

Table 3.18: Sources of Funding – 2003, by leading/lagging.

Response	Leading	Lagging	Total	n=
Private donations	46.7	55.0	51.4	35
Corporate donations	13.3	35.0	25.7	35
Federal grants	26.7	20.0	22.9	35
Provincial grants	23.1	25.0	24.2	33
Municipal grants	21.4	10.0	14.7	34
Federal program	13.3	5.0	8.6	35
Provincial program	33.3	30.0	31.4	35
Municipal program	21.4	30.0	26.5	34
Funds from members	14.3	50.0	35.3	34
Membership fees	35.3	50.0	43.2	37
Revenue from service	35.3	45.0	40.5	37
Community fundraising	46.7	65.0	57.1	35

Source: Innovative Services and Voluntary Survey 2003.

While funding is a key component to the stability and delivery of activities, the range of funding utilized by an organization compliments its level of structural sophistication. While most groups receive funding support from private donations and community fundraising, fewer groups were accessing funds from government grants and programs. A wider range of funding was accessed by groups in lagging communities and metro-adjacent sites. Groups accessing a wider range of funds were more likely to have staff and office space to support their daily activities. Furthermore, groups with a board of directors were more likely to access federal and provincial government grants and programs. This supports earlier testimonies that governments are encouraging organizations to develop a board of directors with suitable representation that can enhance the accountability and legitimacy of an organization in the community.

Classification of Services and Voluntary Organizations - Voluntary Characteristics

Organizational structures are important to providing a stable foundation for groups and for facilitating communication, decision making, and fundraising. As such, a classification scheme was developed to explore relationships between organizational structures and capacity. Overall, 45% of the organizations surveyed were classified as strictly voluntary organizations (groups with no paid staff). Approximately 17.5% of organizations were classified as mixed voluntary organizations - having both volunteers and paid staff. An additional 17.5% were considered to

have strictly paid staff but with a voluntary board of directors. Finally, approximately 20% of the organizations interviewed were not considered to be voluntary in nature.

Upon examining the classification of organizations by voluntary characteristics, there are considerable differences between the sites (Table 3.19). Most notable is the difference between the abundance of strictly voluntary organizations in Springhill versus the wider presence of strictly paid and non-voluntary organizations in Mackenzie. Strictly voluntary organizations and non voluntary organizations were also well represented in Wood River. Mixed voluntary and paid organizations are more present in Tweed.

Table 3.19: Classification of Services & Organizations: Voluntary Characteristics - % of Total Responses, by community.

Response	Mackenzie	Wood River	Tweed	Springhill	Total
Strictly Voluntary	20.0	50.0	40.0	70.0	45.0
Mixed Vol. & Paid	10.0	0.0	50.0	10.0	17.5
Strictly Paid	40.0	10.0	0.0	20.0	17.5
Not Voluntary	30.0	40.0	10.0	0.0	20.0
	n=10	n=10	n=10	n=10	n=40

Source: Innovative Services and Voluntary Survey 2003.

Few strictly voluntary organizations have office space outside of the home (3.20). In fact, none of these strictly voluntary groups have pursued the opportunity to create partnerships for sharing office space. In a few cases, 'other' responses were provided as some organizations are awaiting renovations before sharing office space. In other circumstances, office space was not required but the organization felt they had access to meeting space. However, most organizations in all other categories have office space of their own. This may be an indication of the ability of these entities to obtain office space outside of the home with a wider range of resources.

Table 3.20: Does Your Organization Have Office Space? - % of responses, by organization type.

Response	Strict Vol.	Mixed Vol. & Paid	Strict Paid Vol.	Not Vol.	Total
Yes, our own	16.7	85.7	85.7	87.5	55.0
Yes, shared space	0.0	14.3	0.0	0.0	2.5
Yes, home office	22.2	0.0	0.0	12.5	12.5
No, but access office support	5.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.5
No	33.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	15.0
Other	22.2	0.0	14.3	0.0	12.5
	n=18	n=7	n=7	n=8	n=40

Source: Innovative Services and Voluntary Survey 2003.

Results demonstrate that strictly voluntary organizations have more limited resources. Important financial resources for these organizations include private donations, funds from personal members, funds from membership fees, and community fundraising (Table 3.21). While it is positive that most strictly voluntary organizations have access to local funds, most of these groups do not receive support from government. This is a concern as Wall and Gordon (1999) note that governments are responsible for 60 per cent of the voluntary sector's funding. Subsequently, limited access to government funds may be linked to their relationships with state agencies. On the other hand, few of these strictly voluntary groups have office space or staff, which may impact the stability of their operations and a capacity to pursue funding activities.

Table 3.21: Sources of Funding, by funding type.

Response	Strict Vol.	Mixed Vol. & Paid	Strict Paid Vol.	Not Vol.	Total	n=
Private donations	50.0	85.7	40.0	20.0	51.4	35
Corporate donations	16.7	57.1	40.0	0.0	25.7	35
Federal grants	5.6	71.4	40.0	0.0	22.9	35
Provincial grants	17.6	57.1	25.0	0.0	24.2	33
Municipal grants	11.1	33.3	20.0	0.0	14.7	34
Federal program	0.0	14.3	20.0	20.0	8.6	35
Provincial program	5.6	71.4	60.0	40.0	31.4	35
Municipal program	27.8	42.9	0.0	25.0	26.5	34
Funds from members	52.9	28.6	20.0	0.0	35.3	34
Membership fees	55.6	42.9	33.3	16.7	43.2	37
Revenue from service	27.8	71.4	0.0	83.3	40.5	37
Community fundraising	61.1	71.4	60.0	20.0	57.1	35

Source: Innovative Services and Voluntary Survey 2003.

In contrast, the mixed voluntary and paid group has the widest range of funding sources. Important sources of funding for mixed voluntary and paid organizations include private donations, corporate donations, federal and provincial grants, provincial programs, revenue from services, and community fundraising. In fact, mixed voluntary and paid organizations have a wider base of funding sources than strictly paid organizations. Important funding sources for strictly paid organizations include provincial programs and community fundraising. Non-voluntary organizations do not pursue a wide range of funding sources and primarily rely on revenue obtained from their services.

Summary

Organizational structures are an important foundation for providing stability to innovative services and voluntary organizations. Such structures play an important role in shaping decision making and communication frameworks, as well as funding networks. Within this context, most organizations have developed their structures through the provision of office space, staff, and even a board of directors. These features enhance the visibility of innovative services and voluntary organizations in their communities. Some organizations are building their operational

capacity by sharing office space, developing office space at home, or by accessing office support provided by other service providers.

Innovative service providers and voluntary organizations may face some critical structural challenges. Many of these organizations are dependent upon voluntary leadership and volunteer membership for boards of directors. Such a high dependency may lead to volunteer burnout during more challenging times of economic and social restructuring, and may impact the long term sustainability of an organization's activities and services. Furthermore, most service providers and voluntary organizations have limited access to government support, which can add pressure on local funding sources during transitional periods. At the same time, however, local support enhances the legitimacy of the mandates of these organizations. This can be important as they pursue public funding sources. Strictly voluntary organizations were the most profoundly impacted by these problems. This exemplifies the need for other forms of partnerships, such as those with the private sector. Yet few strictly voluntary organizations are benefiting from corporate donations. Other types of organizations have developed stable structures through paid staff and office space, which strengthens their capacity to conduct organizational activities.

4.0   FILLING SERVICE GAPS

One of the challenges that innovative services and voluntary organizations must face is to prove their significance to their community or clientele as they approach funding sources. A benefit of innovative service providers and voluntary organizations is that these organizations can fill service gaps, reduce government costs, and tailor services to local consumer needs (Te'eni and Young 2003; Gates and Hill 1995). Local non-profit organizations also provide flexibility in public-non-profit partnerships to deliver services (Lesky *et al.* 2001; Lowry 1995). This section explores service gaps that have emerged over the last twenty years in these sites. It also explores the extent to which services are delivered by the organizations studied, the geographical reach of the organizations, as well as their social contribution to the well-being of their community.

Service Closures

One indication of stress during economic and social restructuring can be service closures. When participants were asked if their community had any services close during the past 20 years, almost 70% answered yes (Table 4.1). However, only 10% of responses in Tweed noted that there were service closures.

Table 4.1: Service Closure Over the Last 20 Years - % of responses, by community.

	Mackenzie	Wood River	Tweed	Springhill	Total
Yes	100.0	88.9	10.0	80.0	68.4
	n=9	n=9	n=10	n=10	n=38

Source: Innovative Services and Voluntary Survey 2003.

When the metro-adjacency was explored, respondents indicated that a greater proportion of service closures occurred in non-adjacent sites (Table 4.2).

Table 4.2: Service Closure Over the Last 20 Years - % of responses, by adjacency.

	Adjacent	Non-Adjacent	Total
Yes	52.6	84.2	68.4
	n=19	n=19	n=38

Source: Innovative Services and Voluntary Survey 2003.

There were also significant differences in service closures between leading and lagging sites (Table 4.3). A greater proportion of respondents in leading sites noted service closures.

Table 4.3: Service Closure Over the Last 20 Years - % of responses, by leading/lagging.

	Leading	Lagging	Total
Yes	94.4	45.0	68.4
	n=18	n=20	n=38

Source: Innovative Services and Voluntary Survey 2003.

Respondents were also asked if any groups emerged to fill the service gap left from the closure of services (Table 4.4). Less than half of the services that used to be offered have been covered by other local organizations. There were differences between the sites examined, though. For example, a good portion of services that closed in Wood River and Tweed were recovered by other local organizations. However, fewer services were recovered in Springhill and Mackenzie.

Table 4.4: Did any local organization move to fill the gap of this closed service - % of responses, by community.

	Mackenzie	Wood River	Tweed	Springhill	Total
Yes	11.1	77.8	100.0	33.3	42.9
	n=9	n=9	n=1	n=9	n=28

Source: Innovative Services and Voluntary Survey 2003.

In Mackenzie, service closures included an elementary school, a radio station, some retail businesses, loss of some doctors and speech pathology, and downsizing of personnel in the Ministry of Forests. Many of these services were closed due to government cutbacks and restructuring. However, some retail businesses went bankrupt. The closure of the elementary school was also impacted by lower student enrolments. The radio station was not owned locally, and business owners felt that Mackenzie could be served by radio stations located in the regional centre of Prince George. Service closures meant that residents needed to commute almost two hours to Prince George. The commuting time can be even longer during the winter months. At times, the loss of jobs has led to out-migration, including the loss of youth. For students attending a new elementary school, household stress emerges as families cope with new bus services and larger class sizes. Unfortunately, few organizations have filled the service closure gap in Mackenzie. One exception, however, occurred when the Mackenzie and Area Radio Station (M.A.R.S.) emerged to create a new local radio station. This organization has over 800 members and numerous partnerships with industry, the community college, and the high school.

In Wood River, service closures included an elementary school, some retail outlets, a lumber yard, hospital status, and grain elevators. These services closed due to low student populations, limited funding, or lack of sales. Some retailers, such as car dealerships, moved their operations to larger urban centres. Such closures and job losses affected community morale and required some residents to access services in larger centres. However, many respondents felt that groups emerged to fill these service gaps. For example, the Alive and Well Pharmacy took over Sears. The Co-op store now provides videos after a local video store closed. The Producers Co-op emerged to fill the void after the closure of the grain elevators. The Co-op has reduced shipping and handling costs for farmers, with members paying a reduced cost of $150 per car to ship goods.

In Tweed, few respondents noted any closure of services. Satellite offices were closed for the Community Care for Central Hastings due to costs. The main office, however, was retained in Tweed. In Springhill, closures were experienced in the retail sector, along with a loss of a pharmacy, hospital beds, a social worker, and acute care. The town also lost its arena after it collapsed. These service closures were attributed to government cutbacks, lack of revenue, and mismanagement. As a result, it has been difficult to attract doctors to the community and residents must travel to the closest regional centre of Amherst to access emergency services. Out-of-town shopping has also increased. Only a third of the respondents felt that organizations have emerged to fill the service gaps. On the positive side, a new arena is almost completed.

There were considerable differences between the availability of groups to fill service gaps amongst metro-adjacent and non-adjacent communities (Table 4.5). Organizations in non-adjacent sites were more likely to emerge to fill these services gaps. In non-adjacent sites, just over half of the services that had closed were filled with new service providers.

Table 4.5: Did any local organization move to fill the gap of this closed service - % of responses, by adjacency.

	Adjacent	Non-Adjacent	Total
Yes	20.0	55.6	42.9
	n=10	n=18	n=28

Source: Innovative Services and Voluntary Survey 2003.

However, there were no significant differences between leading and lagging sites as to whether an organization emerged to fill the service gap (Table 4.6).

Table 4.6: Did any local organization move to fill the gap of this closed service - % of responses, by leading/lagging.

	Leading	Lagging	Total
Yes	44.4	40.0	42.9
	n=18	n=10	n=28

Source: Innovative Services and Voluntary Survey 2003.

Respondents were then asked what the impact would be if their organization ceased to exist. Many non-voluntary organizations, particularly innovative businesses, noted that they provide donations to local community groups (Bruce and Halseth 2004: 195-223). If they ceased to exist, this important source of local funding would be lost. Others noted that if they ceased to exist, residents would need to commute for services in other places. The only other option would be for residents to access information on-line. However, some respondents felt that there are residents who prefer personal contact, while others are not familiar with how to use on-line services. Residents may also experience longer waiting times for medical or emergency services. Furthermore, the loss of services would be most devastating on vulnerable residents who could not afford to pay or travel for services. In most cases, services and support groups that serve vulnerable residents, such as safe houses, would simply cease to exist. There would be no other organization available to fill the service gap.

In general, most of the sites examined are experiencing stress stemming from service closures. These closures are particularly felt by non-adjacent sites and leading communities. Such closures not only lead to the loss of jobs, but also may produce out-migration. At times, residents either cannot access some services or now need to commute to services lost to regional centres. The most significant impacts are felt by vulnerable residents who cannot afford to commute outside of their town or pay for alternative services. Some groups have emerged to fill service gaps, particularly in non-adjacent communities.

Service Delivery

When innovative services and voluntary organizations were asked if they offer or deliver services to people, approximately 90% confirmed that they provide services (Table 4.7). In fact, all of the organizations examined in Tweed and Springhill deliver services to people. While some organizations did not offer services to people, most of these organizations instead provided services to the business community.

Table 4.7: Does Your Organization Offer / Deliver Services to People - % of responses, by community.

Response	Mackenzie	Wood River	Tweed	Springhill	Total
Yes	90.0	70.0	100.0	100.0	90.0
No	10.0	30.0	0.0	0.0	10.0
	n=10	n=10	n=10	n=10	n=40

Source: Innovative Services and Voluntary Survey 2003.

In exploring other evaluative variables, results indicated that sites adjacent to metropolitan areas were slightly more likely to deliver services to people (Table 4.8).

Table 4.8: Does Your Organization Offer / Deliver Services to People - % of responses, by adjacency.

Response	Adjacent	Non-Adjacent	Total
Yes	95.0	85.0	90.0
No	5.0	15.0	10.0
	n=20	n=20	n=40

Source: Innovative Services and Voluntary Survey 2003.

When leading and lagging communities were compared, results showed that lagging sites were slightly more likely to offer services to people (Table 4.9).

Table 4.9: Does Your Organization Offer / Deliver Services to People - % of responses, by leading/lagging.

Response	Leading	Lagging	Total
Yes	80.0	100.0	90.0
No	20.0	0.0	10.0
	n=20	n=20	n=40

Source: Innovative Services and Voluntary Survey 2003.

Furthermore, all mixed voluntary and paid organizations and all strictly paid voluntary organizations indicated they provide services to people (Table 4.10).

Table 4.10: Does Your Organization Still Offer / Deliver Services to People - % of responses, by organization type.

Response	Strict Vol.	Mixed Vol. & Paid	Strict Paid Vol.	Not Vol.	Total
Yes	83.3	100.0	100.0	87.5	90.0
No	16.7	0.0	0.0	12.5	10.0
	n=18	n=7	n=7	n=8	n=40

Source: Innovative Services and Voluntary Survey 2003.

We also explored the types of 'vulnerable' clientele that these organizations target for their services. Vulnerable groups include people living in poverty, the unemployed, the elderly, women, youth, and individuals who are sick or victims. Overall, 70% of the organizations in our sample provide services to at least one of these vulnerable groups. Out of the sample, 22.5% provide services for those unemployed or underemployed, while 20% provide services for the elderly, and 20% provide services for youth. Just under 18% of these groups provide services for victims or ill residents. Finally, 5% of the groups provide services specifically for women. Clearly, these innovative services and voluntary organizations are providing important services to vulnerable sectors in their community.

Geographical Reach of Services

The next step was to examine the geographical reach of services provided by organizations. Over 60% of the organizations focus their services either within their community or within the area immediately surrounding their community (Table 4.11). However, it is important to note that many organizations in Wood River and Tweed provide services widely beyond their community. In Tweed, some organizations classified their geographical reach as 'other' because of blurred service boundaries between districts and counties.

Table 4.11: What is the Geographical Reach of Your Services - % of responses, by community.

Response	Mackenzie	Wood River	Tweed	Springhill	Total
Site and immediate area	80.0	44.4	40.0	80.0	61.5
Widely beyond	20.0	55.5	40.0	20.0	30.8
Other	0.0	0.0	20.0	0.0	7.7
	n=10	n=9	n=10	n=10	n=39

Source: Innovative Services and Voluntary Survey 2003.

In exploring metro-adjacency characteristics, there were few differences with the geographical reach of services in either adjacent or non-adjacent sites (Table 4.12).

Table 4.12: What is the Geographical Reach of Your Services - % of responses, by adjacency.

Response	Adjacent	Non-Adjacent	Total
Site and immediate area	60.0	63.2	61.5
Widely beyond	30.0	31.6	30.8
Other	10.0	5.3	7.7
	n=20	n=19	n=39

Source: Innovative Services and Voluntary Survey 2003.

There were few differences between the geographical reach of services in lagging and leading sites (Table 4.13).

Table 4.13: What is the Geographical Reach of Your Services - % of responses, by leading/lagging.

Response	Leading	Lagging	Total
Site and immediate area	63.1	60.0	61.5
Widely beyond	31.6	30.0	30.8
Other	5.3	10.0	7.7
	n=19	n=20	n=39

Source: Innovative Services and Voluntary Survey 2003.

Of particular interest, while most organizations classified as strictly voluntary and strictly paid voluntary provided services locally or within the immediate area, most mixed voluntary groups provided services widely beyond (Table 4.14).

Table 4.14: What is the Geographical Reach of Your Services - % of responses, by organization type.

Response	Strict Vol.	Mixed Vol. & Paid	Strict Paid Vol.	Not Vol.	Total
Site and immediate area	77.8	28.6	71.5	42.9	61.5
Widely beyond	22.2	57.1	28.6	28.6	30.8
Other	0.0	14.3	0.0	28.6	7.7
	n=18	n=7	n=7	n=7	n=39

Source: Innovative Services and Voluntary Survey 2003.

Overall, most organizations focus their services within their community and the surrounding area. Findings did reveal, however, a substantial number of groups providing services widely beyond their area. The geographical reach of services can have important implications on the range of services that can be provided. In such circumstances, partnerships may be particularly critical for obtaining sufficient financial and human resources to ensure the successful delivery of these services over time.

Contribution to Well-Being

Participants were also asked what contribution their organization makes to the social well-being of their community (Table 4.15). Approximately 73% of respondents felt their organization provides an 'above average' or a 'major contribution' to community well-being. In fact, all respondents from Springhill felt that their organization made strong contributions. Organizations that felt they made little or no contribution to community well-being were not focused upon providing services to people.

Table 4.15: Contribution to Well Being - % of responses, by community.

Response	Mackenzie	Wood River	Tweed	Springhill	Total
None	0.0	20.0	0.0	0.0	5.0
Below	10.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.5
Average	30.0	20.0	30.0	0.0	20.0
Above	10.0	10.0	30.0	50.0	25.0
Major	50.0	50.0	40.0	50.0	47.5
	n=10	n=10	n=10	n=10	n=40

Source: Innovative Services and Voluntary Survey 2003.

When comparing metro-adjacent and non-adjacent sites, findings also showed that a greater proportion of organizations in non-adjacent sites felt that their organization provided an above average or major contribution (Table 4.16).

Table 4.16: Contribution to Well Being - % of responses, by adjacency.

Response	Adjacent	Non-Adjacent	Total
None	0.0	10.0	5.0
Below	5.0	0.0	2.5
Average	30.0	10.0	20.0
Above	20.0	30.0	25.0
Major	45.0	50.0	47.5
	n=20	n=20	n=40

Source: Innovative Services and Voluntary Survey 2003.

When leading and lagging variables were explored, a greater proportion of organizations in lagging sites felt that they provided an 'above average' or 'major' contribution in their community (Table 4.17).

Table 4.17: Contribution to Well Being - % of responses, by leading/lagging.

Response	Leading	Lagging	Total
None	10.0	0.0	5.0
Below Average	5.0	0.0	2.5
Average	25.0	15.0	20.0
Above Average	10.0	40.0	25.0
Major	50.0	45.0	47.5
	n=20	n=20	n=40

Source: Innovative Services and Voluntary Survey 2003.

More organizations classified as mixed voluntary and strictly voluntary felt that their organization provided an above average contribution to their community (Table 4.18). Non-voluntary groups were least likely to feel that their organizations provide an above average or major contribution to their community.

Table 4.18: Contribution to Well Being - % of responses, by organization type.

Response	Strict Vol.	Mixed Vol. & Paid	Strict Paid Vol.	Not Vol.	Total
None	0.0	0.0	0.0	25.0	5.0
Below Average	0.0	0.0	0.0	12.5	2.5
Average	27.8	14.3	0.0	25.0	20.0
Above Average	33.3	28.6	28.6	0.0	25.0
Major	38.9	57.1	71.4	37.5	47.5
	n=18	n=7	n=7	n=8	n=40

Source: Innovative Services and Voluntary Survey 2003.

Most of the innovative services and voluntary organizations felt that their organization provides an important contribution to the social well-being of their community. In particular, organizations in non-adjacent sites and lagging communities felt that they provided above average or major contributions to their community. Of interest, over 90% of groups that serve areas widely beyond their community rated their social contribution to well-being to be above average or major.

Summary

Rural and small town places are experiencing significant pressures stemming from downsizing or closure of services. The result is that, in some cases, residents must commute to other places to access services. There has also been a loss of jobs, a loss of local funding sources, and even out-migration. In this context, some service providers and voluntary organizations emerged in these communities to fill the services gap.

The innovative services and voluntary organizations explored in this study provide important services both to people and to the business community. These contributions are not just targeted locally, but are also experienced beyond these sites. Even within this context, these organizations enhance the social well-being and play important roles within their communities. In fact, if many of these organizations ceased to exist, there would be no other available organization to fill the gap. This further emphasizes previous findings about the key role that these groups play in rural and small town places (Bruce *et al.* 1999). Furthermore, many of these services provide key services to vulnerable residents during times of economic and social restructuring.

5.0   OPERATIONS

The operations of public, private, and non-profit organizations can vary and are influenced by a range of factors such as control over budgets and policies, as well as access to information. For example, public service providers may be controlled by elected officials through budget cuts, or have their tasks altered by legislation. Voluntary groups dependent upon government funding may also be controlled through the public sector (Nyland 1995). On the other hand, other voluntary groups will not be easily controlled as they exhibit a greater degree of independence. As public and non-profit sectors build partnerships to deliver services, one concern is that non-profit groups may not provide public services or activities that were intended by political policies (Lowry 1995). As such, tools may be used to influence services provided through the non-profit sectors. At the same time, the voluntary sector has felt frustrated by their limited ability to influence public policies that ultimately impact their daily operations. The development of some government policies have been closed to public and voluntary groups, and, therefore, do not incorporate the experience and local knowledge these voluntary organizations have about community needs (Phillips 2001/2000). This section explores a number of factors that affect daily operations including control and distribution of budgets, setting of policies, as well as sources of information to obtain advice or make decisions.

Control and Distribution of Budgets

Most organizations have local control over their budgets and the size of their budgets is not determined by other sources (Table 5.1). There were differences in the amount of local control between the sites. Local control is highest in Mackenzie despite the fact that a greater proportion of groups in Mackenzie accessed funding from government grants and programs. Local control is lowest in Wood River where less than half of the organizations have local control over their budgets. Few of the organizations' budgets were controlled by regional, provincial, or national bodies. However, roughly 20% of the organizations' budgets were controlled by 'other' bodies. In some 'other' cases, innovative business ventures were controlled by non-local owners. Budgets of some organizations were also controlled by a combination of bodies at different geographical levels.

Table 5.1: Control Over Budget - % of responses, by community.

	Mackenzie	Wood River	Tweed	Springhill	Total
Local people	80.0	40.0	70.0	60.0	62.5
Regional body	10.0	10.0	10.0	0.0	7.5
Provincial body	0.0	0.0	10.0	20.0	7.5
National body	10.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.5
Other	0.0	50.0	10.0	20.0	20.0
	n=10	n=10	n=10	n=10	n=40

Source: Innovative Services and Voluntary Survey 2003.

When the metro-adjacency of sites is examined, findings indicate that a greater proportion of organizations in adjacent sites had local control over the development of their budgets (Table 5.2). Again, this may be surprising given that a greater proportion of groups in adjacent sites had accessed various government grants and programs. When looking at non-adjacent sites, more than half of the organizations acknowledge that their budgets were either controlled by groups outside of their community or by a combination of local and external bodies.

Table 5.2: Control Over Budget - % of responses, by adjacency.

	Adjacent	Non-Adjacent	Total
Local people	80.0	45.0	62.5
Regional body	10.0	5.0	7.5
Provincial body	0.0	15.0	7.5
National body	5.0	0.0	2.5
Other	5.0	35.0	20.0
	n=20	n=20	n=40

Source: Innovative Services and Voluntary Survey 2003.

When exploring leading and lagging sites, findings also suggest that a greater proportion of organizations in lagging sites had local control over budget development (Table 5.3).

Table 5.3: Control Over Budget - % of responses, by leading/lagging.

	Leading	Lagging	Total
Local people	55.0	70.0	62.5
Regional body	10.0	5.0	7.5
Provincial body	5.0	10.0	7.5
National body	5.0	0.0	2.5
Other	25.0	15.0	20.0
	n=20	n=20	n=40

Source: Innovative Services and Voluntary Survey 2003.

There were also considerable variations in control over budgets across types of organizations (Table 5.4). Strictly paid organizations and strictly voluntary organizations were more likely to have control over their budgets. Of interest, nearly 30% of mixed voluntary and paid groups shared budget control with provincial bodies. Many of these mixed voluntary and paid organizations also obtained funding from provincial grants and programs. A greater proportion of non-voluntary groups shared control over their budgets with regional, national, or other bodies.

Table 5.4: Control Over Budget - % of responses, by organization type.

	Strict Vol.	Mix Vol. & Paid	Strict Paid Vol.	Non Vol.	Total
Local people	77.8	57.1	85.7	12.5	62.5
Regional body	5.6	0.0	0.0	25.0	7.5
Provincial body	0.0	28.6	14.3	0.0	7.5
National body	0.0	0.0	0.0	12.5	2.5
Other	16.7	14.3	14.3	37.5	20.0
	n=18	n=7	n=7	n=8	n=40

Source: Innovative Services and Voluntary Survey 2003.

In general, government funding did not appear to have a significant influence on limiting local control over budgets. At least three-quarters of organizations that receive federal, provincial, or municipal grants said that they retain local control over their budget. In fact, a greater proportion of these organizations retain local control over their budget in comparison to organizations that did not receive government grants. On the other hand, organizations that receive financial support from provincial and municipal programs were less likely to retain local control over their budgets. In particular, just 45.5% of organizations accessing provincial program funding and 55.6% of organizations accessing municipal funding said that they were able to retain local control over their budgets. Corporate donations did not significantly impact local control over budgets. However, organizations that receive government and corporate grants were more likely to retain local control over their budgets if they had a board of directors.

Respondents were also asked to describe who controlled the distribution of funds allocated in their budgets. Most organizations also controlled the distribution of budget funds locally (Table 5.5). In fact, it appears that organizations that had control over their budgets in Mackenzie, Wood River, and Tweed retained control over the distribution of the budget. However, it is important to note that while 60% of the organizations in Springhill had control over the budgets, just 40% of organizations had control over how the budgets were distributed. In Springhill, provincial bodies controlled the distribution of budgets for all organizations that received funding from provincial grants and programs. Other bodies also demonstrated control over the distribution of budgets, particularly in Wood River.

Table 5.5: Control Over Budget Distribution - % of responses, by community.

	Mackenzie	Wood River	Tweed	Springhill	Total
Local people	80.0	40.0	70.0	40.0	57.5
Regional body	10.0	10.0	10.0	0.0	7.5
Provincial body	0.0	0.0	0.0	30.0	7.5
National body	10.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.5
Other	0.0	50.0	20.0	30.0	25.0
	n=10	n=10	n=10	n=10	n=40

Source: Innovative Services and Voluntary Survey 2003.

Organizations in metro-adjacent sites were more likely to have control over the distribution of their budgets (Table 5.6). Again, organizations that had control over developing budgets retained control over distributing funds for programs and services. Although, groups in non-adjacent communities that received funding from provincial grants and programs did not retain local control over the distribution of funds. Instead, control over budget distribution for these groups was allocated with provincial bodies.

Table 5.6: Control Over Budget Distribution - % of responses, by adjacency.

	Adjacent	Non-Adjacent	Total
Local people	75.0	40.0	57.5
Regional body	10.0	5.0	7.5
Provincial body	0.0	15.0	7.5
National body	5.0	0.0	2.5
Other	10.0	40.0	25.0
	n=20	n=20	n=40

Source: Innovative Services and Voluntary Survey 2003.

When we explored control over budget distribution with organizations in leading and lagging sites, results indicated there were few differences (Table 5.7). Of interest, however, while 70% of lagging sites had local control over budget development, local control over budget distribution dropped to 55%. This was largely reflected in the loss of local control over the distribution of budgets to provincial and other bodies.

Table 5.7: Control Over Budget Distribution - % of responses, by leading/lagging.

	Leading	Lagging	Total
Local people	60.0	55.0	57.5
Regional body	10.0	5.0	7.5
Provincial body	0.0	15.0	7.5
National body	5.0	0.0	2.5
Other	25.0	25.0	25.0
	n=20	n=20	n=40

Source: Innovative Services and Voluntary Survey 2003.

Furthermore, we explored the relationship between control over budget distribution and the types of organizations (Table 5.8). Strictly paid organizations operated by a voluntary board of directors were most likely to have local control over budget distribution. Non-voluntary groups exhibit little local control over budget distribution. These groups consist of public service providers and businesses that are controlled by government bodies and non-local owners. In some cases, control over the distribution of funds is shared between bodies at different geographical and political levels.

Table 5.8: Control Over Budget Distribution - % of responses, by organization type.

	Strict Vol.	Mix Vol. & Paid	Strict Paid Vol.	Non Vol.	Total
Local people	61.1	71.4	85.7	12.5	57.5
Regional body	5.6	0.0	0.0	25.0	7.5
Provincial body	5.6	14.3	14.3	0.0	7.5
National body	0.0	0.0	0.0	12.5	2.5
Other	27.8	14.3	14.3	37.5	25.0
	n=18	n=7	n=7	n=8	n=40

Source: Innovative Services and Voluntary Survey 2003.

The relationship between control over budget distribution and access to government funding was also explored. Just over half of organizations that received funding from provincial and municipal programs, as well as corporate donations, retained local control over the distribution of their budget. The lower levels of local control over the distribution of funds, however, may be connected to specific government and corporate funding guidelines. In turn, these funding policies may influence the types of policies that are developed by organizations. Also of interest, organizations that received government and corporate grants were more likely to retain local control over the distribution of funds in their budgets if they had a board of directors.

Control for Setting Policy

As noted earlier, government funding bodies may be concerned that non-profit groups may not provide services or activities that were intended by government policies (Lowry 1995). As such, governments may use funding initiatives to influence the policies and services delivered by innovative services and voluntary sector groups. At the same time, there are varying opinions about the extent to which voluntary organizations can advocate and contribute to changes in government policies and services (Te'eni and Young 2003; Phillips 2001/2000). Policy initiatives to be implemented through service provision may be directed in a top-down approach. This can impact and frustrate local service providers if the policy is not applicable to local needs. As such, respondents were asked if control for setting policy is local or external.

Despite the fact that most organizations had control over their budgets, less than half of all the organizations had control over setting major policies (Table 5.9). Local control over setting major policies was strongest in Mackenzie and Springhill where at least half the organizations had control. However, few participants felt that regional, provincial, or national bodies had control over setting major policies for their organizations. Instead, other bodies had the greatest control over setting major policy, especially for organizations in Wood River and Tweed. It is important to remember, though, that some of these 'other' bodies include combined control for setting policy between local groups and other geographical and political levels. This may signal a positive finding as service providers and non-profit groups may be working in 'partnership' with government to develop major policies. This builds upon previous work where the success of networks and partnerships depends upon the congruent interests between public service providers and voluntary groups, as well as the development of mutually acceptable policy positions (Gates and Hill 1995; Hinnant 1995; Nyland 1995).

Table 5.9: Control For Setting Major Policy - % of responses, by community.

	Mackenzie	Wood River	Tweed	Springhill	Total
Local people	50.0	30.0	40.0	50.0	42.5
Regional body	0.0	10.0	10.0	0.0	5.0
Provincial body	10.0	10.0	0.0	20.0	10.0
National body	20.0	0.0	10.0	0.0	7.5
Other	20.0	50.0	40.0	30.0	35.0
	n=10	n=10	n=10	n=10	n=40

Source: Innovative Services and Voluntary Survey 2003.

There were a few differences in the control for setting major policy between adjacent and non-adjacent sites (Table 5.10). Organizations in non-adjacent sites were slightly more likely to have their policies controlled by provincial and other bodies, while only groups in metro-adjacent communities existed where control over setting major policies rested with national bodies.

However, few of the groups with policies set by national bodies received federal government support from grants and programs. Instead, these policies are set by national organizations in which local organizations are an affiliate.

Table 5.10: Control For Setting Major Policy - % of responses, by adjacency.

	Adjacent	Non-Adjacent	Total
Local people	45.0	40.0	42.5
Regional body	5.0	5.0	5.0
Provincial body	5.0	15.0	10.0
National body	15.0	0.0	7.5
Other	30.0	40.0	35.0
	n=20	n=20	n=40

Source: Innovative Services and Voluntary Survey 2003.

When organizations in leading and lagging sites were compared, there were almost no differences in control for setting major policies among innovative services and voluntary organizations (Table 5.11).

Table 5.11: Control For Setting Major Policy - % of responses, by leading/lagging.

	Leading	Lagging	Total
Local people	40.0	45.0	42.5
Regional body	5.0	5.0	5.0
Provincial body	10.0	10.0	10.0
National body	10.0	5.0	7.5
Other	35.0	35.0	35.0
	n=20	n=20	n=40

Source: Innovative Services and Voluntary Survey 2003.

Finally, when various types of organizations were explored, findings indicated that at least half of the strictly voluntary organizations and mixed voluntary and paid organizations retained local control for setting major policies (Table 5.12). Few non-voluntary organizations had local control over setting policies. As noted earlier, many of the non-voluntary groups consist of businesses with non-local owners and public service providers that are accountable to government departments. Many organizations that had policies established by 'other' bodies had their policies established by a combination of bodies.

Table 5.12: Control For Setting Major Policy - % of responses, by organization type.

	Strict Vol.	Mix Vol. & Paid	Strict Paid Vol.	Non Vol.	Total
Local people	50.0	57.1	42.9	12.5	42.5
Regional body	5.6	0.0	0.0	12.5	5.0
Provincial body	11.1	14.3	14.3	0.0	10.0
National body	5.6	0.0	14.3	12.5	7.5
Other	33.3	28.6	28.6	50.0	35.0
	n=18	n=7	n=7	n=8	n=40

Source: Innovative Services and Voluntary Survey 2003.

The relationship between control for setting policy and access to government funding was also explored. Organizations that received government grants at all three levels were more likely to retain control over setting policies in comparison to other organizations. In this context, half of the organizations with federal government grants and 62.5% of organizations with provincial government grants retained local control over setting policies. Not surprisingly, 80% of organizations receiving municipal grants retained local control over setting policies. On the other hand, less than half of the organizations accessing funding from federal and provincial programs retained local control over setting policies. In these cases, policy was either controlled by provincial bodies or policy was developed in cooperation with local groups and bodies at other levels. Also of interest, organizations that received government and corporate grants were more likely to retain local control for setting policy if they had a board of directors.

Summary

Operations of organizations will be influenced by a range of factors including control over the size of budgets, control over the distribution of funds in budgets, control over developing policies, as well as access to sources of information that enhance a group's ability to learn about new options. This has produced a complex and, at times, frustrating relationship between funding agencies and service providers through public and non-profit sectors. However, most organizations retained local control over the size and distribution of their budgets. Notable exceptions include groups that received funding from provincial and municipal programs, as well as corporate donations. These differences may be attributed to donor and government program funding guidelines. Furthermore, groups with government and corporate grants were more likely to retain local control over the distribution of funds if they had a board of directors. This may not be surprising given that governments have been encouraging the development of boards with appropriate representation in order to ensure that a management structure is in place to monitor organizational activities and enhance the accountability of an organization.

Within this context, however, less than half of the organizations studied had exclusive local control over developing policies. In particular, few of the organizations that received funding

from federal and government programs retained local control over setting policies. Again, the presence of a board of directors influenced whether or not an organization retained local control over setting policies. In some cases, organizations shared policy development with bodies at other levels, which may be a positive indication of the engagement of networks and partnerships.

6.0 **SOURCES OF INFORMATION**

In summary, even though knowledge and information can be an important asset for organizations confronting problems and developing solutions, few of the groups studied are pursuing a variety of sources of information. Organizational structures appeared to impact the range of sources of information used. In particular, organizations that had a board of directors were more likely to draw from a wide range of sources of information to make decisions, identify service options, obtain advice, and collect information. Furthermore, in metro-adjacent sites, many of the organizations that received government funding from grants and programs also used government departments as sources of information for making decisions, identifying service options, obtaining advice, or collecting general information. This may also indicate the engagement of networks and partnerships.

Diversity of knowledge is critical for problem solving, something which is increasingly required in the global market place (Hage 1999). Furthermore, interorganizational cooperation and partnerships involve processes of sharing information to build relationships and deliver services (Keast *et al.* 2004). Innovative service providers and voluntary organizations draw from a range of sources of information, such as members of the private sector or universities (Doloreaux 2002; Hinnant 1995). In this section, participants were asked about the sources they use to help make important decisions in their organizations, as well as sources of information used to seek advice, develop mandates, and collect information.

To focus the discussion upon crucial differences only, this section includes tables of responses only for metro-adjacency, leading versus lagging, and by organization type.

Sources of Information to Make Decisions

Overall, when making decisions, management was a key source of information. However, there were strong differences between metro-adjacency and sources of information used to make decisions (Table 6.1). Organizations in metro-adjacent sites were more likely to access a wider range of sources to make decisions. In particular, many organizations in adjacent sites drew from management, staff, and customers to make decisions. Furthermore, almost half of the groups in adjacent sites drew from federal and provincial government offices to help make decisions. Overall, organizations in metro-adjacent sites that received funding from government grants and programs were more likely to use the local, provincial, and federal government departments as a source of information for making decisions.

Table 6.1: Does your organization use the following sources of information to help make decisions? - by adjacency.

	Adjacent	Non-Adjacent	Total
Management	100.0	10.0	55.0
Staff	55.0	10.0	32.5
Customers	60.0	5.0	32.5
Local government	35.0	5.0	20.0
Sector associations	10.0	10.0	10.0
Universities / colleges / research centres	25.0	0.0	12.5
Federal / provincial gov't dept's	45.0	10.0	27.5
Financial institution	15.0	0.0	7.5
Business community	25.0	5.0	15.0
Family & friends	35.0	15.0	25.0
Internet	35.0	0.0	17.5
General media	30.0	0.0	15.0
	n=20	n=20	n=40

Source: Innovative Services and Voluntary Survey 2003.

When exploring organizations in leading versus lagging sites, there were few differences between the sources of information used to make decisions (Table 6.2). A slightly greater proportion of groups in lagging sites drew from management and customers, while more groups from leading sites drew from universities, colleges, and research institutes.

Table 6.2: Does your organization use the following sources of information to help make decisions? – by leading/lagging.

	Leading	Lagging	Total
Management	50.0	60.0	55.0
Staff	35.0	30.0	32.5
Customers	20.0	45.0	32.5
Local government	20.0	20.0	20.0
Sector associations	5.0	15.0	10.0
Universities / colleges / research centres	20.0	5.0	12.5
Federal / provincial gov't dept's	30.0	25.0	27.5
Financial institution	10.0	5.0	7.5
Business community	10.0	20.0	15.0
Family & friends	20.0	30.0	25.0
Internet	15.0	20.0	17.5
General media	10.0	20.0	15.0
	n=20	n=20	n=40

Source: Innovative Services and Voluntary Survey 2003.

There were some interesting differences between the types of organizations and the sources of information used to make decisions (Table 6.3). Overall, mixed voluntary and paid and strictly paid organizations accessed a wider range of sources to make decisions. Management, staff, customers, federal and provincial government offices were important sources for these groups. Organizations with a board of directors were more likely to draw from a range of sources of information to make decisions. Strictly voluntary and non-voluntary groups used a more limited range of sources to make decisions.

Table 6.3: Does your organization use the following sources of information to help make decisions? % Yes, by organization type.

	Strict Vol.	Mix Vol. & Paid	Strict Paid Vol.	Non Vol.	Total
Management	38.9	85.7	71.4	50.0	55.0
Staff	5.6	71.4	57.1	37.5	32.5
Customers	16.7	71.4	57.1	12.5	32.5
Local government	16.7	28.6	28.6	12.5	20.0
Sector associations	11.1	14.3	14.3	0.0	10.0
Universities / colleges / research centres	0.0	14.3	57.1	0.0	12.5
Federal / provincial gov't dept's	16.7	57.1	42.9	12.5	27.5
Financial institution	5.6	0.0	28.6	0.0	7.5
Business community	11.1	28.6	28.6	0.0	15.0
Family & friends	16.7	42.9	42.9	12.5	25.0
Internet	11.1	14.3	42.9	12.5	17.5
General media	11.1	14.3	28.6	12.5	15.0
Other	11.1	0.0	0.0	12.5	7.5
	n=18	n=7	n=7	n=8	n=40

Source: Innovative Services and Voluntary Survey 2003.

Sources of Information to Obtain Advice and Guidance

Participants were also asked to identify the sources of information used to obtain advice and guidance. Only management was consistently cited by at least half of all organizations as an important source of information.

There were strong differences between sources of information used to obtain advice in metro-adjacent and non-adjacent sites (Table 6.4). At least half of the organizations in adjacent sites drew from management, staff, local government, federal and provincial government offices, and the Internet to obtain advice and guidance. However, none of the sources of information were accessed by a wide range of groups in non-adjacent sites. Overall, organizations in metro-adjacent sites that received funding from government grants and programs were more likely to use the local, provincial, and federal government departments to obtain advice and guidance.

Table 6.4: Does your organization use the following sources of information to obtain advice / guidance? - by adjacency.

	Adjacent	Non-Adjacent	Total
Management	100.0	5.0	51.3
Staff	55.0	10.0	32.5
Customers	40.0	5.0	22.5
Local government	55.0	10.0	32.5
Sector associations	15.0	15.0	15.0
Universities / colleges / research centres	40.0	5.0	22.5
Federal / provincial gov't dept's	55.0	10.0	32.5
Financial institution	35.0	0.0	17.5
Business community	35.0	10.0	22.5
Family & friends	45.0	25.0	35.0
Internet	55.0	5.0	30.0
General media	25.0	0.0	12.5
	n=20	n=20	n=40

Source: Innovative Services and Voluntary Survey 2003.

When organizations in leading and lagging sites were compared, there were few differences in the sources of information used to obtain advice or guidance (Table 6.5). Organizations in leading sites were more likely to access universities, colleges, and research centres, while organizations in lagging sites were more likely to pursue advice amongst management, the business community, family and friends, and the Internet.

Table 6.5: Does your organization use the following sources of information to obtain advice / guidance? – by leading/lagging.

	Leading	Lagging	Total
Management	47.4	55.0	51.3
Staff	30.0	35.0	32.5
Customers	25.0	20.0	22.5
Local government	35.0	30.0	32.5
Sector associations	10.0	15.0	22.5
Universities / colleges / research centres	30.0	15.0	22.5
Federal / provincial gov't dept's	30.0	35.0	32.5
Financial institution	15.0	20.0	17.5
Business community	10.0	35.0	22.5
Family & friends	25.0	45.0	35.0
Internet	25.0	35.0	30.0
General media	10.0	15.0	12.5
	n=20	n=20	n=40

Source: Innovative Services and Voluntary Survey 2003.

There were, however, strong differences between sources of information used and the types of organizations (Table 6.6). Overall, mixed voluntary and paid organizations, as well as strictly paid organizations, accessed a wider range of sources to obtain advice. Important sources of information for mixed voluntary and paid groups included management, staff, federal and provincial government departments, the business community, and the Internet. Strictly paid organizations predominantly accessed management, staff, local governments, universities and colleges, federal and provincial government offices, and family and friends to obtain advice and guidance. Of interest, a greater proportion of organizations with a board of directors utilized a wider range of sources of information to obtain advice and guidance. None of these sources of information were pursued by half of strictly voluntary or non-voluntary organizations to obtain advice.

Table 6.6: Does your organization use the following sources of information to obtain advice / guidance? – by organization type.

	Strict Vol.	Mix Vol. & Paid	Strict Paid Vol.	Non Vol.	Total
Management	38.9	85.7	57.1	42.9	51.3
Staff	11.1	71.4	57.1	25.0	32.5
Customers	11.1	28.6	42.9	25.0	22.5
Local government	22.2	42.9	57.1	25.0	32.5
Sector associations	16.7	14.3	28.6	0.0	15.0
Universities / colleges / research centres	0.0	42.9	71.4	12.5	22.5
Federal / provincial gov't dept's	11.1	71.4	57.1	25.0	32.5
Financial institution	5.6	42.9	28.6	12.5	17.5
Business community	11.1	57.1	28.6	12.5	22.5
Family & friends	27.8	57.1	71.4	0.0	35.0
Internet	22.2	42.9	42.9	25.0	30.0
General media	5.6	14.3	28.6	12.5	12.5
	n=18	n=7	n=7	n=8	n=40

Source: Innovative Services and Voluntary Survey 2003.

Sources of Information to Identify Mandate and Service Options

When participants were asked about the sources of information they used to identify their mandate and service options, only management was consistently cited by just under half of all the organizations. Similiar to previous trends, there were strong differences between the sources of information used to identify mandate and service options between organizations located in metro-adjacent and non-adjacent sites (Table 6.7). In almost every case, groups in adjacent sites were more likely to access listed sources of information to identify mandate and service options. Organizations in non-adjacent sites were more likely to rely on sector associations. Overall, organizations in metro-adjacent sites that received funding from government grants and programs were more likely to use the local, provincial, and federal government departments to identify mandate and service options.

Table 6.7: Does your organization use the following sources of information to identify mandate / service options? – by adjacency.

	Adjacent	Non-Adjacent	Total
Management	94.7	5.0	48.7
Staff	50.0	10.0	30.0
Customers	30.0	5.0	17.5
Local government	50.0	5.0	27.5
Sector associations	15.0	20.0	17.5
Universities / colleges / research centres	30.0	0.0	15.0
Federal / provincial gov't dept's	55.0	5.0	30.0
Financial institution	10.0	0.0	5.0
Business community	20.0	10.0	15.0
Family & friends	30.0	10.0	20.0
Internet	35.0	0.0	17.5
General media	15.0	0.0	7.5
	n=20	n=20	n=40

Source: Innovative Services and Voluntary Survey 2003.

When organizations in leading and lagging sites were compared, there were few differences (Table 6.8). Organizations in leading sites were more likely to pursue local governments and universities, colleges, and research centres to identify mandates and service options. Organizations in lagging sites were more likely to use sector associations to identify mandates and service options.

Table 6.8: Does your organization use the following sources of information to identify mandate / service options? – by leading/lagging.

	Leading	Lagging	Total
Management	42.1	55.0	48.7
Staff	25.0	35.0	30.0
Customers	15.0	20.0	17.5
Local government	35.0	20.0	27.5
Sector associations	10.0	25.0	17.5
Universities / colleges / research centres	25.0	5.0	15.0
Federal / provincial gov't dept's	35.0	25.0	30.0
Financial institution	10.0	0.0	5.0
Business community	10.0	20.0	15.0
Family & friends	20.0	20.0	20.0
Internet	20.0	15.0	17.5
General media	5.0	10.0	7.5
	n=20	n=20	n=40

Source: Innovative Services and Voluntary Survey 2003.

Sources of information to identify mandates and service options varied across types of groups (Table 6.9). Overall, strictly paid organizations pursued the widest range of sources of information. At least half of these organizations drew from management, staff, customers, local government, universities and colleges, and federal and provincial government offices. Many mixed voluntary and paid organizations also used management, staff, and federal and provincial departments to identify mandate and service options. Findings indicated that these sources of information were not widely used amongst strictly voluntary and non-voluntary organizations.

Table 6.9: Does your organization use the following sources of information to identify mandate / service options? – by organization type.

	Strict Vol.	Mix Vol. & Paid	Strict Paid Vol.	Non Vol.	Total
Management	33.3	85.7	57.1	42.9	48.7
Staff	5.6	71.4	57.1	25.0	30.0
Customers	5.6	28.6	57.1	0.0	17.5
Local government	11.1	28.6	71.4	25.0	27.5
Sector associations	16.7	14.3	42.9	0.0	17.5
Universities / colleges / research centres	0.0	28.6	57.1	0.0	15.0
Federal / provincial gov't dept's	5.6	71.4	57.1	25.0	30.0
Financial institution	0.0	0.0	28.6	0.0	5.0
Business community	5.6	28.6	42.9	0.0	15.0
Family & friends	16.7	28.6	42.9	0.0	20.0
Internet	11.1	14.3	28.6	25.0	17.5
General media	0.0	14.3	14.3	12.5	7.5
	n=18	n=7	n=7	n=8	n=40

Source: Innovative Services and Voluntary Survey 2003.

Sources of Information to Collect Information

Finally, respondents were asked to identify the sources of information used by their organization to collect information. For the sites overall, important sources for collecting information included the Internet and management. When comparing metro-adjacent and non-adjacent sites, organizations in sites adjacent to metropolitan areas used a wider range of sources of information to collect information (Table 6.10). In fact, all of the organizations in adjacent sites used the Internet. None of these sources of information were widely used amongst organizations in non-adjacent communities. Overall, organizations in metro-adjacent sites that received funding from government grants and programs were more likely to use the local, provincial, and federal government departments to collect information.

Table 6.10: Does your organization use the following sources of information to collect information? – by adjacency.

	Adjacent	Non-Adjacent	Total
Management	95.0	10.0	52.5
Staff	65.0	10.0	37.5
Customers	65.0	10.0	37.5
Local government	55.0	10.0	32.5
Sector associations	40.0	25.0	32.5
Universities / colleges / research centres	55.0	15.0	35.0
Federal / provincial gov't dept's	55.0	10.0	32.5
Financial institution	30.0	5.0	17.5
Business community	40.0	15.0	27.5
Family & friends	65.0	20.0	42.5
Internet	100.0	25.0	62.5
General media	55.0	15.0	35.0
	n=20	n=20	n=40

Source: Innovative Services and Voluntary Survey 2003.

There were some differences between the sources of information used to collect information for organizations located in leading and lagging sites (Table 6.11). Overall, organizations in lagging sites used more sources to collect information. In particular, at least half of the organizations in lagging sites used management, sector associations, family and friends, the Internet, and the general media to collect information. In leading sites, only the Internet was used by half of the organizations to collect information.

Table 6.11: Does your organization use the following sources of information to collect information? – by leading/lagging.

	Leading	Lagging	Total
Management	45.0	60.0	52.5
Staff	40.0	35.0	37.5
Customers	40.0	35.0	37.5
Local government	30.0	35.0	32.5
Sector associations	15.0	50.0	32.5
Universities / colleges / research centres	30.0	40.0	35.0
Federal / provincial gov't dept's	30.0	35.0	32.5
Financial institution	10.0	25.0	17.5
Business community	20.0	35.0	27.5
Family & friends	35.0	50.0	42.5
Internet	50.0	75.0	62.5
General media	20.0	50.0	35.0
	n=20	n=20	n=40

Source: Innovative Services and Voluntary Survey 2003.

When exploring types of voluntary organizations, sources of information used to collect information varied (Table 6.12). At least half of all organizational types used the Internet to collect information. However, mixed voluntary and paid organizations were more likely to draw upon a wide range of sources to collect information. In fact, with the exception of family and friends and the business community, at least half of mixed voluntary and paid organizations used these sources of information to collect information. Many strictly paid organizations used management, staff, customers, local government, universities and colleges, federal and provincial government offices, family and friends, and the Internet to gather information. Non-voluntary organizations predominantly used staff and the Internet to collect information.

Table 6.12: Does your organization use the following sources of information to collect information? – by organization type.

	Strict Vol.	Mix Vol. & Paid	Strict Paid Vol.	Non Vol.	Total
Management	38.9	85.7	71.4	37.5	52.5
Staff	11.1	71.4	57.1	50.0	37.5
Customers	22.2	57.1	57.1	37.5	37.5
Local government	16.7	57.1	57.1	25.0	32.5
Sector associations	27.8	71.4	42.9	0.0	32.5
Universities / colleges / research centres	16.7	71.4	71.4	12.5	35.0
Federal / provincial gov't dept's	11.1	71.4	57.1	25.0	32.5
Financial institution	11.1	42.9	28.6	0.0	17.5
Business community	22.2	42.9	42.9	12.5	27.5
Family & friends	38.9	42.9	57.1	37.5	42.5
Internet	55.6	85.7	71.4	50.0	62.5
General media	33.3	57.1	28.6	25.0	35.0
	n=18	n=7	n=7	n=8	n=40

Source: Innovative Services and Voluntary Survey 2003.

Summary

An important component of innovation is obtaining knowledge through the sharing of information that can lead to the adoption of new ideas and processes. Utilizing a range of sources of information will increase the potential for groups to acquire knowledge to confront the problems they are facing. Within this context, organizations in Mackenzie and Tweed are well equipped to confront challenges by drawing upon many sources to make decisions, seek advice, or even collect information. Furthermore, groups in metro-adjacent sites were particularly taking advantage of a range of sources for many organizational activities. While leading and lagging characteristics revealed few notable differences in pursuing sources of information, variations in the structure of organizations provided a more revealing story. In this case, mixed voluntary and paid organizations, as well as strictly paid organizations, utilized many sources.

In particular, organizations that had a board of directors were more likely to draw from a wide range of sources of information to make decisions, identify service options, obtain advice, and collect information. Furthermore, in metro-adjacent sites, many of the organizations that received government funding from grants and programs also used government departments as sources of information for making decisions, identifying service options, obtaining advice, or collecting general information. This may also indicate the engagement of networks and partnerships.

7.0   CHALLENGES FOR INNOVATIVE SERVICES AND VOLUNTARY ORGANIZATIONS

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

Respondents noted a range of challenges that are facing their organizations (Table 7.1). Most notably, half of these organizations were coping with government cutbacks. This is particularly concerning given that government cutbacks was cited as a reason why these communities have been experiencing service closures during the past twenty years. Other challenges noted by at least one-third of respondents included lack of members, psychological burnout, and lack of funding. Lack of members contributes to other challenges like volunteer burnout and out-migration. If the community is experiencing residential out-migration, this can impact the recruitment and maintenance of members, as well as put additional pressure on remaining members to take on any additional duties.

Table 7.1: What are the challenges facing your organization - % of responses

	% Yes	n=
Funding Challenges		
No funding	34.1	40
Government cutbacks	50.0	24
Challenges with Human Resources		
Lack of members	48.7	39
Little participation by members	22.5	40
Declining enrolments	16.0	25
Difficulty getting staff	12.0	25
Lack of local support	17.5	40
Out-migration	28.0	25
Lack of new leadership	15.0	40
Psychological burnout	40.0	40
Volunteer burnout	32.5	40
Challenges with Organizational Operations		
Ambitious objectives	17.5	40
Poor management	2.5	40
Need to revisit objectives	12.5	40
Challenges with Networks and Communication		
Few partners / outside networks	25.0	40
Communication problem	12.5	40
Challenges with Infrastructure		
Building deterioration	12.0	25
Lack of meeting space	10.0	40

Source: Innovative Services and Voluntary Survey 2003.

Funding Challenges

Funding challenges varied from place to place (Table 7.2). Organizations in Mackenzie and Tweed were more likely to be impacted by funding challenges, particularly government cutbacks. In Wood River, few respondents felt their organizations were impacted by funding challenges. Instead, some Wood River participants felt their organizations were impacted by a limited trading area. Another problem facing organizations included a lack of funding. However, few organizations felt that lack of local support was a problem. This is not surprising given that community fundraising is an important source of funding for most organizations studied.

Table 7.2: Funding Challenges - % of responses, by community.

	Mackenzie		Wood River		Tweed		Springhill		Total	
	%	n=	%	n=	%	n=	%	n=	%	n=
No funding	40.0	10	10.0	10	45.5	10	40.0	10	34.1	40
Gov't cutbacks	77.8	9	0.0	0	80.0	5	10.0	10	50.0	24
Lack of local support	20.0	10	20.0	10	20.0	10	10.0	10	17.5	40

Source: Innovative Services and Voluntary Survey 2003.

There were also differences in funding challenges faced by organizations in metro-adjacent and non-adjacent sites (Table 7.3). In particular, organizations in metro-adjacent sites were more likely to be impacted by a lack of funding and government cutbacks. Often, groups that faced funding challenges included those that did not access funding through corporations or government grants and programs.

Table 7.3: Funding Challenges - % of responses, by adjacency.

	Adjacent		Non-Adjacent		Total	
	%	n=	%	n=	%	n=
No funding	45.0	20	25.0	20	35.0	40
Gov't Cutbacks	78.6	14	10.0	10	50.0	24
Lack of local support	20.0	20	15.0	20	17.5	40

Source: Innovative Services and Voluntary Survey 2003.

Findings indicated differences in funding challenges faced by organizations in leading and lagging sites (Table 7.4). For example, organizations in lagging sites were more likely to be impacted by limited funding. Overwhelmingly, more than 75% of organizations in leading sites were impacted by government cutbacks.

Table 7.4: Funding Challenges - % of responses, by leading/lagging.

	Leading		Lagging		Total	
	%	n=	%	n=	%	n=
No funding	25.0	20	45.0	20	35.0	40
Gov't Cutbacks	77.8	9	33.3	15	50.0	24
Lack of local support	20.0	20	15.0	20	17.5	40

Source: Innovative Services and Voluntary Survey 2003.

Furthermore, the relationships between type of organizations and funding challenges were examined (Table 7.5). Overall, mixed voluntary and paid organizations were most likely to be concerned with financial challenges. A greater proportion of mixed voluntary and paid organizations, as well as strictly voluntary organizations, experienced a lack of funding. On the other hand, two-thirds of strictly paid organizations and non-voluntary groups were particularly impacted by government cutbacks.

Table 7.5: Funding Challenges - % of responses, by organization type.

	Strict Vol.		Mix Vol. & Paid		Strict Paid Vol.		Non Vol.		Total	
	%	n=	%	n=	%	n=	%	n=	%	n=
No funding	38.9	18	42.9	7	28.6	7	25.0	8	35.0	40
Gov't cutbacks	36.4	11	50.0	4	66.7	6	66.7	3	50.0	24
Lack of local support	22.2	18	28.6	7	14.3	7	0.0	8	17.5	40

Source: Innovative Services and Voluntary Survey 2003.

Limited funding and government cutbacks can put added pressure on organizations, and may lead to service cutbacks or even closure. These financial pressures are most strongly felt in metro-adjacent communities, lagging communities, and by mixed voluntary and paid organizations. Financial pressures may push some service groups to pursue user pay systems. Another option for organizations confronting financial challenges will be to pursue partnerships to obtain funding and deliver services.

Human Resources

There were differences with the challenges organizations in each site are facing with human resources (Table 7.6). Overall, almost half of the organizations were coping with a lack of members. In Mackenzie, however, organizations were more concerned with out-migration and psychological burnout due to frustration. In addition to lack of members, organizations in Tweed were coping with psychological burnout. In Springhill, however, a lack of members and volunteer burnout was most prominent compared to all the sites. As noted earlier, these organizations in Springhill were the least likely to have staff and most likely to rely on volunteer support. It is important to note that Wood River participants felt there were other challenges facing their organizations such as limited time and aging members.

Table 7.6: Challenges with Human Resources - % of responses, by community.

	Mackenzie		Wood River		Tweed		Springhill		Total	
	%	n=	%	n=	%	n=	%	n=	%	n=
Lack of members	20.0	10	40.0	10	66.7	9	70.0	10	48.7	39
Little participation by members	40.0	10	10.0	10	20.0	10	20.0	10	22.5	40
Declining enrolments	20.0	10	0.0	0	20.0	5	10.0	10	16.0	25
Difficulty getting staff	20.0	10	0.0	0	20.0	5	0.0	10	12.0	25
Out-migration	60.0	10	0.0	0	0.0	5	10.0	10	28.0	25
Lack of new leadership	20.0	10	0.0	10	10.0	10	30.0	10	15.0	40
Psychological burnout	70.0	10	10.0	10	50.0	10	30.0	10	40.0	40
Volunteer burnout	30.0	10	10.0	10	20.0	10	70.0	10	32.5	40

Source: Innovative Services and Voluntary Survey 2003.

When the metro-adjacency of organizations was explored, there were also different concerns surrounding human resources (Table 7.7). Organizations in metro-adjacent sites were more likely to be coping with a range of issues affecting human resources. More prominent concerns include psychological burnout, lack of members, and out-migration. In this case, out-migration may lead to other challenges, including difficulty in getting staff. Organizations in non-adjacent sites were also concerned with lack of members, along with volunteer burnout.

Table 7.7: Challenges with Human Resources - % of responses, by adjacency.

	Adjacent		Non-Adjacent		Total	
	%	n=	%	n=	%	n=
Lack of members	42.1	19	55.0	20	48.7	39
Little participation by members	30.0	20	15.0	20	22.5	40
Declining enrolments	20.0	15	10.0	10	16.0	25
Difficulty getting staff	20.0	15	0.0	10	12.0	25
Out-migration	40.0	15	10.0	10	28.0	25
Lack of new leadership	15.0	20	15.0	20	15.0	40
Psychological burnout	60.0	20	20.0	20	40.0	40
Volunteer burnout	25.0	20	40.0	20	32.5	40

Source: Innovative Services and Voluntary Survey 2003.

Examining organizations in leading and lagging sites revealed that most organizations in leading sites were concerned about out-migration, while organizations in lagging sites were particularly concerned about a lack of members and volunteer burnout (Table 7.8). Lagging sites were also slightly more concerned about a lack of new leadership. As noted earlier, characteristics of lagging communities include higher rates of unemployment. Such stresses can produce more demands for a range of services, yet it may also produce an environment in which household stresses limit an individual's ability to volunteer. Given that lagging sites rely more on volunteer leadership and voluntary membership on boards of directors, volunteer burnout will be an important issue confronting these communities.

Table 7.8: Challenges with Human Resources - % of responses, by leading/lagging.

	Leading		Lagging		Total	
	%	n=	%	n=	%	n=
Lack of members	30.0	20	68.4	19	48.7	39
Little participation by members	25.0	20	20.0	20	22.5	40
Declining enrolments	20.0	10	13.3	15	16.0	25
Difficulty getting staff	20.0	10	6.7	15	12.0	25
Out-migration	60.0	10	6.7	15	28.0	25
Lack of new leadership	10.0	20	20.0	20	15.0	40
Psychological burnout	40.0	20	40.0	20	40.0	40
Volunteer burnout	20.0	20	45.0	20	32.5	40

Source: Innovative Services and Voluntary Survey 2003.

Finally, findings indicated different relationships between types of groups and human resource issues (Table 7.9). For example, strictly voluntary organizations were particularly concerned about lack of members. Furthermore, psychological burnout and volunteer burnout were more prominent concerns facing voluntary organizations. On the other hand, non-voluntary groups were concerned about difficulty getting staff and out-migration.

Table 7.9: Challenges with Human Resources - % of responses, by organization type.

	Strict Vol.		Mix Vol. & Paid		Strict Paid Vol.		Non Vol.		Total	
	%	n=	%	n=	%	n=	%	n=	%	n=
Lack of members	76.5	17	42.9	7	28.6	7	12.5	8	48.7	39
Little participation by members	27.8	18	0.0	7	28.6	7	25.0	8	22.5	40
Declining enrolments	18.2	11	20.0	5	16.7	6	0.0	3	16.0	25
Difficulty getting staff	0.0	11	20.0	5	16.7	6	33.3	3	12.0	25
Out-migration	18.2	11	20.0	5	33.3	6	66.7	3	28.0	25
Lack of new leadership	27.8	18	0.0	7	0.0	7	12.5	8	15.0	40
Psychological burnout	38.9	18	57.1	7	42.9	7	25.0	8	40.0	40
Volunteer burnout	38.9	18	42.9	7	42.9	7	0.0	8	32.5	40

Source: Innovative Services and Voluntary Survey 2003.

Given the challenges organizations were facing with human resources, respondents were asked if their organization had gained or lost members or employees during the past five years. This is particularly important as long tenure leads to better organizational communication, experience, and stability (Korsching *et al.* 2001). When comparing membership gains and losses over the past five years, results indicate, however, that most organizations are losing more members (Table 7.10). Although, some groups have been successful in recruiting new members.

Table 7.10: Overall Change in Membership During the Past Five Years - % of responses

Response	Gained	Lost
None	34.5	33.3
1-5 members	31.0	53.3
6-10 members	13.8	10.0
More than 10 members	20.6	3.3
	n=29	n=30

Source: Innovative Services and Voluntary Survey 2003.

Overall, roughly one-third of the organizations had not gained any members or staff during the past five years. Just over 30% of these organizations had gained between 1-5 members, while an additional one-third of respondents felt their organizations had gained more than 5 members during the past five years. Organizations in Mackenzie and Tweed were particularly successful in gaining new members (Table 7.11). On the other hand, two-thirds of the organizations in Wood River did not gain new members or employees. Furthermore, most organizations in Springhill were successful in gaining new members during the past five years.

Table 7.11: Members GAINED During the Past Five Years - % of responses, by community.

Response	Mackenzie	Wood River	Tweed	Springhill	Total
None	0.0	66.7	14.3	37.5	34.5
1-5 members	60.0	22.2	28.6	25.0	31.0
6-10 members	20.0	0.0	14.3	25.0	13.8
11-25 members	20.0	11.1	28.6	12.5	17.2
More than 25 members	0.0	0.0	14.3	0.0	3.4
	n=5	n=9	n=7	n=8	n=29

Source: Innovative Services and Voluntary Survey 2003.

When exploring the loss of members across the sites, findings indicated that a lower proportion of organizations in Wood River had lost members or employees during the past five years (Table 7.12). In fact, half of these groups had not lost any members during this period. On the other hand, all of the respondents in Mackenzie noted that their organization had lost some members during the past five years. However, in some cases, low levels of membership or staff losses were not enough to compensate for problems organizations may have had in gaining new members. For example, overall, groups in Wood River lost members. In other sites, it appears that while most organizations are losing at least 1-5 members, some organizations were able to recover these losses by attracting members in greater numbers.

Table 7.12: Members LOST During the Past Five Years - % of responses, by community.

Response	Mackenzie	Wood River	Tweed	Springhill	Total
None	0.0	50.0	28.6	37.5	33.3
1-5 members	80.0	50.0	42.9	50.0	53.3
6-10 members	20.0	0.0	14.3	12.5	10.0
More than 10 members	0.0	0.0	14.3	0.0	3.3
	n=5	n=10	n=7	n=8	n=30

Source: Innovative Services and Voluntary Survey 2003.

Other evaluative variables indicated different changes in membership numbers during the past five years. Notably, while just under half of the organizations in non-adjacent sites had gained members during the past five years, over 90% of the organizations in metro-adjacent sites had gained new members (Table 7.13). This raises concerns as non-adjacent communities were also more likely to be concerned about lack of members and volunteer burnout.

Table 7.13: Members GAINED During the Past Five Years - % of responses, by adjacency.

Response	Adjacent	Non-Adjacent	Total
None	8.3	52.9	34.5
1-5 members	41.7	23.5	31.0
6-10 members	16.7	11.8	13.8
11-25 members	25.0	11.8	17.2
More than 25 members	8.3	0.0	3.4
	n=12	n=17	n=29

Source: Innovative Services and Voluntary Survey 2003.

Results showed, however, that a greater proportion of groups in metro-adjacent sites had lost members or employees during the past five years (Table 7.14). Overall, the change in membership for some organizations in metro-adjacent sites was positive due to strong membership gains by one-third of these groups. On the other hand, when comparing overall gains and losses for groups in non-adjacent sites, an overall loss of members was experienced.

Table 7.14: Members LOST During the Past Five Years - % of responses, by adjacency.

Response	Adjacent	Non-Adjacent	Total
None	16.7	44.4	33.3
1-5 members	58.3	50.0	53.3
6-10 members	16.7	5.6	10.0
More than 10 members	8.3	0.0	3.3
	n=12	n=18	n=30

Source: Innovative Services and Voluntary Survey 2003.

When groups in leading and lagging sites were compared, results indicated that a greater proportion of organizations in lagging sites had gained members during the past five years (Table 7.15). In fact, almost half of these organizations had gained at least 6 new members during this period.

Table 7.15: Members GAINED During the Past Five Years - % of responses, by leading/lagging.

Response	Leading	Lagging	Total
None	42.9	26.7	34.5
1-5 members	35.7	26.7	31.0
6-10 members	7.1	20.0	13.8
11-25 members	14.3	20.0	17.2
More than 25 members	0.0	6.7	3.4
	n=14	n=15	n=29

Source: Innovative Services and Voluntary Survey 2003.

There were few differences between the loss of members amongst leading and lagging sites during this period (Table 7.16). Although, organizations in leading sites have, overall, lost more members during the past five years.

Table 7.16: Members LOST During the Past Five Years - % of responses, by leading/lagging.

Response	Leading	Lagging	Total
None	33.3	33.3	33.3
1-5 members	60.0	46.7	53.3
6-10 members	6.7	13.3	10.0
More than 10 members	0.0	6.7	3.3
	n=15	n=15	n=30

Source: Innovative Services and Voluntary Survey 2003.

When organizations are grouped according to their voluntary classification, there are some interesting differences. Most notably, while 80% of non-voluntary organizations did not gain any new members or employees during the past five years, at least two-thirds of all other voluntary organizations gained new members (Table 7.17). Despite the fact many strictly voluntary organizations are concerned with a lack of members, almost three-quarters of these organizations attracted new people to their organization.

Table 7.17: Members GAINED During the Past Five Years - % of responses, by organization type.

	Strict Vol.	Mix Vol. & Paid	Strict Paid Vol.	Non Vol.	Total
None	26.7	16.7	33.3	80.0	34.5
1-5 members	20.0	66.7	33.3	20.0	31.0
6-10 members	26.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	13.8
11-25 members	20.0	16.7	33.3	0.0	17.2
More than 25 members	6.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.4
	n=15	n=6	n=3	n=5	n=29

Source: Innovative Services and Voluntary Survey 2003.

In general, a greater proportion of organizations that depended upon volunteers were impacted by loss of members (Table 7.18). In particular, a greater proportion of strictly voluntary and mixed voluntary and paid organizations had lost members during the past five years. However, when we compare the overall change between membership gains and losses, there are notable differences between membership change and challenges that groups are concerned about. Overall, there was no change in membership amongst the total number of mixed voluntary and paid organizations and the non-voluntary organizations. However, strictly paid organizations experienced a positive change in their numbers. Moreover, while a greater proportion of strictly voluntary organizations lost more members than they gained, some of these strictly voluntary groups were particularly successful in gaining new members. Therefore, even though most strictly voluntary groups were concerned about a lack of members, some of these groups are deploying successful strategies to recruit new members.

Table 7.18: Members LOST During the Past Five Years - % of responses, by organization type.

	Strict Vol.	Mix Vol. & Paid	Strict Paid Vol.	Non Vol.	Total
None	20.0	16.7	50.0	80.0	33.3
1-5 members	66.7	66.7	25.0	20.0	53.3
6-10 members	13.3	0.0	25.0	0.0	10.0
More than 10 members	0.0	16.7	0.0	0.0	3.3
	n=15	n=6	n=4	n=5	n=30

Source: Innovative Services and Voluntary Survey 2003.

Respondents noted that members had been lost mainly as a result of out-migration, lack of time to participate in activities, and retirement. It is not surprising that out-migration and lack of time are listed here since economic and social restructuring often leads to household stresses where some residents can no longer participate. Without the recruitment of new members, volunteer burnout will be an important challenge that may lead to a decline in organizational activities and even closure.

Overall, more prominent challenges facing organizations in the four study sites include limited members, psychological burnout, and volunteer burnout. These challenges were also particularly apparent as a greater proportion of groups have lost members over the past five years due to out-migration, limited time to participate, and retirement. Insufficient human resources can have profound impacts on organizations during economic and social restructuring. Notably, limited human resources can place added pressure on remaining members to take on additional duties. These issues can also have profound impacts on efforts to carry out daily operations.

Operations

Challenges with organizational operations were also explored (Table 7.19). Previous work has noted that ambitious objectives and initiatives may be supported without fully understanding the human and financial resources required to implement them (Comfort 1997; Dunn 1997). With the exception of Mackenzie, few organizations in the study sites were concerned about operational problems. In Mackenzie, half of the organizations felt that they faced objectives that were too ambitious.

Table 7.19: Challenges with Organizational Operations - % of responses, by community.

	Mackenzie		Wood River		Tweed		Springhill		Total	
	%	n=	%	n=	%	n=	%	n=	%	n=
Ambitious objectives	50.0	10	0.0	10	10.0	10	10.0	10	17.5	40
Poor management	0.0	10	0.0	10	10.0	10	0.0	10	2.5	40
Need to revisit objectives	20.0	10	0.0	10	20.0	10	10.0	10	12.5	40

Source: Innovative Services and Voluntary Survey 2003.

Overall, a greater proportion of organizations in metro-adjacent sites were concerned about operational problems (Table 7.20). In particular, these organizations were more likely to confront ambitious objectives, as well as the need to revisit objectives. Poor management was not a significant concern for groups in either metro-adjacent or non-adjacent communities.

Table 7.20: Challenges with Organizational Operations - % of responses, by adjacency.

	Adjacent		Non-Adjacent		Total	
	%	n=	%	n=	%	n=
Ambitious objectives	30.0	20	5.0	20	17.5	40
Poor management	5.0	20	0.0	20	2.5	40
Need to revisit objectives	20.0	20	5.0	20	12.5	40

Source: Innovative Services and Voluntary Survey 2003.

There were few significant differences between the operational challenges confronted by groups in leading versus lagging sites (Table 7.21). Although, there were wider differences between groups affected by ambitious objectives. In this case, organizations in leading sites were more likely to be concerned about ambitious objectives.

Table 7.21: Challenges with Organizational Operations - % of responses, by leading/lagging

	Leading		Lagging		Total	
	%	n=	%	n=	%	n=
Ambitious objectives	25.0	20	10.0	20	17.5	40
Poor management	0.0	20	5.0	20	2.5	40
Need to revisit objectives	10.0	20	15.0	20	12.5	40

Source: Innovative Services and Voluntary Survey 2003.

Lastly, findings indicated different problems with operations amongst various types of groups (Table 7.22). For example, strictly paid and non-voluntary organizations were more likely to be concerned with ambitious objectives. Furthermore, almost 30% of mixed voluntary and paid organizations and strictly paid organizations felt they need to revisit their objectives. Very few strictly voluntary organizations felt their organizations faced challenges with the operation of their organization.

Table 7.22: Challenges with Organizational Operations - % of responses, by organization types.

	Strict Vol.		Mix Vol. & Paid		Strict Paid Vol.		Non Vol.		Total	
	%	n=	%	n=	%	n=	%	n=	%	n=
Ambitious objectives	5.6	18	0.0	7	42.9	7	37.5	8	17.5	40
Poor management	0.0	18	14.3	7	0.0	7	0.0	8	2.5	40
Need to revisit objectives	0.0	18	28.6	7	28.6	7	12.5	8	12.5	40

Source: Innovative Services and Voluntary Survey 2003.

Overall, challenges with insufficient human resources did not translate into problems for the daily operations of these organizations. Few organizations felt their organization had adopted ambitious objectives or had poor management. An important exception includes organizations in Mackenzie where half of the respondents felt their organization was challenged by ambitious objectives.

Networks and Communications

Next, the relationship between sites and challenges surrounding networks and communications was explored. While few of the sites, overall, felt that limited networks and partnerships were a problem, half of the organizations in Mackenzie were concerned about this problem (Table 7.23). Moreover, a greater proportion of organizations in Mackenzie were coping with communication problems.

Table 7.23: Challenges with Networks and Communications - % of responses, by community.

	Mackenzie		Wood River		Tweed		Springhill		Total	
	%	n=	%	n=	%	n=	%	n=	%	n=
Few partners / outside networks	50.0	10	20.0	10	30.0	10	0.0	10	25.0	40
Communication problem	30.0	10	0.0	10	10.0	10	10.0	10	12.5	40

Source: Innovative Services and Voluntary Survey 2003.

In exploring networks and communication, findings showed that organizations in metro-adjacent communities were more likely to be concerned about limited partners and networks, as well as communication problems, despite the greater presence of a board of directors on organizations in those sites (Table 7.24). This raises concerns about the effectiveness of board members' abilities to bring contacts, relationships, and networks to organizations. Further research could explore the extent to which organizations successfully engage local versus non-local board members, as well as a combination of both, to develop valuable networks for organizations.

Table 7.24: Challenges with Networks and Communications - % of responses, by adjacency.

	Adjacent		Non-Adjacent		Total	
	%	n=	%	n=	%	n=
Few partners / outside networks	40.0	20	10.0	20	25.0	40
Communication problem	20.0	20	5.0	20	12.5	40

Source: Innovative Services and Voluntary Survey 2003.

When responses from leading and lagging sites were compared, a greater proportion of organizations in leading sites were concerned about limited partners and networks (Table 7.25).

Table 7.25: Challenges with Networks and Communications - % of responses, by leading/lagging.

	Leading		Lagging		Total	
	%	n=	%	n=	%	n=
Few partners / outside networks	35.0	20	15.0	20	25.0	40
Communication problem	15.0	20	10.0	20	12.5	40

Source: Innovative Services and Voluntary Survey 2003.

Furthermore, the relationships between various types of groups and challenges with networks and communications were explored (Table 7.26). Overall, a greater proportion of strictly paid organizations were concerned with limited partnerships and networks outside of their community, as well as with communication problems, despite the fact that these organizations have both paid staff and a voluntary board of directors. Further research may reveal different perceptions that various types of organizations have on the importance of partnerships and networks, as well as communication tools, which may impact their views about whether or not they feel these issues are challenges for their organization.

Table 7.26: Challenges with Networks and Communications - % of responses, by organization type.

	Strict Vol.		Mix Vol. & Paid		Strict Paid Vol.		Non Vol.		Total	
	%	n=	%	n=	%	n=	%	n=	%	n=
Few partners / outside networks	22.2	18	28.6	7	42.9	7	12.5	8	25.0	40
Communication problem	5.6	18	14.3	7	28.6	7	12.5	8	12.5	40

Source: Innovative Services and Voluntary Survey 2003.

Communication influences the development of relationships, which subsequently lead to the development of networks and partnerships. Within this context, however, few organizations felt that their organization had communication problems. Instead, organizations were more concerned with limited partnerships and outside networks, particularly in metro-adjacent and leading communities. In particular, organizations with a board of directors were concerned about limited partnerships and networks.

Infrastructure

Finally, respondents were also asked about infrastructure problems facing their organization. Infrastructure problems ranged from place to place (Table 7.27). None of the organizations in Tweed or Springhill felt their organization was impacted by infrastructure challenges. It is important to note that even though some organizations in Springhill did not have any office space, they did not feel it was necessary to conduct activities because they had access to meeting space. On the other hand, 30% of organizations in Mackenzie were concerned about building deterioration. As such, a serious challenge facing these organizations may be to raise capital funds to repair or obtain access to a different building. Furthermore, 20% of participants in Mackenzie and Wood River cited a lack of meeting space as a challenge.

Table 7.27: Challenges with Infrastructure - % of responses, by community.

	Mackenzie		Wood River		Tweed		Springhill		Total	
	%	n=	%	n=	%	n=	%	n=	%	n=
Building deterioration	30.0	10	0.0	0	0.0	5	0.0	10	12.0	25
Lack of meeting space	20.0	10	20.0	10	0.0	10	0.0	10	10.0	40

Source: Innovative Services and Voluntary Survey 2003.

Findings revealed few differences between infrastructure problems facing organizations in metro-adjacent and non-adjacent sites (Table 7.28). However, while none of the organizations in non-adjacent sites were concerned with building deterioration, 20% of organizations in metro-adjacent sites were thinking about this problem.

Table 7.28: Challenges with Infrastructure - % of responses, by adjacency.

	Adjacent		Non-Adjacent		Total	
	%	n=	%	n=	%	n=
Building deterioration	20.0	15	0.0	10	12.0	25
Lack of meeting space	10.0	20	10.0	20	10.0	40

Source: Innovative Services and Voluntary Survey 2003.

On the other hand, there were more significant differences between infrastructure problems facing leading and lagging sites (Table 7.29). Thirty percent of respondents in leading sites were concerned with building deterioration, and 20% of these respondents felt their organization was challenged by a lack of meeting space. None of the lagging sites were concerned about infrastructure challenges.

Table 7.29: Challenges with Infrastructure - % of responses, by leading/lagging.

	Leading		Lagging		Total	
	%	n=	%	n=	%	n=
Building deterioration	30.0	10	0.0	15	12.0	25
Lack of meeting space	20.0	20	0.0	20	10.0	40

Source: Innovative Services and Voluntary Survey 2003.

Findings revealed significant differences between infrastructural problems and organizations with different classifications (Table 7.30). In fact, while few respondents representing voluntary organizations were concerned with their infrastructure, two-thirds of non-voluntary organizations were confronting building deterioration. Furthermore, non-voluntary organizations were more likely to be concerned about limited meeting spaces.

Table 7.30: Challenges with Infrastructure - % of responses, by organization type.

	Strict Vol.		Mix Vol. & Paid		Strict Paid		Non Vol.		Total	
	%	n=	%	n=	%	n=	%	n=	%	n=
Building deterioration	0.0	11	0.0	5	16.7	6	66.7	3	12.0	25
Lack of meeting space	5.6	18	0.0	7	14.3	7	25.0	8	10.0	40

Source: Innovative Services and Voluntary Survey 2003.

Summary

Innovative service providers and voluntary organizations are facing a number of challenges to meet increasing demands for services in rural and small town places. Government cutbacks, limited funding, lack of members, and psychological and volunteer burnout are important issues facing these organizations. At the same time, some organizations are vulnerable to a loss of members. Combined, this places considerable pressure on members in these groups to take on additional duties. If these challenges persist over time, they may also lead to service cutbacks or closure of programs, services, and organizations. If these organizations are going to maintain these services, they will need to find new innovative ways to have them delivered, which may include the development of new networks and partnerships to develop the necessary human and financial resources needed.

8.0   USE OF COMMUNICATIONS & TECHNOLOGY

Innovative services and voluntary organizations may also contribute to community capacity building through communications and networking. Access to knowledge and communication tools play a role in the formation of partnerships and networks. Communication tools can provide opportunities for routine social interaction. They may also help build common values and beliefs, which are components of social cohesion (Miller-Millesen 2003). Information is also essential in reducing uncertainty. Yet limited work has been done to explore mechanisms used for facilitating communication, which impact processes of innovation and implementation (Hage 1999). In this section, key informants were asked how their organization communicates with clients, members, and funders. Furthermore, the use of the Internet and the importance placed on adopting new technologies is examined.

Communication with Clients

Upon examining their communication with clients, respondents overall noted that prominent sources of communication included word of mouth, personal contact, and stories in the media. This resembles other research that found there is still a strong preference for one-on-one, personalized communication (Lasley *et al.* 2001). Furthermore, the use of media stories can enhance the legitimacy of an organization within a community. Residents can read stories about the activities of an organization and see that they are fulfilling on their promises.

When we examined the use of communication tools between metro-adjacent and non-adjacent sites, the results were strikingly different (Table 8.1. While most of the communication tools were used by at least half of the organizations in metro-adjacent sites to communicate with clients, none of these tools were used by half of the organizations in non-adjacent sites.

Table 8.1 How does your organization communicate with clients? – by adjacency.

Response	Adjacent	Non-Adjacent	Total
Newsletter	20.0	5.0	12.5
Website	50.0	20.0	35.0
E-mail	55.0	10.0	32.5
Word of mouth	80.0	40.0	60.0
Personal contact	80.0	40.0	60.0
Posting notices	70.0	15.0	42.5
Brochures	60.0	30.0	45.0
Reports	20.0	5.0	12.5
Stories in media	75.0	25.0	50.0
Advertise in media	70.0	20.0	45.0
Telephone	25.0	5.0	15.0
	n=20	n=20	n=40

Source: Innovative Services and Voluntary Survey 2003.

Furthermore, when leading and lagging sites were compared, findings show that a greater proportion of lagging sites are using a wide range of tools to communicate with their clients (Table 8.2). Word of mouth was utilized by at least half of the organizations in both leading and lagging sites. Aside from personal forms of communication, other important communication tools for lagging sites include posting notices, brochures, and stories and advertisements in the media.

Table 8.2 How does your organization communicate with clients? – by leading/lagging.

Response	Leading	Lagging	Total
Newsletter	0.0	25.0	12.5
Website	35.0	35.0	35.0
E-mail	30.0	35.0	32.5
Word of mouth	50.0	70.0	60.0
Personal contact	40.0	80.0	60.0
Posting notices	25.0	60.0	42.5
Brochures	35.0	55.0	45.0
Reports	15.0	10.0	12.5
Stories in media	30.0	70.0	50.0
Advertise in media	30.0	60.0	45.0
Telephone	10.0	20.0	15.0
	n=20	n=20	n=40

Source: Innovative Services and Voluntary Survey 2003.

Finally, there was a wide range of communication tools used amongst the different types of organizations (Table 8.3). The use of communication tools corresponded with the level of resources available to different types of organizations, such as paid staff. For example, strictly voluntary organizations had a more limited range of methods to communicate with their clients. In fact, only word of mouth was used by half of these organizations. On the other hand, mixed voluntary and paid organizations, as well as strictly paid organizations, also relied on e-mail, posting notices, printing brochures, and using media stories and advertisements to communicate with clients. Websites were more likely to be used by strictly paid organizations and non-voluntary organizations.

Table 8.3 How does your organization communicate with clients? – by organization type.

	Strict Vol.	Mix Vol. & Paid	Strict Paid Vol.	Non Vol.	Total
Newsletter	0.0	42.9	14.3	12.5	12.5
Website	11.1	42.9	57.1	62.5	35.0
E-mail	11.1	57.1	57.1	37.5	32.5
Word of mouth	50.0	85.7	71.4	50.0	60.0
Personal contact	44.4	85.7	85.7	50.0	60.0
Posting notices	27.8	71.4	57.1	37.5	42.5
Brochures	27.8	71.4	57.1	50.0	45.0
Reports	11.1	14.3	14.3	12.5	12.5
Stories in media	33.3	85.7	71.4	37.5	50.0
Advertise in media	27.8	85.7	71.4	25.0	45.0
Telephone	0.0	42.9	42.9	0.0	15.0
	n=18	n=7	n=7	n=8	n=40

Source: Innovative Services and Voluntary Survey 2003.

Comparisons were also made between access to various types of funding and the use of communication tools with clients. In particular, groups with corporate and federal grants, as well as funding from federal and provincial programs, were more likely to have developed newsletters and websites to communicate with clients. Furthermore, groups with corporate and government grants, as well as groups that received government program funding, were more likely to use e-mail, brochures, and media advertisements to communicate with clients.

Communication with Members

To communicate with members, most participants noted that they use word of mouth, personal contact, posting notices, and stories in the media. While personal forms of communication were well used in both metro-adjacent and non-adjacent sites, there were considerable differences in the usage of other forms of communication with members (Table 8.4). In fact, with the exception of reports and the telephone, these communication tools were well used by at least half of the organizations in metro-adjacent sites. On the other hand, outside of personal forms of communication, including word of mouth and personal contact, other communication tools were not widely used by organizations in non-adjacent sites.

Table 8.4 How does your organization communicate with members? – by adjacency.

Response	Adjacent	Non-Adjacent	Total
Newsletter	50.0	30.0	40.0
Website	50.0	15.0	32.5
E-mail	70.0	25.0	47.5
Word of mouth	80.0	65.0	72.5
Personal contact	95.0	60.0	77.5
Posting notices	65.0	35.0	50.0
Brochures	70.0	25.0	47.5
Reports	35.0	15.0	25.0
Stories in media	75.0	25.0	50.0
Advertise in media	60.0	30.0	45.0
Telephone	45.0	45.0	45.0
	n=20	n=20	n=40

Source: Innovative Services and Voluntary Survey 2003.

There were many differences with the communication methods used to connect with members between groups in leading and lagging sites (Table 8.5). Again, personal forms of communication, such as word of mouth and personal contact, were well utilized in both leading and lagging sites. However, groups in lagging sites were more likely to use a range of other tools. Other prominent methods for groups in lagging sites included newsletters, e-mail, posting notices, brochures, and stories and advertisements in the media.

Table 8.5 How does your organization communicate with members? – by leading/lagging

Response	Leading	Lagging	Total
Newsletter	15.0	65.0	40.0
Website	30.0	35.0	32.5
E-mail	30.0	65.0	47.5
Word of mouth	60.0	85.0	72.5
Personal contact	60.0	95.0	77.5
Posting notices	40.0	60.0	50.0
Brochures	35.0	60.0	47.5
Reports	15.0	35.0	25.0
Stories in media	30.0	70.0	50.0
Advertise in media	25.0	65.0	45.0
Telephone	20.0	70.0	45.0
	n=20	n=20	n=40

Source: Innovative Services and Voluntary Survey 2003.

Finally, there were considerable differences amongst the communication tools used by various types of voluntary organizations to communicate with members (Table 8.6). Overall, a greater proportion of mixed voluntary and paid organizations used a wide range of communication tools with members. In fact, with the exception of websites and reports, all of these tools were drawn upon by at least half of these organizations. For strictly voluntary organizations, prominent methods used to connect with members included newsletters, word of mouth, personal contact, stories and advertisements in the media, and the telephone. Outside of personal communication, websites, e-mail, posting notices, and brochures were well used by strictly paid organizations. None of these tools were used by at least half of non-voluntary organizations. It is important to note, however, that some of these non-voluntary organizations are innovative businesses with very few employees, which may not require the use of many communication tools.

Table 8.6 How does your organization communicate with members? – by organization type.

	Strict Vol.	Mix Vol. & Paid	Strict Paid Vol.	Non Vol.	Total
Newsletter	50.0	57.1	0.0	37.5	40.0
Website	16.7	42.9	57.1	37.5	32.5
E-mail	44.4	57.1	71.4	25.0	47.5
Word of mouth	88.9	71.4	85.7	25.0	72.5
Personal contact	83.3	100.0	85.7	37.5	77.5
Posting notices	44.4	57.1	71.4	37.5	50.0
Brochures	33.3	71.4	71.4	37.5	47.5
Reports	22.2	42.9	14.3	25.0	25.0
Stories in media	55.6	57.1	42.9	37.5	50.0
Advertise in media	50.0	71.4	42.9	12.5	45.0
Telephone	61.1	57.1	42.9	0.0	45.0
	n=18	n=7	n=7	n=8	n=40

Source: Innovative Services and Voluntary Survey 2003.

Again, comparisons were made between the types of funding organizations had and the communication methods they used to communicate with members. Innovative services and voluntary organizations with corporate and government grants, as well as those which had funding from government programs, were more likely to use e-mail, brochures, and media advertisements to communicate with members. Corporate grants and funding from federal and municipal programs appeared to be an advantage for organizations using newsletters to communicate with members. Organizations with corporate and federal grants, or program funding from various levels of government, were more likely to have developed a website that allows them to communicate with members. Furthermore, reports were more likely to be used to communicate with members by organizations with corporate, federal, and municipal grants, as well as federal and provincial program funding. Groups that did not have corporate or government funding were more likely to rely on personal forms of communication, such as word of mouth or personal contact.

Communication with Funders

Overall, these organizations do not use a wide range of methods to communicate with funders. The primary methods used included word of mouth and personal contact. When metro-adjacent and non-adjacent sites were compared, a greater proportion of organizations in non-adjacent sites used limited methods to communicate with funders (Table 8.7). Some of these organizations in non-adjacent sites are non-voluntary and do not communicate with funders. On the other hand, these non-adjacent sites also have a greater proportion of strictly voluntary organizations which have a more limited range of funding. Findings indicated that at least half of the organizations in metro-adjacent sites used a range of communication methods, including e-mail, word of mouth, personal contact, posting notices, brochures, and media stories.

Table 8.7 How does your organization communicate with funders? – by adjacency.

Response	Adjacent	Non-Adjacent	Total
Newsletter	25.0	0.0	12.5
Website	45.0	0.0	22.5
E-mail	60.0	0.0	30.0
Word of mouth	70.0	10.0	40.0
Personal contact	70.0	10.0	40.0
Posting notices	50.0	5.0	27.5
Brochures	55.0	5.0	30.0
Reports	35.0	0.0	17.5
Stories in media	55.0	10.0	32.5
Advertise in media	45.0	5.0	25.0
Telephone	20.0	0.0	10.0
	n=20	n=20	n=40

Source: Innovative Services and Voluntary Survey 2003.

When leading and lagging sites were compared, a greater proportion of groups in lagging sites used many of these communication tools to connect with funders (Table 8.8) Even within this context, however, only personal forms of communication, including word of mouth and personal contact, were used by at least half of the groups in lagging sites.

Table 8.8 How does your organization communicate with funders? – by leading/lagging.

Response	Leading	Lagging	Total
Newsletter	0.0	25.0	12.5
Website	20.0	25.0	22.5
E-mail	30.0	30.0	30.0
Word of mouth	30.0	50.0	40.0
Personal contact	30.0	50.0	40.0
Posting notices	15.0	40.0	27.5
Brochures	25.0	35.0	30.0
Reports	15.0	20.0	17.5
Stories in media	20.0	45.0	32.5
Advertise in media	15.0	35.0	25.0
Telephone	10.0	10.0	10.0
	n=20	n=20	n=40

Source: Innovative Services and Voluntary Survey 2003.

Overall, the use of communication tools to connect with funders corresponded with organizations that received private and public funding from various sources. Overall, a greater proportion of mixed voluntary and paid organizations, as well as strictly paid organizations, utilized a range of these communication tools to connect with funders (Table 8.9). Very few non-voluntary organizations used communication tools to be in contact with funders. However, as noted earlier, some of these non-voluntary groups were innovative businesses and were not pursuing funding. Furthermore, while few strictly voluntary groups used various tools to speak with funders, this may not be surprising given that fewer of these organizations received funding.

Table 8.9 How does your organization communicate with funders? – by organization type.

	Strict Vol.	Mix Vol. & Paid	Strict Paid Vol.	Non Vol.	Total
Newsletter	5.6	42.9	0.0	12.5	12.5
Website	5.6	42.9	42.9	25.0	22.5
E-mail	16.7	57.1	57.1	12.5	30.0
Word of mouth	33.3	71.4	57.1	12.5	40.0
Personal contact	33.3	71.4	57.1	12.5	40.0
Posting notices	22.2	42.9	42.9	12.5	27.5
Brochures	16.7	57.1	57.1	12.5	30.0
Reports	5.6	42.9	28.6	12.5	17.5
Stories in media	27.8	42.9	42.9	25.0	32.5
Advertise in media	16.7	2.9	57.1	0.0	25.0
Telephone	0.0	28.6	28.6	0.0	10.0
	n=18	n=7	n=7	n=8	n=40

Source: Innovative Services and Voluntary Survey 2003.

There were strong relationships between access to corporate and government funding and the use of communication tools to communicate with funders. A greater proportion of innovative services and voluntary organizations that received corporate and government grants, as well as funding from any level of government, used websites, e-mail, brochures, and reports to connect with funders. Newsletters were also more likely to be used by organizations with corporate grants, federal grants, and government programs. Furthermore, groups with corporate and government grants were more likely to use media advertisements to communicate organizational activities with funders.

The Internet

The Internet is changing the patterns of communication and social interaction. However, access to the Internet is not uniform across populations (Te'eni and Young 2003). At times, the Internet can present an overload of information. On the other hand, the Internet provides innovative service providers and voluntary groups with an opportunity to offer more information on their services, including the effects of their services, to both clients and funders.

Given that the Internet will be an important tool to use as small places become increasingly affected by globalization, respondents were asked if the Internet improved their access to information and their relations with people both inside and outside their community. Overall, the Internet was perceived to be more important for improving access to information in general, as well as access to government information. In fact, those who viewed the Internet to be important were also more likely to use a wider range of sources, such as universities, colleges, or federal and provincial government departments, to obtain advice or collect information. Furthermore, while the Internet was perceived to be important to improving relations with groups outside of town, it was somewhat less important in facilitating relationships in town.

There were considerable variations amongst the study sites (Table 8.10) For example; a greater proportion of respondents in Mackenzie perceived the Internet to be important to improving access to both general information and government information. Mackenzie respondents were also more likely to perceive the Internet to be important in improving relations with people within their community. On the other hand, groups in Springhill were most likely to perceive the Internet to be important in improving relationships outside of their community. Respondents in Wood River were less likely to perceive the Internet to be important for accessing information or improving relations. This may explain why few organizations in Wood River used the Internet to communicate with clients, members, or funders.

Table 8.10 has the Internet been important to improve access to the following? – by community.

Response	Mackenzie		Wood River		Tweed		Springhill		Total	
	%	n=	%	n=	%	n=	%	n=	%	n=
Information (general)	1.80	10	3.25	4	1.80	10	2.20	5	2.07	29
Government information	1.50	8	4.33	3	2.25	8	2.00	4	2.22	23
People relations in town	2.50	6	5.00	3	3.11	9	3.25	4	3.23	22
Relations outside town	2.50	8	3.25	4	2.40	10	2.00	4	2.50	26

Source: Innovative Services and Voluntary Survey 2003.
Rank: 1=Very Important; 2=More Important; 3=Important; 4=Less Important; 5=Not Important

When metro-adjacent and non-adjacent characteristics were compared, findings showed that organizations in metro-adjacent sites were more likely to view the Internet to be important to improve access to information and relations inside and outside of town (Table 8.11). These organizations were also more likely to use websites and e-mail to communicate with clients, members, and funders.

Table 8.11: Has the Internet been important to improve access to the following? – by adjacency.

Response	Adjacent		Non-Adjacent		Total	
	%	n=	%	n=	%	n=
Information (general)	1.80	20	2.67	9	2.07	29
Government information	1.88	16	3.00	7	2.22	23
People relations in town	2.87	15	4.00	7	3.23	22
Relations outside town	2.44	18	2.63	8	2.50	26

Source: Innovative Services and Voluntary Survey 2003.
Rank: 1=Very Important; 2=More Important; 3=Important; 4=Less Important; 5=Not Important

In comparing leading and lagging sites, results indicated that a greater proportion of groups in lagging sites viewed the Internet to be important in improving access to information and improving relations inside and outside of the community (Table 8.12). In particular, groups in lagging sites felt the Internet had improved their relationships with people and organizations outside of their community.

Table 8.12: Has the Internet been important to improve access to the following? – by leading/lagging.

Response	Leading		Lagging		Total	
	%	**n=**	**%**	**n=**	**%**	**n=**
Information (general)	2.21	14	1.93	15	2.07	29
Government information	2.27	11	2.17	12	1.96	23
People relations in town	3.33	9	3.15	13	3.23	22
Relations outside town	2.75	12	2.29	14	3.88	26

Source: Innovative Services and Voluntary Survey 2003.
Rank: 1=Very Important; 2=More Important; 3=Important; 4=Less Important; 5=Not Important

There were considerable variations of feelings about the Internet amongst different types of organizations (Table 8.13). Feelings about the Internet appeared to correspond with the level of sophistication of the organization, such as the level of paid staff. As such, strictly paid organizations and non-voluntary organizations were more likely to view the Internet to be important to improve access to general and government information. In fact, strictly paid organizations felt that the Internet was very important in helping to improve relations inside of the community. On the other hand, mixed voluntary and paid organizations felt the Internet was important in facilitating relations with outside groups. These groups were more likely to use websites and e-mail to communicate with clients, members, and funders when compared with strictly voluntary organizations.

Table 8.13: Has the Internet been important to improve access to the following? – by organization type.

	Strict Vol.		Mix Vol. & Paid		Strict Paid Vol.		Non Vol.		Total	
	%	**n=**	**%**	**n=**	**%**	**n=**	**%**	**n=**	**%**	**n=**
Information (general)	2.36	11	2.17	6	1.83	6	1.67	6	2.07	29
Government information	2.75	8	2.40	5	1.83	6	1.50	4	2.22	23
People relations in town	3.63	8	2.75	4	1.33	6	3.25	4	3.23	22
Relations outside town	2.89	9	1.80	5	2.50	6	2.50	6	2.50	26

Source: Innovative Services and Voluntary Survey 2003.
Rank: 1=Very Important; 2=More Important; 3=Important; 4=Less Important; 5=Not Important

Adopting New Technologies

Respondents were also asked about the importance of adopting new technologies for a range of activities that contribute to capacity building. Overall, respondents felt that adopting new technologies was most important to use new equipment and to meet the needs of clients. Adopting new technology was least important for recruiting new staff and volunteers (Table 8.14).

There were some differences between the participating sites. Adopting technologies for a range of activities was deemed to be most important in Mackenzie and Springhill and least important in Wood River. In fact, all of the Wood River participants felt that new technologies were not applicable to recruiting new staff and volunteers in their organizations. New technologies were only felt to be somewhat important for Wood River organizations to meet the needs of clients. In Springhill, adopting new technologies was particularly important to develop services, meet client needs, develop expertise, and address training needs. For organizations in Mackenzie, new technology was predominantly useful to develop services, to use new technology, to meet client needs, and to train people. In Tweed, developing expertise and meeting client needs were important uses of new technology.

Table 8.14: Importance on Adopting New Technologies? – by community.

Response	Mackenzie		Wood River		Tweed		Springhill		Total	
	%	n=	%	n=	%	n=	%	n=	%	n=
Develop new products and services	1.67	6	2.00	3	2.60	10	1.50	4	2.09	23
Use new equipment	1.25	8	1.50	4	2.63	8	2.00	4	1.88	24
Meet needs of clients	1.67	9	1.83	6	2.50	10	1.67	6	1.97	31
Recruit staff / volunteers	3.00	6	n/a	0	3.30	10	2.67	6	3.05	22
Develop more expertise	2.33	9	2.20	5	2.33	9	1.25	4	2.15	27
Address training needs	1.86	7	2.33	3	2.80	10	1.50	2	2.32	22

Source: Innovative Services and Voluntary Survey 2003.
Rank: 1=Very Important; 2=More Important; 3=Important; 4=Less Important; 5=Not Important

When the metro-adjacency of groups were considered, findings showed that adopting new technology was more likely to be very important to organizations in non-adjacent sites (Table 8.15). For non-adjacent communities, new technologies were particularly important to meet client needs, develop services, use new equipment, and develop more expertise. More prominent uses for new technology in metro-adjacent sites include using new equipment, meeting client needs, and developing new products and services.

Table 8.15: Importance on Adopting New Technologies? – by adjacency.

Response	Adjacent		Non-Adjacent		Total	
	%	n=	%	n=	%	n=
To develop new products and services	2.25	16	1.71	7	2.09	23
To use new equipment	1.94	16	1.75	8	1.88	24
To meet needs of clients	2.11	19	1.58	12	1.97	31
To recruit new staff / volunteers	3.19	16	2.67	6	3.05	22
To develop more expertise	2.33	18	1.78	9	2.15	27
To address training needs	2.41	17	2.00	5	2.32	22

Source: Innovative Services and Voluntary Survey 2003.
Rank: 1=Very Important; 2=More Important; 3=Important; 4=Less Important; 5=Not Important

In exploring differences amongst leading and lagging sites, findings indicated that organizations in leading sites placed more importance in adopting new technologies for a range of activities (Table 8.16).

Table 8.16: Importance on Adopting New Technologies? – by leading/lagging.

Response	Leading		Lagging		Total	
	%	n=	%	n=	%	n=
To develop new products and services	1.78	9	2.29	14	2.09	23
To use new equipment	1.33	12	2.42	12	1.88	24
To meet needs of clients	1.73	15	2.19	16	1.97	31
To recruit new staff / volunteers	3.00	6	3.06	16	3.05	22
To develop more expertise	2.57	14	2.00	13	2.15	27
To address training needs	2.00	10	2.58	12	2.32	22

Source: Innovative Services and Voluntary Survey 2003.
Rank: 1=Very Important; 2=More Important; 3=Important; 4=Less Important; 5=Not Important

Again, the importance placed on adopting new technology appeared to correspond with the type of organization (Table 8.17). Results indicated that strictly voluntary organizations were the least likely to view adopting new technologies to be important for a range of activities. On the other hand, strictly paid groups placed the highest levels of importance in adopting new technologies, particularly for training, developing new products and services, and for meeting client needs. Non-voluntary groups considered new technology to be particularly useful for using new equipment and meeting client needs. Furthermore, new technology was mostly useful for meeting client needs and developing expertise amongst mixed voluntary and paid organizations.

Table 8.17: Importance on Adopting New Technologies? – by organization type.

Response	Strict. Vol.		Mix Vol. & Paid		Strict Paid Vol.		Non Vol.		Total	
	%	n=	%	n=	%	n=	%	n=	%	n=
Develop new products and services	2.57	7	2.00	7	1.50	4	2.00	5	2.09	23
Use new equipment	2.33	6	2.00	7	1.60	5	1.50	6	1.88	24
Meet needs of clients	2.40	10	1.86	7	1.50	6	1.88	8	1.97	31
Recruit staff / volunteers	3.75	8	3.29	7	1.75	4	2.33	3	3.05	22
Develop more expertise	2.25	8	1.67	6	1.83	6	2.71	7	2.15	27
Address training needs	2.67	6	2.33	6	1.25	4	2.67	6	2.32	22

Source: Innovative Services and Voluntary Survey 2003.
Rank: 1=Very Important; 2=More Important; 3=Important; 4=Less Important; 5=Not Important

Summary

Communication is an essential component for building relationships and common values, as well as networks and partnerships. Subsequently, respondents were asked how they communicate with clients, members, and funders. Overall, personal forms of communication were more prominent. These include word of mouth and personal contact. The range of communication tools used appeared to correspond with the level of sophistication or availability of resources to an organization, such as the level of paid staff. As such, strictly voluntary groups used a more limited range of communication methods. Furthermore, a lower proportion of groups in non-adjacent communities and leading communities used communication tools. Funding may be playing an important role in the development and use of communication tools. Groups with corporate and government grants, as well as funding from government programs, were more likely to use a range of communication tools to connect with clients, members, and funders.

Innovative services and voluntary organizations that view the Internet to be an important tool to improve access to information and enhance relations were also more likely to use a broader range of sources of information, such as universities or government departments, to obtain advice or collect information. Some organizations, however, did not view the Internet to be important for improving access to information or improving local or external relations. As Miller-Millesen (2003) notes, when some organizations are not experiencing significant change or stress, they may view the need for external information to be low. Organizations that place high levels of importance on adopting new technologies for a range of needs may indicate that these groups are 'ready' to embrace opportunities for innovation.

9.0   PARTNERSHIPS - BRIDGING SOCIAL CAPITAL

In assisting vulnerable groups in the community, innovative services and voluntary organizations confront problems that require multiple services, coordination, public support, and different strategies (Berman and West 1995). Such responses may be beyond the capacity of individual organizations that are also confronting government cutbacks and challenges by declining human resources. Within this context, networks and partnerships may emerge as important.

Public and private partnerships are becoming increasingly common (Lowry 1995). Through partnerships, an organization may obtain new knowledge or skills, adopt technologies, or different styles of management. Relationships and partnership building is also important to build organizational capacity because they can help organizations to develop leadership, as well as share information, expertise, and resources (Nyland 1995). Important resources for building partnerships may include cash assets, facilities and equipment, donor relations, and expertise and capacity through volunteers, management, and staff (Lesky *et al.* 2001). With this broader knowledge base, rural and small town decision makers will have an opportunity to be better informed about possible options and choices. Partnerships can also help to demonstrate the legitimacy of an organization within and outside of the community. They can also foster the delivery of services that may otherwise not exist. Such partnerships are developed through relationships and maintained through routine social interaction, which are components of social cohesion and social capital. In these respects, partnerships may be a surrogate for community capacity. This section will explore the development of partnerships with organizations, businesses, government, and other institutions both within and outside of the four study sites. Since government policies have been advocating the use of partnerships in order for groups to obtain funding, the research also explored if groups with partnerships were more likely to access government funding. Furthermore, since communication is an important component to building relationships, networks, and subsequently partnerships, this section will describe the use of communication tools employed by organizations that have partnerships.

Local Partnerships

Responses showed that partnerships, both within and outside the community, are an important component of the operations of these organizations. Overall, just under two-thirds of the respondents noted that they have partnerships within their community (Table 9.1). There were, however, strong differences between sites. For example, while 90% of the Tweed respondents had local partnerships with volunteer groups, businesses, institutions, or government, only 30% of Wood River respondents noted that their organization had partnerships within their community.

Table 9.1: Does your organization have local partnerships with volunteer groups, businesses, institutions, government inside the community? % of responses, by community.

Response	Mackenzie	Wood River	Tweed	Springhill	Total
Yes	77.8	30.0	90.0	66.7	65.8
	n=9	n=10	n=10	n=9	n=38

Source: Innovative Services and Voluntary Survey 2003.

Partnerships were particularly well developed in metro-adjacent sites (Table 9.2). Almost 85% of respondents in metro-adjacent sites had formed local partnerships, while just under half of the organizations in non-adjacent sites had formed partnerships with other local groups.

Table 9.2: Does your organization have local partnerships with volunteer groups, businesses, institutions, government inside the community? % of responses, by adjacency.

Response	Adjacent	Non-Adjacent	Total
Yes	84.2	47.4	65.8
	n=19	n=19	n=38

Source: Innovative Services and Voluntary Survey 2003.

When leading and lagging sites were examined, a greater proportion of organizations in lagging sites had formed local partnerships (Table 9.3). In particular, while just over half of the organizations in leading sites had formed local partnerships, nearly 80% of groups in lagging communities had formed partnerships with other groups in their community.

Table 9.3: Does your organization have local partnerships with volunteer groups, businesses, institutions, government, etc? % of responses, by leading/lagging.

Response	Leading	Lagging	Total
Yes	52.6	78.9	65.8
	n=19	n=19	n=38

Source: Innovative Services and Voluntary Survey 2003.

After examining responses by organizational type, findings indicated that mixed voluntary and paid organizations, as well as strictly paid voluntary organizations were most likely to have local partnerships (Table 9.4). Further research could clarify the extent to which board members are

using their local contacts to develop partnerships within the community. Only one-quarter of non-voluntary organizations had formed local partnerships.

Table 9.4: Does your organization have local partnerships with volunteer groups, businesses, institutions, government inside the community? % of responses, by organization type.

	Strict Vol.	Mix Vol. & Paid	Strict Paid Vol.	Non Vol.	Total
Yes	70.6	85.7	83.3	25.0	65.8
	n=17	n=7	n=6	n=8	n=38

Source: Innovative Services and Voluntary Survey 2003.

Non-Local Partnerships

Respondents were also asked to indicate partnerships that their organization has with volunteer groups, businesses, institutions, and government departments outside of the community. Just over two-thirds of the participants noted that they have partnerships outside of the community (Table 9.5). However, there were some strong regional differences. Only 30% of the participants in Wood River noted that their organization had partnerships with groups outside of the community. On the other hand, 90% of organizations in Springhill had formed partnerships with groups outside of the community. This is particularly surprising given that fewer organizations in Springhill have access to government funding and that they use more personal forms of communication tools. Furthermore, groups in Springhill do not draw from a wide range of information sources to identify mandate and service options or to make decisions.

Table 9.5: Does your organization have partnerships with volunteer groups, businesses, institutions, government outside of the community? % of responses, by community.

Response	Mackenzie	Wood River	Tweed	Springhill	Total
Yes	70.0	30.0	80.0	90.0	67.5
	n=10	n=10	n=10	n=10	n=40

Source: Innovative Services and Voluntary Survey 2003.

Partnerships with external organizations were also well developed in sites adjacent to metropolitan areas (Table 9.6). Slightly more organizations in metro-adjacent sites (75.0%) had partnerships outside of the community when compared to non-adjacent sites (60.0%).

Table 9.6: Does your organization have partnerships with volunteer groups, businesses, institutions, government outside of the community? % of responses, by adjacency.

Response	Adjacent	Non-Adjacent	Total
Yes	75.0	60.0	67.5
	n=20	n=20	n=40

Source: Innovative Services and Voluntary Survey 2003.

What is interesting is that a greater proportion of organizations in lagging sites (85.0%) had partnerships with volunteer groups, businesses, institutions, and government outside the community (Table 9.7). Half of the organizations in leading sites had partnerships outside of their community. Groups in lagging sites may be responding to crises and be more open to innovation by exploring new ways to deliver services through partnerships.

Table 9.7: Does your organization have partnerships with volunteer groups, businesses, institutions, government outside of the community? % of responses, by leading/lagging.

Response	Leading	Lagging	Total
Yes	50.0	85.0	67.5
	n=20	n=20	n=40

Source: Innovative Services and Voluntary Survey 2003.

When examining the profiles of these organizations, non-local partnerships were developed by all of the mixed voluntary and paid organizations (Table 9.8). Many of these organizations not only had volunteers and paid staff, but also a board of directors, which may have provided these organizations with sufficient contacts to develop networks. Strictly paid voluntary organizations and non-voluntary organizations, on the other hand, were less likely to have partnerships outside of the community. It is important to note that the strictly paid organizations that had partnerships were also the ones who felt most challenged by limited partnerships and networks.

Table 9.8: Does your organization have partnerships with volunteer groups, businesses, institutions, government outside of the community? % of responses, by organization type.

	Strict Vol.	Mix Vol. & Paid	Strict Paid Vol.	Non Vol.	Total
Yes	66.7	100.0	57.1	50.0	67.5
	n=18	n=7	n=7	n=8	n=40

Source: Innovative Services and Voluntary Survey 2003.

Many organizations have responded to challenges facing their organization by developing a series of local and non-local partnerships. These new working relationships have enabled these groups to be able to deliver new services that otherwise might not be possible. Local partnerships were particularly well developed by metro-adjacent and lagging sites, as well as mixed voluntary and paid organizations. Non-local partnerships, on the other hand, were well developed by groups in Springhill, in addition to metro-adjacent sites, lagging sites, and mixed voluntary and paid organizations.

Partnerships and Funding

With government cutbacks and restructuring throughout the 1980s and 1990s, governments moved towards strategic partnerships with voluntary organizations and service providers. Groups were encouraged to develop partnerships with other non-governmental groups to demonstrate that they are showing initiative and proposing activities that have appeal in the larger community, including business corporations. Therefore, we wanted to explore whether groups with partnerships were more likely to access government funding.

First, the relationship between partnerships and access to private funding was explored. These sources can provide a good foundation when pursuing government funding as they can demonstrate local support and gain legitimacy for their cause. Overall, organizations with partnerships locally or non-locally were more likely to have access to a range of private funding resources (Table 9.9). Prominent sources of private funding for organizations with partnerships included private donations and community fundraising. Furthermore, only groups with partnerships inside or outside of the community accessed corporate funding. Organizations that do not have partnerships are more likely to rely on revenue from services provided.

Table 9.9: Partnerships and Private Funding - 2003

Response	Local Partnerships				Non-Local Partnerships			
	% Yes	n=	% No	n=	% Yes	n=	% No	n=
Private donations	78.3	23	0.0	10	66.7	24	18.2	11
Corporate donations	39.1	23	0.0	10	37.5	24	0.0	11
Funds from members	43.5	23	20.0	10	37.5	24	30.0	10
Membership fees	41.7	24	45.5	11	42.3	26	45.5	11
Revenue from service	33.3	24	63.6	11	38.5	26	45.5	11
Community fundraising	69.6	23	20.0	10	66.7	24	36.4	11

Source: Innovative Services and Voluntary Survey 2003.

Next, the relationship between partnerships and access to government grants at the federal, provincial, and municipal level was explored (Table 9.10). While less than one-quarter of all organizations obtained government grants, findings indicated that organizations with partnerships either outside or within the community were more likely to obtain grants at all three levels. It is also important to note that in almost every circumstance, organizations with local

and non-local partnerships and private funding from corporate donations, community fundraising, or private donations were more likely to receive government grants at all three levels. The exception is that groups with local or non-local partnerships and funding from community fundraising were not more likely to receive provincial grants.

Table 9.10: Partnerships and Government Grants - 2003

Response	Local Partnerships				Non-Local Partnerships			
	% Yes	n=	% No	n=	% Yes	n=	% No	n=
Federal grants	34.8	23	0.0	10	33.3	24	0.0	11
Provincial grants	31.8	22	10.0	10	30.4	23	10.0	10
Municipal grants	22.7	22	0.0	10	21.7	23	0.0	11

Source: Innovative Services and Voluntary Survey 2003.

Findings show a similar relationship between partnerships and access to funding through government programs (Table 9.11). While there were few differences between organizations accessing funding through federal programs, organizations with partnerships participated more often in obtaining government funding through provincial and municipal programs. In general, groups that received funding from federal and provincial programs were more likely to have both partnerships and access to private funding sources. Groups with partnerships and community fundraising, however, did not have an advantage in obtaining funding from provincial programs. Moreover, groups with partnerships and private funding sources did not appear to have an advantage in receiving funding from municipal programs. This may be an indication as to why partnering organizations were more likely to be concerned about limited funding and government cutbacks.

Table 9.11: Partnerships and Government Programs - 2003

Response	Local Partnerships				Non-Local Partnerships			
	% Yes	n=	% No	n=	% Yes	n=	% No	n=
Federal program	13.0	23	0.0	10	8.7	23	8.3	12
Provincial program	39.1	23	20.0	10	41.7	24	9.1	11
Municipal program	40.9	22	0.0	10	34.8	23	9.1	11

Source: Innovative Services and Voluntary Survey 2003.

Partnerships and Networking

An analysis was also done to explore if there was any relationship between the use of communication tools and whether or not organizations belonged to any partnerships. Again,

organizations with partnerships both locally and non-locally were more likely to use communication tools to reach clients (Table 9.12). Of interest, there are some important partnerships developing to provide a foundation for increasing the use of e-mail and the Internet through Community Access Program partnerships in Springhill, Tweed, and Mackenzie.

Table 9.12: Partnerships and Communication with CLIENTS - 2003

Response	Local Partnerships				Non-Local Partnerships			
	% Yes	n=	% No	n=	% Yes	n=	% No	n=
Newsletter	20.0	25	0.0	12	18.5	27	0.0	13
Website	40.0	25	33.3	12	40.7	27	23.1	13
E-mail	40.0	25	25.0	12	37.0	27	23.1	13
Word of mouth	84.0	25	25.0	12	77.8	27	23.1	13
Personal contact	76.0	25	33.3	12	70.4	27	38.5	13
Posting notices	60.0	25	16.7	12	51.9	27	23.1	13
Brochures	56.0	25	33.3	12	55.6	27	23.1	13
Reports	16.0	25	8.3	12	18.5	27	0.0	13
Stories in media	68.0	25	25.0	12	63.0	27	23.1	13
Advertise in media	60.0	25	25.0	12	55.6	27	23.1	13
Telephone	20.0	25	0.0	25	14.8	27	15.4	13

Source: Innovative Services and Voluntary Survey 2003.

When exploring the relationship between partnerships and communications with members, findings showed that partnering organizations were more likely to use a wide range of communication tools (Table 9.13). Also of interest, a greater proportion of partnering organizations used personal forms of communication with members.

Table 9.13: Partnerships and Communication with MEMBERS - 2003

Response	Local Partnerships				Non-Local Partnerships			
	% Yes	n=	% No	n=	% Yes	n=	% No	n=
Newsletter	48.0	25	25.0	12	51.9	27	15.4	13
Website	44.0	25	8.3	12	40.7	27	15.4	13
E-mail	64.0	25	25.0	12	59.3	27	23.1	13
Word of mouth	92.0	25	50.0	12	81.5	27	53.8	13
Personal contact	92.0	25	50.0	12	92.6	27	46.2	13
Posting notices	64.0	25	25.0	12	59.3	27	30.8	13
Brochures	64.0	25	16.7	12	63.0	27	15.4	13
Reports	36.0	25	8.3	12	37.0	27	0.0	13
Stories in media	60.0	25	25.0	12	63.0	27	23.1	13
Advertise in media	56.0	25	25.0	12	63.0	27	7.7	13
Telephone	52.0	25	41.7	12	51.9	27	30.8	13

Source: Innovative Services and Voluntary Survey 2003.

When the relationship between partnerships and communication methods with funders was examined, findings indicated that groups with partnerships were more likely to use a range of communication tools (Table 9.14). This may coincide with reporting requirements that facilitate the need for more communication with various corporations and government agencies.

Table 9.14: Partnerships and Communication with FUNDERS - 2003

Response	**Local Partnerships**				**Non-Local Partnerships**			
	% Yes	**n=**	**% No**	**n=**	**% Yes**	**n=**	**% No**	**n=**
Newsletter	20.0	25	0.0	12	18.5	27	0.0	13
Website	36.0	25	0.0	12	29.6	27	7.7	13
E-mail	48.0	25	0.0	12	37.0	27	15.4	13
Word of mouth	64.0	25	0.0	12	51.9	27	15.4	13
Personal contact	60.0	25	0.0	12	51.9	27	15.4	13
Posting notices	44.0	25	0.0	12	33.3	27	15.4	13
Brochures	48.0	25	0.0	12	40.7	27	7.7	13
Reports	28.0	25	0.0	12	25.9	27	0.0	13
Stories in media	44.0	25	0.0	12	33.3	27	30.8	13
Advertise in media	36.0	25	0.0	12	29.6	27	15.4	13
Telephone	16.0	25	0.0	12	11.1	27	7.7	13

Source: Innovative Services and Voluntary Survey 2003.

Summary

Partnerships are an important component of the daily operations and delivery of services for these organizations. Partnerships help organizations to provide valuable services to vulnerable people as communities confront cutbacks or closures of services. Both local and non-local partnerships were particularly well developed in metro-adjacent and lagging communities. Furthermore, mixed voluntary and paid organizations had developed numerous local and non-local partnerships, while strictly paid organizations had also developed many local partnerships. These networks may explain why partnering organizations are accessing a wider range of corporate and public funding. Finally, the use of a range of communication tools appears to have made an important contribution to the development and maintenance of partnerships. As multiple partnerships develop in the community over time, it may collectively build the capacity of a place through an inventory of expertise and leadership, and enhance a community's ability to cope with the challenges associated with social and economic restructuring.

10.0   CONCLUSION

Rural and small town places across Canada have been experiencing change through social and economic restructuring processes. These processes have placed pressures on service providers, particularly in places that have experienced service cutbacks and closures. These pressures can have profound impacts on vulnerable sectors of the population and may even lead to out-migration. If residents wish to retain these services, they will have to find new ways to have them delivered. Within this context, the innovative services and voluntary organizations included in this study have made important contributions to their community.

This study explored the capacity and challenges facing innovative services and voluntary organizations in four sites across Canada. These sites include Mackenzie, B.C., Wood River, Saskatchewan, Tweed, Ontario, and Springhill, Nova Scotia. In particular, the organizational structure, control over resources, contributions to social well-being, and challenges were explored. Other areas of capacity examined included sources of information used in the operations of an organization, as well as a range of communication tools for connecting with information, clients, funders, and the like. Combined with sufficient human and financial resources, these attributes provide a foundation for building and maintaining partnerships.

Many organizations had developed a stable structural framework for organizational operations through the provision of staff, office space, and a board of directors. These features enhance the visibility of innovative services and voluntary organizations in these communities. Of interest, some organizations are developing capacity by sharing office space, developing office space at home, or by accessing office support provided by other organizations.

The operations of organizations will be influenced by the level of control they exert over budgets and policy development. With the exception of groups that received funding from corporate, provincial, and municipal programs, most organizations retained local control over their budgets. These differences may be attributed to donor and government program funding guidelines. Moreover, groups with government and corporate grants were more likely to retain local control over the distribution of funds if they had a board of directors. This reflects government preferences for funded organizations to have a board of directors in order to ensure that a management structure is in place to monitor organizational activities and enhance the accountability of an organization.

However, innovative service providers and voluntary organizations are facing a number of challenges to meet increasing demands for services in these communities. While these organizations face many challenges, government cutbacks and limited funding have been more prominent problems faced, particularly by voluntary organizations who do not receive government funding. Lack of members and psychological and volunteer burnout are other important issues facing these organizations. Many of these organizations are dependent upon voluntary leadership and volunteer membership for boards of directors. Such a high dependency generates a vulnerability to burnout during more challenging times of transition, and may impact the long term stability of an organization. At the same time, some organizations are vulnerable

to a loss of members. This places considerable pressure on members in these groups to take on additional duties. If these challenges persist over time, they may also lead to service cutbacks or closure of programs, services, and organizations. If these organizations are going to maintain these services, they will need to find new innovative ways to have them delivered.

To accomplish their goals, partnerships are becoming increasingly important for delivering services in rural and small town places. Through partnerships, organizations are strengthening the legitimacy and support for their goals. This can provide an important foundation when these organizations seek funding from private and public sources. Communication tools have also played a role in the development and maintenance of partnerships and the provision of their services. This trend has been particularly strong in communities adjacent to metropolitan areas. Through partnerships and shared knowledge, service providers and decision makers will learn about more options for delivering services that may not otherwise exist. These services are particularly important to vulnerable groups during restructuring periods. Finally, the development of numerous partnerships within a place may collectively enhance the capacity of a place to cope with the challenges associated with social and economic restructuring.

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Interview Consent Form

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

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Potential Risks And Benefits - This project has been assessed by the UNBC Research Ethic Board to be of no risk to participants. We hope that by participating you will have a chance to provide input into how your quality of life is affected by services in your town, and to voice some of your own personal needs for the community.

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

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

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

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

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Innovative and Voluntary Institutions in Rural and Small Town Places:

A Survey for the Initiative on the New Economy Project

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

2003

Innovative and Voluntary Institutions in Rural and Small Town Places

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

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

This survey has twelve sections: background information on the organization, structure, demographics, clients, logistical operations, changes to service delivery by voluntary organizations, networks and relationships, community action, funding, general group profile, technology and personal information on the interviewee. Please answer sections that you feel are relevant to your organization, and **thank you for your time**.

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

Section A :   Background Information On The Organization.

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

A1. Name of organization:_____

A2. When was your organization established? (*Note to interviewer: We are interested in the local volunteer and innovative services/organizations only, if they are an affiliate or chapter of a larger provincial or national organization, only record the year of the establishment of the local chapter*.)
Year_____.

A3. How would you describe the focus of your organization? (*Please circle all that apply*)
1.   Environment & Wildlife
2.   Multi-domain
3.   Arts & Culture
4.   Health
5.   Law & Justice
6.   Social Services
7.   Foreign & International Organizations
8.   Sports & Recreation
9.   Society & Public Benefit
10.   Religious Organization
11.   Education & Youth Development
12.   Employment & Economic Interests
13.   Other (*Please specify*):_____

A4. Does your organization have a mission statement?
1.   Yes
2.   No

A5. If your organization has a mission statement, can you please state it?

A6a. Is there a specific reason your organization was established in this community?
1.   Yes
2.   No

A6b. If yes, please explain.

Section B: Structure

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

B1. Does your organization have a president/chairperson/owner?
1.	Yes
2.	No
3.	Don't know

B2a. Is the leader elected?
1.	Yes *(please go to question B2c)*
2.	No *(please go to question B2b)*

B2b. If no, can you please explain?

B2c. If yes, by whom are they elected?

B2d. If yes, is this leadership position a voluntary or paid position?
1.	Voluntary
2.	Paid
3.	Other *(Please specify)*:_____

B3a. Does your organization have a board of directors?
1.	Yes
2.	No

B3b. If yes, are they elected or appointed?
1.	Elected
2.	Appointed
3.	Mix of elected and appointed

B3c. If yes, are they voluntary or paid positions?
1.	Voluntary
2.	Paid
3.	Other *(Please specify)*:_____

B4. How many members *(defined as those assisting in some way in making decisions, delivering a service, etc)* make up your organization?
Total _____

B5. Of the total number of members of your organization, how many would you consider to be "core" or "active"? (*Note to interviewer: allow the respondent to define for themselves what they consider to be a core or active person*)
Total number of core/active people_____

B6. Of the decisions that are made by your organization, how many people would you say hold the main decision making power and responsibilities?
1.   1-2 people
2.   3-5 people
3.   6-10 people
4.   More than 10 people
5.   Evenly divided amongst all members

Section C: Demographics Of Your Organization

In this section of the survey we would like to ask about the demographics of your organization, so that we can get a better understanding of who you are working with.

C1. If your organization has lost members/employees, please circle all of the reasons why you think that loss happened.
1.   Chose to retire due to age
2.   Chose to retire because of lengthy service to our organization
3.   Lost interest
4.   Moved away
5.   No longer agree with mission/goals
6.   Lack of time or ability to participate
7.   Personality conflicts
8.   Other (*Please specify*): _____

C2. Is it easy to find new board members?

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

C3. How easy is it to find new general members/employees ?

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

C4. What specific steps would you take to recruit new board members?

C5. How do you recruit new members/employees?

Section D: Clients

In this section we would like to ask you about the people that your organization serves.

D1a. Does your organization offer/deliver services to people?
1.   Yes
2.   No (*If no, go to D2*)

D1b. If yes, please describe the people who benefit from the service?

D1c. Has the composition of the people your organization serves changed over the last 5 years?
1.   Yes
2.   No

D1d. If yes, please explain how the people have changed.

D2. What is the geographic "reach" of your service(s)?
1.   This community only (*use site boundaries*)
2.   This community and the immediate surrounding communities(*list*):_____
3.   Widely beyond this community (*list*):_____
4.   Other (*Please specify*):_____

D3. Please indicate on the scale of one to five the level of contribution that your organization makes to the social well-being of your community.

No contribution		**Average contribution**		**Major contribution**
1	2	3	4	5

D4. Are there specific indicators or measures you can provide about the impact of your programs? *(E.g. increased school attendance because of a school breakfast program; xx people found employment because they completed a high school equivalency program, etc.)*

D5. What would the impact be in your community if your organization ceased to exist?

D6. Who would fill the gap?

D7a. What voluntary organizations or innovative services do you think are needed in this community that currently do not exist? (*Create a list, prompt with "why?" and "what would they do?"*)

Need   Why   What would they do

D7b. What resources would be needed to start the service/organization?

D8. How does your organization communicate with the people it services? With members and with funders? Place a check in all the columns that apply. (*Note to interviewer: ask the interviewee if they have a newsletter, if they do please obtain copies and ask to whom is it circulated; ask if they have a website and to whom is it intended to serve; etc. Search and print off website information from research office.*)

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

Section E : Logistical Operating Questions

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

E1a. Does your organization have office space?
1.   Yes, our own
2.   Yes, shared with other organizations or businesses
3.   Yes, we use home office space (i.e. a member's kitchen, den or home office space that is primarily used for other matters)
4.   Yes, we have specific home office space (dedicated primarily to the organization)
5.   No, but a business/organization provides us with some office support
6.   No
7.   Other (*Please specify*):_____

E1b. If yes, is it staffed?

Paid:
1.   Full-time paid staff (20 hours per week or more). Number of staff_____
2.   Part-time paid staff (19 hours per week or less). Number of staff_____

Volunteer:

3.   Full-time volunteer staff (20 hours per week or more). Number of volunteer staff_____
4.   Part-time volunteer staff (19 hours per week or less). Number of volunteer staff_____
5.   Occasional volunteer staff (a few hours per week). Number of volunteer staff _____

E2. Describe the current challenges facing your organization?
(*Note to interviewer: Ask this question first without listing the response categories first. Check any of the answers they give in the 'open' column. Then ask them if they face any of the remaining possible challenges they did not identify on their own. Record those in the 'probed' column.*)

Challenge	Open Response	Probed Response	Comments
No funding			
Government funding cut backs			
Lack of members			
Little participation by members			
Declining enrollments			
Building deterioration			
Lack of meeting space			
Difficulty getting staff			
Lack of local support			
Out migration			
First objectives were too ambitious			
Poor management			
Lack of new leadership			
Lack of partners or outside networks (isolation)			
They need to revisit objectives			
Psychological burnout			
Communication problems			
Volunteer burnout			
Other (please specify)			

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

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

    _____

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

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

    _____

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

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

    _____

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

> In this section we are interested in the innovative services that are available from your organization.

F1. Please provide a summary of the **current** services and programs offered.

F2. Can you identify how these services have **changed over** time?

F3. What changes do you expect to make to your services over the next five years?
(Examples might be: closure, merger, expansion of programs, etc.)

F4a. Have any services closed or merged with another over the last 20 years? *(i.e. school, medical services, government services, or voluntary organizations)*.

1.   Yes (*Please specify*): _____ _____

2.   No (*If no, please skip to question G*1a)

F4b. Please list services that closed or merged in the last 20 years.

F5. What were the circumstances surrounding its closure?

F6. What were/are the impacts on the community?

F7. Did your or any other local organization move to fill the gap of this closed service?

Section G : Networks and Relationships

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

G1a. Does your organization have partnerships with volunteer groups, businesses, institutions, government **outside of the community**?

1. Yes
2. No (please go to G2a)

G1b. If yes, please list the names and location of those partnerships.

G2a. Does your organization have partnerships with **local** volunteer groups, businesses, institutions, government etc.?

1. Yes
2. No

G2b. If yes, please list the names of those partnerships.

G3a. Describe your relationship with other **local** volunteer groups, businesses, and institutions. Do you work well together to provide services, share space, etc.? (*Please give examples*)

G3b. Is the relationship between your organization and other local groups a positive (*work together well*) or negative (*frustrating to work together)* relationship? Why?(*Please give examples)*

G3c. Have the relationships changed over time? (*Please explain*).

G4a. Describe your relationship with the municipal government. Do you receive funding, information, resources, or moral support? (*Please explain*)

G4b. Do you make presentations to council to seek their support for activities? (*Please explain*)

G4c. Is the relationship with council positive (*work together well)* or negative (*frustrating to work together*)? Why? (*Please give examples)*

G4d. Have the relationships changed over time? *(Please explain*).

G5.What interesting things have you done together with other groups/organizations in order to deliver programs or services? (*Examples might be: the building is open to the public after hours, special programs, co-op work placement for students in local businesses, local government speaks in the classroom, etc.*) Please name the groups and describe the innovations.

1. With **local businesses**.

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

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

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

5. With **local government**.

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

7. With other **community members**.

G6. Does your organization use any of the following sources of information to help in its local mandate/services? (*Check as many as apply*).

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

Section H: Community Action

In this section we are interested in how the community acts.

H1. How would you evaluate the citizens of this community in the following areas? (*Please circle*)

	Very Effective	Effective	Neutral	Uneffective	Very Ineffective	Not Sure
Ability to mobilize resources (*time, money, volunteer)*	1	2	3	4	5	6
Willingness to work together, (*cooperation*)	1	2	3	4	5	6
Ability to obtain government support	1	2	3	4	5	6

H2. How would you evaluate other local community service organizations in the following areas? (*Please circle*)

	Very Effective	Effective	Neutral	Uneffective	Very Ineffective	Not Sure
Ability to mobilize resources (*time, money, volunteer*) on behalf of the community	1	2	3	4	5	6
Willingness to work together, (*cooperation*)	1	2	3	4	5	6
Ability to obtain government support	1	2	3	4	5	6

H3. What in your opinion, are the most important formal and informal organizations, groups, committees, or boards which "define" this community and contribute the most to community life.

H4. What in your opinion, are the words that best describe how things get done in this community?   (*Examples might be "high degree of consultation and discussion in the community", "we rely on one or two people to do everything", "we do things quickly, we do things slowly", "we rely on our elected officials", "we do things for ourselves", etc.*)

H5. Looking back at the last 20 years, what have been the long standing strengths of this community? Please explain. *(For example, "we always pull together in times of crisis", "good people always run for council", "business people support local clubs", etc.)*

H6. Looking back at the last 20 years, what have been the long standing weaknesses of this community? *Please explain. (For example, we never got the civic centre built, too many people have always shopped out of town, high school kids go to school in another community and don't have any connection with this community.)*

Section I: Funding

In this section, we would like to know where the funding for your organization comes from. (This section is specifically for volunteer services.)

I1. From where does your group receive its current funding? Describe the nature of the funding/programs. *(Note to interviewer: ask this question without the response categories first. Check any of the answers they give in the 'open' column. Then ask if they use any of the remaining possible funding sources they did not identify on their own. Record those in the 'probed' column).*

Source	Open Response	Probed Response	Comment/Description
Private donations			
Corporate donations			
Government grants - Federal			
Government grants -Provincial			
Government grants - Municipal			
Government program - Federal			
Government program - Provincial			
Government program - Municipal			
Personal funds from members			
Membership fees			
Revenue from service provided			
Fundraising in the community			
Other (Please specify)			

Section J : General Organization Profile

> In this section of the survey we are interested in some background information on your organization.

J1a. Is your organization primarily:
1.   Voluntary
2.   Non-profit
3.   Cooperative (*Co-op*)
4.   Business
5.   Government

J1b. If a business, what is the ownership structure of your business?

1.   I am the sole owner. If yes what year did you become owner?_____
2.   I own the business in partnership with other(s) in my family
3.   I own the business in partnership with other(s)
4.   Other (*please specify*):_____

J1c. If your organization is a Co-op, why did your Co-op open?

J1d. What is the total membership of this Co-op? _____

J1e. Can anyone in the community join? (*Please explain*)

J2. When did your organization become active in the local community? _____year

J3. In what ways does the population size of this community, and its relative location to other communities, serve as an advantage to your organization?

J4. In what ways does the population size of this community, and its relative location to other communities, serve as a disadvantage?

J5. In your opinion, what types of support or resources are missing in your community to support your organizations activities?

Section K: Technology

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

K1.What importance do you place on adopting new technologies for each of the following points? (*Please circle the appropriate number*)

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

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

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

Section L: Personal Information On The Interviewee

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

L1. In which of the following categories is your age:
1.   Under 15 years
2.   16-25 years
3.   26-44 years
4.   45-64 years
5.   65 years or more

L2.What is your current occupation?

L3. Where is your place of work?

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

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

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

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

1.   Yes
2.   No

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

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