Empowering our Citizens & our Communities

Building an Engine for Social & Economic Change

GERMANY – November 2006

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INDIGNATION AT INJUSTICE
RATIONALITY IN ACTION
To rev up the engine of community revitalization put social & economic development on the same track.
Key Economic Functions

**Planning, Research, & Advocacy**

A capacity to gather intelligence and then apply it to making or influencing decisions in the community’s interest is a fundamental and ongoing necessity.
Key Economic Functions

Accessible Credit

Without access to credit, people and businesses are blocked from productive asset building.

Lack of Access = Marginalization
Key Economic Functions

- **Building Equity & Local Ownership**
  - For individuals, ownership of assets is key to escaping poverty.
  - Within territories, businesses that generate profit & reinvest help build the economic base.
  - Maximizing local ownership helps maximize local reinvestment.
Key Economic Functions

Develop People’s Capacity

Ranging from the marginalized to a community’s leadership, getting people willing, ready and able to participate in strengthening a local economy is an ongoing strategic function.
Key Economic Functions

Infrastructure

Access to clean water; grain storage; transportation; access to the internet: all are examples of infrastructure necessary to the development of a territory.
Key Social Functions

Education

Access to and quality of education for children and adults influences the development prospects of a territory
Key Social Functions

Safety & Security

The extent to which safety and security of citizens and businesses is assured makes an important difference to peoples ability to participate in the development of a territory.
Key Social Functions

Social Supports

Reaching out & supporting citizens to meet their basic needs & participate in community life strengthens the social interconnectedness within a territory which in turn effects the extent to which local people & resources can be effectively mobilized.
Accessible & affordable housing has a major influence on quality of life and the ability of citizens to adequately meet their social and economic needs.
Culture & Recreation

The physical and emotional health of citizens and communities is reinforced by active physical and cultural engagement.
To rev up the engine of community revitalization put social & economic development on the same track
Decline of Population:
Point St. Charles
SW Montreal Quebec

By 1984 poverty is entrenched

- 43% live below poverty line
- 17% unemployed
- 25% living on state assistance

Population Decline in Point St. Charles

1967: 30,000
1986: 13,000
Plugging the Leaks

Diagram showing a barrel labeled "POINT ST. CHARLES" with water flowing out, labeled "BUSINESSES," "PEOPLE," and "SERVICES."
Animating & Organizing the Base: Basic Needs Focus

- Late 60’s and through 70’s: Community Organizations focus on building community assets to meet basic needs

- Consumers co-op established

- Housing information service
- 23 housing coops organized 300 units of affordable housing built
Animating & Organizing the Base: Basic Needs Focus

Has Important Gains? **YES**! BUT the decline continued 😞

- ECONOMIC FUNCTIONS
  - EQUITY & LOCAL OWNERSHIP
  - Community-based social & recreational services organized

- SOCIAL FUNCTIONS
  - SOCIAL SUPPORTS
  - AFFORDABLE HOUSING
  - CULTURE & RECREATION
    - Housing information service
    - 23 housing coops organized
      - 300 units of affordable housing built

- Consumers co-op established
Animating & Organizing the Base: Resistance to Displacement

In the 70’s and early 80’s real estate developers pressed city government to allow them to “revitalize” the neighbourhood by building upscale condominiums.
By the early 80’s the community had a permanent coalition in place to resist unwanted developments.

But organized resistance does not by itself build an alternative.
1982- YMCA hires **two community organizers for two years** to foster a more integrated approach

- **Research and learning** about what is going on elsewhere (CDCs in U.S., European experience).
- **Educate and animate** community organizations around what is working elsewhere.
- **Begin applying lessons** learned to the neighbourhood context.

The resulting coalition presses the provincial government for **dollars to study how to reverse the decline** of Point St. Charles.
Getting Started – Using the Resources Available & Building the Membership Base-85-86

PEP secures from Province 1-year funding & $100,000 fund for business loans
- Entrepreneurial Training for 25 people
- Most fail but 50 jobs created
- Many more jobs lost in the meantime

Controversy over focus on business development - 3 founding organizations leave

But 140 individuals & 13 corporations and other organizations join
Building a broader strategy

- PEP moves away from new business development to focus on business retention
- With the other two CDECs, PEP establishes loan fund for business financing in poor neighbourhoods
- In first two years 188 jobs retained and 76 more created
RESO – Building a multi-function strategy

- Ongoing work to strengthen business retention capacity – 200 businesses assisted in first 2 years.
RESO – Building a multi-function strategy

- Work with unions to build early warning system focused on avoiding plant closings
RESO – Building a multi-function strategy

Training of 1500 people per year – customized to business needs
RESO – Building a multi-function strategy

Mobilizing growing membership to fight for zoning and other decisions to reflect the priorities of the five neighbourhoods
RESO – Building a multi-function strategy

- Establishing a $7 million equity investment fund with government and union assistance – becoming owners
RESO – Building a multi-function strategy

- Networking, Brokering and Partnering is a central role.
- Leveraging & Strengthening community assets is an ongoing process across functions.
Evolving Governance & Building the Membership Base 1989-94

Composition of RESO Board

- community organizations (4)
- trade unions (2)
- small business (2)
- large business (1)
- finance (1)
- staff (1)

Over the first several years the membership grew to 1500 individuals and 300 organizations.
RESO’s DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM

Core Functions
- Planning, Research, & Advocacy
- Equity & Local Ownership
- People

+ Multi-stakeholder governance
  Democratic Membership
  Networking
  Partnerships

= Significant progress in other key areas
- Infra structure
- Social Supports
- Credit
- Culture
- Housing
- Literacy

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Core Functions + Democratic Base = Influence over Territory = Results

By the mid 1990s, Statistics Canada reported that for the first time in 30 years, the economic decline in SW Montreal had stopped.
Some Basic Conclusions

- An impoverished community that is not organized will not contend.
- Without a strategic approach or plan, it is not possible to create durable social and economic results.
- It takes a multi-functional approach through a CED organization, or a strategic partnership of organizations within a territory, to have significant impact over time.
- Ongoing learning is central to building democratic organizations that can sustain the mobilization of social and economic resources necessary to make and maintain a positive development impact.
- State support, while not a prerequisite to initiating action and innovation, is still critical, at least in Canada, to scaling up to the level that has broad impacts.
The CED – Social Economy Linkage

Environmental Stewardship

Territorial Emphasis

Community Development

SOCIAL ECONOMY Enterprise Focus

Strengthening Citizen Engagement & Social Interconnectedness
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THE CENTRE FOR COMMUNITY ENTERPRISE

www.cedworks.com for (Canada’s CED quarterly) Making Waves Special Issue on *CED and the Social Economy*

Free on line in English and French
More on Coops, CED and the Social Economy
RESO – A more Detailed Account
Going Glocal – Elevating the Local to the Global Stage

And a wide range of other resources free & for sale on line. Thanks again.