



TOOLS & TECHNIQUES

FOR COMMUNITY RECOVERY & RENEWAL

Developed and designed by the Centre for Community Enterprise
with funding from Forest Renewal BC, the Ministry of Community
Development, Co-operatives & Volunteers, & the Rural Secretariat



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This work is re-issue of the First Edition of *Tools and Techniques for Community Recovery and Renewal* (2000), repaginated for purposes of distribution in small segments via the internet.

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ISBN 1-895818-43-5



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Tools & Techniques

Techniques' editor and chief contributor, as well as to many other people who assisted: Michelle Colussi, Flo Frank, Keith Jacobsen, Mike Lewis, Sandy Lockhart, James MacGregor, Don McNair, Rod Paynter, Brigitta Perry, Pippa Rowcliffe, Ivan Thompson, and Gary Wilson. We also express deep appreciation to FRBC, to the provincial Ministry of Community Development, Co-operatives, and Volunteers, and to the Rural Secretariat for funding this resource.

This is a work in progress. The Centre is committed to revise, expand, and update *Tools & Techniques* in the years to come so that it keeps pace with the highly innovative field of community economic development. We therefore encourage readers to use the Community Resilience pages at our website, www.cedworks.com, to send us suggestions and recommendations, not only for additional entries but also for resources and publications. The Centre has earmarked some of its own resources for this work, and is seeking funding for new entries.

Many, many people have contributed to the learning represented here. Many, many more will contribute in the years ahead. We invite you to consider this a collective resource which we all keep building, and from which we all keep learning.

Mike Lewis
Executive Director, Centre for Community Enterprise
November 2000



Introduction

This publication is the initial version of, in effect, an encyclopedia - an encyclopedia of certain practical activities that communities have used to handle the socio-economic changes (such as plant closings or major out-migration) which could severely threaten them. As the title indicates, we have called these activities simply community economic development tools and techniques. The selection found in this edition represents some of the best practices used in the Canadian context, although most of them are also to be found in the U.S. The intent of these compiled entries is to provide a ready resource for community organizations that seek to build community resilience and stability in the face of current or expected economic and social change.

Due to constraints of time and effort, there are significant omissions, among them tools and techniques in the fields of housing and in human services. With the assistance of readers and other supporters, future editions shall correct those omissions.

We hope all sorts of community-based organizations (such as Community Development Corporations, Chambers of Commerce, and even municipal government agencies) can make use of *Tools & Techniques for Community Recovery & Renewal*. There is a slight emphasis in this edition on *what would be most useful for smaller cities, towns, and rural regions*, and discussion is often geared to that context. In addition, for concrete applications, we have concentrated on cases and opportunities in British Columbia. However, the tools described here have also been used and some even invented in larger or urban settings throughout North America, and many case illustrations come from other provinces and throughout the U.S.

Historically, the usual efforts to strengthen the local economy of a community have relied on a single approach - such as industrial recruitment, buy-local campaigns, or mainstreet improvement. These approaches have had their champions and successes. Sometimes these approaches have been combined and have included more than one community-building project. But, generally speaking, in the past these efforts have not been integrated as a systematic strategy to strengthen the over-all resilience of a community to handle economic and social change.

There is nothing wrong with communities choosing to carry out a single project or a series of projects for local improvement (say, upgrading the local fair grounds, or training local tour guides to improve tourism appeal, or holding monthly business clinics). Most such

projects are good in themselves, but what we are assuming here is that communities can take a very different and more powerful sort of approach, trying something bigger: namely, community economic development (CED).

CED is not a matter of focussing on one or another community-building project, or on a limited strategy like industrial recruitment. It is a *comprehensive system for development* that is intended for on-going implementation over at least a decade or two, usually much more. Thus the individual tools are described here under the assumption that they are to be used in a wide-ranging CED strategy, not as isolated projects. This strategy is intended to empower the community to handle its own destiny; it is not focussed on growth as such, but on capacity to handle economic and social change for local benefit.

CED in its most effective format embodies the following features:

- a multi-functional, comprehensive strategy or development system of on-going activities, in contrast to any individual economic development project or other isolated attempts at community betterment;
- an integration or merging of economic and social goals to make a more powerful impact for community revitalization;
- a base of operating principles that empower the broad range of community residents for the governance both of their development organizations and their community as a whole;
- a process guided by strategic planning and analysis, in contrast to opportunistic and unsystematic tactics;
- a businesslike financial management approach that builds both ownership of assets and a diverse range of financial and other partners and supporters; and finally,
- an organizational format that is nonprofit, independent, and non-governmental, even though for-profit or governmental entities are linked to its work.

Considering that over-all perspective, the reader of this compendium will also recognize that the individual tools described here are just single pieces to be integrated in a process or system. Thus they will be most successful in the context of a systematic CED approach. That certainly *does not mean* that every tool described here must be used in order to create a system for development. Only those tools that make sense within the context of the particular community and its resources and limitations ought to be used. However, the community leadership must carefully consider how to maintain a long-term, on-going process of development, and this on-going process will require, at a minimum, a special organization for guiding the CED strategy.

Organizations that take such a systematic development approach will be referred to throughout as CEDOs: community economic development organizations. A CEDO provides

the locus for evolving and managing the CED strategy. One entry focusses specifically on creating such an organization. Several other items deal with the preliminaries to founding or re-shaping this lead group, activities such as a community-wide visioning process.

An extended illustration of a successful CED effort in Revelstoke, B.C., using a variety of tools in the rural region/small town context is provided in Appendix A. The CEDO described there is by no means intended as a model; it is in fact a rather rare combination of several inter-linked organizations. But the case can serve as an introduction to a real development system and how a CEDO manages it. Other communities will not take the same general route; each must find its own pathway. The story of Revelstoke is however, a concrete example of how CED can work, and to read it is to see a whole array of tools put to use.

HOW THIS PUBLICATION IS ORGANIZED

Tools & Techniques is organized by topic groups. For example, all tools that are directly relevant to development finance are listed under the topic heading, “Addressing the Financial Gaps.” Sometimes there are also sub-topics under which a group of entries are listed. For instance, “Personal Development and Preparation” appears under the topic of “Building Human Resources,” and it includes three entries. Each topic group (and sometimes a sub-topic group) is introduced by a general discussion of that particular CED function or activity. Then, within each topic group or sub-topic heading, each entry is presented in identical format:

- ***Description***
- ***Benefits***
- ***Major challenges***
- ***Some practical steps***
- ***Resource organizations & contacts***
- ***Publications***

Within any entry there may be cross-references to other parts of this publication as well as references to resources available through the internet. If you are using *Tools & Techniques* in its portable document format (PDF) and are viewing it on a computer monitor, cross-references appear in dark purple letters. References to internet resources appear in green. (In the complete -- i.e., consecutively paginated -- print edition of *Tools & Techniques*, these

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references are hotlinked to other points in the publication and on the internet.) In printed copies of this publication, cross-references and references both appear in a dark grey hue.

A number of recommended case studies, distinguished by an asterisk (*), are available from the Centre for Community Enterprise in portable document format at nominal charge. Phone 1-888-255-6779 for assistance.

Note that this publication is a companion to *The Community Resilience Manual: A Resource for Rural Recovery & Renewal*. The Manual itself is a fundamentally important publication for any community that is addressing its economic and social future. It will be assumed that the Manual is recognized by the reader as key, and it will not be repeatedly cited; only other helpful publications will be listed where appropriate.