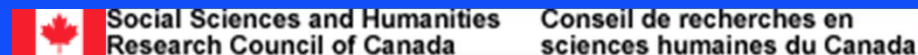


CAPacity

The Role of Community Access Centres in Building Capacity in Rural Areas

Evan Dickinson

Rural and Small Town Programme
Mount Allison University



The Community Access Program

“CAP aims to give residents of rural and remote areas access to [affordable public Internet terminals], providing rural Canadians with a new way to communicate, learn and do business in the knowledge-based economy.”

Community Access Program | Connecting Canadians: <http://connect.gc.ca/en/240-e.asp>

Specifically CAP aims to:

- Promote public awareness of the benefits and opportunities of using information technology and services;
- Help citizens become better informed through the exchange of ideas and information;
- Provide training for individuals in the use of information technologies;
- Support online delivery of government programs and services;
- Facilitate business activities such as electronic commerce; and
- Conduct online learning and researching.

How?

- Partnership between:
 - Federal, Provincial and Local Government
 - Private Sector
 - Community Groups
- Federal Government acts as enabler through Industry Canada
- Community based administration

Capacity Model

ASSETS

- Economic Capital
- Human Skills and Abilities
- Social Capital
- Natural Resources

PROCESSES

Market
Bureaucratic
Associative
Communal

VALUED OUTCOMES

- Economic prosperity
- Social and political inclusion
- Environmental stewardship
- Social and self-worth
- Safety and security
- Social cohesion

Outcomes become new assets and liabilities

CAPacity Model

- **Economic Capital**
 - Capital and on-going funding from IC
- **Human Skills and Abilities / Social Capital**
 - Volunteers
 - Municipal paid positions

Bureaucratic

Federal/ provincial/
municipal gov't

Associative

Community Groups

VALUED OUTCOMES

"awareness of the benefits and opportunities of using information technology and services"

"being better informed through the exchange of ideas and information"

New technology and computer skills, etc.

Research Aims / Objectives

- Assess to what degree the achievement of these desired outcomes is occurring.
- Measure how much CAP sites are aiding the building of community capacity in rural areas.

Specifically we intend to measure...

- How CAP sites have increased economic assets in rural communities and to what degree this new economic capacity is being utilized to further build capacity;
- How CAP sites make use of existing human and social capital;
- How CAP sites have increased human and social capital (and therefore the capacity of their host communities) and;
- How the added capacity created by CAP sites being used by the communities.

Methodology

- Examination of literature, government and other.
- Analysis of applicable data from existing NRE sources:
 - 2001 Household survey
 - 2003 Communications Inventory
- Collection and analysis of new primary data from CAP sites on the “Role of Community Access Centers in Building Capacity in Rural Areas”:
 - Interview guide created
 - Mostly open-ended, qualitative questions
 - Option to complete as an interview or as a self-administered survey

Findings

Preliminary at this stage, given all data collection has not yet been completed.

- 18 of 22 sites in observatory have CAP facilities (82%).
- 8 responses received (April 15) from 7 sites.
- CAP means different things to different communities
 - vast range of the hardware available
 - vast range of services offered
- Anecdotal evidence suggest CAP sites help build capacity in some way, most often building social and human capital through associative social relationships.

Next Steps

- Finish analysis of household survey data and communications inventory data.
- Complete remaining interviews / receive completed interview guides.
- Analyze interviews.
- Prepare report – September 2004.

