

Monograph series

Exemplary Practices in Community Development Research Report

presented by

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Of the many roles colleges¹ are called upon to play, the role of partner in community development is a significant one. The visibility and importance of this function is particularly evident in rural and remote communities. These locations provide excellent opportunities to examine the dynamics of this interaction, and gain an understanding that can be used to enhance the ability of colleges to work with their communities to achieve important goals. This study examined over 60 projects identified by the Association of Canadian Community Colleges (ACCC) as exemplary practices in community development in rural and remote communities.

What does a typical project look like that is considered by college staff to be an exemplary practice in community development in a rural or remote community? Based on the projects submitted to ACCC, a composite exemplary project would include a response to a local need (usually a social or economic problem) identified through consultations between a college and a number of local groups and agencies. As the college and these groups agreed to work together to locate funding from a government department or agency and operate a program, the college would create or modify the content or delivery of an adult education or vocational training program to suit the local situation. Usually the target population would be the unemployed or underemployed, and would often be facing other barriers due to the marginalization of women, the rural poor or Aboriginal groups.

A review of the projects revealed that they tended to fall into five main categories, and frequently displayed the features of more than one category. Projects were typically local variations of college education or training programs, an adaptation of adult education or literacy programs, a partnership with local organizations or agencies (usually including a government department), or an arrangement with a corporate partner or employer group. In a small number of cases, the project was unique, unusual or simply difficult to classify.

A related focus of the study was to look at the evaluation of college involvement in community development, that is, how evaluation was undertaken and what was learned. However, when it came to the tracking or measuring of college impact on community development, there was very little to examine. Most respondents reported that no attempt was made to systematically record results, although many indicated that they attempted to pay attention to informal feedback. When evaluations were conducted, they were usually done by other agencies (often the government department providing the funding), or were part of an assessment of college academic programs, and did not provide useful information for the improvement of the community development aspect of the project.

Respondents generally had several years of experience with college involvement in community development, and used a variety of informal and ad hoc methods of assessment. Based on their experience, several factors contributing to or inhibiting successful involvement of colleges in community development were identified. Many responses focused on the track record of the college (and often particular college staff) in networking and problem-solving in the community. The belief was clearly indicated that without a long-standing healthy working relationship, individual projects were unlikely to be successful by anyone's measure. Solid support, both verbal and financial, from the college administration for this kind of work was considered by many to be essential for success, and any lack thereof was frequently blamed for failure. Related to this theme, there was considerable frustration expressed about the temporary and insufficient nature of the funding available for these projects (usually due to government policy), resulting in staff shortages and turnover, and termination of promising projects before the desired results could be achieved.

¹ The term "college" is used in this document to refer to community college, institute of technology, vocational training institute, cégep and university college.

A theme which emerged early in this research, and persisted throughout, was the tension between two main views of the role of colleges in society. On the one hand, provincial policies, particularly in the past two decades, have emphasized the economic functions of colleges. These economic purposes are focused on producing graduates that match employer-driven definitions of employability. On the other hand, people involved in college work in community development saw the major role of education in terms of sustainable human development. This concept includes economically and environmentally sustainable development, but focuses on human and social concerns. As partnerships developed and programs were implemented, there were many times when the relative priority of economic or humanistic goals had to be weighed and difficult decisions made based on the comparative importance of one or the other at that time.

Recommendations stemming from this study have implications for local campuses, for colleges and for government policy in order to enhance the ability of colleges to work with their communities to achieve important goals. The recommendations include the need to:

- improve communication among colleges in rural and remote communities, particularly at the level of program developers and managers.
- provide professional development for college staff in the areas of community development, creative partnerships, proposal writing and evaluation theory and practice.
- incorporate appropriate evaluation processes into community development projects at the planning stage, support evaluation with adequate resources and share evaluation results.
- facilitate the study of college involvements in community development in rural and remote communities to inform and improve future projects.
- identify funding for pilot projects or demonstration sites in order to showcase exemplary practices, ascertain factors related to beneficial interactions, document consequences and lessons learned and publish the results.
- recognize, at both the college and provincial level, the tension between the economic and sustainable human development roles of colleges, and search for opportunities to bring this into the realm of open debate on public policy.
- recognize and include First Nations concerns up front at the project planning stage, and pay more attention to the challenges of inter-governmental and inter-departmental cooperation in local First Nations projects.
- promote the value and importance of college involvement in community development within colleges and to potential community partners, provincial governments, federal departments and agencies.
- encourage and enable staff working at college campuses with successful track records in community development to share their expertise with colleges in other rural and remote areas as well as with urban colleges dealing with identified groups and colleges in developing countries.

INTRODUCTION

What do colleges really do? And how well do they do it? The complex and multifaceted roles that colleges play in Canadian society are not well understood. Although there is much discussion in the media and in public policy arenas about effectiveness and accountability in education, when this discussion turns to colleges it is rarely anchored in a comprehensive overview of the function of education in general or of colleges in particular. This appears to be a chronic problem for colleges in Canada, having been identified as a concern at several points in their short history (Muller, 1990a; Dennison, 1995).

The role of colleges in community development in rural and remote Canada is an excellent example of the complexity and diversity of the many functions undertaken by colleges. Communities in these areas often have a clear and direct relationship with a local college, and this relationship has typically formed the basis for specific interventions aimed at bringing observable benefits to the local population. These situations provide an opportunity for an examination of the results of interactions between educational institutions and their communities. It is in these interactions that the tensions between different visions of colleges' roles are experienced on the ground. This is where, for example, the economic and humanistic goals of colleges compete for priority status.

A better understanding of the roles played by colleges in rural and remote communities, and how these roles are evaluated, can provide insight into the function of post-secondary education in Canadian society as these types of communities are in many ways microcosms of the larger society. A broadened awareness of the interactions of post-secondary education with societal development is valuable for individuals as they make educational choices, for faculty and administrators in educational institutions as they make program and budget decisions and for public policy-makers as they formulate educational and social policy with attendant fiscal and infrastructure priorities.

Recognizing the importance of these roles, the Association of Canadian Community Colleges (ACCC) has instituted the Serving Rural and Remote Communities Initiative, convened symposia and task groups and undertaken studies such as this one. This report is essentially written by college people about college endeavours to improve college interactions with their communities. One of the recurring themes in the rural symposia and task group meetings is the need to identify and promote examples of good work that is being done by colleges. As a result, a number of informative items have been printed or posted on the ACCC website, including several advocacy resources and a listing of project descriptions and contact information under the heading Exemplary Practices in Community Development. The Task Group and ACCC staff have used a variety of approaches to raise the profile of colleges' valuable work in rural areas and promote the sharing of this information between colleges. In order to understand the related issues, a few basic questions need to be asked (and hopefully answered) by this study. Who are we? Why are we here? What is happening? What are we doing? How good is it? How would we know?

The current study came about through discussions between Lynden Johnson, Special Advisor for the Serving Rural and Remote Communities Initiative at ACCC, and the author, Nelson Rogers, who has several years experience in faculty and administration at a rural college campus, and currently is a doctoral student in Educational Administration at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto (OISE/UT). The study focused on the projects listed on the ACCC website as Exemplary Practices in Community Development, and included an analysis of the listed projects, a survey of the identified contact persons and interviews with a few of the project managers or related college administrators.

1. WHO ARE WE? WHY ARE WE HERE? COMMUNITY COLLEGES IN CANADA - HISTORY AND FUNCTIONS

In their comprehensive overview of colleges in Canada, Dennison and Gallagher (1986) demonstrate that the development of these institutions followed a significantly different path than that of similar institutions in the US and UK. Although there were colleges of various kinds in Canada throughout the history of the nation, today's colleges are essentially products of the 1960s. In order to meet the demands for post-secondary education, due to both the dramatic increase in numbers of high school graduates and employers' demands for highly skilled labour, a college system was set up in each province during that era.

While there are some notable differences between provincial systems, the mandates that colleges were expected to fulfill are the same in almost every province. The most obvious mandate involved educational programs, particularly focused on vocational, trades, apprenticeship and technological training. University transfer programs, para-professional training and general academic studies (usually including Aboriginal and women's programs) were also significant components of college operations in most jurisdictions. Continuing and adult education, both upgrading and general interest, and customized or contract training for business and industry rounded out the diverse offerings of the colleges (Dennison & Gallagher, 1986; Muller, 1990a; Dennison, 1995).

The formation of the college systems was based not only on the provision of training programs, but also on some general principles that were widely believed to be of benefit to Canadian society. These principles included a focus on accessibility that was demonstrated in open admission policies, preparatory programs, the promotion of diversity, provision of student services, flexibility in scheduling and an emphasis on teaching (rather than a university-type research emphasis). At the same time, the colleges were designed to be responsive to government direction and changes in the economy, and to provide specialized services as needed in their local communities (Dennison & Gallagher, 1986). While the various college systems have evolved considerably since the 1960s, these purposes and principles are still very much in evidence in current college operations.

Roles of Community Colleges – Competing Views

The debate continues about the relative importance of the colleges' many roles. On the one hand, statements of government policy on post-secondary education frequently emphasize economic priorities. For example, a recent Ontario government policy document emphasized an employment focus.

The Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities recognizes the need for post-secondary institutions to invest additional resources in areas that will maintain, enhance and improve the educational experience of students in order to deliver relevant, high-quality education and training that meet evolving employer needs and support Ontario's economy (OMTCU, 2003)

On the other hand, the Canadian Commission for the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), after an extensive review of UNESCO conferences, particularly the World Conference on Higher Education (WCHE) and the International Congress on Technical and Vocational Education (ICTVE) as well as related reports and consultations, identified sustainable human development as the major focus for post-secondary education.

Sustainable development is generally recognized as having three broad dimensions: an ecological dimension, an economic dimension, and a social/political dimension. This third, human dimension is characterized by concerns for equity, democracy, and the quest for peace... The expression “sustainable human development” used in UNESCO documents places the human dimension at the centre of sustainable development...

This ... perspective reflects numerous confirmations of the inequalities that economic growth-focused models generate and the human and ecological costs that characterize them. The well-being of individuals and communities is now seen as the ultimate purpose of development. Human development must, of course, incorporate economic concerns, but these must be accompanied by ecological, social, cultural and ethical dimensions. (Canadian Commission for UNESCO, 2001)

An overview of the guidelines and recommendations of the WCHE reveals four major themes associated with the role of post-secondary education in sustainable human development: service to the community, education for responsible citizenship, critical and ethical functions, and interaction with other components of the educational system. (Canadian Commission for UNESCO, 2001; World Conference on Higher Education, 1998; Delors, 1996).

These competing views of the economic roles of colleges, focused on an employer-driven definition of employability, versus humanistic roles, focused on sustainable human development, are rarely articulated or debated in the popular media. Yet, the current study found that this tension is experienced daily in the lives of college staff and the communities they serve. There is evidence that this debate is part of a current trend in many “western” countries (Wolf, 2002; Griffith and Connor, 1994), but it is felt acutely in rural and remote communities in Canada.

The Significance of Colleges to Rural and Remote Communities

Although the issues related to sustainable human development are significant for any society, the importance of these concepts is more readily seen in rural areas. In Canada, in particular, rural and remote issues are of considerable importance as nearly one third (31 percent) of the Canadian population lives in non-urban areas, although this group only makes up 26 percent of the nation’s employed. Furthermore, 95 percent of the country’s natural resources are located in non-urban areas, and the resource sector of the economy accounts for 25 percent of Canada’s GDP and 40 percent of its exports (Cunningham and Bollman, 1996). Clearly, the rural and remote regions of Canada are of critical importance to the possibility of sustainable human development.

The experience of small, rural, Canadian college campuses was selected to facilitate a more detailed examination of the interaction of colleges and community development, the evaluation of these interactions and the lessons learned. These campuses demonstrate many of the characteristics mentioned previously as significant features of Canadian colleges: service to a target population, specialized programming and adaptation to the local environment. There is a recent interest in these issues in Canada, as reflected by the success of ACCC February 2001 symposium on colleges serving rural and remote communities and the resulting creation of a national task force to address related concerns. Although the interest is evident, the research is not. There has been some research on rural schools in Canada (Newton & Knight, 1993) and rural colleges in the US (Killacky & Valadez, 1995), but no significant recent research on rural colleges in Canada.

Colleges in rural and remote communities are particularly significant institutions in Canadian society because they deal head-on with overcoming issues of access to post-secondary education related to location or academic preparedness. They also supplement other approaches to education, such as on-the-job training or technology-mediated instruction, which also have particular access issues.

Colleges have a physical presence in over 900 locations across Canada and are frequently the only post-secondary option available in a local community. A recent Statistics Canada study found that, while about one fifth of Canadians live beyond commuting distance from a university, only three percent are beyond a similar distance from a college. Furthermore, commuting distance was found to be a significant factor in post-secondary participation rates at all income levels (Frenette, 2003).

Significant providers of post-secondary education in rural and remote communities in Canada, colleges also play a key role in adult literacy, high school graduation equivalency, access to university programs, skills training, continuing education courses and community development (Hill, 2001; Myers, 2001). One of the strengths of the college is the ability to develop specialized education and training programs to adapt to local situations. Colleges have a broader mandate and more diverse resources than most local community development organizations, and a wider spectrum of programs and more recognizable credentials than most private training corporations. They also generally offer more flexibility in adapting training programs to local needs than do most universities. Colleges are often key organizations in their communities (particularly in rural and remote areas), and are involved in solutions to economic and social problems that can make a difference in people's lives (Hill, 2001; Killackey & Valadez, 1995).

On-the-job training, which has been the traditional backbone of agriculture and resource-extraction industries, is losing its marketability as employment opportunities in these fields, not to mention skilled trades and service occupations increasingly require post-secondary training and certification. Life-long learning has become a normal expectation of many people due to rapid changes in business and industry and the trend toward multiple careers. As such, lack of access to further education can significantly hinder personal and community development. Participation in life-long learning is now used by some economic analysts as a measure of national economic potential (Times Higher Education Supplement, Jan. 10, 2003, p.4). Although these challenges are being addressed in part by the availability of on-line learning and technology-mediated instruction, the need for traditional in-class, hands-on instruction to supplement the new technologies is still significant. Colleges are critically involved in the search for solutions to these types of challenges (Walsh, 2001).

There has been some speculation that obstacles to access to education in rural and remote areas would be overcome by new communication technologies. The rhetoric of the "information age", with the promise of access to economic and educational opportunities "any time, any place", ignores the distinction between rural and urban and assumes equal accessibility for all. In actuality, many rural and remote areas are still beyond the reach of Broadband services, and large segments of the population lack the technological literacy necessary to take advantage of these services, even if they are available. As Burbules and Callister (2000) and others (eg: Moll, 2001) have cautioned, educational institutions, in their eagerness to adopt the latest information technologies, have not generally appreciated how these technologies exclude some groups while favouring others. People with strong links to traditional cultures, or with lifestyle issues that inhibit the development of technological literacy or access (such as nomadic or seasonal workers, or people in poverty) are particularly likely to be disadvantaged in this area. Colleges, with their strong track-records of dealing with access issues, are uniquely positioned to help people in rural and remote areas to overcome these barriers. Some Canadian rural schools that experimented with technology-mediated instruction found that face-to-face interaction was still a very important ingredient for success (Bosetti and Gee, 1993; Downer and Downer, 1993).

A recent Alberta study of the socio-economic benefits of the colleges in the province found that over \$2 billion (approximately four percent) of Alberta's annual economic activity is attributable to college operations and the increased earning power of college graduates. The study also attempted to quantify the social and economic benefits of college graduates' statistical tendency to report better health as well as reduced crime and welfare participation rates. These factors had significant impacts on the provincial economy in addition to the obvious societal benefits (Christopherson & Robison, 2003). Colleges also provide important economic contributions to small communities via their roles as major employers, providers of access to information about a wide range of programs and services, catalysts for the economic spin-offs derived from the presence of the student population, and as providers of institutional facilities to community groups (Bacon, 2001). It would therefore seem that if Canada is to make significant progress in sustainable human development, colleges will need to be heavily involved.

ACCC Interest in Rural and Remote Communities

Although ACCC has coordinated and facilitated many initiatives that have assisted non-urban colleges over the years, the Serving Rural and Remote Communities Initiative was implemented only recently. At the ACCC 2000 annual conference, several "corridor conversations" took place concerning common issues facing colleges in rural and remote areas and the lack of conference sessions explicitly dealing with them. As a result of this emerging debate, a "Serving Rural and Remote Communities Symposium" was held in the winter of 2001, hosted by North Island College in British Columbia. The response exceeded expectations when over 70 people, representing approximately 40 colleges, and government departments in eight provinces and two territories, registered for the symposium. The featured presentations included information about the Canadian Rural Partnership of the federal Rural Secretariat as well as the US Rural Community Colleges Initiative (RCCI) which is funded by the Ford Foundation and operated in partnership with the American Association of Community Colleges. The Rural Secretariat involves the coordination of 26 Canadian federal government departments that have programs targeted at rural issues, and includes the Canadian Rural Information Service as well as funding for rural pilot projects. In the US, the RCCI provides funding and expertise to implement pilot projects that demonstrate the expansion of economic and educational opportunities in distressed rural areas. Encouraged by the RCCI examples, evidence of the Canadian government interest in rural issues and success stories from colleges across Canada, the symposium participants put forward several key recommendations (ACCC documents and website; Autry and Rubin, 1998; MDC, 1998) which identified the need to: develop a strategy recognizing the uniqueness of rural and remote colleges, examine their particular needs and challenges; and, undertake advocacy on behalf of these institutions at all levels of government.

The symposium is now an annual event held in conjunction with the ACCC annual conference. In addition, a Task Group on Rural and Remote Communities has met at least twice a year, an issue of College Canada was devoted to rural and remote issues and the Serving Rural and Remote Communities Initiative has become an on-going focus of the Association (ACCC documents and website; Mills, 2001).

2. WHAT IS HAPPENING? COLLEGE INVOLVEMENT IN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN RURAL AND REMOTE COMMUNITIES

One of the recurring themes in the rural symposia and task group meetings has been the need to identify and promote examples of exemplary practices undertaken by the colleges. As a result, a number of informative items have been printed or posted on the ACCC website, including several advocacy resources. Within the context of developing these resources, several research questions emerged, including: What is known about what colleges are doing in community development in rural and remote communities? How well are they doing whatever it is they do? How could information about community development be shared among colleges or used to promote colleges nationally?

The Exemplary Projects

Information was collected via a survey conducted by ACCC staff concerning projects that program managers or college administrators considered to be suitable for posting on the ACCC website under the heading Exemplary Practices in Community Development. (For more information on methodology, see Appendix A.) The projects varied widely in nature and scope, from short-term “one-of” interventions to long-term approaches to community development. Of the 62 projects posted, 33 colleges were represented from 10 provinces. Although 45 campuses were identified as hosting projects, most respondents reported operating in several communities (sometimes more than 20), so that between 200 and 300 communities were involved. While 33 colleges out of an Association membership of just over 150 appears to be a significant number (about 22 percent), the projects were essentially self-nominated therefore no claims can be made that this is a representative sample. Representative or not, these projects are considered by some program managers and college administrators to be exemplary. An examination of the themes and issues common to these projects can produce useful information for many people involved in this field.

A review of the projects revealed that they tended to fall into five main categories, and frequently displayed features of more than one category. Projects were typically local variations of college education or training programs, an adaptation of adult education or literacy programs, a partnership with local organizations or agencies (usually including a government department), or an arrangement with a corporate partner or employer group. In a small number of cases, the project was unique, unusual or simply difficult to classify.

Over half of the projects featured partnerships with community groups and/or social agencies to solve local problems, and almost invariably included a government department or agency which provided much of the funding. Local arrangements were not counted as partnerships unless there was specific mention of joint efforts beyond simply a funding partner or a nominal position on a committee or board. Most of these projects featured several partners. In some cases, over 20 different organizations were involved. This was particularly noticeable in Saskatchewan and Nova Scotia. The regional college system in Saskatchewan does not normally include curriculum development or granting credentials as would be expected of colleges in other jurisdictions. Saskatchewan regional colleges are mandated to broker programs from other institutions (typically the Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology), and to select and deliver programs in response to local need. This requires extensive consultation with community groups, and frequently involves joint ventures in a number of areas including facilities and organizational infrastructure. In Nova Scotia, community economic development is part of the mandate of the college system, and the province has a long history of local community development organizations, both volunteer-based and government-sponsored (Alexander, 1997). In these provincial environments, a large number of local partners is to

be expected. However, projects such as the Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Initiatives of College of New Caledonia, Lakes District Campus in Burns Lake, BC and the Delivering Service Skills in Remote Communities project of Cambrian College in Little Current, Manitoulin Island, Ontario as well as others from almost every province featured a large number of community partners

Almost 50 percent of the projects could be described as typical college post-secondary education or vocational training programs, adapted significantly to the local situation. Frequently this adaptation involved the development of new curriculum, new certification or innovative delivery methods or schedules. In several cases, similar programs or delivery strategies were developed in different parts of the country in response to similar environmental factors, although there was no evidence of communication or collaboration between them. Adaptation and innovation in education and training development and delivery has been a significant feature of Canadian colleges throughout their history (Dennison, 1995; Dennison and Gallagher, 1986), and this was clearly evident in many of the projects in this study. Hopefully, studies such as this one will encourage the cooperation of college program developers as they face similar challenges in different parts of the country. Algonquin College's campus in Pembroke, Ontario and the Valemount Campus of the College of New Caledonia in BC both encountered a local economy in transition from a resource focus to tourism focus. Both institutions responded with training programs for workers in outdoor adventure and ecotourism businesses. Likewise, in response to challenges relating to shortages of health care workers in remote communities with a significant Aboriginal population and limited access to training opportunities, Assiniboine College, based in Brandon, Manitoba, the Geraldton Campus of Confederation College, Northern College based in Timmins, Ontario and several other colleges, developed methods for delivering provincially accredited nursing or nursing assistant programs in innovative ways.

It is also worth noting that several colleges encountered similar environmental factors and developed quite different responses. For example, when confronted with declining economic activity related to reductions or transitions in forest-related industries, the development of outdoor adventure and ecotourism training programs was not the only response, although ecological and sustainability concerns were prominent themes. Keewatin College in The Pas, Manitoba, in partnership with a number of local groups and agencies including First Nations organizations, developed the Northern Forest Diversification Centre to provide training for employment and entrepreneurship in the area of non-timber forest products such as wild or natural foods and herbal extracts. The College of New Caledonia's Nechako Campus in Vanderhoof, BC developed a Forest Resource Technology program, featuring on-the-job training, to upgrade the skills of forestry workers and increase opportunities for long-term employment in forest-based industries. Cégep St. Jérôme at Mont-Laurier, Québec instituted a diploma program, related to the technology of forest products, to train workers for technical jobs in advanced production processes for wood products. Taking a very different approach, Selkirk College in British Columbia and its many partners developed an educational forest preserve and several arts-related programs which included the production of murals and music festivals.

Slightly more than one quarter of the projects involved adult education or literacy (including technological literacy), basic skills or job-readiness programs, but again adapted to the local community. Almost all of these programs had several community partners, frequently including First Nations groups. One remarkable project, the Columbia Basin Alliance for Literacy, included a partnership between two colleges (College of the Rockies and Selkirk College) and several community groups to access provincial funding for a very diverse approach to literacy. The project included 56 local sites in 17 communities, each with its own Community Literacy Coordinator and able to provide services to adults, youth and families. A strong focus in these projects was the link between literacy and opportunities for employment or further education, with the recognition that building these links is a long-term process, the results of which may only be recognized in the lives of future generations.

Almost one quarter of the projects revolved around a partnership with a corporation or employer group for training employees or prospective employees. This type of project almost always was implemented due to economic transition issues brought about by changes in the local resource-based economy. Most of the projects previously mentioned as adaptations of college program content or delivery to respond to changes in the forest industry, also featured a partnership with an employer or industry group. The College of the North Atlantic worked in Nain, Labrador, in conjunction with several partners including the Torngait Ujaganniavingit Corporation, to train crane operators. This provided the employer with skilled workers without having to recruit in southern Canada, and provided long-term, high-wage employment close to home for people affected by the increasing challenges of making a living through traditional hunting and fishing.

In less than one sixth of the cases, the projects appeared to be notably non-traditional, had unique features or were difficult to categorize, often due to a distinctive target population or delivery methodology. Most of these projects had features that also fit the previous categories, so the number of truly unique examples was very small. The unusual or unique category included an Elder College program run by North Island College in Courtenay, BC, a peace centre operated in conjunction with Selkirk College and other groups in Castlegar, BC, and the Centre for Community Leadership at Niagara College in Welland, Ontario. The latter project included many local, government and corporate partners and featured a coordinated approach to diverse resources and services for voluntary and non-profit groups.

Overall, what does a typical project look like that is considered by college staff to be an exemplary practice in community development in a rural or remote community? Based on the projects submitted to ACCC, a composite exemplary project would include a response to a local need identified through consultations between a college and a number of local groups and agencies. As the college and these groups agreed to work together to locate funding from a government department or agency and operate a program, the college would create or modify the content or delivery of an adult education or vocational training program to suit the local situation. Usually the target population would be the unemployed or underemployed, and would often be facing other barriers due to the marginalization of women, the rural poor or Aboriginal groups.

College Staff Speak Out – Questionnaire and Interview Responses

The current study included a survey of the people who were listed as contact persons on the ACCC Exemplary Practices in Community Development web pages. There were 53 contact persons, holding a variety of positions in 33 colleges, listed for the 62 exemplary projects. Although, as discussed previously, there appears to be a connection between membership and participation in the Task Group and the colleges represented on the Exemplary Practices list, several respondents provided background on certain themes that indicated a strong focus on doing work that they thought needed to be done in their local community, regardless of the official direction of the college. It should also be remembered that the respondents were all project managers or college administrators with responsibility for these types of projects, so the responses tended to be “college-centric” and “leader-centric” in many cases.

Regarding the roles that colleges play in community development, most respondents indicated that partner and initiator were the most significant, although the need for flexibility and diversity of roles was also a prevalent theme. The review of project descriptions and the added detail in the questionnaire responses certainly emphasized the frequency and importance of a broad range of community and agency partnerships in most projects. The importance placed on the initiator role may be a reflection of the selection process for the Exemplary Practices projects, and an understandable bias of the respondents, considering their positions related to the projects. However, as this issue was followed up in the interviews, it seems that it is unlikely that many of the projects would have been in operation without the partnership between key college staff and community groups.

In most of the colleges represented in the survey responses, no particular person or department was specifically responsible for community development. Typically, the role of community development was included within a very diverse job description, often that of campus director/principal or a manager of a department of community or continuing education. Several respondents indicated that at a small campus in a remote community, most staff get involved in community development in many ways, whether or not it is part of their job description. Many responses included examples of staff involvement as volunteers, board members or advisors in local groups due to their personal interest in their communities.

Respondents were encouraged to consider a broad definition of the field of community development, such as “a process by which members of a community determine to take stock of their community, set goals for desirable change and work toward those goals” Selman and Dampier, 1998, p. 8) as they answered the questions. It was assumed that this would be familiar territory for the respondents as similar definitions are found in many other well-known books in this field. For example, Twelvetrees (2002) defines community work as “the process of assisting people to improve their own communities by undertaking collective action” (p. 1). The perceptions of community development that emerged from the questionnaires and interviews were consistent with much of the literature, although only one of the respondents referred to any related research. However, one of the respondents expressed some discomfort about the generality of these definitions and preferred to speak only of community economic development.

The responses indicated that “community” was usually viewed in terms of a locality, that is, a specific geographic location. In several cases, though, “community” was considered as a group of people united by common characteristics or interests. In at least one case, the community was a “virtual” one, created and maintained via communication and information technologies. This type of development is apt to become more common, and may require some re-thinking of how colleges see themselves providing services to “communities” in the future. Burbules and Callister (2000) have examined the idea of community and different theoretical approaches to the concept, with a particular view to examining the relevance of definitions of community to Internet-based communities. They articulate the view that “community”, in whatever context, is always socially imagined; it exists only as a social construction in the realm of the collective imagination. This kind of definition could have a liberating, empowering effect for people in community work as it emphasizes that the nature of a community can change as members’ perceptions of the community change. For example, one of the respondents spoke of Prairie communities considered by local residents to be “hopeless” due to declining population and related issues. Local college staff were working on partnerships to make these communities “vibrant”, but vibrancy had no clear definition other than the meaning assigned to it by community members. By using the socially constructed view of community, the challenge then would become interaction within the community so it comes to be considered by the residents to be vibrant. This may have quite different results than developing an “expert” or “objective” definition of “vibrant”, with related indicators, and working to improve those indicators.

Answers to the survey questions about the official mandate of the college or the campus for community development, were mixed and often contradictory. In most cases, there was affirmation of support for this type of work from the president and board (especially when the respondent was a president or senior administrative officer) or within institutional vision or mission statements. On the other hand, comments attached to this question or other questions, indicated that rarely were adequate staff or budgetary resources assigned to this type of work. Frequently, it was stated or implied that staff were free to pursue community development as long as the projects were cost-recovery within the fiscal year. In some cases, there were specific statements about the lack of official support for this work,

but staff at “ground level” went ahead because they believed it was valuable, or even necessary to do so.

There were significant provincial variations in comments relating to support for community work, reflecting differences in provincial policy. In BC, where colleges have a strong history of community work, and Saskatchewan, where community partnerships are a specific part of the college mandate, and Nova Scotia, where community economic development has recently become an official priority of the local campuses, the influence of provincial policy could clearly be seen in the types of projects listed, the content of the project descriptions and the responses to the survey questions. In Ontario, where this focus is not a part of the college mandate, the corresponding lack of support was evident in parallel ways. However, respondents from all regions of the country spoke of the importance of this work, and their ambition to continue, with or without an “official” mandate. The significance of this work was frequently described in terms consistent with the concept of sustainable human development.

When interviewees were asked about the frequent paradox between nominal or official support but a lack of fiscal or operational support for community development activities, the responses frequently referred to provincial policy rather than difficulties internal to the college. In a few cases there were references to the college central administration being in an urban centre and somewhat out of touch with the realities “on the ground” in rural or remote communities. However, there were at least as many comments to the effect that, although the college was based in what would be technically considered a city, the general sense of the mission of the college was focused on service to the surrounding rural areas, and dealing with rural (often agricultural) issues. It should be noted that these latter comments were typically from a member of the senior administration of the college, not usually from local program staff at a rural campus.

Answers to the question about the contribution of colleges to their communities were very diverse. As expected, most respondents mentioned access to educational and training opportunities as a major contribution. While it would be tempting to consider this another example of the “college-centric” nature of this study, the Statistics Canada research, as previously mentioned, clearly demonstrated a link between distance to a college or university and participation rates, and showed that colleges are significantly more accessible (Frenette, 2003). Several responses also referred to leadership in programs targeted at economic and social problems as being the most significant contribution of the colleges. Comments on this theme were based on many different concepts of community, not simply locality but economic, ethnic, demographic, gender or other types of communities.

Other impacts mentioned in the questionnaires and interviews included the economic benefits of the college payroll, purchasing and student spending as well as the availability of college facilities to the community. A few comments highlighted the belief that the impacts of college involvement (educational, social and economic) were much more direct and visible, and possibly more important, in rural and remote communities than in urban areas.

Many of the themes that emerged from the questionnaires and interviews were similar to the list of characteristics of colleges serving rural and remote communities identified by the ACCC Task Group and published in *College Canada*. These included: access issues related to geography and distance, interaction with First Nations communities, small class sizes and the related financial challenges, the expectation of communities that colleges will provide leadership in economic and social development and a lack of understanding by governments concerning the impact of colleges on their communities (Mills, 2001).

Overall, college staff saw their institutions as primarily fulfilling the roles of partner and initiator; although there was concern about conflicting messages from provincial (and often college) policies and the encouragement of community development work without the providing significant fiscal and human resources. College staff used flexible definitions of “community” and “community development” in their approaches to improving the educational, economic and social conditions of their target populations. These college efforts continuously dealt with the tension between competing views of the role of colleges – serving economic goals or working toward sustainable human development.

Community Development in Canada - Analysis and Application

Community development has been an important social initiative in Canada for several decades. College involvement in community development is not a spontaneous and isolated occurrence. Many of the themes that emerged in this research have been discussed in the community development literature for many years. Jack Rothman proposed a framework that uses three models of community organization to clarify the many types of practice which may fall under this umbrella: locality development, social planning and social action. According to Rothman, locality development focuses on a geographic area and attempts to build local community capacity. Social planning looks at a community segment or functional community and attempts to solve local manifestations of significant social problems. Social action strives to address power relationships and inequitable access to resources in the broader social context. This framework has been widely adopted as a useful way of analyzing and understanding the diverse nature of community work (Cox, Erlich, Rothman, and Tropman, 1970; Wharf, 1979; Lee, 1992).

The projects examined in this study indicate that much of the college involvement in community development today follows these common patterns of Canadian community development (Lotz, 1987; Lee, 1992). While the primary focus centres on locality development, there is also considerable focus on social planning. There appears to be little community work that could truly be called social action, although a few respondents indicated some interest in this approach, frequently with reference to First Nations issues, though they found no outlet for this interest within the college structures. The increasing emphasis placed by governments on economic development was a pervasive theme, but one received with mixed reviews. In some cases, government support for economic development enabled college staff to develop beneficial programs for their communities. In other cases, urgent local social problems appeared to warrant more than an exclusive focus on economic development, and college staff expressed some frustration with government policy in this area and the associated difficulties in accessing funding to address these problems.

Any differences in opinion between funding agencies, college staff, community partners and participants could not be examined in this study. The lack of information concerning the evaluation of these programs raises questions about whether the issues of legitimacy of the proponents of change and the mandate of the group to effect change are adequately being taken into account. An additional concern is that the quest for recognition of legitimacy, whether that recognition is sought from the community or the sponsors, often prevents innovation (Wharf, 1979). The low incidence of innovative projects in this study may very well be largely attributable to this factor. There were positive indications that there is an awareness of these challenges with some responses to the survey questionnaires speaking of “creative proposal writing” to bring forward the desires of the community in a way that could be funded, rather than implement fundable programs that the people did not want.

When considering the environment in which the change is to occur, the preoccupation with locality development and government sponsorship tends to inhibit the investigation of major structural change. Locality development may talk about power and empowerment, but define it in terms of sharing

community resources more equitably among its own members, while ignoring the power imbalances between marginalized groups and other institutions and structures of society (Wharf, 1979; Lee, 1992; Mayo, 1999). In the current study, several of the comments on Aboriginal concerns revealed some awareness of, and frustration with, these marginalization issues. College staff were attempting to partner with Aboriginal community groups to improve local conditions, but the enormity and pervasiveness of the historic and current marginalization of aboriginal people in Canada could not be addressed through available programs.

Locality development workers, especially volunteer workers, may not always be aware of or critically analyze the larger social context of the issue at hand. Social planning and social action workers may presume to speak and act on behalf of their client group, although there may be substantial differences of opinion between the worker and the community (Lee, 1992). Paulo Friere (1970) identified that this is a common problem with the social planning model of community work, and suggested that workers may have to commit “class suicide” in order to become part of the community and speak on its behalf (Mayo, 1999). In this study, some respondents indicated that college staff saw their role as speaking on behalf of the community, while other comments indicated that college staff saw themselves as integral parts of the community and were heavily involved in local issues at a personal level, regardless of their official college roles.

There are two major kinds of educational concerns included in college involvement in community development: formal, related to program content and delivery, and informal, related to community capacity building. The informal educational aspect of community work should not be underemphasized. The essence of community work is fundamentally about teaching/learning interactions. In many cases this is not recognized because the educational aspect of the project is informal, or is subsumed in other project objectives. Through international case studies, extensive theoretical research and critical analysis, Griff Foley (1999) reveals the pervasiveness and importance of informal education in community projects. Too often the educational component of community development does not include the critical learning which enables participants to understand the social and economic context of their situation, the power structures that perpetuate the status quo and their own power to effect meaningful and ongoing change (Foley, 1999; Mayo, 1999). This critique of community development work is directly applicable to the college projects in this study – projects which frequently included little attention to the informal educational aspect of the work and rarely incorporated attempts to increase an understanding of the social and political context of the local situation.

In Canadian colleges, most programs focus on vocational training or some form of career preparation with a general education component normally included in a comprehensive certificate or diploma program. Attempts by some college professors to use the general education component of college programs to increase student understanding of social justice and critical social analysis have not been encouraged by government policy (Johnson, 1990). The tension between general education and job skills in vocational training has been a long-standing feature of many college programs (Luker, 1990). Since the 1980s in particular, the emphasis has been placed on globalization and the need for educational programs to produce a flexible and adaptable work force. Participation in the work force has been redefined to suit the needs of major employers, or to justify a lack of (or cuts to) general education, as well as many publicly funded social programs, not only in Canada but in the US, the UK and elsewhere (Mayo, 1999; Wolf, 2002). These policy trends make it difficult for colleges to incorporate a social action approach into their programs.

Jacob Muller studied the changes to the college system of British Columbia during the 1980s when an increased emphasis was placed on corporate management. The corporate approach to college management focuses on operating colleges like businesses, with a priority given to financial

accountability and the efficient use of public funding. The consequence of this approach is more control by business and industry over the curriculum and a reduced scope for curriculum development by the teachers. With this business-like focus, cuts to funding tend to be targeted at particular programs that are seen as less useful to employers or less financially viable (i.e.: profitable) for the colleges. More often than not these programs are ones that were designed to assist marginalized groups to have greater access to opportunities (Muller, 1990c). Studies of the college systems in Quebec and New Brunswick revealed similar issues (Witchel, 1990; Muller, 1990b). In addition to educational concerns, Jackson and Sanger (2003) have provided a recent analysis of how the dominance of global economic issues in Canadian public policy is affecting a wide range of social services.

Overall, many aspects of the tension between the economic purposes of education (especially employer-driven definitions of economic purposes) and education for sustainable human development have been documented over the past 20 years or more in Canada. In the current study, it is clear that college staff in daily contact with rural and remote communities have been very persistent and creative in maintaining the focus on sustainable human development in the face of substantial pressure, from government policies and “the spirit of the times”, to prioritize certain economic concerns. But it is one thing to attempt to focus on the humanistic benefits of community development, whether in competition or cooperation with economic development, and quite another thing to examine whether these attempts are successful. The next section of this report looks at the evidence and criteria for success in this area.

3. HOW GOOD IS IT? AND HOW WOULD WE KNOW? EVALUATING COLLEGE IMPACT ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

When it came to the tracking or measuring college impact on community development, there was very little data to examine. Most respondents reported that no attempt was made to systematically record results, although many indicated that they attempted to pay attention to informal feedback. When evaluations were conducted, they were usually done by other agencies (often the government department providing the funding), or were part of an assessment of college academic programs, and did not provide useful information for the improvement of the community development aspect of the project. As this theme was further probed through the interviews, one respondent indicated that in two decades of community college experience in more than one province, he had never seen or heard of what he considered to be even a moderately successful attempt to evaluate college impact on community development.

When asked about how evaluations of college efforts in community development should be conducted, most respondents had seen so few evaluations done well (usually none), that they had difficulty visualizing how it could be otherwise. Some respondents had attempted to examine indirect measures of project results, such as program completion rates, welfare participation rates before and after the program, or track media reports related to college interventions. There were a few reports of unsatisfactory attempts to produce quantitative reports on small process-oriented projects. There were also several comments on the difficulty of quantifying the outcomes expected from community development projects, as the goals are often related to broad social concerns and long-term (sometimes generational) change. Responses to questions about evaluation were often based on the assumption that evaluation had to be quantitative, and if quantifiable measures were unavailable or inappropriate, nothing else could be done. Others were not so pessimistic, and suggested focus group feedback for participants in programs, interviews with representatives from partner organizations and the development of long-term follow-up systems. Overall, the respondents appeared to have little familiarity with evaluation literature or diverse evaluation methodologies. Interestingly, this was equally the case with people in senior administration or in program management.

In the absence of recorded data (either quantitative or qualitative) about the impact of college interactions with rural and remote communities, the question about the major results of the programs under consideration produced much speculation, though usually based on several years of grass-roots experience. Increased accessibility of the community to education and training was considered to be a significant impact by many, as was the facilitation of networking and partnerships. A few responses referred to the belief that college involvement in local projects resulted in community capacity-building. That is, many community groups were now better able to take action in terms of identifying needs, selecting appropriate partners, seeking funding and delivering programs, although this was not as extensive as that advocated by Mayo (1999) and Foley (1999), as discussed earlier.

During the interviews, when more detail was requested about the specific benefits of colleges to rural communities, the responses generally referred to very broad, long-term goals of social (and sometimes environmental) improvement. In very few cases, the impact was described as exclusively or even primarily educational or economic. However, in one case, it was reported that a college's success in attracting a major international employer to a rural community had been brought to the attention of senior members of the provincial government. Some subsequent funding from the province for other college initiatives was believed to be linked to this event. The respondent indicated that publicizing college successes can be a useful strategy for improving the priority given to college issues by the government. Although, according to the respondent, there were many substantial and long-term social and environmental benefits to the community resulting from college interaction with the employer, it appears that the immediate economic benefits were what attracted government attention. Again, it was apparent that education for sustainable human development was a priority of college staff in rural communities, while governments tended to focus on the immediate economic consequences of educational pursuits.

Another example of how this tension gets played out is revealed in a recent study sponsored by the Alberta Association of Colleges and Technical Institutes. The study looked at the social benefits of a college education, such as improved health, lower incarceration rates, reduced dependence on social programs and so on, but in each case the social benefit was redefined in economic terms and a dollar value assigned to it. Since the purpose of the report was for advocacy on behalf of the college system, particularly with the provincial government, the return on investment for the province, and for individuals, became the primary focus of the report. This approach has been used to produce advocacy reports for more than 200 colleges in the US and Canada in recent years, and other similar reports are in process (Christopherson and Robison, 2003).

Returning to the study at hand, respondents reported factors contributing to or inhibiting the successful involvement of colleges in community development based on experience rather than formal evaluation. Again, many responses focused on the track record of the college (and often particular college staff) in networking and problem-solving in the community. The belief was clearly indicated that without a long-standing healthy working relationship, individual projects were unlikely to be successful by anyone's measure. Solid support from the college administration for this kind of work, both verbal and financial was considered by many to be essential for success and a lack thereof was frequently blamed for failure. Related to this theme, there was considerable frustration expressed about the temporary and insufficient nature of the funding available for these projects, resulting in staff shortages and turnover and the termination of promising projects before the desired results could be achieved. The conditional and temporary nature of funding for community development projects in Canada has long been documented as a major challenge in this field (Lee, 1992).

Concerns about funding challenges were often associated with the difficulties of dealing with several ministries of a provincial government, or the interactions between local, provincial and federal

governments and a variety of non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Complications or confusion about the mandates of multiple departments, ministries and NGOs were frequently cited as obstacles to more successful interactions between colleges and Aboriginal communities.

Another frequently mentioned obstacle to successful college involvement in community development was, as would be expected, the challenge of serving vast areas with sparse populations. Several attempts to use information technology solutions to this were discussed, but in every example mentioned, face-to-face interaction of some type was needed to supplement the technology. The involvement of colleges in the Rural Access Project (RAP) in Saskatchewan was one instance where this need was demonstrated. Simply assisting a community to become connected to the Internet and ensuring that computers were available was never seen as a solution to the challenges of access to education or other community services. Although the respondents in the current study did not refer to the literature in this field, many thorough discussions of the related issues have been published. For instance, Burbules and Callister (2000) pointed out the many flaws with approaches to IT based on the “computer as panacea” or “computer as tool” viewpoints. These approaches frequently omit or obscure the many personal and cultural issues that inhibit access to information, or direct people toward certain types of information access without enabling them to become informed and critical consumers of what they may encounter. Similar concerns have also been raised in the Canadian context (Moll, 2001).

Several of the respondents indicated some satisfaction with the uniqueness of their college’s response to community needs. When these programs were scrutinized more closely by the researcher, in almost every case a very similar program (often several) was discovered at another college. When this theme was followed up in the interviews, most respondents had very little knowledge of the related programs at other colleges, even though in several cases these were listed on the same website as the respondent’s own project. Some respondents questioned the importance of uniqueness, and considered the criteria of effective response to community need to be much more important. There were several comments about the need to find better ways to communicate information about successful programs to small rural and remote campuses, as well as the concern that managers in these locations were frequently stretched by their current workloads and had little time to review research.

Evaluation Challenges

Overall, college staff were concerned with doing the right thing for their communities, and were looking for feedback to indicate what the communities thought about college priorities, programs and results. However, due to diverse and demanding job descriptions, the uncertain and intermittent nature of funding and the complexities of forming and re-forming partnerships, as well as an apparent lack of familiarity with a wide range of evaluation literature and practice, most felt unable to obtain an adequate overview of how well they were doing. Since most evaluations of college programs are quantitative in nature, there appeared to be an assumption that college involvement in community development would have to be quantified to be evaluated. While it may be true that many funding and regulatory agencies require quantitative reports, it seems that in order to evaluate the projects included in this study, some form of qualitative analysis would be needed. A consultative, participatory approach would be necessary, not only for the program evaluation, but to support decisions about how success is defined, who evaluates whom and what will happen to the evaluation findings.

The challenges related to evaluation can be seen as another example of the tension between competing views regarding the role of colleges. Government policies that emphasize the economic purposes of colleges focus institutional evaluation on economic factors such as the employment rate of graduates

and the cost-effectiveness of the program. College staff who are involved in community work tend to be focused on sustainable human development, and find the question of evaluation related to this approach to be challenging and unsupported by policy or funding.

As these many challenges are common to most types of social programs, there may be evaluation processes from other fields that could be adapted to the situations of the colleges in this study. Kirby and McKenna (1989) developed a handbook of research methods for use by or with people involved in social programs targeted at people on the “margins”. They use the term margins to refer to “the context in which people suffer injustice, inequality and exploitation” (p. 33) and describe a range of processes for defining a research question, doing the research and reporting and acting on the findings. Maguire (1987) also produced an analysis of participatory research practice with detailed examples which, although focusing on self-evaluation of women’s organizations, provides considerable insight into the value and defensibility of qualitative research of potential relevance to many situations. There are also a number of approaches to evaluation research in the educational field and authors such as Weiss (1998) provide considerable useful background on how to make decisions about what is evaluated, what methods are used (whether quantitative or qualitative or some combination) and how results are reported. However, the many challenges to implementing appropriate evaluation processes and using the results to improve decision-making, should not be underestimated, as Weiss (1988) has pointed out.

An overview of the responses related to the evaluation of community development work revealed some main recurring themes. The major goals of this work were huge and complex, including eradication of major social problems, improvement of ecological and environmental situations, community capacity-building and strengthening the relationships between colleges and their communities. It was recognized that success in these areas would be extremely challenging to evaluate, particularly with the limited range of (mostly quantitative) evaluation methodologies with which respondents were familiar. Some respondents expressed strong feelings that provincial and college interest in community development needed to be followed up with fiscal and operational support that included provision for adequate and relevant evaluations.

In this study, there was considerable interest in finding out how well colleges were doing in their involvements in community development, and some serious thought had been given to this area. It seems that colleges across Canada are instrumental in partnering with many groups in rural and remote areas, and together are producing significant social, environmental and economic benefits. The lack of systematic recording, analysis and publishing of these benefits is believed by participants to be hindering advocacy work for colleges in general and for non-urban campuses in particular. Hopefully, the current study will prove to be a step forward in addressing this challenge.

4. WHAT NOW? RECOMMENDATIONS AND NEXT STEPS

Throughout this study many diverse and wide-ranging suggestions and recommendations emerged. Various recommendations had implications locally, college-wide, provincially and nationally. Institutional support for many of these recommendations is necessary, as most of the local college staff are doing community development work on top of an already large and complex job, and would have difficulty with more tasks being added. The major themes related to the recommendations can be summarized as follows:

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- There is a significant requirement for improved communication among colleges in rural and remote communities, particularly at the level of program developers and managers, especially with regard to sharing successful practices.
 - Professional development for college staff is needed in the areas of community development, creative partnerships, proposal writing, as well as evaluation theory and practice.
 - Appropriate evaluation processes should be built into community development projects at the planning stage, supported by adequate resources, and evaluation results shared.
 - There is a need for further study of college involvements in community development in rural and remote communities, which should include case studies of apparent successes, a survey of relevant research, examples from other jurisdictions (US, UK, Australia, elsewhere), feedback from community partners and participants, and examination of evaluation methodologies in order to inform and improve future projects.
 - The identification of funding for pilot projects or demonstration sites, in order to showcase exemplary practices, identify factors related to beneficial interactions, document consequences and lessons learned, and publish the results.
 - A recognition, at both the college and provincial level, of the tension between economic and sustainable human development roles for colleges, and a search for opportunities to bring this into the realm of open debate on public policy.
 - The significance of First Nations concerns needs to be recognized up front at the project planning stage, and more attention needs to be paid to the challenges of inter-governmental and inter-departmental cooperation in projects that involve First Nations communities. The lessons learned through the interaction of the Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technology and the regional colleges, and by the “college within a college” approach of Nagahneewin College of Indigenous Studies and Confederation College in Thunder Bay, Ontario may be relevant in other jurisdictions.
 - There is a desire for more effective advocacy promoting the value and importance of college involvement in community development, within colleges, to potential community partners, to provincial governments, to federal departments and agencies.
 - Staff at local college campuses with successful track records in community development should be encouraged to share their expertise, not only in other rural and remote areas, but with urban colleges dealing with identified groups, and colleges in developing countries where college-community cooperation is desperately needed.

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INTERNET RESOURCES

Association of Canadian Community Colleges: www.accc.ca

ACCC Serving Rural and Remote Communities Initiative
www.accc.ca/rural/index.cfm

Canadian Commission for UNESCO: www.unesco.ca

UNESCO International Congress on Technical and Vocational Education:
www.unevoc.de/congress/index.htm

UNESCO World Conference on Higher Education: www.unesco.org/education/educprog/wche/index.html

APPENDIX A

Methodology

British Columbia was highly over-represented in the project listings, both in the number of projects and the number of colleges, with almost one third of the total number of projects (see Table 1). Quebec was considerably under-represented, considering the number of cégeps in that province and the many rural and remote communities in which they operate. This is apt to be a reflection of the composition of the Task Group (again, a largely self-selected group) and the limited promotion that the Serving Rural and Remote Communities Initiative has done in French, rather than a substantive indication that community development is thriving in BC and languishing in Quebec or elsewhere.

Table 1 – Number of Projects and Number of Colleges, by Province

Province	BC	AB	SK	MB	ON	QC	NB	PI	NS	NL	Total
Projects	20	8	3	2	11	4	4	1	6	3	62
Colleges	7	6	2	2	8	3	1	1	2	1	33

A review of the projects revealed that they tended to fall into five main categories, and frequently combined features of more than one category. Projects were typically local variations of college education or training programs, an adaptation of adult education or literacy programs, a partnership with local organizations or agencies or an arrangement with a corporate partner or employer group. In a small number of cases, the project was unique, unusual or simply difficult to classify.

Table 2 – Types of Projects

Project Category	Number
Partnerships with organizations, agencies, government departments	36
Adaptations of college education and training programs	30
Adaptations of adult education or literacy programs	17
Partnerships with employer(s)	13
Unique or unusual	10

(Note: There were 62 projects in total, but many projects had characteristics belonging to more than one category.)

The research into these projects included a survey of the people who were listed as contact persons on the ACCC Exemplary Practices in Community Development web pages. For the 62 projects there were 53 contact persons holding a variety of positions in 33 colleges. Many of the themes were similar to the list of characteristics of colleges serving rural and remote communities identified by the ACCC Task Group and published in *College Canada* (Mills, 2001). Although, as discussed previously, there appears to be a connection between membership and participation in the Task Group and the

colleges represented on the Exemplary Practices list, several respondents provided background on certain themes that indicated a strong focus on doing good work in their local community, regardless of the official direction of the college. It should also be remembered that the respondents were all project managers or college administrators with responsibility for these types of projects, so the responses tended to be “college-centric” and “leader-centric” in many cases.

The contact list included presidents, CEOs and vice-presidents, as well as campus directors or principals, program or department managers (the largest group), and other people affiliated with a college through their community program position. The group of contacts was well-balanced in terms of gender (26 female, 27 male), although the program and department managers and related positions were slightly more apt to be female (21 female, 18 male). Due to staff turnover and reassignment, and the transitory nature of community development projects, it was only possible to get current contact information for about 80 percent of the original list.

Questionnaires were sent to all current and former contacts, with a request that it should be passed along to another person in the same project if the listed contact was unavailable. Due to a number of procedural delays, computer glitches, address corrections and so on, the questionnaires which were planned to be distributed in May, 2003, were not received by some people until late June or July. The summer vacation period and the linkages between many of the projects and the regular academic operations of the colleges may have been responsible for the lower than expected response rate. Eventually, 11 questionnaires were returned (21 percent of the original number of contacts), some by alternate personnel who were involved in the listed projects. The responses represented every major region of Canada, except Quebec or the Territories.

The questionnaires asked about the colleges’ involvement in community development work in general, not just the listed projects (see Questionnaire, Appendix B). Respondents were encouraged to look at broad definitions of community development such as “a process by which members of a community determine to take stock of their community, set goals for desirable change, and work toward those goals” (Selman & Dampier, 1998, p. 8).

The questions were open-ended and were designed to elicit information about the local campus and community, the role of college programs and staff in community development, the impact of colleges on rural and remote communities, the evaluation of these programs or impacts and the lessons learned. A query about interest and availability for a follow-up interview was included in the questionnaire. Seven interviews were conducted by telephone or email and focused on the elaboration or clarification of issues raised by the responses to the questionnaires. Each interview was recorded and transcribed, and examined for recurring themes and relevant comments on the topic at hand.

APPENDIX B

Questionnaire

Exemplary Practices: Community Colleges and Community Development

Please feel free to answer any or all questions, briefly or in detail.

Participant information:

Name:

Position:

Years in this position:

College and Community Information:

College:

Campus or Learning Centre:

Local Community:

Brief overview of size and significant characteristics of campus and community:

Keeping in mind broad definitions of community development, such as “a process by which members of a community determine to take stock of their community, set goals for desirable change, and work toward those goals”, please answer the following:

1. What role (or roles) does your campus play in local community development? (such as: initiator, partner, supporter, enabler, contributor, critic, other) Which role is most significant? Why?
2. Who at the campus is a major player in this role? (such as: personnel, department, program, other) Briefly explain why you think so.
3. Is this role in community development mandated by your college? (e.g.: included in job descriptions, part of program goals, budgeted for, supported by Board of Governors, other?)
4. What contributions, in your experience, do colleges make to their communities? (Give examples, if appropriate)
5. How is the impact of the college on community development currently being tracked, measured, or evaluated? What are the major findings of the evaluations?
6. What do you think is the major result, product or consequence of college involvement in community development? Briefly explain.
7. What factors seem most important for successful college involvement in community development?
8. What factors inhibit or prevent the college from fulfilling its potential for community involvement?
9. Ideally, how could or should the effectiveness of the college in this role be evaluated?
10. Would you like to comment on any other aspects of this general topic (colleges and community development)?

Would you be interested in being contacted for a follow-up interview for clarification of issues raised in this survey?

If so, please indicate your preferred method of contact: telephone number or email address.

Thank you.