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Engage!

From Baking Bread to Raising a Child *Simple and Complex Solutions*

"The tendency of people in positions of power is to believe that they can control and they believe in the power of 'let us figure it out.' 'Let's hire the experts, let us sit in a room, figure it out and then it'll happen.' That is a common theme and it's one that I just don't believe in." - James Taylor, President & CEO, University of Louisville Hospital, Kentucky

From baking bread to raising a child, we believe that as long as we just keep working at a problem or system (if we think more, plan more effectively, and keep our fingers crossed), we will find a solution.

We think logic and reason will help us find the answers we need, and often believe that every problem has one solution. But that's not necessarily true, says Brenda Zimmerman, a professor at the University of Toronto's School of Business who applies complexity science to human services in an effort to help us see the interrelated nature between ideas and systems.

Complexity science is not a single theory. It involves the study of complex adaptive systems and their relationships, organization, outcomes and sustainability.



"Complexity science reframes our view of many systems," writes Brenda. "Systems as apparently diverse as stock markets, human bodies, forest ecosystems, manufacturing businesses, immune systems, termite colonies, and hospitals seem to share some patterns of behavior. These shared patterns of behavior provide insights into sustainability, viability, health, and innovation. Leaders and managers in organizations of all types are using complexity science to discover new ways of working."

 [A Complexity Science Primer](#)

Related Links:

- [Meet Brenda Zimmerman](#)
- [Interview with Brenda Zimmerman](#) 
- [Nine Emerging and Connected Organizational and Leadership Principles](#)

By: Paul Born

Movements for Change

"Movements for change have first challenged and then later defined the civic landscape. They have driven new behaviors, practices and policies."
- Tyler Norris, 2001

Civil Rights. Mothers Against Drunk Driving. The environmental movement. Anti-globalization. We can all name examples of movements for change, movements that have altered the way we think and act; but can we create one?

Last year, Tamarack launched a learning initiative on dynamic community engagement. This summer, we are delving into an intriguing world of systems change, innovation, and activism; we are challenging ourselves, and our friends, to think about whether, how, and under what circumstances, movements for change can be deliberately created in Canada.

A key component of our learning is engaging with the rich experiences and diverse perspectives of those directly involved in social change initiatives in Canada. July's tele-learning session sparked a fascinating conversation that provided both direction and focus for our ongoing exploration of movements.

Related Links:

- [Some initial thoughts on Movements for Change](#)
- [Dynamic Community Engagement](#)

By: Chris Cowperthwaite

Supporting local efforts

"Run-down" neighbourhoods get a boost from ECOF.


For a region that is supposed to be struggling, things are pretty lively in Trois-Rivières, the capital of the Mauricie region in Quebec!

While one neighbourhood organized a forum to discuss its future, another planned a spring festival. In yet another, people explore how to improve the safety of their neighbourhood by creating opportunities for young people.

In each of them, small community ventures - such as a home cleaning service, a newspaper and catering venture - are taking hold.

What do all these activities, so varied at first glance, have in common, apart from the fact that they are located in what some would call "run-down" neighbourhoods?

They are part of a collective effort by local residents to build strong neighbourhoods and they emerge, in part, because of support from the Économie communautaire de Francheville (ECOF), also known as the CDÉC de Trois-Rivières.

 Learn more about ECOF, one of Trois-Rivières' greatest resources, and a participating member of the Vibrant Communities pan-Canadian learning community [here](#).

Related Links:

- [ECOF website](#)
- [Trois-Rivières in Vibrant Communities](#)

By: William Ninacs & Francine Gareau

Our Careless Society



Co-director of the [Asset-Based Community Development Institute](#) at Northwestern University and author of several notable publications, including *The Careless Society* and *Building Communities from the Inside Out*, John McKnight is a recognized leader in community development research and practice.

McKnight's reputation has been built on his efforts to assist organizations to understand how to effectively help society's disadvantaged. He believes both Canada and the United States have been "careless in how they have attempted to assist ("care for") the disadvantaged."

I grew up in the Fraser Valley of British Columbia and many of my neighbours were from the Punjab of India. Sikhs and Mennonites had a lot in common: we had close-knit communities, much of our social life revolved around church activities, we farmed and we all loved to eat!

As we worked together on the farm fields we would share our food. I remember sitting in the middle of a raspberry patch as a boy, with a roti in my hand and receiving a ladle of the finest homemade curry you could ever taste. I fell in love with Indian food on the spot.

Thirty years on, that love has not wavered – an entire cupboard in our kitchen is devoted to Indian spices, I seek out Indian restaurants wherever I travel, and for fun I love nothing more than to invite over a dozen friends for an Indian meal.

I start by shopping for the freshest ingredients and I will often cook for eight hours - creating up to a dozen dishes. Honestly, there's nothing that gives me as much joy as cooking an Indian meal for friends and family.

And so, I'm happy to share my recipe for Sag Paneer with you. This is the dish my son specifically requested for his birthday meal and I hope it will soon become a special dish in your home!

 [Get Paul's recipe!](#)

Related Links:

- [The Curry Addict's Website](#)
- [Check out Tamarack's kitchen for more great recipes!](#)

By: Paul Born