

# Context and Application of Community Well-Being

**NWMO SR-2009-04**

**April 2009**

**Marvin Stemeroff, Don Richardson & Tomasz Wlodarczyk**

AECOM Canada Ltd.

**nwmo**

NUCLEAR WASTE  
MANAGEMENT  
ORGANIZATION

SOCIÉTÉ DE GESTION  
DES DÉCHETS  
NUCLÉAIRES



**Nuclear Waste Management Organization**  
22 St. Clair Avenue East, 6<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Toronto, Ontario  
M4T 2S3  
Canada

Tel: 416-934-9814  
Web: [www.nwmo.ca](http://www.nwmo.ca)

## **Nuclear Waste Management Organization**

The Nuclear Waste Management Organization (NWMO) was established in 2002 by Ontario Power Generation Inc., Hydro- Québec and New Brunswick Power Corporation in accordance with the *Nuclear Fuel Waste Act (NFWA)* to assume responsibility for the long-term management of Canada's used nuclear fuel.

NWMO's first mandate was to study options for the long-term management of used nuclear fuel. On June 14, 2007, the Government of Canada selected the NWMO's recommendation for Adaptive Phased Management (APM). The NWMO now has the mandate to implement the Government's decision.

Technically, Adaptive Phased Management (APM) has as its end-point the isolation and containment of used nuclear fuel in a deep repository constructed in a suitable rock formation. Collaboration, continuous learning and adaptability will underpin our implementation of the plan which will unfold over many decades, subject to extensive oversight and regulatory approvals.

## **NWMO Social Research**

The objective of the social research program is to assist the NWMO, and interested citizens and organizations, in exploring and understanding the social issues and concerns associated with the implementation of Adaptive Phased Management. The program is also intended to support the adoption of appropriate processes and techniques to engage potentially affected citizens in decision-making.

The social research program is intended to be a support to NWMO's ongoing dialogue and collaboration activities, including work to engage potentially affected citizens in near term visioning of the implementation process going forward, long term visioning and the development of decision-making processes to be used into the future. The program includes work to learn from the experience of others through examination of case studies and conversation with those involved in similar processes both in Canada and abroad. NWMO's social research is expected to engage a wide variety of specialists and explore a variety of perspectives on key issues of concern. The nature and conduct of this work is expected to change over time, as best practices evolve and as interested citizens and organizations identify the issues of most interest and concern throughout the implementation of Adaptive Phased Management.

---

### Disclaimer:

This report does not necessarily reflect the views or position of the Nuclear Waste Management Organization, its directors, officers, employees and agents (the "NWMO") and unless otherwise specifically stated, is made available to the public by the NWMO for information only. The contents of this report reflect the views of the author(s) who are solely responsible for the text and its conclusions as well as the accuracy of any data used in its creation. The NWMO does not make any warranty, express or implied, or assume any legal liability or responsibility for the accuracy, completeness, or usefulness of any information disclosed, or represent that the use of any information would not infringe privately owned rights. Any reference to a specific commercial product, process or service by trade name, trademark, manufacturer, or otherwise, does not constitute or imply its endorsement, recommendation, or preference by NWMO.

---



## ***Context and Application of Community Well-Being***

Prepared by: Marvin Stermeroff, Don Richardson, and Tomasz Wlodarczyk, AECOM Canada

The NWMO has proposed Adaptive Phased Management (APM) as its end-point solution for the isolation and containment of used nuclear fuel within a deep geological repository in a suitable rock formation at a location that has yet to be determined. The implementation of APM has, among other things, made a commitment to ensure the “well-being” of all communities with a shared interest. The NWMO is developing a process by which communities can express an interest in the project and think through the extent to which this project might contribute to their well-being. This raises some questions about the definition of Community Well-Being (CWB) and its application for achieving this goal.

The purpose of this paper is to provide background regarding community well-being. The first section defines community well-being: what is it; where did it come from; and what is the benefit others see from using it? The second section discusses its use and application and what can be learned from its application. The third section suggests possible characteristics of a framework for measuring community well-being for the NWMO as a means to help build the capacity of communities to engage in a meaningful dialogue with the NWMO about how the project might affect their well-being.

### ***Diverse Terminology – Similar Goals***

There is extensive literature with a cornucopia of subject headers including: community well-being, sustainable development, sustainability, social capital, social well-being, participatory development, etc. In many cases, these and other terms are used interchangeably or applied as a sub-set to another term. There is no distinct rule or collective wisdom regarding which term to use under different circumstances or situations. Furthermore, there is no clear historical progression of how and when these and other terms came into play. There are some attempts by others (Dale and Onyx, 2005<sup>1</sup>) to clarify these terms and the framework that they might be used.

Suffice it to say that the notion of community well-being, sustainable development and the like are not new terms or concepts. Despite the wide use of different terminology, all relate to a similar set of goals, largely being the improvement of community and/or individual quality-of-life or state of well-being over the long-term. This paper does not attempt to define and clarify of each term, nor does it distinguish which term is more appropriate under different circumstances. Rather, we focus only on Community Well-Being (CWB) and we attempt to place it into an appropriate context.

---

<sup>1</sup> Dale, Ann, and Jenny Onyx (editors). 2005. *A Dynamic Balance: Social Capital and Sustainable Development*. UBC Press.

## **Community Well-Being**

### **What is it?**

The term “community well-being” includes a combination of abstract ideas and human actions. Its meaning and interpretation is unique not only for communities but even for individuals and groups within a community. A “community” can be a group of individuals linked by geography or interests (whether bound by physical, sociological, economic, cultural, and/or psychological dimensions)<sup>2</sup>. “Well-being” relates to the quality of life or state of satisfaction within a community, and it is a ubiquitous term. There is no consensus about a definition of community or well-being or what they should be; however, there is consensus that these terms are best defined and measured by members of the community itself. When a community establishes for itself these terms it then starts to set its own goals and parameters for enhancing well-being. The fundamental challenge is engage local community groups and stakeholders in a process that gathers and synthesizes community-based data/information into a framework that measures and enhances community well-being that best represents their values and criteria for success.

It is useful to see how others have defined these terms not because they are absolute, but because they offer a sense of the possible diversity applied to its meaning and application:

According to Hird (2003) “(community is) a number of people who have some degree of common identity or concerns often related to a particular locality or conditions ... a community is not a thing. It is a number of people who have repeated dealings with each other. When a community is identifiable with a locality, community well-being / the quality of community life is intimately concerned with:

- How well that locality is functioning,
- How well that locality is governed,
- How the services in that locality are operating, and
- How safe, pleasant and rewarding it feels to live in that locality”.<sup>3</sup>

The City of Calgary, Community Services Department, takes a holistic view that “...recognizes that well-being of the individual and the community is defined by quality of (its) ... social relationships, economic situation, and physical environment.”<sup>4</sup> The concept of community well-being is considered just one of the frameworks for community assessment in arctic regions (others including: local community quality-of-life studies, community health or community capacity).<sup>5</sup> As Kusel and Fortmann (1991) state, the concept is focussed on understanding the contribution of the economic, social, cultural and political components of a community in maintaining itself and fulfilling the various needs of its local residents.<sup>6</sup>

The Rural Assistance Information Network (RAIN) in Australia defines community well-being as “a concept that refers to an *optimal quality of healthy community life*, which is the ultimate goal of all the

---

<sup>2</sup> See: Gartner Lee Limited. 2007. The Role and Application of Sustainable Livelihoods Framework for Measuring and Monitoring Community Well-Being. Discussion Paper prepared for the NWMO, November 2007.

<sup>3</sup> NHS Health Scotland. 2003. Community Wellbeing: A discussion paper for the Scottish Executive and Scottish Neighbourhood Statistics, August 2003.

<sup>4</sup> City of Calgary. 2005. Indices of Community Well-Being for Calgary Community Districts. Community Services Department, Community Strategies Business Unit, Policy and Planning Division, Winter 2005.

<sup>5</sup> Ribova, Larissa. 2000. Individual and Community Well-Being. Stephansson Arctic Institute. The Arctic. See: <http://thearctic.is>

<sup>6</sup> Kusel, J. and L.P. Fortmann.1991. What is community well-being? In J. Kusel and L. Fortmann (eds.). Well-being in forest-dependent communities (volume I). pp. 1-45/ Forest and Rangeland Resources Assessment Program and California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, Berkley, California.

various processes and strategies that endeavour to meet the needs of people living together in communities. It encapsulates the ideals of people living together harmoniously in vibrant and sustainable communities, where community dynamics are clearly underpinned by 'social justice' considerations.”<sup>7</sup>

The Australian Unity partnership states that “contrary to popular belief, wellbeing is different from ‘happiness’. Happiness can come and go in a moment, whereas wellbeing is a more stable state of being well, feeling satisfied and contented.”<sup>8</sup> The Australian Unity Wellbeing Index is based on average levels of satisfaction with various aspects of personal and national life. Elements of the Personal Wellbeing Index report satisfaction with:

- Your health;
- Your personal relationships;
- How safe you feel;
- Your standard of living;
- What you are achieving in life;
- Feeling part of the community; and
- Your future security.

Elements of the National Wellbeing Index report satisfaction with:

- Social conditions;
- Economic situation;
- The state of the Australian environment;
- Australian business;
- National security; and
- Government.

Another definition from Australia (Melbourne, Victoria) includes community well-being with four other objectives in its overall Sustainable Community Rating initiative, where it defines well-being as an objective “to deliver communities that are safe, healthy; have access to services, jobs and learning; foster active local citizenship, and are pleasant places in which to live, work and visit.”<sup>9</sup> Their definition identifies five priorities that influence well-being that they use to monitor progress:

1. **Respond to Community Needs** – to identify the likely composition and needs of communities;
2. **Building Community Capacity** – is achieved through community engagement and processes that achieve a strong sense of belonging;
3. **Economic Benefit** – is delivered when new developments generate local employment opportunities and ensure access to regional labour markets;
4. **Healthy and Active** – communities are attained through creating safe environments that offer opportunities for healthy activity, recreation and social interaction; and
5. **Lifelong Learning** – opportunities are offered through ease of access to education and training opportunities at different stages of the lifecycle.

---

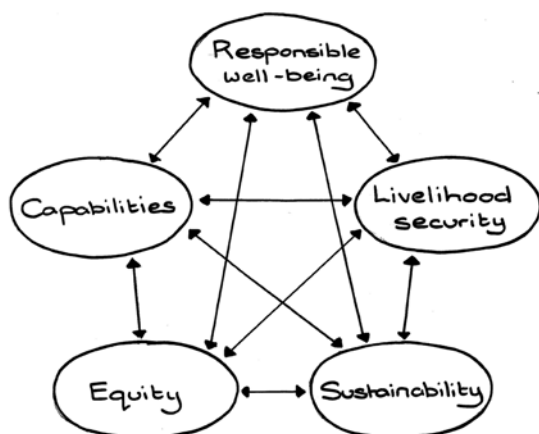
<sup>7</sup> RAIN, see: [http://www.rain.net.au/community\\_wellbeing.htm](http://www.rain.net.au/community_wellbeing.htm)

<sup>8</sup> Australian Unity Partnership, see: <http://www.australianunity.com.au/wellbeingindex/#top2>

<sup>9</sup> Sustainable Community Rating, 2008. see: <http://www.sustainablecommunityrating.com>

Finally, Robert Chambers describes a web of responsible well-being that includes many of the above notions of others, but clearly draws a line between well-being, livelihood security, sustainability, equity, and capabilities into one holistic concept as illustrated in his pencil drawing (Figure 1).

**Figure 1: The web of responsible well-being promoted by Robert Chambers (2004)**



Chambers (2004) describes **livelihood security** as the basic building block to well-being. A “livelihood” can be defined as the adequate stock and flow of goods and services necessary to sustain well-being of individuals and the community. Security refers to the rights and access to food, income, and other basic needs that support well-being. It includes both tangible and intangible assets that offset risks, ease shocks and meet contingencies. Sustainable livelihoods maintain or enhance resource productivity over the long-term and equitable livelihoods maintain or enhance the livelihoods and well-being of others.

**Capabilities** are the means to livelihoods and well-being, and refer to what people are capable of doing and being. They are the means to fulfilment of livelihoods. **Equity** is a qualifier and includes such things as human rights, intergenerational and gender equality. **Sustainability** refers to economic, social, and environmental conditions that translate into long-term policies and actions.

Chambers states that:

*Well-being can be described as the experience of good quality of life. Well-being and its opposite, ill-being differ from wealth and poverty. Well-being and ill-being are words with equivalents in many languages. Unlike wealth, well-being is open to a whole range of human experience, social, psychological and spiritual as well as material. It has many elements. Each person can define it for herself or himself. Perhaps most people would agree to include living standards, access to basic services, security and freedom from fear, health, good relations with others, friendship, love, peace of mind, choice, creativity, fulfilment and fun. Extreme poverty and ill-being go together, but the link between wealth and well-being is weak or even negative: reducing poverty usually diminishes ill-being: amassing wealth does not assure well-being and may diminish it<sup>10</sup>.*

Chambers notes that the overarching end of development is well-being, with capabilities and livelihood as means to that end. Equity and sustainability are principles which qualify livelihood to become *livelihood security*, and well-being to become *responsible well-being*.

As one can see from the above discussion there is a degree of commonality in defining community well-being:

1. Improved well-being is the prime objective, with development of capabilities and livelihoods as its means, but the process of improving well-being is constantly in change.
2. There is no correct definition for community well-being – each community must define it for itself, but it typically includes elements relating to such things as health, safety and security,

<sup>10</sup> Chambers, Robert. 2004. Ideas for development: reflecting forwards. IDS Working Paper 238, Institute for Development Studies, Brighton, Sussex, England.



social and environmental conditions, and enhancing opportunities for people and communities.

3. It not only states the desire for greater “well-being”, but it attempts to frame what specifically it seeks to enhance (i.e. It should state your goals and objectives).

Like in most circumstances, it may prove beneficial to keep your definition simple. The definition should not describe how to achieve these objectives. That is the subject of discussion later in this article.

### ***Where did it come from?***

The notion or concept of community well-being is not new. In Canada, Lotz (1977) paints a rich history of regional and community development particularly post 1945. Gibson (2007)<sup>11</sup> states that the use of sustainability criteria in planning and decision making dates back to the 1987 World Commission on Environment and Development (the Brundtland Commission) when it issued *Our Common Future*<sup>12</sup>. He describes the history, essence and context of sustainable development which includes the notion of community well-being. He states that:

*Sustainability-based assessment is now practiced in many jurisdictions around the world. It appears under many different names, takes various forms, and is applied to wide variety of undertakings, as often in planning and development deliberations as in advanced environmental assessments. The diversity of current approaches reflects the diversity of circumstances to be respected (different ecologies, communities, institutional structures, cultures, etc.) and our still expanding understanding of what is entailed by a commitment to sustainability (Gibson, 2007, page 4).*

Essentially, the concept of community well-being springs from emerging social commitments to ensuring that developments of all kinds, in both developing and the developed world, result in affected communities being “better off” in some way than before. The concept of community well-being is not inconsistent with what communities have been long seeking in relation to community development. In most ongoing and past approvals processes in Canada, there is a strong emphasis on assessing impact to the human environment with references to sustainable development, sustainability, community health, etc. As Gibson (2006) points out, “we began doing what amounted to sustainability-based assessment long ago.” Early examples of this include:

- The work of former Justice Thomas Berger in his initial inquiry into the proposed Mackenzie Valley Pipeline in the mid 1970's; and
- The Ontario class environmental assessment of Crown Land timber management plans and undertakings in the 1980's.

In recent times, a number of major Canadian projects that have been subject to Panel Review, have had terms of reference that specify the need to address sustainability. Among these are:

- Voisey's Bay Mine and Mill Environmental Assessment Panel, “Environmental Impact Statement Guidelines for the Review of the Voisey's Bay Mine and Mill Undertaking” (June,1997)

---

<sup>11</sup> Gibson, Robert J. 2007. Notes for presentation to the hearings of the Whites point Quarry and Marine Terminal Joint Review Panel. Digby, Nova Scotia. June 26, 2007.see: [http://www.ceaa.gc.ca/010/0001/0001/0023/hearings\\_e.htm](http://www.ceaa.gc.ca/010/0001/0001/0023/hearings_e.htm)

<sup>12</sup> World Commission on Environment and Development. 1987. *Our Common Future*. Oxford University Press. London.

- Inuvialuit Game Council, MacKenzie Valley Environmental Impact Assessment Review Board and Minister of the Environment, “Environmental Impact Assessment Terms of Reference for the MacKenzie Gas Project” (July, 2005)
- White’s Point Quarry and Marine Terminal Project Joint Review Panel, “Environmental Impact Statement Guidelines” (March, 2005) and
- The De Beers Gahcho Kué Project in the NWT currently being assessed by the Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board (MVEIRB).

The Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency, acknowledges that it has a vital role to play in achieving sustainable development and by implication enhancement or at least the protection of community well-being. Furthermore the Agency acknowledges that a challenge lying before it is to “find ways to ensure the tools within the environmental assessment framework can collectively respond to environmental considerations, within the spatial and temporal context that they occur, and in a manner that supports progress toward sustainable development.”

Consequently, this paper’s focus on the context and application of community well-being is not setting a new standard or process. The concept of community well-being is utilized extensively in many ways and it is continually evolving. It is playing a significant role in enhancing the decision-making process at the community level and adds value to proponents and approval agencies.

### ***What are the benefits from applying the concept of community well-being?***

There is an old adage that says “*you get what you measure*”. In this case, simply defining community well-being, no matter the nature or scope of it, is not enough to make it happen. For many, the process of measuring community well-being provides a concrete focus to engage local citizens and strengthen communities in discussions about what matters most to them. The process of defining community well-being and developing community wellbeing indicators and community plans is seen by many as an excellent way to inform and involve local people and organisations, and it is a meaningful undertaking for citizens. It enables them to identify their key issues, discuss their priorities and contribute to possible actions and plans for their community. Involving citizens in the process is more likely to lead to change (hopefully increase) in CWB – people “buy-in” to or adopt changes more readily when they are a part of it from the beginning and it directly applies to them.

Of course the participation of community stakeholders in such an exercise is predicted on them have the “capacity” to participate in meaningful dialogue. Many communities simply do not have the necessary “social capital” in place that enables effective participation in community well-being dialogues of this nature. Dale (2005), defines social capital as “The set of norms, networks, and organizations through which people gain access to power and resources, and through which decision making and policy formulation occur.”<sup>13</sup>

The application of community well-being or sustainability principles does not have to be triggered by a project or significant new development within the community. In many cases, initiatives are underway

---

<sup>13</sup> Dale, Ann, 2005. Social Capital and Sustainable Community Development: Is There a Relationship? In Ann Dale and Jenny Onyx (editors). 2005. A Dynamic Balance: Social Capital and Sustainable Development. UBC Press.

throughout the world to measure well-being of communities. The positive results of these initiatives will be to:

1. Understand the current state of communities,
2. Assess what community characteristics residents/citizens consider to be important,
3. Organize vast amounts of information about communities, and
4. Provide a baseline of data and information that can:
  - Help direct policy makers to key community assets and deficits that need protection and corrective measures, respectively, and
  - Help local communities develop plans which leverage their strengths and addresses weakness so that they are better able to manage change and sustain themselves over the long-term.

Two recent examples of initiatives to measure community well-being include:

- The Community Accounts of Newfoundland and Labrador  
<http://www.communityaccounts.ca/CommunityAccounts/OnlineData/getdata.asp>

This initiative was designed and implemented in 2005 under the joint leadership of the Memorial University and the government of Newfoundland and Labrador. The Community Accounts is intended to be used for social, community and economic development as well as private sector business development. The accounts can be used to:

- Measure the status of the population and communities to identify issues of concern;
  - Identify problems to determine where social and economic problems exist;
  - Assess needs to understand the nature, scope and extent of problems,
  - Ascertain root causes of problems by linking well-being indicators with one another to enable researchers to identify potential sources of issues,
  - Select communities for research where the correlation between the various factors being studied is significant,
  - Inform the development of policy by informing policy analysts and policy makers on the issues that need to be addressed for people in communities,
  - Plan and implement policies to resolve social and economic issues,
  - Design programs and services to match desired outcomes,
  - Develop programs and services to meet specific community needs,
  - Target program delivery to places where needs are greatest,
  - Monitor progress over time by following the changes in the status of people and communities over time, and
  - Evaluate if programs and service investments have resulted in social and economic change over time.
- The Community Indicators Victoria (CIV) project in Australia  
<http://www.communityindicators.net.au/>

A set of community well-being indicators was established and is being measured to:

- Provide a concrete focus to engage local citizens and strengthen communities in discussions about what matters most to them.

- Support Council decision-making by ensuring that decisions about policies are based in the best local evidence – this includes evidence on community priorities, as well as the key social, economic, environmental, cultural and governance trends in their community.
- Integrate policy and planning initiatives that show how different issues fit together and how progress in one key area of concern to local communities is related to another.

Two examples of how the notion of community well-being has been used in Canada include the following:

1. The Challenge for Change – the Fogo Experiment in 1974; and
2. KNET – building capacity of First Nations through broadband connectivity in 2004.

### *The Fogo Experiment.*

In the early 1970s the National Film Board (NFB) of Canada introduced a project called “Challenge for Change” that used community direct video to chronicle issues, challenges, and actions regarding community development and sustainability. One ambitious project was known as the Fogo Experiment and it involved a long term pilot project in “community film” on Fogo Island off the coast of Newfoundland. The Fogo Experiment was conducted in close association with community development workers and with the residents of Fogo Island who had control over some of the editing choices and who were encouraged to help decide on topics and locations of the engagement/dialogue process.

The end result was a series of films that was to aid the Islanders in understanding their resources and capabilities and which stimulated them to engage in communication with each other about common problems and ideas and tactics for change. Among other things, the films provided the catalyst that the Islanders needed to work for the establishment of a cooperative fish plant and a boating cooperative enterprise based on their own assessment of their skills and capacities and market needs.

What is striking about this project is that this early experiment in community capacity building for enhancing community well-being led to the realization that the products represented by the films (i.e. chronicling the issues, challenges and dialogues of residents) were the least relevant aspects. It was the community involvement in the process of stimulated cooperative work and innovative change. It forced the community residents to leverage and improve existing social networks to collectively understand their issues and options, and to cooperatively find solutions and develop action plans that everyone could buy into and effectively take ownership of.

In some respects the Fogo Experiment is considered the precursor and partial supporting rationale of how the current Community Accounts program of Newfoundland should be used to enhance to a community’s understanding of its well-being and to establish actions to change.

While there is little doubt that infrastructure upgrades usually bring positive change in the form of new opportunities for remote communities, it is not so easy to show how such upgrades drive economic development. Economic development is a catchy phrase that often means different things to different people, and for very remote communities with low population density, it has its own implications. The K-Net is an aboriginal network that is providing broadband connectivity to First Nations communities in the remote regions of northwestern Ontario. A case study to examine its impact on affected First Nations communities was conducted using the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework (SLF).<sup>14</sup>

The case study assessed community effects under five domains or capitals that were of most relevance to community members<sup>15</sup>. **Human Capital** refers to the people within a community, their skills, personal well-being, self-esteem, and ability to take initiative to enhance their own and their community's lives. **Social Capital** refers to people connecting to people, recognizing the importance of networking and exchange, of creating and strengthening links of trust. **Physical Capital** looks at the infrastructure aspects of economic development – which, in this case focused on the installation and application of state-of-the-art information and communication technologies (ICTs). **Natural Capital** is an important, though often overlooked, aspect of economic development. Natural resources, the land and environment, and their relationship to culture, language and heritage are aspects of the natural capital of communities. **Financial Capital** is more commonly understood in terms of economic development. Jobs, income generation, financial growth and cost savings can be measured over the long term. Under the sustainable livelihoods framework, however, the dynamism and relationships between all five components are studied, resulting in an understanding of the contribution of each to the economic health of the First Nations communities.

The case study demonstrated that community well-being was greatly enhanced. It was shown that economic development happens when human connectivity increases and when the sense of isolation and separation is reduced. In the North, "economic development" is what happens when:

- community members who have left the community because of sickness, schooling, or work keep in touch with their community and know what's happening (videoconferencing, homepages with local news, photos);
- there is more potential for those who have left to return (more access to information and the outside world", less "boring" and isolating) ;
- members within the community keep in touch with family members, especially children who are away at school;
- people stay in their community longer and still have their needs met (e.g. people needing medical or psychological treatment, kids have more time to mature before going away to high school); and
- community members see what's going on in other places (in the North or further) and gather ideas for new things they'd like to promote in their own lives.

---

<sup>14</sup> For an overview of the SLF, see: Gartner Lee Limited. 2007. The Role and Application of Sustainable Livelihoods Framework for Measuring and Monitoring Community Well-Being. Discussion Paper prepared for the NWMO, November 2007.

<sup>15</sup> IDRC/ICA, 2004. Harnessing ICTS: A Canadian First Nations Experience – KNET Case Study on Economic Development, January 2004

### Sample Uses and Application of Community Well-Being

There are many other benefits derived from measuring community well-being. Some of these will become evident in this section which explores how it is used in two cases and discusses the key mechanics of its application.

#### **Community Accounts of Newfoundland and Labrador**
















The Province of Newfoundland and Labrador in cooperation with Memorial University has developed a comprehensive user-driver web-based program that attempts to incorporate multiple domains or attributes that seemingly affect individual and community well-being and have been mentioned in the literature (Figure 1).

Figure 1: The Domains of Community Well-Being Utilized in the Community Accounts Program of Newfoundland and Labrador



The various domains illustrated in Figure 1 are inter-related reflecting aspects of individual and community lives which are believed to impact overall well-being. Users of the Community Accounts, can selected all or individual components of these domains to develop their customized assessment of their community well-being such as the example in Table 1 for Fogo, NL.

Table 1: Sample Output Assessment of Community Well-Being from Community Accounts

Well-Being Account for Fogo, Newfoundland					
Indicator	Value	Community Rank	Well-Being Rank	Community Charts and Maps	
Economic Self-Reliance Ratio	67.3%	<a href="#">124<sup>th</sup></a>		<a href="#">view chart</a>	<a href="#">view map</a>
Income Support Assistance Incidence	6.9%	<a href="#">110<sup>th</sup></a>		<a href="#">view chart</a>	<a href="#">view map</a>
Personal Income Per Capita	\$18,700	<a href="#">100<sup>th</sup></a>		<a href="#">view chart</a>	<a href="#">view map</a>
Average Couple Family Income	\$56,000	<a href="#">98<sup>th</sup></a>		<a href="#">view chart</a>	<a href="#">view map</a>
Change in Employment	-4.0%	<a href="#">199<sup>th</sup></a>		<a href="#">view chart</a>	<a href="#">view map</a>
Employment Insurance Incidence	53.1%	<a href="#">124<sup>th</sup></a>		<a href="#">view chart</a>	<a href="#">view map</a>
Population Change	-3.7%	<a href="#">119<sup>th</sup></a>		<a href="#">view chart</a>	<a href="#">view map</a>
Migration Rate	-6.3%	<a href="#">147<sup>th</sup></a>		<a href="#">view chart</a>	<a href="#">view map</a>
High School or Above - (pop 18 to 64)	56.7%	<a href="#">272<sup>nd</sup></a>		<a href="#">view chart</a>	<a href="#">view map</a>
Bachelor's Degree or Higher - (pop 25 to 54)	5.7%	<a href="#">176<sup>th</sup></a>		<a href="#">view chart</a>	<a href="#">view map</a>
Employment Rate - (pop 18 to 64)	73.8%	<a href="#">153<sup>rd</sup></a>		<a href="#">view chart</a>	<a href="#">view map</a>
Life Expectancy	79.0	<a href="#">23<sup>rd</sup></a>		<a href="#">view chart</a>	<a href="#">view map</a>
 - Ranks Low  - Ranks Average  - Ranks High					
<p><b>Understanding the Well-Being Colors</b></p> <p>In order to answer the question, "How is the area doing relative to all other communities in the province?" we take each community and line them up from lowest to highest based on the indicator values. This gives us our entire range of values. We then take the closest match to the lower 25% of communities, the middle 50% of communities, and the upper 25% of communities. The range of values representing this bottom range of communities is colored red, the top range is colored light yellow and the range of values representing the middle group of communities is colored orange. We then show where the value for your chosen geography falls (represented by the colored square), and from this you can determine how a community or region is doing compared to all communities in the province.</p>					

Other data and information, such as that relating to services and infrastructure, are highlighted on maps for users to obtain an overview of infrastructure and service locations. Although much of the data contained in the many of well-being domains are economic or physical in nature more is being added particularly to the safety and cultural domains. It is recognized by the sponsors that the Community

Accounts is very much a dynamic work-in-progress and will be continually refined to reflect emerging needs.

### **Community Indicators Victoria (CIV)**

Community Indicators Victoria (CIV) is a collaborative project, funded by VicHealth and hosted by the McCaughey Centre, School of Population Health, at the University of Melbourne. The project emerged and grew from the need for more sophisticated measures to support policy and development processes that are responsive to the complex issues of social development. At the heart of the project is recognition that:

“... reliance on narrow economic measures, such as Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is now widely understood as inadequate, with the economy as only one factor to consider in the measurement of social and community progress.” What is required is planning models that measure the broader aspects of wellbeing; the interrelationships between economic, social, and material wellbeing; the downsides of economic growth, as well as the benefits; the limits of natural assets; the value of heritage and environment; the need to keep natural systems in balance; the importance of non-material aspects of wellbeing such as cultural, spiritual and psychological considerations; the benefits of strong communities and of social inclusion; and participation and the need to sight of benchmark values such as democracy, human rights and active citizenship.<sup>16</sup>

The VIC groups all well-being indicators and measures into five domains of community well-being:

1. **Social** – Healthy, safe and inclusive communities
2. **Economic** – Dynamic resilient economies
3. **Environmental** – Sustainable and built natural environments
4. **Democratic** – Democratic and engaged communities
5. **Cultural** – Culturally rich and vibrant communities

The indicators of well-being under each of the five domains are detailed in Table 2.

Table 2: Indicators and Measures of Community Well-Being in the VIC Project

<b>Well-Being Domain</b>	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Sample Measures</b>
<b>Social</b> – Healthy, safe and inclusive communities	Personal health and well-being	Self-reported health Life expectancy
	Community connectedness	Volunteerism Parental participation in schools
	Early childhood	Breastfeeding rates Immunization
	Personal and community safety	Workplace safety Crime
	Lifelong learning	Home internet access School retention

<sup>16</sup> Wiseman, John, Warwick Heine, Anne Langworthy, Neil McLean, Joanne Pyke, Hayden Raysmith, and Mike Salvaris. 2006. Measuring Well-Being: Engaging Communities – Developing a community indicators framework for Victoria: The final report to the Victorian Community Indicators Project (VCIP)..Institute of Community Engagement and Policy Alternatives, Melbourne Australia, July 2006.



Well-Being Domain	Indicators	Sample Measures
	Service availability	Access to services
<b>Economic</b> – Dynamic resilient economies	Economic activity	Business activity Retained retail spending
	Employment	Employment rate Local employment
	Income and wealth	Food security Per capita income
	Skills	Education level achievement Qualifications
	Work-life balance	
	Open space	Access to open spaces
	Housing	Affordable housing
	Transport accessibility	Public transport patronage Number of dedicated walking and cycle paths
<b>Environmental</b> – Sustainable and built natural environments	Sustainable energy use	GHG emissions Renewable energy sources
	Air quality	Air quality measures
	Biodiversity	Native vegetation growth
	Water	Water consumption
	Waste Management	Household waste generation Recycling
	Citizen engagement	Local female councillors Opportunity to vote for a trustworthy person
	Arts and culture activities	Participation rates in arts and cultural activities and events
	Leisure and recreation	Participation rates in sporting and recreational activities
<b>Cultural</b> – Culturally rich and vibrant communities	Cultural diversity	Community acceptance of diverse cultures

The CIV offers a multitude of outputs and reports, a sample of which is illustrated below (Figures 2 and 3) for two indicators only, that can be used by anyone to compile their own customized assessment of well-being for one or all communities contained in the database.

Figure 2: Sample Output from the CIV for Indicator: Personal and Community Safety - Crime

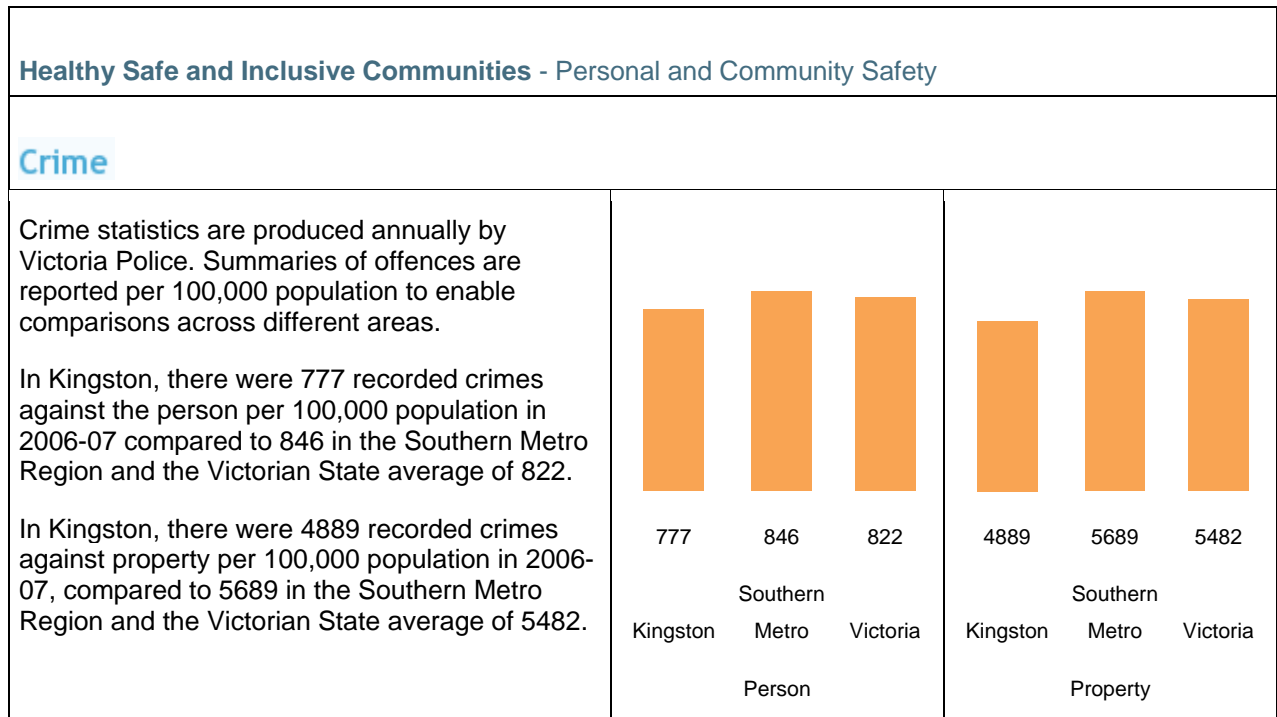
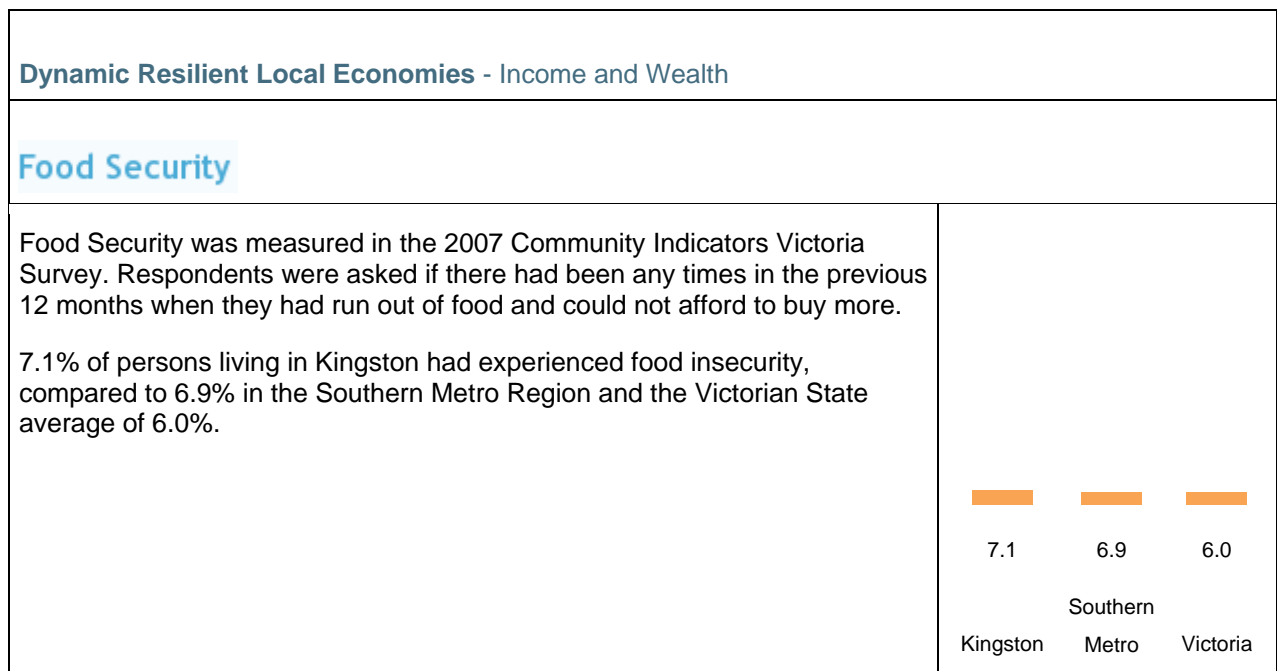


Figure 3: Sample Output from the CIV for Indicator: Income and Wealth - Food Security



## **Observations and Lessons Learned**

The above two applications of community well-being represent only a fraction of the community well-being applications internationally. Within Canada there are numerous instances of the use and application of community well-being, some of which have been documented by others.<sup>17 18 19 20 21 22</sup>

In all documented cases it has been expressed that the use of community well-being as a means to advance the interests of communities is not new. All use unique terminology, structure and organization of the community well-being framework, but various commonalities transcend them all:

1. **It is the process not the product that counts most.** The use and application of community well-being as a tool and framework serves as the focal point for community dialogue. The experience of others is that the act of community engagement grounded with a purpose established by the community well-being framework is the key to success.

There is no correct method or formula to engage communities, but a common element to the above case examples is the implementation of a “participatory communication approach”. This approach was first popularized, if not pioneered, by Don Snowden in the “Fogo Process” in the 1970s. The Fogo Process is a people-centred community development approach which, via simple media tools, assists communities and individuals in coming to grips with their strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. The Fogo Process, captured in the then Community Challenge program, provided one model of communication for development that was ahead of its time.

The Fogo Process began in 1973 on Fogo Island, a small island outport fishing community off the eastern coast of Newfoundland. Don Snowden led a process whereby community members were able to articulate their problems, ideas and vision on films that were later screened to community members to facilitate community discussion forums. Through the films, the residents of Fogo Island began to see that each of the villages on the island were experiencing similar problems and became aware of the need for community organization. The films were also used to bring distant politicians face-to-face (or face-to-screen) with the voices and visions of people they seldom heard. The upshot of this process was a new understanding and government policies and actions were changed, the people of Fogo Island began to organize, and the history of the Island changed forever. They were able to build upon their common strengths, address their weakness and built a renewed capacity to sustain themselves for the long-term.

---

<sup>17</sup> Rust, Christa, 2007. Building Knowledge, Measuring Well-being: Developing sustainability indicators for Winnipeg’s First Nations community. Prepared by the IIDS for the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs, October 2007.

<sup>18</sup> Ontario Trillium Foundation and Canadian Policy Research Networks. 2007. Indicators of Healthy and Vibrant Communities Roundtable: A Primer

<sup>19</sup> Cooke, Martin. 2005. The First nations Community Well-being Index (CWB): A Conceptual Review. Strategic Research and Analysis Directorate, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, January 26, 2005

<sup>20</sup> Ontario Healthy Communities Coalition, <http://www.healthycommunities.on.ca>

<sup>21</sup> The Community Well-Being Index, <http://www.ainc.inac.gc.ca/pr/ra/cwb/wbc/cwi/e.html>

<sup>22</sup> Stedman, Richard C., John R. Perkins, and Thomas M. Beckley. 2005. Forest dependence and community well-being in rural Canada: variation by forest sector and region. In Can. J. For. Res. 35:215-220.

Today the technology is different and film can now be substituted for webcam technology and/or blogs – or even just plain community forums / discussions / workshops? But the idea and process is the same. Both the Community Accounts and CIV case examples used a variety of survey techniques and community forums to reach their communities of interest.

2. **A formal structure is required to organize the data into domains or asset groups** that constitute the determinants of community well-being. The best framework is one that is flexible and easily accommodates the desires and expressions of the community that is engaged in building their community well-being. All applications of the community well-being framework tend to organize data and information into domains or asset categories. The number and character of these domains of well-being vary. Some have 3 domains and others have 5 or more. Regardless, the important point is that they all include some representation of economic, social and environmental determinants of community well-being, and they have good balance of objective and subjective indicators and measures.
3. **No two situations or community well-being frameworks are same.** Definitions and indicators/measures of community well-being differ by community and within communities. The true art of community well-being is in the process of engaging stakeholders to develop a common set of indicators that can be measured and tracked over time. There are number of criteria offered by Wiseman *et al.* (2006) that provide a useful starting for seeking community well-being indicators that resonate with residents. For example, each indicator should:
  - a. Be relevant and valuable to the community
  - b. Be grounded in theory (have some degree of expert endorsement)
  - c. Measure progress towards a stated community vision
  - d. Be measurable and supported with fact-based data
  - e. Be measureable over time to show trends
  - f. Be disaggregated by demographic groups
  - g. Be benchmarked against other relevant jurisdictions
  - h. Be unambiguous and clear
  - i. Be realistic and representative of what the community feels is a fair indicator of their well-being

Overall, these indicators of community well-being should also have a balance of objective and subjective measures where feasible. More important, most applications of the community well-being framework limit the number of indicators since that there may be many measures for each and one must be careful not to overload the assessment with extraneous information.

4. **Keep it simple.** Case studies show that simple frameworks with user-friendly interaction and easy to understand outputs will drive its value. Focus on indicators and measures of community well-being that already have a good data source. It is pointless to identify indicators for which it is difficult to find supporting measures and data. The data sources will likely be a combination of publicly available census-type information and primary data derived from surveys.

## Characteristics of a Community Well-Being Framework for the NWMO

The foregoing discussion articulates that the process of engaging communities in a dialogue about their well-being and how it may be affected is the most critical element to increasing community well-being. The strategic considerations, depicted in Figure 4, should include processes that start with a fundamental understanding of the community dynamics, issues, challenges and opportunities. From this common understanding will emerge a plan that clearly defines goals and objectives, determines activities and offers some performance measure indicators to track success.

Figure 4: Strategic Considerations and Characteristics for Increasing Community Well-Being



Only actions that are implemented, monitored and evaluated with the leadership and involvement of local residents tend to be initiated and completed with a successful outcome. In the case of Fogo Island or the KNET, community well-being was enhanced when local venues and networks were leveraged under the leadership of community leaders/elders with the active involvement of women and youth.

It should be noted that the process of enhancing community well-being is not a one-time event. It is a process that is continuous responding to ever-changing community dynamics and socio-economic circumstances of the time.