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Engage!

Community from a Child's Perspective

Consider community from your child's perspective. Who belongs in their community? What does their community look like?

Community is a critical component in the development and growth of a child. Children need supportive parents, safe neighbourhoods, adult mentors, and caring teachers. They need role models who will help them to develop a sense of civic and social responsibility. Most of all, children need to feel that they belong.

As a society, we need to embrace our children. As cliché as it may sound, children are our future and our community's future. We ought to help nurture and care for their community today so that they can care for it tomorrow.

Our kids spend hours every day in a ready-made community.

At school they interact with people of varying ages, ethnic backgrounds and abilities. But how does community make an impact on education?

We have been looking at this issue for a few months and invite you to explore some of the resources we've collected.

 [Visit our Kids Corner!](#)

Related Links:

- [School as Community](#)
- [Resources for parents](#)

By: Louise Kearney with Anita Fieguth

The Social Economy Profits Community

What do these have in common?: a car co-op, a community arts initiative, a microcredit program, a women's housing project, and a community economic development venture.

They're all part of the social economy. They do not belong to the conventional business or corporate sector that is focused on financial profit. They are not publicly administered, though they may receive support from government. These initiatives and organizations, along with many others in the so-called third sector, contribute in significant ways to collective social and economic (and environmental and cultural) well-being. In other words, they have a multiple bottom-line.

In a world obsessed with competitiveness and individual profit, these types of initiatives offer a welcome alternative: they advance collective well-being and community profit.

The term "social economy" was first used widely in Canada in Quebec. Initially it was used to describe enterprises and organizations which are autonomous and private in nature, but where capital and the means of production are collective.

 [on the social economy!](#)

Related Links:

- [Summer School on Building Community](#)
- [Meet a Social Economy Champion!](#)

By: Leslie Kemp

The Teen Factor

Organizers in Saint John's Vibrant Communities initiative have been working hard to find ways to address teen pregnancy in Saint John, which stood at 43 out of 1,000 births in 1999. Community partners have been implementing various strategies to assist children, youth and young single parents in an effort to prevent and reduce poverty.

Exposing teens to the realities of parenting is one of those strategies. The regional health authority's Community Health Centre Using manages a program called "Baby Think It Over," which sees teens care for an infant simulator that mimics the random crying patterns of a newborn child for 48 hours.

Other strategies in use include supporting teen parents. Once a teen becomes pregnant, there is little available in the way of housing in the community. So, in 2002 the community opened [First Steps Housing Project Inc.](#), a residence for homeless parenting and pregnant teens which supports 12 pregnant and parenting youth at any one time. First Steps also provides family doctors, educational service professionals, abuse outreach and addiction counselors as requested.

Vibrant Communities Saint John is supported by various key partners and funders. In addition, various sectors and community residents participate on their leadership roundtable. See who's involved [here](#).



[Read Caledon's paper on Saint John's efforts to help young people!](#)

Related Links:

- [Vibrant Communities in Saint John](#)
- [Saint John Community Plan](#)

By: Kerrie Skillen

Determined Optimism & Innovation

How Voluntary Sector Organizations Can be Self-sustaining

The era of full funding from government sources has ended. In the last 10 years, voluntary sector organizations, working at the community level to provide social and employment services, have experienced continuous cutbacks in government contributions combined with increased demands for results and accountability.

Government support for the work of community-based voluntary sector organizations is not expected to return to pre-1990's levels.

If organizations are going to continue to make valuable contributions to the well-being of families, neighbourhoods and communities they need to develop the capacity to be more enterprising.

A successful future will depend on how well an organization can expand its relationships with individuals and organizations in all three sectors of society. In addition to government, resources need to be secured from business and the sector in which these organizations are key players - "civil society".

Success will depend on an organization's ability to develop key capacities.

 [on the key capacities to self-sustainability.](#)

Related Links:

- [The 21st Century NGO: In the Market for Change](#)
- [Societal Learning: Creating Big-Systems Change](#)

By: David Pell

What? So what? Now what?

Several years ago I was facilitating a session for a community group and as we came to agreement on an issue a member of the roundtable said, "Well that's the what we need to do. Now we need to answer the questions: So what? What difference will this make? Then we need to ask, now what? What do we do about it?"

This simple formula has stuck with me ever since.

What? – Community leadership

We talk about community leadership in many ways. For some of us it is another program thrust, a technique that needs to be implemented. For others, community leadership is a way of being - a deeply held belief that a school is at the heart of a neighbourhood and the only way to improve the school's performance is to better the neighbourhood.

Though I would prefer you believe the latter, community leadership, to me, is both about technique and passion.

What is it to you?



[So what? Now what?](#)

Related Links:

- [More from Paul on leadership](#)
- [More resources on leadership](#)

By: Paul Born