

CAPACITY BUILDING:

A FRAMEWORK FOR STRENGTHENING STEWARDSHIP IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

MARCH 2009

PREPARED BY:

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PREPARED FOR:

THE STEWARDSHIP CENTRE FOR BRITISH COLUMBIA



STEWARDSHIP
centre for
British
Columbia

Fraser Salmon & Watersheds Program



Fraser Basin Council



Fisheries and Oceans
Canada



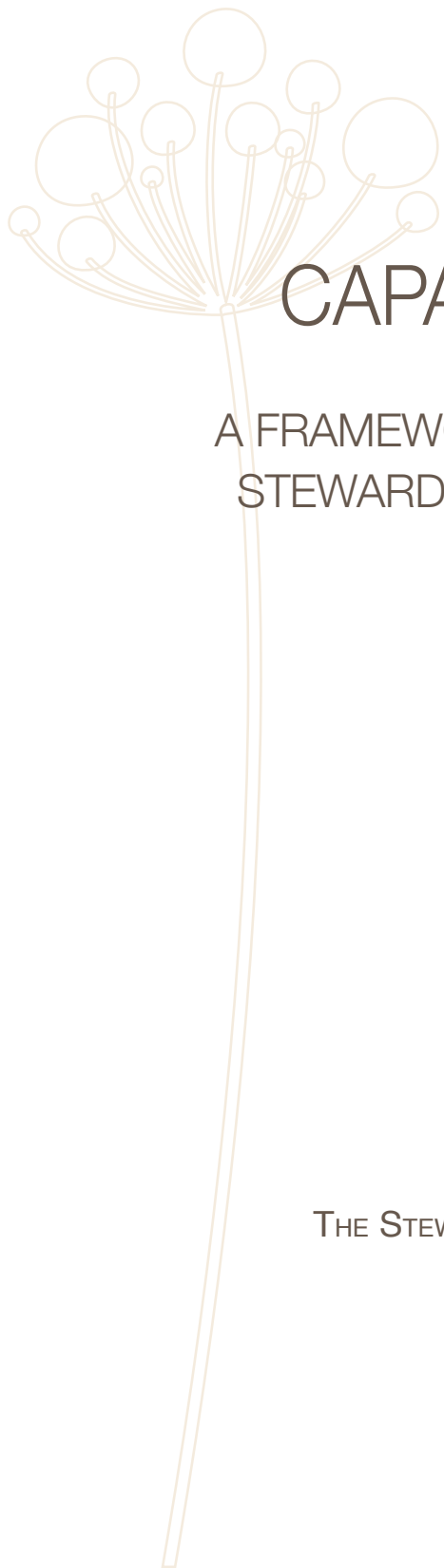
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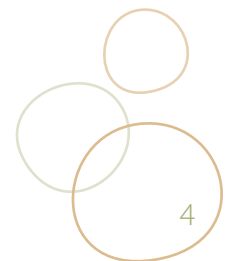
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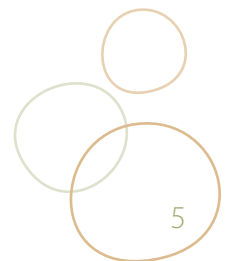
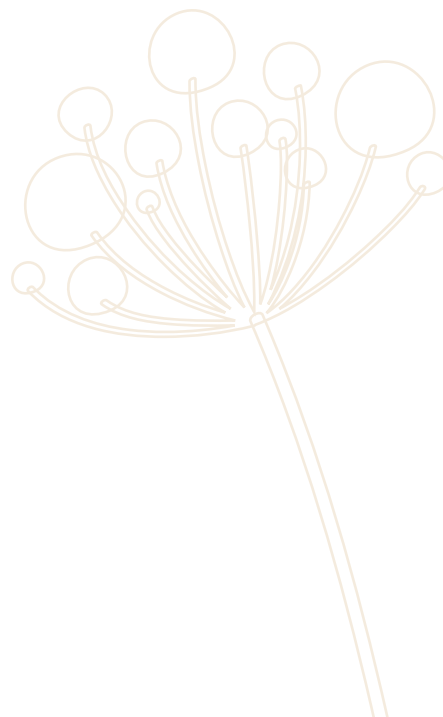
KRISTINE WEBBER-LAMPA

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Naomi Tabata, Stewardship Centre for BC

Edwin Hubert, Stewardship Outreach Coordinator, Ministry of Environment

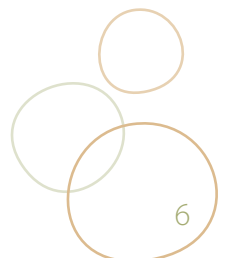
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About the Authors

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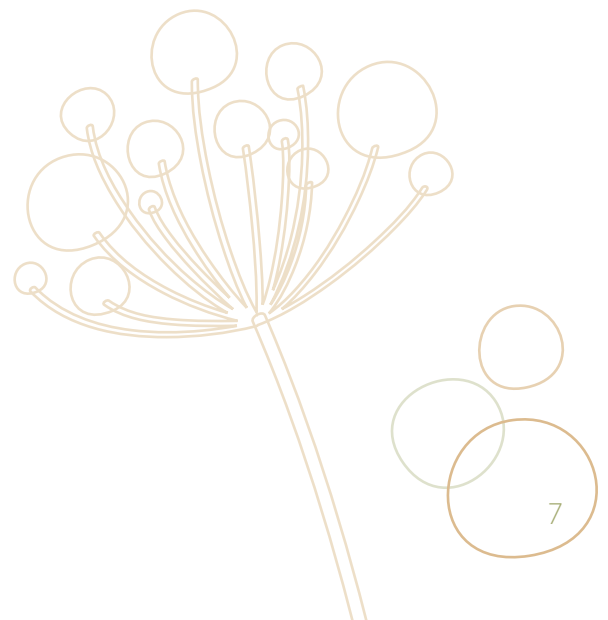
Catherine got into the environmental field as a result of her passion for wildlife and wild spaces. After completing a Master's in Environmental Studies at York University, she began working as an Environmental Consultant specializing in environmental research and communications, facilitation, sustainability, and environmental education and interpretation.

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Kristine's connection to nature grew from a childhood exploring the west coast rainforest, steps from her back door, on rural Vancouver Island. Since completing her Master of Science Degree from UBC she has worked in and with environmental nonprofit organizations specializing in environmental education, facilitation, communications, development and leadership.

Her passions are people and the planet- and how to enable both to shine. Kristine can be reached at kristinelampa@gmail.com.



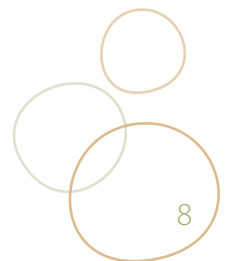
Executive Summary

Stewardship groups are very innovative and efficient in achieving their objectives in a climate of shrinking resources and increasing expectations. As resourceful as these not-for-profit organizations are, many still struggle and there is a concern that the full potential of these groups may not be being realized. Capacity building, which is the systematic strengthening of the capabilities of an organization, may provide a trailmap to help organizations realize their full potential. While the concept of capacity building has been gaining increasing recognition in the not-for-profit world over the last decade, little is known about capacity building in the stewardship sector.

The purpose of this research was to gain an understanding of the current status of capacity building in the stewardship sector in British Columbia in order to identify gaps and recommend next steps. The material in this report was developed through literature research, discussions with the project team, others in the stewardship sector, and capacity builders as well as telephone interviews with twenty-one stewardship organizations across British Columbia.

One of the key findings is that while there is an overwhelming amount of material written on capacity building, no common approaches or best practices have yet been identified. Numerous obstacles to capacity building were identified including time, organizational and stewardship culture, lack of funding for capacity building, lack of recognition of its value throughout the stewardship sector, and groups not knowing how to build capacity or where to access resources. As well, the stewardship sector is really at the beginning stages of capacity building and no tools or resources specific to the sector have yet been developed.

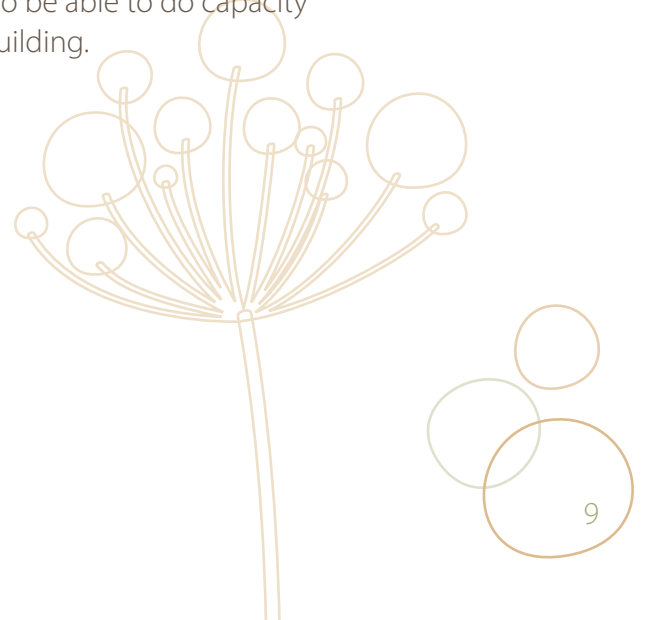
In addition to the research examining the current status of capacity building in the British Columbia stewardship sector, another task was to develop a framework that could be used by stewardship organizations in developing capacity. An eight-point framework was developed to provide a common platform to be able to discuss capacity building and to help stewardship organizations systematically approach capacity building. The framework was reviewed by the Project Team as well as sent to twenty-six stewardship organizations around the province.



Gaps Identified

The research revealed that stewardship capacity building in British Columbia is really in the first stages of development and thus a number of gaps were identified:

- Existing capacity building resources are piecemeal and in many different places;
- There is confusion across the stewardship sector (including organizations, government, funders, etc.) about what capacity building is and its value;
- There is a great deal of confusion over the meaning of the term 'capacity building' in both the literature and in general use;
- Groups wanting to do capacity building often have a hard time even knowing where to start;
- There is little information available that demonstrates the benefits of an organization engaging in capacity building;
- The existing resources have not been evaluated for success and best practices;
- Existing resources are not regionally available;
- Capacity building resources have not yet been adapted to and developed specifically for the stewardship sector;
- Current capacity building by groups tends to live in individuals rather than organizations meaning that when the individual leaves the organization, the capacity goes with them;
- There are few links and partnerships between capacity builders;
- There are few links and partnerships between stewardship groups trying to do capacity building; and
- Stewardship organizations need time and money to be able to do capacity building and funders often do not fund capacity building.



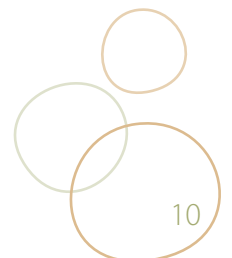
Recommendations

As a result of the research from this project, **the priority recommendation is that The Stewardship Centre for B.C. take a leadership role in advancing stewardship capacity building within British Columbia.**

A number of additional recommendations fall out from this main recommendation:

- Create a central hub for stewardship capacity building in BC that acts as a clearinghouse of information and a learning exchange.
- Create an inventory of resources and build partnerships to foster capacity building in the stewardship sector.
- Advocate and educate for stewardship capacity building to foster an understanding of the importance and value of strengthening organizations.
- Use plain language and terminology in developing resources and tools and educational materials for capacity building.
- Develop tools and resources to foster capacity building in the stewardship sector, specifically:
 - A capacity benchmarking tool- an assessment tool is needed so that organizations can benchmark their current capacity in the different areas identified in the Framework.
 - A suite of resources, tools and implementation strategies based on each of the Framework areas.
- Determine best practices- the tools and techniques, including delivery models, that work best for the stewardship sector.
- Explore opportunities for capacity building funding. Develop, strengthen and foster relationship with funders and government to support initiatives that fund capacity building work.

If we value the work that stewardship groups do, we have to also value the groups themselves and invest in their success. Capacity building is an important area, not just an add-on to what groups are already doing. As one interviewee said, “Capacity building would allow us to flower instead of stumble along. The possibilities would be limitless. This work spreads our wings.”



Background

The Stewardship Centre for British Columbia Society (SCBC) promotes stewardship of natural values as the foundation for sustainability. The mission of the Stewardship Center for B.C. is to promote ecological stewardship by engaging British Columbians, increasing knowledge and understanding of healthy ecosystems, and building the capacity of stewardship organizations.

The Stewardship Centre is working to build capacity of stewardship organizations in BC by addressing the critical need for core funding but recognizes that other mechanisms exist to build capacity. The objective of this project was to examine capacity building in relation to the stewardship sector and to gain a better understanding of the capacity challenges and solutions facing B.C.'s stewardship sector. This document explores the relatively new field of capacity building and its even more recent application to support and strengthen the varied and passionate work of the stewardship community. Using both a combination of research and interviews with stewardship groups, this report provides an eight point framework of capacity building and contains strategic recommendations for building capacity in the sector in British Columbia.

Introduction

With the increasing recognition of the environmental and societal impacts of habitat degradation, species loss, pollution and climate change, stewardship organizations are playing a progressively more valuable role in our communities. As the importance of their work grows, it becomes even more critical for these organizations to perform effectively and maximize the impact of their resources.

In spite of their strengths and resourcefulness, many organizations are facing substantial difficulties, and there are “concerns that the full potential of their contributions is not being realized” (Canadian Centre for Philanthropy 2003 p.vii). As a systematic strengthening of the capabilities of an organization, capacity building may provide a trailmap to help organizations realize their full potential.

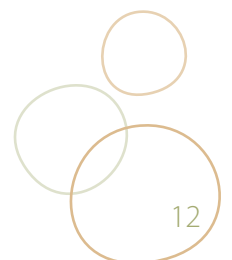
Like for-profit businesses, not-for-profits are looking at how they can maximize their impact. Capacity building involves both removing factors that inhibit the ability of an organization to fulfill its mission as well as strengthening its capabilities. “The question is not whether nonprofits make miracles everyday, but whether they need more organizational help to do so. At least according to their employees, the answer is emphatically yes. Nonprofits have been doing more with less for so long that many now border on doing everything with nothing” (Light 1998 p.14).

A Little History

Capacity building originated with the United Nations in the early 1970's. Known as institution building, it involved increasing the ability of national organizations to be able to do their jobs well. By 1991, institution building had become known as capacity building which was defined as “the creation of an enabling environment with appropriate policy and legal frameworks, institutional development, including community participation (of women in particular), human resources development and strengthening of managerial systems” (Wikipedia). The UN recognized capacity building as a “long-term, continuing process” that required the involvement of all stakeholders.

The development of the knowledge economy stimulated interest in other kinds of organizational capital. The idea of capital broadened to include “the ‘intangible assets’ of organizations, such as the knowledge they create, their brands, and their ability to innovate” (Canadian Centre for Philanthropy 2003 p.4). Capital building recognized the importance of these assets for organizational performance.

In the mid 1990's, capacity building gained momentum as a result of the increase of venture philanthropists. These people had made money building and selling businesses and wanted to contribute to causes. They understood the importance of organizational capacity to success from their own experience and thus were willing to provide funding to enable not-for-profits to address capacity building in their organizations (Hudson 2005 p.8).



A Definition of Capacity Building: Clear As Mud

There are a variety of definitions for capacity building. For example, Ann Philbin in writing about capacity building for social justice organizations, defines capacity building as the “process of developing and strengthening the skills, instincts, abilities, processes and resources that organizations and communities need to survive, adapt, and thrive in the fast-changing world” (1996).

Capacity building “has not been defined by either the new venture philanthropists or the nonprofits who represent the potential investment recipients, and may well mean something different to each of them” Venture Philanthropy Partners, 2001 p.5

Other definitions refer to the ability of organizations to fulfill their missions. The Canadian Centre for Philanthropy states that “[a]ssessments of capacity are primarily assessments of the ability of organizations to undertake their work and of the factors that serve to constrain or impair the ability of organizations to fulfill their missions” (2003 p.3). In a similar vein, another author defines capacity building as, “A systemic strengthening of the capabilities of an organisation to perform its mission more effectively” (Cammack 2007 p.3). Leslie Crutchfield and Heather McLeod Grant, the authors of *Forces for Good: The Six Practices of High-Impact Nonprofits* write that a high-impact organization is one that is able to effect social change.

The Stewardship groups interviewed held similarly diverse definitions of capacity building:

“Everyone has a different idea about [capacity building]; I think it means being “more capable” of doing what they want to be able to do.”

“I don’t know- sounds like a “governmentese” word.”

“Ability to do our job consistently without having to worry about funding.”

“Developing creative strategic ways for people and money to come into and remain in an organization in order for the organization to do its work.”

“Ability to grow or maintain as an organization especially when it comes to staff, members, volunteers and knowledge for the community.”

“Ability of an organization to fulfill its mandate- investing in the people who are there for the long-haul.”

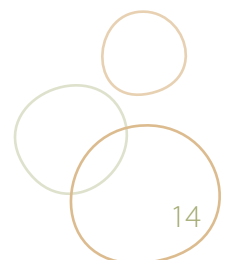
“Hardest thing that all non-profits go through- constant level and attention to each part- volunteers, staff, projects, money etc.”

Another aspect that makes defining capacity building difficult is the fact that a variety of terms are used interchangeably including organizational development, organizational effectiveness, capacity development and organizational capacity. The term capacity building is generally only used when referring to nonprofit organizations. The same ideas of capacity are called by another term when dealing with for-profit organizations. What the various definitions have in common is the idea of enabling organizations to conduct their work in better ways so that they are more likely to be successful.

How to do Capacity Building?

In addition to there being no common definition of capacity building, there is also no agreed method for how capacity building should be accomplished. In the last few years, there has been an increasing call for capacity building in the literature, from organizations and from funders, yet “[d]espite this new emphasis on the importance of nonprofit ‘capacity building,’ the sector lacks a widely shared definition of the term” (Venture Philanthropy Partners 2001 p.13).

One author, in a background document examining the capacity building literature for arts, culture, and heritage organizations, wrote that there was “no agreed upon terminology, structure, or approaches – most writers or researchers appear to analyze the topic from their own personal perspective. It is difficult, if not impossible, to compare capacity building undertakings with each other because there are so few common denominators. Worse than comparing apples and oranges, when you look at twenty capacity building reports you are left with a pantry full of fruits and vegetables” (Ginsler 2005 p.5). “The literature review identified over twenty studies, reports, and manuals that stressed the importance of recognizing the principles involved in capacity building – almost none of which provided any examples of what such principles might be” (Ginsler 2005 p.9).



Levels of Capacity Building

Some literature identifies different levels of capacity building:

- **Individual:** changing attitudes and behaviours-impacting knowledge and developing skills while maximizing the benefits of participation, knowledge exchange and ownership.
- **Institutional:** focuses on the overall organizational performance and functioning capabilities, as well as the ability of an organization to adapt to change.
- **Systemic:** emphasizes the overall policy framework in which individuals and organizations operate and interact with the external environment.

One of the reasons for this difficulty is that capacity building encompasses so many ideas. Capacity building can take place within and across organizations, within the nonprofit sector, within communities, and over whole geographic areas. In addition, it may involve individuals, groups of individuals, organizations, groups of organizations within the same or a different field or sector. Capacity is also multidimensional. An organization's overall capacity to fulfill its mission depends on a variety of specific capacities. In addition, different organizations can fulfill similar missions by drawing on different capacities" (Canadian Centre for Philanthropy 2003 p.3).

Also, as a relatively new discipline, capacity building is still under development, In fact, "the one finding that most capacity building researchers agree on is that capacity building needs more research" (Ginsler 2005 p.5).

One of the goals of this project is to simplify the huge field of capacity building, and, creating a simple definition of capacity building is the first step. Thus, the definition of capacity building used for this project is the 'systematic strengthening of the capabilities of an organization to perform more effectively'.

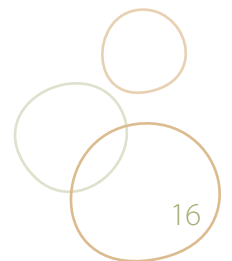
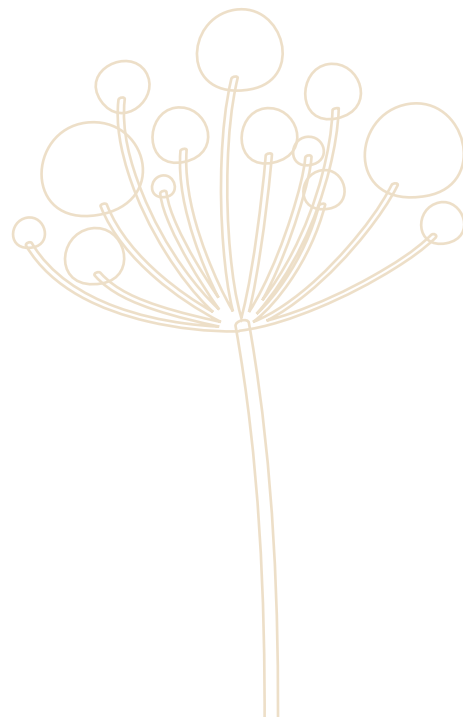
Methodology

The material in this report was developed through literature research, discussions with the project team, and telephone interviews with stewardship organizations across British Columbia.

While there were many references to the need for capacity building in the stewardship literature, there was almost nothing that defined exactly what is meant by capacity building or how it should be accomplished. Thus, other sources of information such as other nonprofit literature and business theory were used to inform the report and framework.

The authors found themselves trying to complete three projects in one: conduct a background review of the literature on capacity building, develop a framework of capacity building that would be applicable to stewardship organizations in British Columbia, and create a plan of next steps for capacity building for the B.C. stewardship sector. Due to the project limits and the overwhelming amount of material available on capacity building, only a limited amount of the literature available could be reviewed.

The document was developed from literature on organizational capacity from both the nonprofit and business sectors and informed by interviews with 21 stewardship organizations and the experience and knowledge of the authors. Surprisingly, few examples of frameworks were found to draw from. Those that were available were either missing essential aspects of capacity building or overwhelming because of all the capacity building elements included. The goal of this project was to create a framework that both incorporated the huge range of topics that make up capacity building, and yet was easy to understand and work with.



Capacity Building Benefits

As a relatively new discipline, capacity building is still undergoing development in terms of what it is and how it is best accomplished. What makes it even more complicated is the fact that capacity building is a multidimensional concept. An organization's overall capacity to fulfill its mission depends on a variety of specific capacities that are interdependent and may change in priority over time.

"Give a man a fish, and you feed him for a day; teach a man to fish, and you feed him for a lifetime; teach a man to fish sustainably, and you feed him and his descendents for generations to come." Roberts & Feeley 2008 p.106

The statistics for organizations with unfulfilled capacity are readily available. Eighty percent of small businesses are said to fail within the first five years of start-up. And the rate of mortality for nonprofit organizations is believed to be even higher than that of small businesses (Light 2004 p.5).

But capacity building provides benefits well beyond just surviving. Some of the benefits of include:

- Fostering innovation and responsiveness to change;
- Improving the quality of products, services and programs;
- Enhancing the organization's value;
- Reducing costs and improving efficiency;
- Team building and improving the satisfaction of those working and volunteering for the organization;
- Developing the tools to work through change rather than block it.

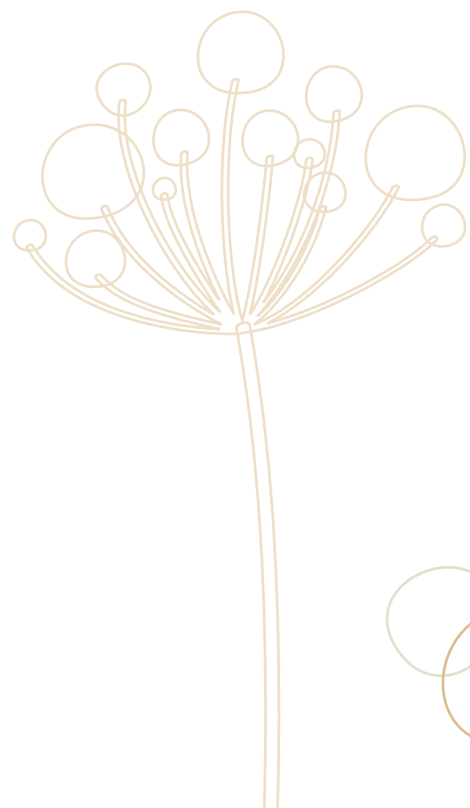
Stewardship interviewees also recognized that there were various benefits to doing capacity building from 'getting groups out of reactionary mode' to helping groups better achieve their missions. Interview participants acknowledged that benefits ranged from immediate or short-term to long-term:

- Immediate - enhanced organizational stability and functionality especially in terms of funding, staff consistency, volunteer management and avoiding staff burnout;
- Mid-range - the ability to achieve long-term mission-based planning, enhance effectiveness, and communicate better with and engage the public in their vision;
- Long-range- the chance to realize a future where they have accomplished their mission.

Confirmation of the value of capacity building is beginning to be substantiated. For example, a random telephone survey of nonprofit employees in the United States found a correlation between employees who said they had access to organizational resources and those that felt “their organization did a very or somewhat good job running programs and services, spending money wisely, being fair in decisions, and helping people” and those that trusted their organization to do the right thing most of the time (Light 2004 p.14).

Hollyhock is one organization in British Columbia that offers capacity building training, Hollyhock’s Executive Director Rhian Clare Walker believes capacity building is critical:

“Most organizations feature very intelligent committed staff working with less resources and support than most other sectors. This type of work has no formal designation or training programs, many learn as they go. What this tends to create is a) passion and innovation on the positive side, but b) burn-out, repetition, energy spent less strategically on projects that might not have impact, lack of peer community and peer sharing. This causes losses to key causes, and causes organizations to lose great people. Capacity building and training that Hollyhock Leadership Institute (and others) provide truly mitigates this, yielding better leaders, less burnout and greater impact.”



The Stewardship Sector in British Columbia

The Contribution of the Stewardship Sector

The stewardship sector in British Columbia is characterized by an interplay of nonprofit organizations, various levels of government, First Nations, other land managers, developers, businesses, organizations, institutions, and the general public.

Stewardship organizations are embedded within B.C.'s nonprofit sector and contribute significantly to the people and places in British Columbia. As a whole, B.C.'s nonprofit sector employs more than 147,000 individuals - a number greater than the forestry, fishing, mining and oil and gas industries combined, generates 114 million volunteer hours and contributes six billion dollars into the provincial economy (Government Nonprofit Initiative 2008 p.1).

Stewardship nonprofits play an essential role in British Columbia: "the services provided by the ENGO sector in B.C. are varied and substantial. The dedication, creativity and sheer determination of individuals in these groups to ensure that environmental values are upheld, understood and respected means they accomplish a huge amount for a fraction of what would be considered 'normal' expenditures for similar work done by government or the private sector. In addition, ENGOs carry out work that neither of the other sectors will undertake. Attention to particular species and habitats in various areas of the province come under the purview of these citizen groups who care about them because they live near them and know and appreciate them" (Finding Solutions Network 2004 p.21).

While specific research on the environmental contributions of stewardship organizations in British Columbia is not available, research conducted across Canada found that the stewardship and conservation sector makes a number of environmental contributions (Gardner et al. 2003 p.22):

- Awareness raising;
- Public and community engagement;
- Policy and legislation improvements;
- Innovation and management advances toward sustainability;
- Protection of land;
- Promotion of stewardship practices on private land;

- Research;
- Provision of information, knowledge and tools and;
- Building partnerships.

As their missions involve sustaining the health of the land, waters, and wildlife, stewardship organizations play an important, yet often unrecognized, role in British Columbia. Already, stewardship nonprofits are accomplishing a great deal with few resources. By providing them with the appropriate resources, the gains will be exponential.

The Character of the BC Stewardship Sector

Eighty-two percent of the 22,000 nonprofit societies in B.C. have operating revenues of less than \$250,000 per year and these smaller nonprofit organizations rely on volunteers to achieve their goals. Often these are grassroots groups, working tirelessly on local issues with limited resources to better their communities and the environment. It is nested within this component of B.C.'s nonprofit sector that the many stewardship organizations are to be found.

Stewardship groups in British Columbia are engaged in a variety of activities and address a range of issues in a desire to conserve and restore ecosystems for the benefit of all species, now and for the future. The most common activities undertaken are education and outreach, assessment, monitoring and inventory, and habitat restoration and rehabilitation, and conservation. Relatively fewer groups act as umbrella organizations, contact landowners, business and industry; develop policy focus on advocacy or focus on land acquisition (Smailes 2006 p.5).

Stewardship groups address a number of local and regional issues. In interviews with 80 stewardship organizations in B.C., Smailes found habitat to be the predominant issue addressed by groups in the province. The next most common were salmonids and wildlife, cited about half as often as habitat, and then, water quality, sustainability, forestry, urban land use and parks and wilderness. Relatively fewer groups were working on marine or agricultural issues (Smailes 2006 p.3).

Twenty-one stewardship groups were interviewed for this project and it became abundantly clear that they possessed, as individuals and collectively, an incredible array of skills, dedication, and sense of purpose as stewards of our natural heritage. As a group, these twenty-one oversaw budgets in excess of four million dollars, employed approximately forty staff (in various flexible part and full-time configurations), engaged close to 600 volunteers and connected

close to 3500 community members with local stewardship issues. The groups were predominantly involved in the tasks of education (17), monitoring (15) and habitat enhancement (14). Policy development (6) and advocacy (6) work were done by fewer than half the groups that were involved in education, monitoring or enhancement. Seven groups described themselves as umbrella organizations or networking hubs while eight stated they were engaged in land use planning or landowner contact.

Consistent with research conducted by Smailes in 2006, the stewardship groups interviewed for this project had limited staff (often on contract or part-time) and all but one respondent expressed significant concern over consistency and availability of funding.

The Current Climate

In British Columbia, with budget cuts to both federal and provincial governments, stewardship not-for-profits are playing an increasingly important role with ever decreasing budgets and resources. The following metaphor by Harvey Greer writing about community salmon groups summarizes what has been happening overall in the stewardship sector in B.C. (Greer 2004 p.6):

Imagine the "B.C. salmon team" as a football team. Maybe they're called the Vancouver Chinooks. The Chinooks' roster is initially made up of professionals - some more skilled than others, but all of them paid. The players all have the same coach and the same owner and they use the same playbook, the list of strategies and techniques for defeating their opponents. . . . Alas, the Vancouver Chinooks have a string of losing years. So management does what real-life team managers have probably always dreamed of doing when the boos began to rain down on them from the stands: they turn around and say to the fans making the most noise, "OK, you guys come down here on to the field, we'll give you a suit and a helmet and see how well you do. And by the way," - here they turn to their old players - "you, you, and you, you're out of a job. You'll be handing the ball to Joe Fan here. Shake hands, and good luck." With that, the manager walks off the field and leaves his coach to make the best of it. The whistle blows, Joe Fan pulls on his helmet and runs onto the field next to his new teammates, bursting with pride. That was stewardship in the early nineteen nineties.

What happens next? Either the new-look Chinooks learn to play well together or they don't. Maybe they accept the situation, work hard, play as a team, have a winning season. Or maybe they dissolve in bickering and mutual distrust. As long as there's still money for a football and some uniforms, they've got a fighting chance.

That was stewardship until about 1999.

But management calls a team meeting halfway through the season and says to the fan-players, "Nice work guys, but we can't afford uniforms for you any longer. Gonna have to suck it up and play in your T-shirts. Go get 'em."

Other authors are reaching similar conclusions: "the authors take the position that government institutions frameworks and agencies at all levels in British Columbia are no longer capable of protecting and restoring freshwater environments on their own. If salmon and steelhead habitats are to be nurtured in the future, the public, through the efforts of individuals and community groups alike, must participate more directly. They must take on a greater role in the advocacy and stewardship of fisheries and natural resources and work closely with government agency biologists, engineers and managers to achieve results in terms of salmon conservation and habitat restoration" (Rosenau & Angelo 2001 p.2).

And other research reported that "Respondents often stated that provincial and federal government departments seemed unable to carry out their legislated mandates - protecting the public interest and public domain. They cited the combination of field and support staff cut backs, changes in policy, and the lack of funding programs for stewardship groups and environmental work, as their greatest concerns" (Finding Solutions Network 2004 p.21).

Stewardship Nonprofits – Picking Up the Ball?

As government has pulled out of various stewardship and conservation activities in B.C., stewardship organizations have done their best to fill the gap. The question is, do these groups really have the capacity to fill this gap?

While stewardship nonprofits are now increasingly accepting responsibility for work traditionally done by the government, they face capacity issues in recruiting and retaining volunteers (including skilled board members) and securing on-going operating funds. Groups are often reliant on variable and insecure short-term project funding which leads to uncertainty and often results in organizational instability, relatively low wages, high staff turnover (if there is paid staff), and stress.

In response, groups are coming up with creative and innovative ways to maintain their presence: a few groups have strengthened partnerships with municipalities receiving a modicum of stability in donated office space and contracts; other groups are forming coalitions to strategize on how to address common issues and create new opportunities for stability and growth; others are scaling back operations in an attempt to stay solvent.

Stewardship groups in B.C. were already experiencing many challenges prior to the current economic downturn, but many now find themselves operating in an increasingly difficult environment. Despite the challenging climate two things remain unchanged: the ever-increasing need for the work of stewardship groups and their passion and commitment for the environment. Supporting capacity building in this sector is critical to enabling groups not just to survive but to thrive.

Capacity Building and Stewardship

As mentioned, capacity building is a relatively new area still under development. Not surprisingly, the area of stewardship capacity building is even less well developed than the more general topic of capacity building. In fact, capacity building is really at the beginning stages of being applied to the stewardship sector. There are few articles available specifically on stewardship capacity building and even fewer that specifically speak to stewardship capacity building in British Columbia. Of the few articles that do exist, many stress the need for capacity building without revealing what such capacity building would entail. In fact, interesting enough, a number of articles with the term, 'capacity building' in the title contained no references to capacity building within the text of the document!

The small number of articles that exist on local stewardship capacity building are mostly ad hoc lessons culled from personal experience rather than more systematic approaches. There is also some confusion between capacity building efforts focused on organizations and people versus those focused on specific projects: "Many initiatives focus on specific projects rather than on growing capacity as a goal unto itself, resulting in activities that are not funded or sustained past the typically short project lifetime. The most successful capacity-building efforts are based on periodic needs assessments and include plans to maintain and expand capacity over the long term" (The National Academies 2008 p.1).

The majority of stewardship groups interviewed recognized the importance of capacity building: fourteen out of twenty-one groups ranked capacity building as important or extremely important to their organizations. In fact, seventeen out of the twenty-one had engaged in some capacity building activities; however, many were ad hoc and most groups did not have a strategic approach to capacity building nor had they evaluated the results. For a number of groups, the benefits of capacity building had left with the staff and volunteers who had participated.

Obstacles to Capacity Building

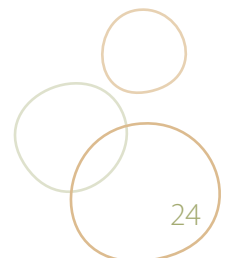
While there is recognition by stewardship groups that there are tangible short and long-term benefits to capacity building, it rarely finds its place in annual workplans and strategy documents. So if groups believe the work is important, why is it not more of a priority and approached in a systematic manner? The authors of High Performance Nonprofit Organizations write that “the nonprofit sector appears highly ambivalent about strengthening its organizations. On the one hand, everyone can agree that we need to take care of the organizations that are tackling difficult problems. On the other hand, deeply ingrained behaviours, public policy, funding systems, and the culture of nonprofit service itself have all led to the sector to rely on virtually anything but organizational capacity as a foundation for lasting effectiveness” (Letts et al. 1999 p.4).

The research conducted for this project revealed similar obstacles to capacity building. One barrier for organizations is time. Most groups are so stuck in reactive mode that they do not know how to find the time away from accomplishing the day to day tasks to take a look at the bigger picture.

Another obstacle is a lack of access to funding to do capacity building work. “Programming and other fundraising still has to happen, (capacity building) adds another layer and we’re already doing too much with too little” offered one interview respondent. Groups are experiencing funding uncertainty and high rates of staff turnover so investing scarce resources in staff that may leave means “you lose the hard work and goals you’ve achieved” (Interview participant). The issue of a dominant program-based funding structure and lack of core funding was repeatedly mentioned as impediments to capacity building and long-term stability in the sector.

There is also a dominant culture in stewardship organizations of ‘doing’ that attracts people who prefer to be outside engaged in the work, “most stewardship groups are action oriented so it somewhat goes against the grain to plan and talk about the work rather than do it.” Other barriers identified by respondents included: communication and interpersonal issues, lack of leadership buy-in, and a need for greater awareness of the benefits.

Another common obstacle was a general lack of awareness of where to access resources or support for capacity building. Since organizations are already pressed for time, with ambitious program focused workplans, and administrative requirements, it is not surprising that the lack of a central hub to access capacity building resources for the sector provides a barrier to beginning the work of capacity building.



“Many nonprofits are working to improve their performance. However, in contrast to the private sector which spent more than \$100 billion on consultants in 2003, nonprofits have little access to the kind of capital needed to update facilities and systems and often launch improvement efforts with limited planning and little objective data with which to measure success” Light 2004 p.5

A Lack of Recognition of the Value of Capacity Building

“One observation that is fairly clear from the capacity building literature is that it is all but impossible for an organization to increase its capacity all on its own. It has to involve funders, other community organizations, and its public if it is to successfully increase its capacity.” (Ginsler 2005 p.5). Unfortunately, there is lack of broad-based support for and recognition of the value in capacity building both from within the sector and from the funding agencies that support stewardship.

While many stewardship organizations have knowledge of capacity building and intrinsically understand the benefits of conducting this work, many others do not. Although individuals in organizations recognize the value of capacity building, organizations, as a whole, are not prioritizing capacity building work. Before organizations will invest limited resources in capacity building they will need to understand and appreciate the benefits to their organizations and ultimately to stewardship i.e. protecting land and species. Educating organizations about the value of capacity building and generating more awareness about how capacity building enables better stewardship outcomes is a key piece in shifting the way the work is approached in the stewardship sector.

One of the main problems is the issue of funders supporting programs and not organizations. A lack of core funding to sustain organizations and an emphasis on short-term, project-based grants stifles opportunity for organizational growth and dollar-for-dollar reduces the impact funders are able to exert with their grants.

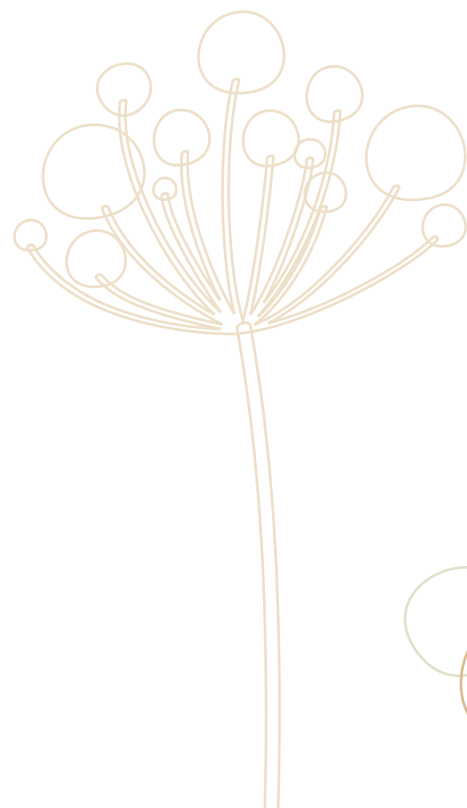
Funders are in the unique position of being able to both enable and encourage nonprofits to engage in capacity building. Although there are some notable exceptions, Mountain Equipment Co-op, VanCity, the Centre for Sustainability, and Vancouver Foundation to name a few, most funders have been slow to tag dollars to capacity building work. And even those who do, only allocate a small portion of their disbursements to capacity building. Support can be built for stewardship capacity building by engaging the philanthropic community in conversations about the importance of capacity building and helping them recognize that when they fund capacity building for an organization, it helps their dollars go further

Government also needs to understand the importance of capacity building in the stewardship sector. When considering the stewardship sector as a whole, interviewees cited government cutbacks and the political climate as barriers to capacity building.

The Negative Connotations of Business

Another impediment to capacity building may be the language and association of capacity building with business practices - which in itself can carry negative connotations for many in the sector. For one thing, the comparison to business has often been used to put not-for-profits down as in, 'nonprofits should be run like a business'. Also, many people blame corporate practices for causing many of the problems that they are now trying to clean up and for promoting a materialism and consumerism that has had a huge impact on the environment (Letts et al. 1999 p.5). However, there are lessons to be learned from the business sector. The fact is that 95% of businesses fail within their first five years for the same organization problems that cause nonprofits to fail. Businesses that thrive over the long-term are those that have incorporated organizational development.

It will take a coordinated effort between the sector and its partners to shift these cultural and systemic barriers and enable the sector to support and strengthen its organizations for the long haul. This document is a first step in that direction.



Capacity Building: Best Practices

Good Capacity Building Goes Beyond Developing Program Skills and Training

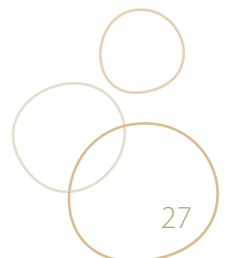
Stewardship nonprofits often focus on program delivery – in large part due to funding structures which tend to be organized to fund specific projects. Unfortunately, focusing on projects and developing the specific technical skills to do the project work (such as stream restoration or water quality monitoring), although essential does not build organizational capacity. “Nonprofits, just like businesses, need to focus on building the capacity of their entire organization if they want to maximize their social impact. Both board and staff need to dedicate themselves to raising capacity building to the same level of importance and attention as program development and management – to think early and often about strengthening the organization in lockstep with implementing programs” (Venture Philanthropy Partners 2001 p.27).

A distinction can also be made between capacity building and receiving technical assistance. Often nonprofits hire outside specialists to perform tasks or functions in areas in which they lack capacity. Again, although the assistance may achieve programmatic goals and does increase the ability of an organization to achieve its mission, those services provided do not necessarily leave behind additional organizational capacity.

No One Size Fits All

When it comes to capacity building, one size doesn't fit all; organizations of different sizes, history, culture, context and geographical setting have different capacity building needs. Voluntary groups without paid staff and little donor funding will tend to have the less complicated needs than larger organizations with bigger budgets and staff (Cammack 2007 p.6).

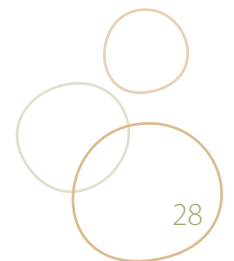
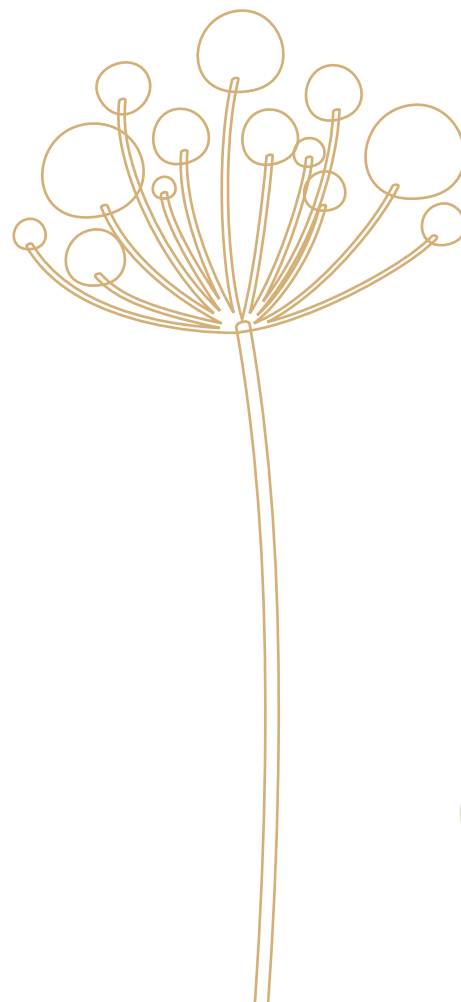
As organizations grow in size, their capacity building needs often change. Part of the task of capacity building is identifying the stage of development. Problems occur when organizations grow more quickly than their capacity.



Capacity Building Is An Ongoing Process

As discussed in the previous section, different sized organizations have different capacity building needs. But the truth is actually simpler than that. Different organizations have different capacity building needs. Capacity building is a process and so as an organization begins that process, assuming the process is well facilitated, the particular needs of the unique organization will rise to the top. No organization will ever have finished capacity building efforts because every organization exists in a dynamic internal and external environment. "Building capacity can feel like a never-ending process because improvements in one area or practice have a way of placing unexpected new demands on other areas, which in turn trigger new needs" (Venture Philanthropy Partners 2001 p.15).

As well, the various areas of capacity building are interrelated and when an organization works on one area, those practices interact with other areas in mutually reinforcing ways. "When a nonprofit applies all these forces simultaneously, it creates momentum that fuels further success. 'It's like pushing a snowball down a hill,' says one Habitat for Humanity volunteer. 'At first you have to work at it, and it takes a lot of energy. But once it gets going, momentum builds and it starts rolling on its own' (Crutchfield and Grant 2008 p.23).



Capacity Building Framework

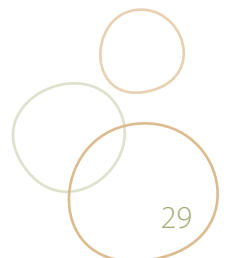
The vast field of capacity building can be overwhelming for organizations trying to strengthen the capacity of their organizations, both because the term encompasses so many aspects as well as because there is no universally accepted definition and strategy.

The following eight-point framework was developed to provide a common platform to be able to discuss capacity building and to help stewardship organizations systematically approach capacity building.

Surprisingly few frameworks for capacity building were available from the literature. The few that were found either did not encompass all the areas or were so overwhelming as to be difficult to comprehend and thus use. Thus, the goal in producing this framework is to include all areas of capacity building and yet use simple language and be easy to comprehend.

The framework consists of eight discrete areas; however, it is important to recognize that the areas are interrelated and often overlap. For example, if an organization increases their marketing and communications capacity, they will likely be able to attract more volunteers and funding. Increasing teamwork capacity will help with staff and volunteers. In fact, work done in any of the eight areas is likely to increase capacity in other areas. Thus, the capacity building framework functions more like an ecosystem than a hierarchy.

A draft copy of a condensed capacity building framework was sent to twenty-six B.C. stewardship organizations for review and comment. Feedback on a draft framework as well as organizational and sector priorities for capacity building were solicited from the stewardship sector through twenty-one telephone interviews of approximately an hour in length each. The interview questions can be found in the appendices. Based on comments, feedback and further research the final framework was amended to contain an eighth category on advocacy.



The Framework: Overview

1. Foundation
2. Organizational Design & Management
3. The People
4. Leadership & Team Building
5. Funding & Financial Management
6. Getting the Message Out: Marketing & Communications
7. Partnerships, Networks and Alliances
8. Advocacy: Changing Policy, Practices & Legislation

The Framework: Step by Step

1. Foundation

Without a clear direction, it is not possible for an organization to function optimally. Having an explicit idea of what you want to accomplish through your organization is the basis for capacity building. Indeed, all other capacity efforts build upon having a clear focus that is shared throughout the organization.

Initial research suggests that nonprofits increase their capacity tremendously when they reassess their aspirations – their mission, vision and their strategy and the actionable ways to achieve their goals. Venture Philanthropy Partners conducted a study on capacity building and found that:

“the act of resetting aspirations and strategy is often the first step in dramatically improving an organization’s capacity. The nonprofits in this study that experienced the greatest gains in capacity were those that undertook a reassessment of their aspirations – their vision of what the organization was attempting to accomplish in the next phase of its development – and their strategy. It is important to emphasize that a new aspiration or strategy can only be transformative if it is then used to align the other aspects of organizational capacity. If done thoroughly, this alignment process provides a tight institutional focus and a road map for the organization to use with both internal and external audiences, which help keep everyone on track during the long and difficult process of building capacity”

(Venture Philanthropy Partners 2001 p.15).

Not-for-profits have traditionally relied on programs to make their impact, but research is suggesting that even innovative programs do not survive without a strong organization behind them. “The missing ingredient in the prevalent, program-centered conception of social impact is organizational capacity...It is the capacity for strong performance in organizations – the ability to develop, sustain and improve the delivery of a mission-that provides the foundation for lasting social benefits (Letts et al. 1999 p.4).

What prevents organizations from building foundational capacity is often the mistaken belief that they have already done it. For example, many groups interviewed felt their organizations ‘had done the work’ in building a foundation for their organization. Yet very few indicated that they regularly revisited their mission and vision or applied them as a filter to guide workplans and evaluate success.

The organizations who had revisited their foundation principles and integrated them into annual work or management plans indicated that these actions had provided the staff and board with a clear focus and the ability to more easily identify and say no to projects and activities that, although important, were not a part of their mission. Ultimately this reduced the stress that accompanies extraneous activities and focussed more attention, dollars and energy on mission-based programming.

The following are elements of foundational capacity:

Vision

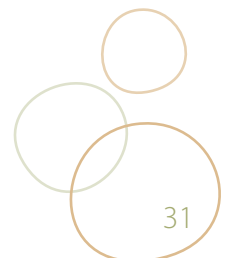
A vision statement expresses what an organization ultimately hopes to accomplish as a result of its efforts: its optimal goal and reason for existence.

Mission

The mission provides an overview of an organization’s plans to realize its vision by identifying service areas, target audience/s and the values and goals of the group. A good mission statement makes decision-making much easier by helping an organization to stay focused and on course.

Strategic Planning & Goal-setting

Strategic planning establishes what an organization is going to do over the next year or more, how it’s going to accomplish its journey and how it will know if it was successful. A good strategy allocates resources to priorities, defines how the organization is unique and is linked to the major goals of the organization.



While many organizations focus on the creation of a strategic plan document, it is the planning process and the willingness to continually examine whether the strategic actions are effective and aligned with the mission that builds the capacity of an organization. Traditional strategic plans often collect dust on the shelf, but a living strategic action plan uses the vision to guide the day to day operations. The development of a living strategic plan is a process rather than an event.

Strategic and operational plans should:

- Define an organization's purpose and direction;
- Establish goals capable of being achieved;
- Identify the greatest opportunities, prioritize projects and focus the appropriate resources to guarantee success;
- Increase stakeholder support and employee commitment;
- Improve operational efficiency and effectiveness;
- Define tools for measuring progress.

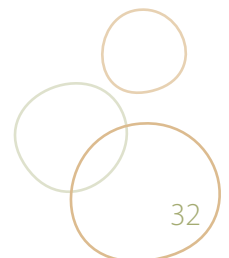
2. Organizational Design & Management

Well-articulated goals and well-developed strategies are an important first step in capacity building, but unless these are placed within the context of the right organizational structure, an organization is unlikely to be effective in executing them. Unfortunately, many stewardship organizations develop their structure and systems ad hoc rather than on purpose.

Building capacity involves increasing the impact and likelihood of success of an organization by designing an adaptive and purpose-built structure that is aligned with the organization's vision and strategy. A good organizational structure allows an organization to be responsive to change while integrating and aligning human resource capabilities, external environmental factors, strategic practices, technology and internal resources.

Organizational Structure

Organizational structure is the way in which the policy and the affairs of an organization are influenced and conducted including the organizational design, planning, interfunctional coordination, individual job descriptions and roles and the legal and management structure. An organization's ability to structure and govern itself also determines its efficacy. A good organizational structure supports the vision, mission and strategies of an organization as well as its systems and human resources. It will also create "clear operational ground rules and an environment that fosters healthy interpersonal communication (Thomson 2008 p.30).



Adaptability

"[R]esearch suggests that the most critical dimension of capacity for a nonprofit organization is adaptive capacity—the ability to monitor, assess, and respond to internal and external changes" (Connolly and York 2003 p.2). But the right structures have to be put in place to make an organization adaptive.

Systems and Infrastructure

Systems are the formal and informal processes by which an organization functions, while the infrastructure are the physical and technological assets of an organization. Often, the need for systems and infrastructure capacity building is obvious because problems are so apparent when there is a malfunctioning in these areas. However, efforts to solve the issue are frequently directed at the single problem rather than recognizing that the problem is a symptom of larger issues. Capacity building requires looking at the full range of systems and how they work or fail to work together.

Examining systems and infrastructure capacity entails looking at the planning systems, decision making framework, conflict resolution strategies, accountability framework, knowledge management, administrative systems, adaptive capacity and the physical and technological assets of an organization.

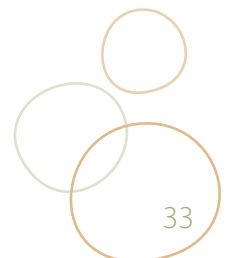
Systems

Creating systems in your organization is about being able to complete repetitive tasks with less energy and enabling others to be able to jump in and do a job with a seamless transition.

Systems are an important part of capacity building because if the functions of the organizations are not systemized then people end up 'recreating the wheel' every time something needs to be accomplished. With a good system, people in your organization have a clear understanding of the work they are to perform and what is expected of them" (Beyer 2007 p.35). Organizational systems are based on the mission statement, code of ethics, policies and operations manual. Many organizations write a mission statement and then never refer to it again. A mission statement can be a living document that guiding a nonprofit through the building of a great organization if the code of ethics, policies and operations are continually measured against it.

Code of Ethics

Ethics may seem to be something that belongs in a business rather than a nonprofit. After all, isn't ethics the very essence of a nonprofit? While nonprofits are focused on doing good in the world, ethics programs focus on what is happening internally. Often, there is a surprising disparity between the



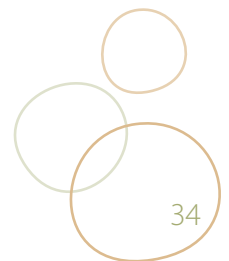
preferred values of an organization and the values actually reflected in the organization (McNamara 2008). Ethics programs create an alignment between the values considered most important by the leaders of the organization and employee and volunteer behaviours. The result is strong teamwork and productivity. "Ongoing attention and dialogue regarding values in the workplace builds openness, integrity and community -- critical ingredients of strong teams in the workplace. [People] feel strong alignment between their values and those of the organization. They react with strong motivation and performance" (McNamara 2008).

McNamara, who wrote a guide to ethics management, believes that the best way to handle ethical dilemmas is to avoid their occurrence in the first place. Developing codes of ethics and codes of conduct sensitizes people to ethical considerations and minimizes the chances of problems occurring in the first place.

In the ABC's of Building a Business Team That Wins, Blair Singer talks about the code of ethics as the code of honour: "Great relationships don't happen by accident. There is usually a common understanding and set of rules holding you together. A Code of Honor is the cornerstone of the culture of any organization because it is the physical manifestation of thoughts, ideals and philosophies. People talk about creating culture in organizations... The core of the culture and number-one tool used to establish, refresh, broadcast and demonstrate the culture is the Code of Honor (2004 p.xxiv). He further states that a Code of Honor creates accountability and a feeling of support and is key to a successful group.

Policies and Operations Manual

An operations manual is made up of written procedures, policies and checklists and is accessible to everyone in the organization. In nonprofits, where staff turnover can be high and jobs may sometimes be performed by staff and at other times by volunteers, policy and procedure manuals take on an even greater significance. Without systems, new staff have to come in and recreate systems and relearn jobs - taking resources away from the mission-based work of the organization.



3. The People

While many nonprofits recognize the people working and volunteering for the organization as their greatest resource, this is also an area of great challenges for organizations (Canadian Centre for Philanthropy 2003 p.viii & 28). Consequently, it is no surprise that the stewardship groups interviewed identified “people” as the number one priority for building organizational capacity.

Capacity building in this area involves recruitment, retention, management, and training matters.

Volunteers

The majority of stewardship nonprofits rely on volunteers in some way in order to be able to accomplish their missions. Volunteers fill dual purposes of getting the work done and engaging constituents in the mission/issues of the organization.

Finding and managing volunteers is an increasing challenge for not-for-profits. In their research on nonprofits across Canada, the Canadian Centre for Philanthropy found that “the most frequently identified human resources capacity issue was the need for more volunteers” and thus, that finding “approaches to volunteer recruitment and management that meet the changing needs and interests of potential volunteers” is an important aspect of capacity building (Canadian Centre for Philanthropy 2003 p.28 and ix).

However, the issue is not simply being able to attract more volunteers, but rather the right volunteers and then being able to manage them. Some organizations have mixed feelings about having volunteers because of the difficulties related to managing them. Interview participants identified that the lack of a dedicated volunteer coordinator to manage the program was the biggest issue for groups wanting more volunteers or wanting to develop their volunteer program.

Volunteer capacity building involves finding approaches to volunteer recruitment and management that meet the changing needs and interests of both potential volunteers and the organization. Recruitment involves finding the right volunteers for the right duties, increasing the commitment of volunteers, and finding volunteers who are willing to take leadership positions. Management includes avoiding issues such as volunteer burn-out, providing volunteer recognition, empowering volunteers, maximizing volunteer contributions, being able to adapt to the needs of volunteers, and training and overseeing volunteers (Canadian Centre for Philanthropy 2003 p.31-2).

Capacity building around volunteer recruitment and management is particularly important because research suggests that the number of Canadians who volunteer for nonprofit organizations has decreased slightly in the last decade (Lindsay 2006 p.1; Canadian Centre for Philanthropy 2001 p.16). “The Canadian Centre for Philanthropy’s Highlights for the 2000 National Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating indicates that the total number of volunteer hours has dropped from 1,108.9 million in 1997 to 1,053.2 million in 2000, which is equivalent to a loss of about 29,000 full-time jobs” (Robinson 2005 p.1). In Canada, fewer than 1% of citizens volunteer with environmental groups (Lasby & McIver 2004 p.5).

Staff

“According to head-to-head comparisons across the [government, business and nonprofit] sectors, nonprofit workers are the most motivated employees in the economy. They take their job for the right reasons and come to work each day motivated by the right goals”. They also tend to be more committed to and proud of their organization

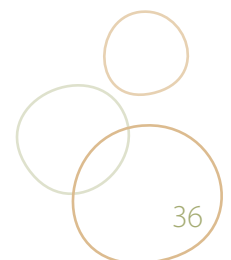
As in for-profit organizations, staff issues have significant costs for not-for-profits. But they are also important to the work that stewardship nonprofits do. An interviewee pointed out that in most instances, volunteers do not replace the qualifications or commitment of staff, and that “there is a huge difference between a volunteer and employee if a volunteer stops the jobs stops but if a employee leaves, you hire some else”.

Staffing capacity looks at staffing levels, retention and reducing staff turnover, improving staff performance so that people reach their full potential, increasing motivation and morale, empowering staff, and the allocation of staff based on their skills to roles within the organization.

Management

Effective nonprofits require people in senior positions who are committed to capacity building i.e. who are committed to the incremental and ongoing processes of strengthening their organizations onto maximize effectiveness throughout the organization. The process of capacity building requires both managerial ability and progressive leadership.

“Nonprofits need people in senior positions who are committed to taking the initiative to make capacity building happen and are willing to “own” it and drive it down through the organization. Progress in effectively resetting aspirations and strategy, institutionalizing sound management processes, and improving systems to work at scale requires managerial ability as well as good leadership” (Venture Philanthropy Partnership 2001 p.15).



Board

The quality of a board has tremendous impact on the organization. An organization's success is dependent upon the capacity of the directors to provide guidance that enables the organization to be the best it can be. Thus, developing the capacity of a board to be able to fully contribute to the organization is an important aspect of capacity building.

“Board members, like all volunteers need to feel valued and heard. One needs to identify each board member's strengths and interests in order to engage and motivate them in their work. I see feeding and nourishing the board as a large part of my job as ED.” Interview participant

Some of the main issues relating to boards are strategic recruitment (competition for board members, people who will not join boards that do not have liability insurance, the lack of people under 40 willing to accept board positions, people who do not contribute), governance (e.g., roles and structures), (the need for role clarity and more active boards), operations, training (the need for more training but the lack of resources to implement it), and retention (from too frequent turnover to not enough turnover resulting in boards becoming stagnant) (Canadian Centre for Philanthropy 2003 p.29, 34-6).

Many interview participants discussed issues with their board of directors. There was an equal mix of admiration for the dedication of individuals on the board and frustration around several board related issues such as: the lack of understanding of the role of board members, the need for board renewal and the resistance of board to fundraising.

The issue of board effectiveness is important because many organizations are accountable only to their boards. In theory, a board is responsible for ensuring that the organization is accountable for its performance to members, key stakeholders and the wider community. However, many stewardship organizations struggle to find good board members and to keep them actively involved. Often board members do not fully understand their role.

Areas of focus for board capacity building include the composition of the board, the commitment, involvement and support of board members, strategic recruitment, roles and structures, board effectiveness, training, and retention.

Members

Throughout history, organizations have been able to accomplish great things by involving individuals in a cause. Capacity building in this area involves attracting members, creating stakeholder value, addressing stakeholder demands, and creating loyalty and a compelling member experience.

By becoming members of an organization, individuals in the community support the mission and vision of a stewardship group. This support may extend if members volunteers their time, speak out on behalf of an issue or choose to donate. Membership holds an unknown potential for stewardship organizations.

4. Leadership & Team Building

“It takes leadership, time and effort to build capacity.” (HRDC 1999)

What is leadership?

Leadership is the process of influencing others to accomplish objectives that move the organization to realize its vision and mission and effect social change. It is often regarded as “the single most critical factor in the success or failure of institutions” (Bass 2008 p.10). “Leadership is important in all areas of capacity building... Effective leaders convey a shared vision that motivates and empowers people, focuses activities, and provides confidence in the management process” (The National Academy of Sciences 2008 p.4).

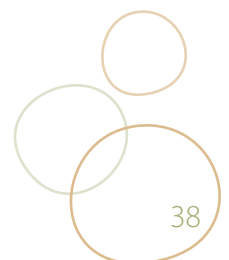
Organizational culture is defined as “the values, behaviour, and attitudes shared by people within an organization. They shape the way in which it relates internally and to its stakeholders. Culture can be described as ‘the way we do things around here’” Cammack 2007 p.13

Leaders set the tone for the organization and are a key factor in the satisfaction and success of staff and volunteers (Lamb and Key 2008 p.9). Effective leaders demonstrate awareness of external factors impacting the organization and are proactive in positioning the organization to take advantage of opportunities or avoid pitfalls. They are also the gatekeepers of the organizational culture setting and set the tone for how a group relates both internally and externally.

Good Leaders are Made Not Born

Many stewardship nonprofits form when engaged citizens respond to an environmental crisis or issue in their community. Founding members of nonprofits are often passionate agents of change. However, what they frequently lack are the specific skills and competencies required to lead an organization to be the best it can be.

Fortunately, as it is said, good leaders ‘are made, not born’. People can develop effective leadership skills through ongoing learning, self-evaluation training, and experience. Building leadership capacity entails applying leadership attributes such as beliefs, values, ethics and character and developing the skills and knowledge to guide the organization.



The old-school of leadership is based on a hierarchical organizational model, but unfortunately that design steals energy from problem-solving, productivity, innovation, and fun. Leadership capacity takes a broader view of leadership. It is not just important for the person at the head of the organization, but for all members. In *Unleashing Leadership*, Hoover and Valenti ask “How would your organization perform if everyone accepted leadership responsibility? How differently would your organization behave if leadership were an expectation of everyone, not an exception for the anointed few? The most distinguishing characteristic between thriving enterprises and struggling enterprises is the presence and quality of leadership at all levels (2005 p.9).

“My training is in environmental protection technology not human resources. I know I need to develop greater leadership skills – then I could motivate people better, help them to build ownership... and people would feel that they were being used to their best advantage.” Interview participant

Teamwork

Nonprofit organizations are born out of a passionate desire to make a positive change in the world through the selfless commitment of individuals united under a cause. However, hope, hard work and goodwill may not be enough on their own for a group to avoid the eventual personality conflicts and difficulties that plague so many nonprofit groups. Teamwork provides a strategy and structure to enable groups to recapture the hope and enthusiasm of those first heady days of a nonprofit and build skills to work together to achieve the mission they all so passionately believe in. “The development of teamwork enables groups to accomplish what might have seemed impossible. Teamwork not only helps people accomplish more in less time, but it also helps people find greater fulfillment in the work by providing a sense of connection and belonging” (Lencioni 2005 p.4).

An organization hoping to achieve extraordinary results has to become more than a gathering of people working together; it has to function as a team. Team-building involves creating a unified sense of purpose, a commitment to a common set of values, collective desire, accountability and trust and avoiding artificial harmony and destructive conflict.

Teamwork also provides a unique competitive advantage for groups “...teamwork is almost always lacking within organizations that fail, and often present within those that succeed” (Lencioni 2005 p.3).

Both leadership and teamwork are important aspects of an organization reaching its full potential because they help people to bring out the best in one another for the sake of the mission.

5. Funding & Financial Management

Financial capacity involves developing the skills required to design a diverse and effective financial strategy, creating an organizational culture that recognizes the importance of integrating fundraising into all areas of the organization and building the expertise to be able to make the most of the funds raised and reduce the administrative burden of reporting.

Most stewardship groups need money to accomplish their goals, but the current global economic crisis, reduced government support and increasing specificity of foundation grant-making criteria (Humphries 2005 p.4; Vesneski 2005 p.4) coupled with increasingly onerous reporting requirements and a reduction in core funding support have created a difficult funding climate in which many nonprofits are struggling. Indeed, financial capacity issues have long been noted as the “greatest challenge” facing the nonprofit and voluntary sector (Canadian Centre for Philanthropy 2003 p.viii).

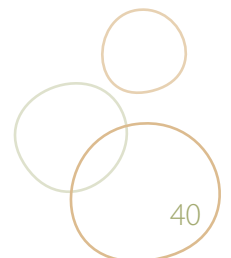
Strong fundraising strategies are diverse and broad both in scope and personnel: funding is not just foundation-based, but includes a variety of funding sources such as donors, earned income, government, and planned giving. As well, solid fundraising strategies are integrated and valued throughout the organization so that everyone has some skills and contributes to fundraising.

“(We) need training and tools to build a financial plan for long term sustainability- access to financial planners, building endowments, business planning... we need to treat ourselves as businesses not like beggars for funds” Interview participant

When organizations have a diverse fundraising strategy they:

- Gain greater control over their program work rather than being directed by funders;
- Become more resilient to changeable foundation and government funding sources;
- Are able to mobilize timely responses to external events or crises (because all their money is not tied to specific grant related programs); and
- Establish strong connections and support in their community through their broad donor base that results in broad community support.

Part of building financial capacity is recognizing that fundraising is not an extracurricular task, but rather an essential component of the work of an organization because it engages donors and constituents in the organization’s mission. This is particularly salient for smaller nonprofits that cannot afford



dedicated development staff and the primary tasks of fundraising are borne by all individuals in the organization from the executive director to program staff, the board and other volunteers.

Raising funds is only one aspect of an organization's financial fitness. Overall financial capacity is built by using "financial information, skills, and methods to make the best use of an organisation's resources" (Cammack 2007 p.8). Building capacity in this area involves assessing an organisation's current status and developing skills in planning and budgeting, accounts record-keeping, financial reporting, and financial controls.

6. Getting the Message Out: Marketing & Communications

All nonprofits have a need to stand out in the crowd – whether it is to attract volunteers, change people's behaviour, find people to participate in their programs or get funding. Every day, more than one hundred new nonprofits are created in North America which means that there are a lot of nonprofits competing for resources (Sagawa & Jospin 2009 p.29). The organizations that will attract the funders, staff, volunteers, and community support are those that are best able to communicate how they make a difference for causes people care about.

The 2003 research on nonprofits across Canada conducted by the Canadian Centre for Philanthropy revealed that organizations need "strategies to improve public and media awareness of the value of nonprofit and voluntary organizations, their contributions to society, and their need for support" (Canadian Centre for Philanthropy 2003 p.ix). The research also revealed that nonprofits often have to counter a number of negative perceptions such as that they are inefficient in managing resources and that government or other funders are providing all the money they need (Canadian Centre for Philanthropy 2003 p.17).

The stewardship organizations interviewed identified marketing and communications as a top priority for building capacity both within their organizations and across the stewardship sector. One respondent commented that there is "lots of work happening but lack of overall public awareness. Ask people what watershed they are in and they likely can't tell you. [We need to] get out shared messages. Big brush awareness is needed for the sector as a whole."

Building marketing and communications capacity has many benefits:

- Increase public awareness of an organization's issue, the contribution of an organization and its need for funds;
- Reach stakeholders with the message that gets the desired response;

- Differentiate an organization so that it stands out;
- Identify and reach a target market;
- Develop strategies to meet marketing and public relations goals;
- Effectively use news media to get a message out and build support for an organization;
- Be able to manage a public relations crisis;
- Educate community members in order to overcome assumptions and stereotypes and reframe the public debate;
- Build support for public policy changes.

Interview participants also identified a number of benefits to building capacity in this area:

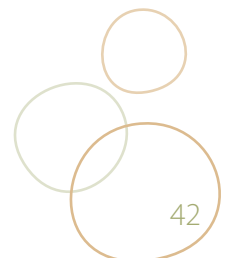
- “Having people fully understand what we do- appreciate the whole story, who we are and how we can help them find shared solutions”;
- Improve fundraising success by raising organizational profile ;
- Raise the profile of environmental issues;
- Increase membership, engage volunteers and inspire personal action;
- “[Create an] informed public - a lot of people don’t realize the impact they’re having on the watershed, . . . [they would] realize the natural world is an important part of where they live”.

Not knowing how to effectively communicate in order to get the desired response prevents many organizations from being the strong and productive organizations they want to be. Without the ability to communicate strategically, an organization’s voice is likely to remain unheard – or worse, create misunderstandings and problems for the organization.

The following are examples of techniques for building communications and marketing capacity:

Branding

The idea of branding is obviously well used in for-profit companies. It is the idea of creating a strong, easily recognizable identity. Branding involves differentiating yourself so people understand how your organization is unique. As well, branding requires consistency so that every experience a person has with your organization contributes to the idea/s that you want people to have about the organization.



Elicit an Emotional Response

Compelling communication draws on both logical and emotional appeals. Creating an emotional connection is key to changing people's behaviour or gaining their support.

The authors of Forces For Good found that high-impact organizations communicate their mission, vision and values to the community in an engaging way. "Over and over again, we heard this theme: it's not about marketing per se; it's about the message" (2008 p.88).

Talking in Benefits

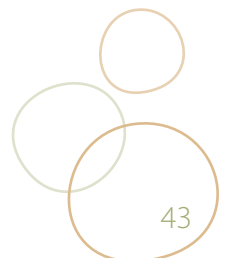
People who are concerned about the environment are often frustrated that people seem unaware, uncaring and uninvolved. Unfortunately, this often becomes the basis for how groups communicate creating guilt and shame in listeners who are quick to tune out.

The Nature Conservancy (TNC) raises over \$14 million annually from 550,000 members who pay dues and receive over \$129 million in corporate and private donor gifts of land in money. The reason for its high income is that it emphasizes benefits to its donors. TNC talks about what it wants to accomplish in the interest of the greater good and how people can help in a way that benefits them (Sandler & Hudson 1998 p.88).

7. Relationships & Networks

"Nothing we do is without long-term partnerships...[in] collective problem solving we come up with better solutions and better products." Interview participant

With funding dollars seemingly to be ever on the decrease, the need for strategies to reduce competition among organizations and increase opportunities to share infrastructure and other resources has become obvious. The development of connections is a way to bring together people working in similar ecosystems or with comparable challenges to be able to share information, pool resources and learn from each other. Effective relationships reduce people's sense of isolation and help people envision the bigger picture. They can also promote the implementation of best practices when assessments are regularly conducted examining what is working and what is not. Crutchfield and Grant write that high-impact nonprofits "help the competition succeed, building networks of



nonprofit allies and devoting remarkable time and energy to advancing their larger field. They freely share wealth, expertise, talent, and power with their peers, not because they are saints, but because it's in their self interest to do so" (Crutchfield & Grant 2008 p.22).

Groups can benefit by sharing skills- one respondent stated their organization helped facilitate board development and strategic planning exercises for another group with similar goals. Interview participant

Other authors also reported an increase of collaboration and even funders encouraging collaboration. However, while "most groups pay lip service to collaboration, many of them really see other nonprofits as competition for scarce resources" (Crutchfield & Grant 2008 p.22). The Canadian Centre for Philanthropy reported that participants in their research expressed frustration that funders were requiring collaboration. "Although often considered worthwhile, collaboration is reported by participants to be time-consuming, to require specific human resources skills, and to be difficult to sustain. The success of collaborative projects can be jeopardized if one partner fails to perform his or her part adequately. Competition among organizations can also impede their ability to collaborate effectively" (Canadian Centre for Philanthropy 2003. p.18).

Thus, the Canadian Centre for Philanthropy identified the need for "strategies to reduce competition among organizations and increase opportunities to share infrastructure and other resources" (Canadian Centre for Philanthropy 2003 p.ix).

Besides saving resources, various authors identified another need for collaboration: sharing of information to prevent overlap and increase effectiveness. Discussing the stewardship of the oceans and coasts, one author notes that "there is little coordination among efforts with similar goals or overlapping geographic coverage—resulting in programs that are less effective due to their isolation in time and space. This fragmentation inhibits the sharing of information and experience and makes it more difficult to design and implement management approaches at appropriate scales" (Roberts 2008 p.74). Other authors writing about British Columbia have similar conclusions. For example, Paish writes, "The next step is to make community groups aware of precisely what inventory information, advice on municipal planning processes, and information on fisheries production potential and habitat issue in watersheds is available (from D.F.O. and other agencies). This would, among other things, be an invaluable guide to save groups duplicating work that has already been done" (1997 p.53).



To build effective capacity in this area, understanding the kind of partnerships that will work effectively for an organization is crucial. This includes the structure of collaboration, the number and type of groups that form an alliance, the process of collaboration, and the degree of engagement of partners.

Examples of capacity building in this area include:

- Coordination among organizations with similar goals and/or overlapping geographic coverage;
- Collaboration as a method of sharing costs and reducing expenses;
- Addressing difficulties associated with collaboration such as that it is time-consuming, difficult to sustain and can fail due to competition or unequal participation;
- Sharing of information and experience;
- Using technology to create and sustain relationships of people separated by distance;
- Mechanisms for cooperation and networking locally to globally recognizing the transboundary nature of environmental issues.

B.C.'s stewardship groups are routinely demonstrating successful partnership and collaborations: "nothing we do is without long-term partnerships" one respondent emphasized. Examples include:

- "Gumboot" stewardship groups on southern Vancouver Island gathering to come up with creative ways to address the current economic crisis;
- The Skeena Watershed Society sponsoring staff from another nonprofit to attend leadership training because they recognize it will strengthen the overall capacity in the region;
- Forty-seven stewardship groups in the East Kootenays succeeding together in securing a dedicated conservation fund in the upper Columbia Valley region.

"The secret to success lies in how great organizations mobilize every sector of society – government, business, nonprofits, and the public – to be a force for good. In other words, greatness has more to do with how nonprofits work outside the boundaries of their organizations....Great organizations work with and through others to create more impact than they could ever achieve alone" (Crutchfield & Grant 2008 p.19).

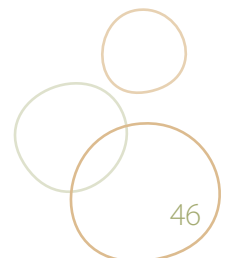
Simple technology can connect groups that share common interests easily and cheaply: ONE/Northwest hosts a listserv to help connect 80 Lower Mainland grassroots stewardship groups, associations and individuals. Groups can share upcoming events, successful initiatives and stewardship activities happening in the region.

There are many benefits to creating relationships and working together with governments as well. For nonprofits, governments can provide technical expertise, collaborate on issues, coordinate on priorities, develop partnerships, seek resources for partnerships, add legitimacy to groups' efforts, and provide logistical support such as space, materials, tools, etc. "Strategic government investment in the sector can help support stability amongst key non profit sector partners, enable joint capacity to manage accountability and enhance mutual ability to deliver results" (Government Nonprofit Initiative 2008 p.3).

Government agencies also benefit from relationship building with nonprofits. Stewardship organizations often offer a way into local communities and access to landowners as well as help to fulfill many government mandates.

In conversation with stewardship groups it became clear that there is a perception that government is downloading responsibility for certain activities to stewardship groups as government priorities change. Issues were also identified by interviewees with government funding as it is often project-centric and on annual cycles that do not help organizations to do their best work. However, environmental stewardship is a shared responsibility. The public sector, First Nations, private sector, civil society, and citizens all have a role to play in caring for the environment and natural resources. Stewardship takes place when individuals, communities, groups, organizations, businesses, corporations, industries, and all levels of government act alone or in partnership to care for natural values. To be working collaboratively, all of these groups need to identify overlapping outcomes, and look for opportunities to support each other in accomplishing these outcomes.

Better communication about the relationship and networking successes would increase the capacity of the stewardship sector in the province. As well, groups are building relationships with one another, but there is still a strong need for relationship building with government and the public. One respondent felt that by celebrating successes and daylighting cooperation in the field "alliances will change the public perception that ENGOs can't cooperate...[in] collective problem solving we come up with better solutions".



8. Advocacy: Changing Policy, Practices, & Legislation

Generally speaking, the ultimate vision of most stewardship nonprofits is to conserve or restore some aspect of an ecosystem, whether it is land, water, or organisms. Unless a nonprofit is involved in purchasing tracts of land for preservation purposes, the aspect of an ecosystem on which they are focused falls under the jurisdiction of one or more levels of government who ultimately decide what happens to the ecosystems. For a variety of reasons, government bureaucracies are known for a certain inertia in changing policies, practices and legislation. Historically, such changes have almost always resulted from grassroots pressure.

Webster's dictionary defines advocacy as "the act of advocating, or speaking or writing in support (of something)". Under this definition, almost every stewardship group plays an advocacy role. The issue is that they need more effective mechanisms to translate knowledge and concerns of groups into information usable by planners and decision-makers.

Advocacy techniques include:

- Involving the media to bring attention to a certain issue or cause;
- Influencing local, provincial and federal governments at the political level;
- Hiring consultants to provide technical and scientific information in order to strengthen a position or disprove a counter position;
- Educating the public;
- Using the legal system to undertake, or provide the threat of, court action;
- Making governments accountable to existing legislation, policy and regulation (Rosenau and Angelo 2001 p.11).

Particularly in the area of stewardship organizations, the importance of that influence cannot be underestimated; indeed, Paish states it well when talking about watershed advocacy: "participation in local government processes can bring to local governments' attention the values that voters and taxpayers associate with stream habitat in a way that officials from another level of government can never achieve. (1997 p.18).

In *Forces for Good*, the authors identify six practices of high-impact nonprofits. The first practice they identify is Advocate and Serve meaning that the most effective nonprofits do both advocacy and program delivery. They say that high-impact organizations "may start out providing great programs, but eventually they realize

that they cannot achieve systemic change through service delivery alone. So they add policy advocacy to access government resources or to change legislation, thus expanding their impact (2008 p.21).

In the literature on stewardship capacity building, authors discussing watershed protection comment that advocacy is very important. Paish states that it is advocacy that is most needed because impacts result from land-use and water-use decisions made by one or all levels of government. “The problem here is that the kind of decisions and actions that lead to the erosion of Lower Mainland aquatic habitats are all political decisions, made mostly at the municipal level. ... community groups can be far more effective as local residents, local voters, and local taxpayers” (1997 p.18). Rosenau and Angelo echo this concern in talking about the Greater Vancouver region. “[W]hile stewardship provides an important ‘glue’ for many community groups wanting to protect or restore fish habitats and provides a needed connection to the resource, it is the inclusion of the advocacy role of these non-government organizations that really makes a group effective for salmon and steelhead habitat. (2001 p.17).

While combining advocacy and program delivery creates an effective nonprofit, there are a number of reasons why groups avoid advocacy. First of all, many groups and individuals are uncomfortable with the idea. Many people want to avoid conflict and believe that advocacy is about creating conflict. It’s much easier for groups to focus on education or rehabilitation programs. As well, many worry that if their group becomes too politicized they will risk alienating critical supporters. Finding revenue to support advocacy activities can also be an issue.

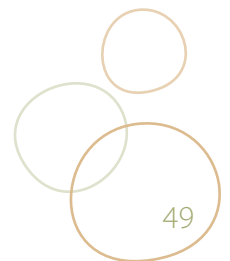
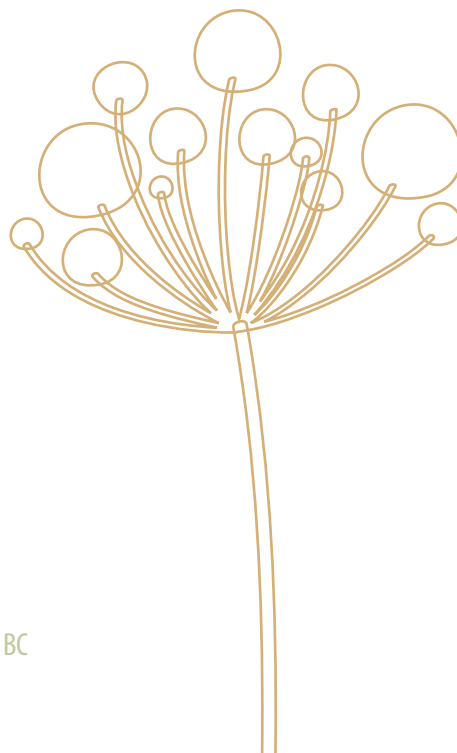
Advocacy is also more difficult to manage than program delivery. With programs, what is needed is generally fairly obvious, but advocacy requires “pursuing multiple goals, playing different roles in competing arenas, and taking substantial risks” (Crutchfield & Grant 2008 p.45). Advocacy is also hard to quantify and measure. It also takes sustained time and energy, and it doesn’t always succeed. As one interview respondent explained, nonprofits are overwhelmed because “government agencies no longer have the staff to do the protection” and the work that governments once did “is taking up so much time that we’re not able to do the advocacy work that is needed.” She described it as “a vicious cycle” that has resulted in many groups no longer doing advocacy work and instead “spend time doing the environmental education – so at least you can feel good about something”.

Current federal legislation can also impact the advocacy capacity of nonprofits. A survey by The Canadian Centre for Philanthropy found that some participants felt that current legislative restrictions on the amount of advocacy activity that charitable organizations can undertake constrained their ability to do effective advocacy. Participants also said that the lack of a clear definition of advocacy in Canada Customs and Revenue Agency regulations was confusing (Canadian Centre for Philanthropy 2003 p.19). A public opinion poll commissioned by the Muttart Foundation in 2006 found that 73% of Canadians believed that “advocacy laws should be changed to permit charities to advocate more freely for their causes” (Muttart Foundation 2006). Of course, likely the only way that this legislation will be changed is through advocacy!

Other reasons that groups have difficulty having meaningful input into the development of government policies, legislation and programs include:

- A perceived as a lack of interest and responsiveness on the part of government. (Canadian Centre for Philanthropy 2003 p.19);
- Lack of political will by all levels of government to stem the tide of habitat destruction;
- Lack of demonstration by governments to protect habitats or to restore conditions (Rosenau & Angelo 2001 p.1).

Thus, capacity building in the area of advocacy involves providing groups with philosophies, techniques and tools to connect their communities with decision-makers that are not based on confrontational models, but on effective engagement. This entails focusing on solutions and working within the current economic and political reality in order to achieve maximum influence with a majority.



Comments on the Framework from Interview Participants

The overall feedback on the framework from interview participants was positive. Some respondents expressed an interest in using it with their organizations even before the completion of the final report. Most found it to be a good overview of the various components of capacity building, suggesting that it helped to clarify and connect the range of activities and ongoing processes that work to strengthen organizations.

Interview participants were asked to rate the priorities for capacity building for both their organization and for the sector based on the framework. Participants were asked to consider capacity building mechanisms beyond core funding since that was the focus of this project.

Selecting priorities was a difficulty for many respondents as they recognized the value and interrelatedness of all of the categories. One respondent explained that partnerships were essential but because she felt they already did this well, she did not select it as a priority area for her organization. The results are represented in graphs below:

Priorities for Organizations

Framework Mechanism (# Selected)

The People (18)
 Funding/ Financial (11)
 Marketing & Communication (11)
 Leadership & Teambuilding (8)
 Partnerships/ Networking (2)
 Design/ Management (2)
 Foundation (1)

Priorities for the Sector

Framework Mechanism (# Selected)

The People (9)
 Marketing & Communication (9)
 Funding/ Financial (8)
 Partnerships/ Networking (8)
 Leadership & Teambuilding (5)
 Design/ Management (3)
 Foundation (3)

The top three areas identified as priorities for capacity building were consistent both for organizations and within the sector: The People, Marketing & Communications, and Funding and Financial. Partnerships & Networking was also identified as a high priority for the sector as a whole.



Several interviewees emphasized the importance of using plain language when developing resources and programs to strengthen organizations. Some found the term “capacity building” itself, problematic or off-putting. Another caution offered by interviewees was to ensure any capacity building resources reflected the unique characteristics of the sector and were delivered by consultants with appropriate sector experience. Developing capacity building resources with ongoing input from the sector and presenting resources in both the language and form that stewardship organizations want will help ensure they are accessed by and meaningful to stewardship organizations.

Capacity Building Resources in BC

Once organizations are committed to building the capacity of their organizations they are faced with the difficult decision of knowing where to start and who to ask for help. Presently there is no one place to find this information. Through interviews, follow-up calls, web research and contacts provided by the project team, the following preliminary inventory of capacity building organizations and resources was compiled.

Capacity Builders in BC

Hollyhock Leadership Institute (www.hollyhockleadership.org)

Hollyhock Leadership Institute provides capacity building programs for organizations focussed on the environment and social change. They offer a week-long leadership training program in residence at the Hollyhock Centre on Cortes Island. The leadership program is offered annually and some scholarships are available. In addition, they offer day-long courses throughout the year at both the Cortes Island location and at the Tides Centre in Vancouver. These courses cover a range of topics including fundraising, leadership, marketing and communications and advocacy.

Centre for Sustainability (www.centreforsustainability.ca)

The Centre for Sustainability offers capacity grants and opportunities to B.C.’s not-for-profit sector. The EnviroPOD program is specifically tailored to B.C.’s environmental nonprofits. A limited number of grants are made annually and

groups must apply for the grants. Successful groups are able to work with capacity building professionals. The program areas of focus include organizational assessment and priority setting primarily in the areas of foundation, people, organizational design and management. The program can also be tailored to meet the specific needs of an organization.

Centre for Nonprofit Development (<http://bccnpd.ca>)

The Centre for Nonprofit Development is located at the University of the Fraser Valley. Their capacity building resources include an on-site library, a website with resources and links covering a variety of topics as well as a ten module introductory course in Non-Profit Management offered at various community college locations across the province. A limited number of funded seats are available for nonprofits to participate in the course. The Centre also provide a Speakers Bureau list of 40 speakers and facilitators that can assist nonprofits in building capacity in a range of areas. Centre employees are available to speak on a number of topics of interest to nonprofits such as governance and legal matters. A referral service for the nonprofit sector is also provided.

Centre for Nonprofit Management (www.cnpm.ca)

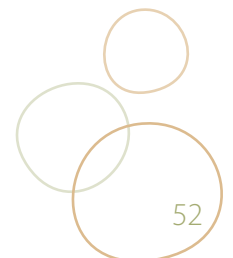
The Center Nonprofit Management builds leadership and management capacity in the nonprofit sector. Located in Victoria, the Centre has a strategic partnership with the Centre for Public Sector Studies in the University of Victoria's School of Public Administration. The Centre's capacity building resources include:

- An Executive Director breakfast lecture series;
- The Voluntary Sector Knowledge Network with online resources on leadership, community and government relations, funding and financial management, people and management. VSKN also offers an Ask a Mentor initiative in which organizations can access experts in the field for time-limited one-on-one sessions.

Workshops and short courses are offered in Victoria and on Vancouver Island on a range of topics for the nonprofit sector including: board development, funding and financial management, change management, marketing and communications, partnerships and leadership and teamwork. The Centre is also involved in the Government/Nonprofit initiative which fosters dialogue between nonprofits and the provincial government.

Glasshouse Capacity Services Society (www.glasshouse.ca)

Glasshouse helps charitable organizations assess their capacity, develop plans for building it, and find the resources necessary to implement these plans through hands-on consultation. A charitable organization that charges for the work



they do, their main areas of focus include financial and fundraising, volunteer coordination, board training and policy development. Glasshouse is based in Vancouver. Glasshouse has worked with environmental organizations such as West Coast Environmental Law and SPEC.

Volunteer BC (www.volunteerbc.bc.ca)

Volunteer B.C. is a provincial association of voluntary organizations and volunteer centres and individuals interested in strengthening the province's voluntary sector. They offer some free online resources and host a Provincial Training Calendar which functions as a clearinghouse for workshops and training opportunities around the province. Volunteer B.C. also operates the Learning and Leading Exchange, a peer-based learning model that develops leadership capacity through community learning pods.

Social Planning and Research Council -SPARC (www.sparc.bc.ca)

SPARC is a B.C. charity that works with communities on community development education, accessibility, income security and social planning. They are able to provide free and low cost workshops for capacity building in rural B.C. through their community development education program. Programs vary depending on the particular needs of the community, the partners and the skill or capacity to be developed. SPARC also offers fee-for-service consulting and a research department that works with nonprofits on needs assessments, strategic planning, skills and capacity building, policy analysis, facilitation and program evaluation. SPARC is also the secretariat for the Capacity Development Consortium (see below).

Capacity Development Consortium - CDC

The Capacity Development Consortium is an association of B.C. organizations who are committed to developing capacity in communities across B.C.. Membership in CDC is informal with no fees. The group meets several times a year to discuss, plan and collaborate on projects that build community capacity. Learning Initiatives for Rural and Northern B.C. is a working group of the CDC, and offers event planning, workshop/ dialogue design, facilitation, curriculum resources and training to build capacity for organizations and communities in rural, remote and Northern B.C. A limited number of communities are provided this service based on an annual application process in late spring. The CDC is presently compiling a living inventory of capacity builders in the province.

VanCity (www.vancity.com/mycommunity/notforprofit/)

Vancity is Canada's largest credit union with a long history of supporting B.C.'s nonprofit sector through grant and financial education. They previously offered grants targeted to capacity building. Currently, nonprofits can access financial and



legal educational materials on their website and through fee-based workshops offered in partnership with United Service Co-op. Vancity is also a financial contributor to the EnviroPOD grant offered through the Centre for Sustainability.

Connecting Environmental Professionals- CEP (www.cepvancouver.org)

Connecting Environmental Professionals is a nonprofit, volunteer organization providing networking, career development and capacity building opportunities. CEP works with individuals across the environmental sector including working and future professionals, government, business, and nonprofits. CEP is a chapter of the Young Environmental Professionals (YEP) organization which has chapters in Toronto, Ottawa, Calgary and Edmonton. They offer workshops, lectures, a mentorship program and networking opportunities. The scope of topics offered varies, but has included leadership, advocacy, marketing and facilitation.

The Stewardship Centre for BC (www.stewardshipcentre.bc.ca)

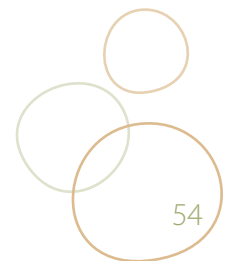
The Stewardship Centre is a non-profit organization dedicated to supporting the stewardship sector in BC. As part of their strategy to increase the capacity of stewardship organizations, they are testing the Stewardship Works! program to provide core funding to organizations and evaluate the impacts. This test program is now in its second year and SCBC continues to seek additional ways to build stewardship capacity in BC.

Charity Village (www.charityvillage.com)

Billed as Canada's supersite for the nonprofit sector, Charity Village offers more than 3,500 pages of information for the nonprofit sector in both official languages, including jobs and volunteer opportunities, e-training, listings of news and events and educational resources. Educational materials, research and articles can be found on all the areas of capacity building. However, most of the articles are short and thus usually only provide an introduction into a topic.

Work in NonProfits.ca (www.workinnonprofits.ca)

Work in NonProfits.ca offers an alternative to some of the services offered by Charity Village at a reduced cost to nonprofits. Work in NonProfits.ca helps to connect nonprofits around the country with job seekers and suppliers of services and products. They provide an easily searchable database of consultants in a range of areas that nonprofits can engage to assist in customized capacity building work. Work in NonProfits.ca is both used by and run by individuals who work and volunteer in the nonprofit sector; they also donate 50% of net advertising profits to organizations that use the site.



Stewardship Sector Organizations Supporting Capacity Building

In addition to the capacity building organizations and partnerships listed above the stewardship sector itself also coordinates periodic capacity building workshops and resources. These may be offered in tandem with conferences or meetings and are generally coordinated in partnership with other organizations. Although conference goals are often predominantly to share technical expertise, research and enhance programmatic skills, by integrating capacity building activities into conference agendas, the sector can strengthen organizations and achieve better outcomes. The biannual B.C. Stewardship Community Workshop provides a good example: the 2009 conference hosted by the Alouette River Management Society, Kanaka Education and Environmental Partnership Society and Stave Valley Salmonid Enhancement Society offers twenty-six workshop sessions. Most sessions are aimed at building technical skills, but several are targeted toward developing organizational capacity. The capacity building sessions include topics on communications and messaging, policy, partnerships, fundraising, governance and the legal ramifications of becoming a society or charity.

Discussion

Under this project it was not possible to explore the full range of capacity building organizations or the professional facilitators, consultants and companies that provide nonprofit capacity building services. However, none of organizations reviewed appeared to offer a comprehensive and systematic solution for capacity building for nonprofits.

The research into capacity building resources also provided a better understanding of the challenge that stewardship groups face when approaching capacity building work: determining where to start. The myriad of disparate resources, organizations and approaches to capacity building found by the authors reinforced comments made by interviewees that they were unclear as to where to access resources and how to know which ones were good. The fact that there is no standardized evaluation of capacity building resources or organizations makes it even more difficult for stewardship groups to know where to expend their limited resources.

If stewardship nonprofits are to engage in capacity building, they need a source of readily available, comprehensive and trusted capacity building resources. A role exists for umbrella organizations like the Stewardship Centre for B.C. to filter and provide information on capacity builders and their programs to the sector.

Demonstrating Success - Capacity Building Case Studies

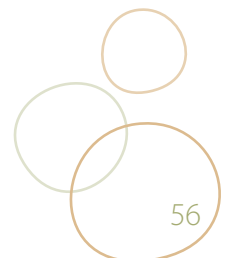
The goal of finding case studies was to have inspirational and illustrative examples of building organizational capacity. However, it was challenging to find B.C. case studies for two reasons: first, many examples of capacity building were programmatic or developed specific skills in individuals but not necessarily organizational capacity; and second, many of the groups that are doing capacity building have not been tracking their results and thus it is hard to know if their efforts were indeed effective.

Case Study: Foundation Capacity Building Increases Organizational Impact

The Nature Conservancy, Canada

The Nature Conservancy undertook three major capacity building exercises in the 1990's focused on their mission, vision and goals. Although the organization appeared to be healthy with record membership, revenues and acres acquired, each office was functioning autonomously setting their own priorities and collecting their own funding. This made it difficult to cooperate on conservation projects that crossed boundaries – an important need as conservation theory was changing to recognize the necessity of protecting larger expanses of land. Historically, The Nature Conservancy had purchased land for conservation, but as conservation theory identified the need to protect larger pieces of land, The Conservancy did not have enough resources and needed to turn to collaboration and partnerships in order to fulfill its objectives. The autonomy of the various offices meant that it was difficult to pull together resources for organization-wide projects.

Under the leadership of John Sawhill, staff looked at how they could increase their impact and determined the need for a single mission, set of goals, and approach to conservation. While there were staff that resisted the changes, after a decade of capacity building, The Nature Conservancy had aligned its mission, goals and strategies. The result has been that The Conservancy has tripled their revenues, offices and staff, been able to attract high-end talent, and doubled their membership. They now protect over a million acres of land a year.



Case Study: Leadership Development

Skeena Watershed Conservation Coalition, Hazelton, BC

The Skeena Watershed Conservation Coalition is a grassroots community group that began by taking on Shell Oil to protect the sacred headwaters and became a powerful voice for the environment and a staunch community builder in the region.

Founded by a powerful female leader, Shannon McPhail, and supported by a team of engaged volunteers, the SWCC had results that landed them on the pages of national and international media. Like many organizational founders, McPhail was charismatic and had intense passion and drive for the issue, but a lack of experience running campaigns, a paucity of leadership and management abilities, and no formal strategy training - all of which threatened severe burnout for her and the organization. She also 'rode her volunteers hard' – expecting them to respond immediately to requests and letting them hear about it if they didn't.

“I admit that I attended the leadership training under duress but it was a truly life changing experience. SWCC would not be around if I hadn't gone- I was heading for severe burnout but now I understand that personal ecology is important. I learned how to ask for help; I got skills I didn't have. We are doing things now that give you butterflies in your stomach.” Shannon, Executive Director, SWCC

McPhail had no interest in capacity building but was both encouraged by a mentor and threatened with the loss of financial support by a funder. Fortunately, Hollyhock supported her residency in their Canadian Environmental Leadership Program with a scholarship. So, against her will, she attended Hollyhock for campaign and leadership training. There she honed her strategy and campaign skills and became a better manager of people. Subsequent to the training, McPhail has developed a more cohesive organization and learned balance and strategy that has helped her lead SWCC to a number of impressive victories. Before the capacity training, McPhail did not think that she would make it through the first campaign; since the training she has managed to have two children while keeping SWCC running and doesn't shout at anyone anymore.

Having benefited so much from capacity training, SWCC now annually sends staff to training to grow capacity throughout the organization. Another learning that McPhail took away from the training was taking an inclusive, help everyone out approach that has changed how they function in the region. In fact, SWCC are even sponsoring two staff from another regional organization who they recognized would benefit from building leadership capacity.

Case Study: Fundraising Capacity Building

West Coast Environmental Law, Vancouver, BC

In 2007 West Coast Environmental Law received a \$20,000 Capacity Grant from Vancity which enabled them to take their fledgling, foundation dependent fundraising program to another level. WCEL used the funds to hire a consulting company to conduct an audit of their direct appeal program and develop a plan to maximize fundraising return for their limited resources. They focussed on two areas: major gifts and individual donors. They also learned the importance of having very clear and specific development objectives, building from the support an organization already has and using targeted asks. As a result of this work WCEL has seen a significant increase in individual donations and has increased their financial independence.

Case Study: Building Financial Capacity Using a Social Enterprise Model

Earth Matters, Nelson, BC

Earth Matters began in the spring of 1995 when two local youth were inspired to create a summer pilot project for high school students called "HANDS-ON". Building on its success, Earth Matters evolved out of "HANDS-ON" as a youth-driven program focused on involving young people in giving back to their community. Through grant-based projects, Earth Matters has delivered a diverse range of environmental and social justice programs that have responded to the community's needs over the past 13 years. However, Earth Matters was dependent on grant-based funding for all of its operations, resulting in the development of programs that were financially unsustainable in the long term.

In an effort to find more sustainable ways to continue their work and have more control over their finances, Earth Matters is developing three social enterprises. The profits from these enterprises, known as Earth Matters Community Composting, Earth Matters ECO Store and Earth Matters Recycling will be used to support other Earth Matters initiatives and the youth initiatives arm of Earth Matters providing local youth with support to develop their own innovative community projects. Partial Funding for the planning of these social marketing initiatives was provided by Enterprising Nonprofits, a social enterprise funder.

Case Study: Charting a Capacity Building Course Using a Benchmarking Tool

Earth Day Coalition, Cleveland, Ohio

Founded on the twentieth anniversary of Earth Day in 1990, the small grassroots organization called the Earth Day Coalition began as an organization with an ambitious mandate to host a community Earth Day celebration. From the one-day celebration, the Coalition quickly evolved: with two staff and many volunteers they developed local environmental education initiatives on recycling, solid waste management, energy efficiency, conservation and pollution prevention.

Wanting to take their organization to the next level, the Earth Day Coalition sought external help from the Institute of Conservation Leadership (ICL) Northeast Ohio Sustainable Organizations Program. The year-long program began by charting a capacity building course of action by identifying areas of need via a benchmarking tool.

Through a combination of training, sustained one-on-one coaching and the benchmarking tool as a constant reference point, the Coalition redefined their programs into four key areas, strengthened their board and fundraising acumen and determined how to multiply and grow their small staff. Earth Day Coalition now has six staff and six regular interns. They have also doubled their income and their expanded programs are recognized nationally. Chris Trepal the Coalition's co-executive director credits their success to focussing on specific goals defined during their benchmarking process as well as regular self-evaluation against targets and deadlines.

Case Study: Capacity Building by investing in People

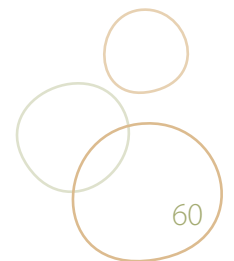
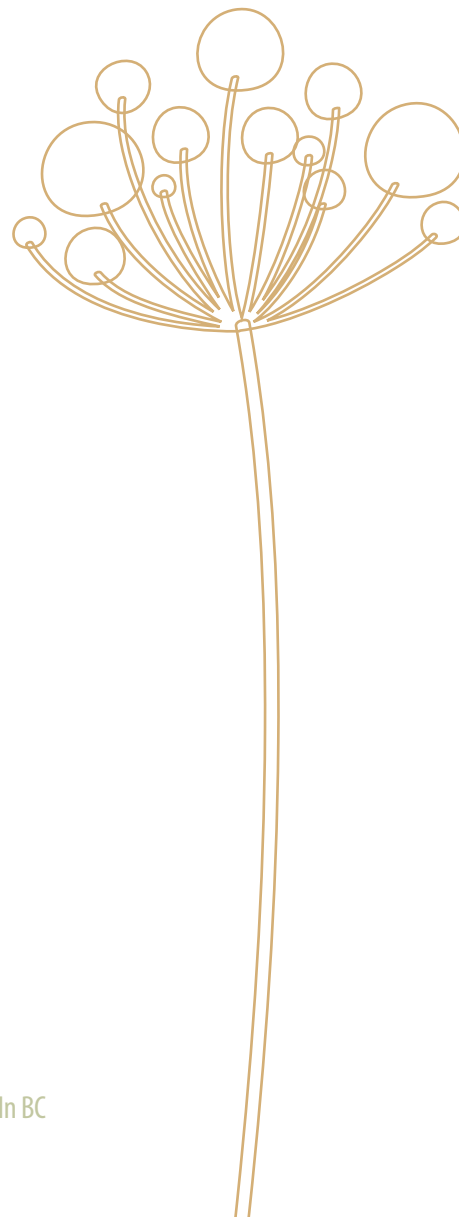
Alouette River Management Society (ARMS), Maple Ridge, BC

The Alouette River Management Society (ARMS) was formed in 1993 to advocate for increased water flows into the Alouette River from a B.C. Hydro Dam. Along with other active community groups, they achieved their aim in 1996. More than a decade later, they remain committed to the protection and enhancement of the watershed through advocacy education and stewardship.

Like many grassroots stewardship groups, ARMS relies on volunteers to assist in delivering programs such as their summer camps for children. In 2007, ARMS was unable to secure the number of volunteers needed to assist with the camps and had to make the difficult decision to hire two additional summer staff to enable them to offer the day-camps.

ARMS recognized the need to dedicate time and resources to support their volunteer program. In 2008, ARMS received a Stewardship Works! core funding grant and decided to apply a portion of it toward developing a strategy for their volunteer program in order to increase recruitment. Under their new strategy, they set targets and focused recruitment on students from local high schools who needed career and personal planning (CAPP) volunteer hours. To help identify suitable volunteers they enlisted the help of high school counsellors.

Due to the time spent strategically developing the capacity of their volunteer program, ARMS was successful in meeting their volunteer targets for the summer of 2008 and even had some of the volunteers returning to help with the spring break camps the next year. Amanda Bakke, ARMS Executive Director credits their success to developing stronger relationships with the high school counsellors and feels confident those relationships will continue to pay dividends into the future.



Gaps and Recommendations

Capacity Building Gaps

The literature review, interviews, and discussions with individuals involved in the stewardship sector revealed that stewardship capacity building in British Columbia is really in the first stages of development. There is a lot of misunderstanding of what it is, what it entails and its benefits. While there are some resources available, they are widely spread among many different players and not easy for groups to access or even be aware of. Specifically, the following gaps were identified over the course of the project:

- Existing capacity building resources are piecemeal and in many different places ranging from web resources, to capacity building nonprofits to consultants. There is no one place where organizations can currently go to get good, comprehensive information and tools that would enable them to be able to systematically do capacity building;
- There is confusion across the stewardship sector (including organizations, government, funders, etc.) about what capacity building is, how to do it and its benefits;
- There is a great deal of confusion over the meaning of the term 'capacity building in both the literature and in general use;
- Groups wanting to do capacity building often have a hard time even knowing where to start;
- There is little information available that demonstrates the benefits of an organization engaging in capacity building;
- The existing resources have not been evaluated for success and best practices;
- Existing resources are not regionally available;
- Capacity building resources have not yet been adapted to and developed specifically for the stewardship sector;
- Current capacity building by groups tends to live in individuals rather than organizations meaning that when the individual leaves the organization, the capacity goes with them;
- There are few links and partnerships between capacity builders;

- There are few links and partnerships between stewardship groups trying to do capacity building;
- Stewardship organizations need time and money to be able to do capacity building and funders often do not fund capacity building.

Recommendations

As a result of the research from this project, the priority recommendation is that **the Stewardship Centre for B.C. take a leadership role in advancing stewardship capacity building within British Columbia.**

A number of additional recommendations are being made that fall out from this main recommendation.

- Create a central hub for stewardship capacity building in BC that acts as a clearinghouse of information and a learning exchange.
- Create an inventory of resources and build partnerships to foster capacity building in the stewardship sector.
- Advocate and educate for stewardship capacity building to foster an understanding of the importance and value of strengthening organizations.
- Use plain language and terminology in developing resources and tools for capacity building educational materials.
- Develop tools and resources to foster capacity building in the stewardship sector, specifically:
 - A Capacity Benchmarking Tool- an assessment tool is needed so that organizations can benchmark their current capacity in the different areas identified in the Framework.
 - A suite of resources, tools and implementation strategies based on each of the Framework areas.
- Determine best practices- the tools and techniques, including delivery models, that work best for the stewardship sector.
- Explore opportunities for capacity building funding. Develop, strengthen and foster relationship with funders and government to support initiatives that fund capacity building work.



Discussion of Recommendations

The Stewardship Centre to Take a Leadership Role

In order for capacity building to advance in the stewardship sector in British Columbia, someone will need to take a leadership role. The Stewardship Centre for B.C. is in a unique position to take this leadership role. For one thing, the Stewardship Centre has recently changed their mandate to include capacity building. As well, the Stewardship Centre is already an umbrella group for stewardship organizations in British Columbia and also has relationships and partnerships developed with not only stewardship organizations, but also government and funders.

A number of the individuals interviewed during this project also recommended that the Stewardship Centre take on this leadership role for capacity building for the stewardship sector in the province.

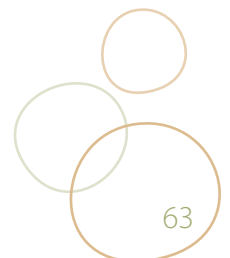
Taking a leadership role for capacity building in the stewardship sector in B.C. is a large job requiring considerable time as well as human and financial resources.

Create Hub for Stewardship Capacity Building in B.C.

While there are some capacity building resources in the province, few stewardship organizations have accessed them. One solution to this is to create a central hub, such as a website of information and resources related to stewardship capacity building. To be effective, a hub would need to be advertised so that groups are aware the information is available. It would also require ongoing funding to be able to update the information.

The Stewardship Centre for B.C. would be a very good place to house this information hub. For one thing, it would fit well with their mandate which is to help organizations, government, businesses, and citizens to carry out stewardship activities in the most efficient, effective, and rewarding ways possible. As well, SCBC already supports stewardship by providing technical resources and best practices guidelines to the stewardship community in the form of online tools and high quality information guiding stewardship practices. Thus, adding stewardship capacity building resources to current tools and information would be a good fit.

During the interview portion of the project, it was discovered that a number of the interviewees were not familiar with the Stewardship Centre. However, even those who were unclear of the mandate of the Stewardship Centre thought that it made sense for the Centre to host capacity building resources. In order to ensure success, funding should not only be found to develop the capacity building resources,



but also to promote the resources and the SCBC as the hub for these resources. An outreach strategy should be developed to ensure that stewardship groups are made aware and have access to the resources.

A hub needs to have a significant online component because stewardship groups are spread throughout the province and many outside of the larger urban areas currently have little access to resources. The following are ideas for the elements of an online hub:

- Make capacity building resources available (particularly sector specific resources) such as research materials and tools including the Framework;
- Include a database of capacity building initiatives including the topic covered, the location, cost, when, and the scope (e.g. introductory or advanced);
- Incorporate the ability for people to be able to add capacity building resources and also evaluate those resources. For example, if someone has taken a course they could post an evaluation of how they found it and what they got out of it;
- Include the ability for groups to be able to share experiences including what works and what does not; and,
- Add success stories and case studies;
- Incorporate a social networking component to facilitate partnerships by connecting regionally to others working on building capacity and also to create interest-based connections i.e. who in the province is working on a certain capacity? This would allow groups to share resources and learn from one another;
- Incorporate ways for capacity builders to create links and partnerships using the hub.

Create an Inventory of Resources and Build Partnerships

Some capacity building players were identified as part of the research for this project. This work needs to be continued and expanded upon to generate a comprehensive list is produced for use by the stewardship sector. In addition to the types of resources identified in this research, an inventory should include professional facilitators, consultants and companies that provide nonprofit capacity building services.



As this inventory is developed, potential partnerships can be explored. As mentioned earlier, taking a leadership role in stewardship capacity building in the province is a huge job and the SCBC will need to partner with others, such as the Capacity Development Consortium (CDC), in order to accomplish it.

Advocate and Educate for Stewardship Capacity Building

Understanding the importance and value of capacity building to stewardship is an essential aspect of furthering capacity in the sector. The SCBC needs to both advocate and educate about what capacity building is and the benefits of building capacity. This education needs to occur throughout the sector including the organizations, all levels of government, funders, communities, etc. There are a variety of forms such education could take including workshops, webinars, website resources, and sharing the Framework and success stories. Education will need to occur on an ongoing basis. A practical approach may work best for educating the sector. In other words, by developing tools such as the Framework and assessment tools and teaching people in the sector how to use and apply them, people will have first-hand experiences of the benefits of capacity building.

Use Simple Terminology

One of the issues with capacity building is the confusion with the term, 'capacity building' as well as the number of different words used to describe capacity building or organizational development. There is a great deal of confusion over the meaning of the term in both the literature and in general use. A number of the interviewees expressed confusion about what capacity building consisted of.

In order to move forward effectively, some exploration of the best terminology is needed. An investigation should delve into whether 'capacity building' is the best term or whether a better term or simpler language exists. This will require feedback from throughout the stewardship sector as well as those involved in conducting capacity building. In addition, consideration should be given to ways in which to put a more accessible face on capacity building material making them less intimidating and more likely to be approached with curiosity rather than dread.

Next Tools and Resources

Create a Capacity Benchmarking Tool

One of the gaps identified in the research was that groups do not know where to start to build capacity for their organizations. The Framework was a first step in providing a systematic, comprehensive and simple to use model for capacity building. Now that a framework has been developed, the next priority is an assessment tool so that organizations can benchmark their current capacity in the different areas under the Framework.

A capacity benchmarking tool would enable groups to measure their current organizational capacity building success, set priorities, track their progress, and evaluate their success as they begin to do the work of capacity building.

Developing a benchmarking tool based on the framework would be a relatively easy task as there are some existing models that could be adapted. Examples of existing models that could be adapted include the Capacity Assessment Grid developed by Venture Philanthropy Partners and Benchmarking Your Organization's Development developed by the Institute for Conservation Leadership for the McKnight Foundation.

Begin Building Upon Areas of the Framework

Besides a benchmarking tool, the next step is to begin develop a suite of resources, tools and approaches for each of the eight areas of the framework. This will include discovering best practices and modifying existing tools and resources for stewardship sector.

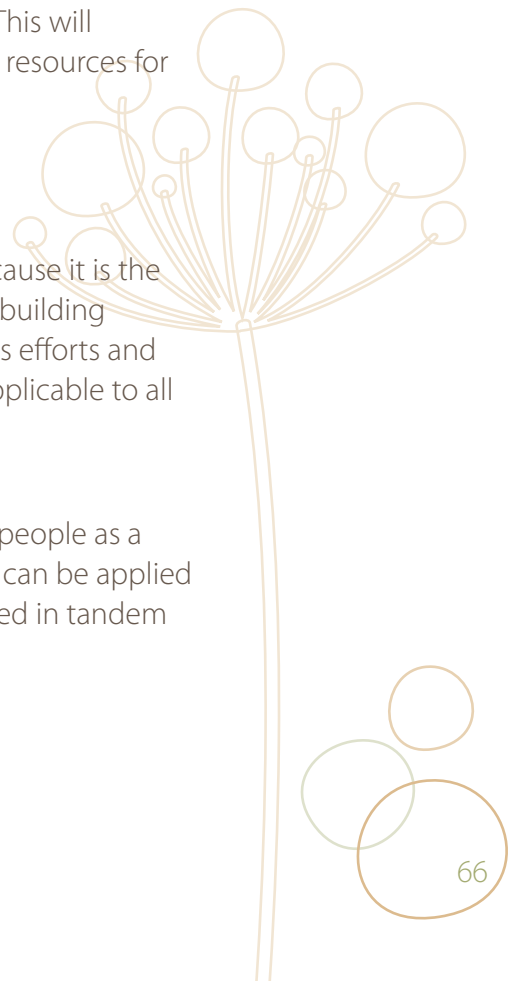
Based on the research, three priority areas are recommended:

Foundation

The foundation is an essential first area for capacity building because it is the basis for all other capacity building efforts. Foundation capacity building streamlines all the work that an organization does maximizing its efforts and minimizing wasted resources. In addition, Foundation work is applicable to all sizes and types of organizations.

The People

Interview participants identified developing capacity related to people as a priority for capacity building. This is also an area of capacity that can be applied to any sized organization. Potentially this area could be developed in tandem with leadership and teambuilding.



Marketing and Communications

Many organizations are looking for a way to have their message better heard and building marketing and communications capacity is a way of accomplishing that. As other areas identified as priorities, marketing and communications capacity building is applicable to any sized organization as well as to the sector as a whole.

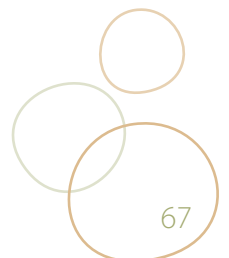
Explore Best Practices

Discovering best practices – the tools and techniques that work the best for the stewardship sector - is an essential part of building capacity.

Best practices also includes examining the best delivery models for capacity building. There is a large range of capacity building approaches that includes peer-to-peer learning, mentors, facilitated organizational development, training and academic study, research, publishing and grantmaking which may be done by consultants, nonprofit collaboratives, foundations, government, and others.

The development of best practices involves:

- Researching best practices; there is extensive literature on capacity building, but only some of it applies to the stewardship sector. While we reviewed many documents during this research, there are many more to examine. Specifically, research need to be done on best practices and on information, approaches, tools and techniques that are applicable to the stewardship sector or can be adapted;
- Continuing to gather information on the available capacity building resources in the province. During this research, a number of organizations that offer capacity building training and other resources were identified. That process of the identification of resources needs to continue including adding the various consultants in British Columbia who offer capacity building services. As well, the various resources need to be evaluated for efficacy and a evaluation mechanism set up so that they can be evaluated on an ongoing basis;
- Continuing to build on success stories;
- Create evaluation and feedback mechanisms including ways to share success stories and best practices and stewardship organizations begin to implement capacity building in their organizations;
- Create and maintain communications mechanisms such as posting information, events and resources to an interactive website; enable people to submit feedback, ask questions and post success stories.



Explore Opportunities for Capacity Building Funding

To be effective at building capacity, stewardship organizations need access to funding. SCBC should foster relationship with funders and government to support initiatives that fund capacity building work. One such initiative is Stewardship Works! since many of the stewardship organizations are using the core funding allocated by this program to do capacity building work. The success of programs like Stewardship Works! should be celebrated and built upon to increase the awareness of the value and need for core funding. Part of the value of core funding is that it is not tagged to specific projects, thus groups can designate those monies to their highest area of need – including capacity building activities.

Conclusion

This work was undertaken to explore mechanisms for strengthening stewardship organizations to better enable them to perform their role as key players in restoring, protecting and preserving wild places and spaces in British Columbia. What has resulted is an understanding that the stewardship sector is at the nascent stages of capacity building and that there is a great deal of opportunity to move forward strategically to provide resources and support to strengthen our organizations and protect our environment.

If we value the work that stewardship groups do, we have to also value the groups themselves and invest in their success. Enabling groups to succeed involves working with them and supporting them in developing the tools and resources they need to chart their best course. The groups are not looking for a handout – they want to be respected, supported and trusted in the work that they do.

Capacity building is an important area, not just an add-on to what groups are already doing. As one interviewee said, “Capacity building would allow us to flower instead of stumble along. The possibilities would be limitless. This work spreads our wings.”

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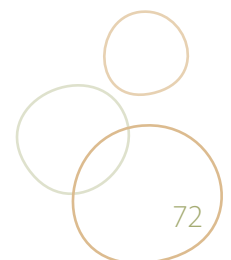
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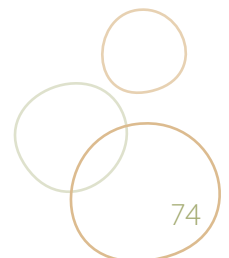
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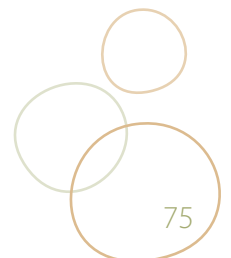
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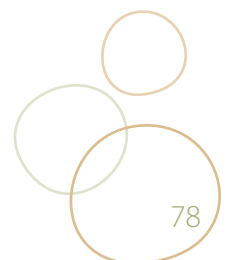
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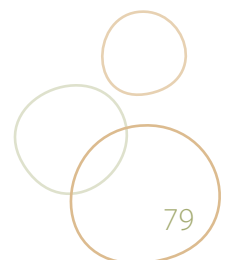
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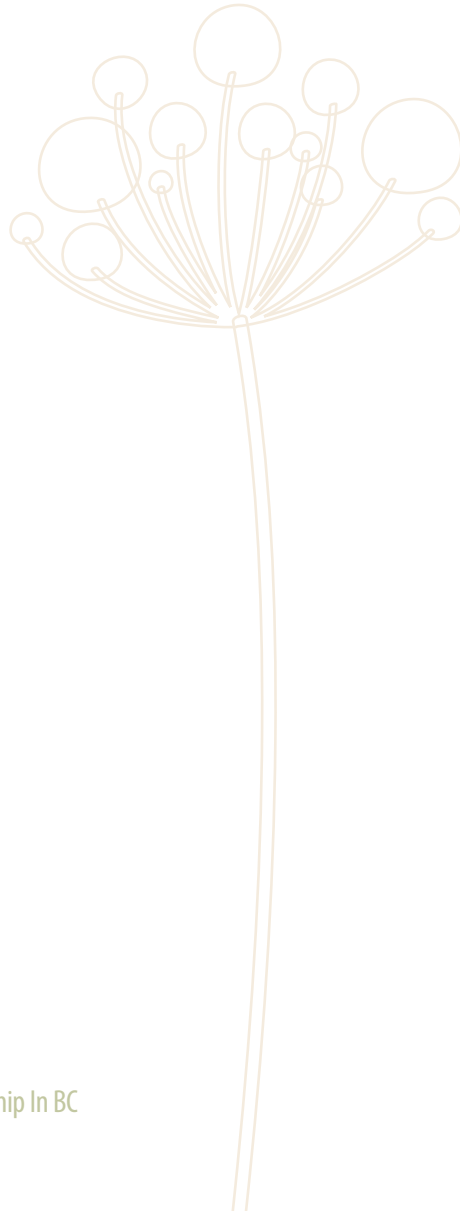
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Appendix 3: Abridged Capacity Building Framework

With the increasing recognition of the environmental and societal impacts of habitat degradation, species loss, pollution and climate change, stewardship nonprofits are playing a progressively more valuable role in our communities. As the importance of their work grows, it becomes even more critical for these organizations to perform effectively and maximize the impact of their resources. Capacity building provides a trailmap to enable organizations to realize their potential.

Capacity building can be defined as, 'the systemic strengthening of the capabilities of an organization to perform more effectively'. In other words, organizations are looking to do the most with the resources they have. Capacity building involves both removing factors that inhibit the ability of an organization as well as strengthening its capabilities. Like for-profit businesses, not-for-profits are looking at how they can make and do the most with what they have in order to maximize their impact.

As a relatively new discipline, capacity building is still undergoing development in terms of what it is and how it is best accomplished. What makes it even more complicated is the fact that capacity building is a multidimensional concept. An organization's overall capacity to fulfill its mission depends on a variety of specific capacities that are interdependent and may change in priority over time.

Some of the benefits of capacity building include:

- Fostering innovation and responsiveness to change
- Improving the quality of products, services and programs
- Enhancing the organization's value
- Reducing costs and improving efficiency
- Team building and improving the satisfaction of those working and volunteering for the organization;
- Developing the tools to work through change rather than block it.

The vast field of capacity building can be overwhelming for non-profits trying to improve capacity within their organizations. One of the goals of this project is to simplify the huge field of capacity building into something useful to stewardship organizations in British Columbia. The following framework is a first step in that direction.

Capacity Building Framework

1. The Foundation
2. Organizational Design & Management
3. The People
4. Leadership & Team Building
5. Funding & Financial Management
6. Getting the Message out: Marketing and Communication
7. Partnerships, Networks and Alliances
8. Advocacy: Changing Policy, Practices, & Legislation

1. Foundation

Ensuring that an organization has a clear and shared mission and vision is the foundation of capacity building because all other capacity efforts build upon having a clear focus that is shared throughout the organization. Initial research suggests that nonprofits increase their capacity tremendously when they reassess their aspirations – their mission, vision and their strategy and the actionable ways to achieve their goals.

Vision

A vision statement expresses what an organization ultimately hopes to accomplish as a result of its efforts: its optimal goal and reason for existence.

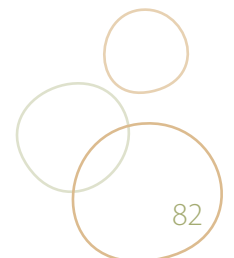
Mission

The mission provides an overview of an organization's plans to realize its vision by identifying service areas, target audience/s and the values and goals of the group. A good mission statement makes decision-making much easier by helping an organization to stay focused and on course.

Strategic Planning & Goal-setting

Strategic planning establishes what an organization is going to do over the next year or more, how it's going to accomplish its journey and how it will know if it was successful. A good strategy allocates resources to priorities, defines how the organization is unique and is linked to the major goals of the organization.

While many organizations focus on the creation of a strategic plan document, it is the planning process and the willingness to continually examine whether the strategic actions are effective and aligned with the mission that builds the capacity of an organization.



2. Organizational Design & Management

Well-articulated goals and well-developed strategies are an important first step in capacity building, but unless these are placed within the context of the right organizational structure, an organization is unlikely to be effective in executing them. Unfortunately, many stewardship organizations develop their structure and systems ad hoc rather than on purpose.

Building capacity involves increasing the impact and likelihood of success of an organization by designing an adaptive and purpose-built structure that is aligned with the organization's vision and strategy. A good organizational structure allows an organization to be responsive to change while integrating and aligning human resource capabilities, external environmental factors, strategic practices, technology and internal resources.

Systems and Infrastructure

Systems are the formal and informal processes by which an organization functions, while the infrastructure are the physical and technological assets of an organization. Often, the need for systems and infrastructure capacity building is obvious because problems are so apparent when there is a malfunctioning in these areas. However, efforts to solve the issue are frequently directed at the single problem rather than recognizing that the problem is a symptom of larger issues. Capacity building requires looking at the full range of systems and how they work or fail to work together.

Examining systems and infrastructure capacity entails looking at the planning systems, decision making framework, conflict resolution strategies, accountability framework, knowledge management, administrative systems, adaptive capacity and the physical and technological assets of an organization.

Organizational Structure

Organizational structure is the way in which the policy and the affairs of an organization are influenced and conducted including the organizational design, planning, interfunctional coordination, individual job descriptions and roles and the legal and management structure. The design of an organization supports its vision, mission and strategies as well as its systems and human resources.

3. The People

While many nonprofits recognize the people working and volunteering for the organization as their greatest resource, this is also an area of great challenges for organizations.

Capacity building in this area involves recruitment, retention, management, and training matters.

Volunteers

Volunteers fill dual purposes of getting the work done and engaging constituents in the mission/issues of the organization. Finding and managing volunteers is an increasing challenge for non-profits. Volunteer capacity building involves finding approaches to volunteer recruitment and management that meet the changing needs and interests of both potential volunteers and the organization. For example, recruitment involves finding the right volunteers for the right duties while management includes avoiding issues such as volunteer burn-out, providing volunteer recognition, empowering volunteers, maximizing volunteer contributions, being able to adapt to the needs of volunteers, training and overseeing volunteers.

Staff

As in for-profit organizations, staff issues have significant costs for nonprofits. Staffing capacity looks at staffing levels, retention and reducing staff turnover, improving staff performance so that people reach their full potential, increasing motivation and morale, empowering staff, and the allocation of staff based on their skills to roles within the organization.

Management

Effective nonprofits require people in senior positions who are committed to capacity building ie. who are committed to the incremental and ongoing processes of strengthening their organizations onto maximize effectiveness throughout the organization. The process of capacity building requires both managerial ability and progressive leadership.

Board

The quality of a board has tremendous impact on the organization. An organization's success is dependent upon the capacity of the directors to provide guidance that enables the organization to be the best it can be. Thus, developing the capacity of a board to be able to fully contribute to the organization is an important aspect of capacity building.

Areas of focus for board capacity building include the composition of the board, the commitment, involvement and support of board members, strategic recruitment, roles and structures, board effectiveness, training, and retention.

Members

Throughout history, organizations have been able to accomplish great things by involving individuals in a cause. Capacity building in this area involves attracting members, creating stakeholder value, addressing stakeholder demands, and creating loyalty and a compelling member experience.

4. Leadership & Team Building

Leadership is the process of influencing others to accomplish objectives that move the organization to realize its vision and mission. Many stewardship nonprofits form when engaged citizens respond to an environmental crisis or issue in their community. Founding members of nonprofits are often passionate agents of change. However, what they frequently lack are the specific skills and competencies required to lead an organization to be the best it can be.

Fortunately, as it is said, good leaders 'are made, not born'. People can develop effective leadership skills through ongoing learning, self-evaluation training, and experience. Building leadership capacity entails applying leadership attributes such as beliefs, values, ethics and character and developing the skills and knowledge to guide the organization.

People often struggle with interpersonal conflicts and miscommunication when working together. Team building helps people to learn to work collaboratively. An organization hoping to achieve extraordinary results has to become more than a gathering of people working together; it has to function as a team. Team-building involves creating a unified sense of purpose, a commitment to a common set of values, collective desire, accountability and trust.

Both leadership and teamwork are important aspects of an organization reaching its full potential because they help people to bring out the best in one another for the sake of the mission.

5. Funding & Financial Management

Financial capacity involves developing the skills required to design a diverse funding strategy, creating an organizational culture that recognizes the importance of integrating fundraising into all areas of the organization and building the expertise to be able to make the most of the funds raised.

Part of capacity building is recognizing that fundraising is not an unpleasant, extracurricular task, but rather an essential component of the work of an organization because it engages donors and constituents in the mission. Strong fundraising strategies are diverse: funding is not just foundation-based, but includes a variety of funding sources such as donors, earned income, government, and planned giving. As well, solid fundraising strategies are integrated and valued throughout the organization so that everyone in the organization has some skills and contributes to fundraising.

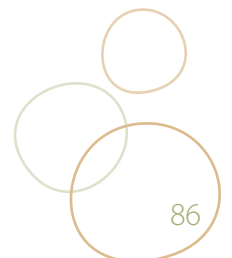
When organizations have a diverse fundraising strategy they:

- Gain greater control over their program work rather than being directed by funders;
- Become more resilient to changeable foundation and government funding sources;
- Are able to mobilize timely responses to external events or crises (because all their money is not tied to specific grant related programs); and
- Establish strong connections and support in their community through their broad donor base that results in broad community support.

Raising funds is only one part of financial capacity, organizations must also develop competencies in setting and monitoring budgets, gaining awareness of the markets in which they operate, developing skills in forecasting expenses and controlling expenditures all with an eye to accountability to both their mission and commitments to donors and constituents.

6. Getting the Message Out: Marketing & Communications

All stewardship nonprofits have some need for marketing and communications – whether it is to attract volunteers, change people’s behaviour or get funding. Not knowing how to effectively communicate in order to get the desired response prevents many organizations from being the strong and productive organizations they want to be. Without the ability to communicate strategically, an organization’s voice is likely to remain unheard – or worse, create misunderstandings and problems for the organization.



There are a variety of benefits of building marketing and communications capacity:

- Increase public awareness of an organization's issue, the contribution of an organization and its need for funds;
- Reach stakeholders with the message that gets the desired response;
- Identify a unique role or niche;
- Identify and reach a target market;
- Develop strategies to meet marketing and public relations goals;
- Effectively use news media to get a message out and build support for an organization;
- Be able to manage a public relations crisis;
- Educate community members in order to overcome assumptions and stereotypes and re-frame the public debate
- Build support for public policy changes

7. Partnerships, Networks and Alliances

With funding dollars seemingly to be ever on the decrease, the need for strategies to reduce competition among organizations and increase opportunities to share infrastructure and other resources is obvious. To build effective capacity in this area, understanding the kind of partnerships that will work effectively for an organization is crucial. This includes the structure of collaboration, the number and type of groups that form an alliance, the process of collaboration, and the degree of engagement of partners.

The development of networks is a way to bring together people working in similar ecosystems or with comparable challenges to be able to share information, pool resources and learn from each other. Effective networks reduce people's sense of isolation and help people envision the bigger picture. Networks can promote the implementation of best practices when assessments are regularly conducted examining what is working and what is not.

Technological advancements, such as webinars, are enabling networks to be set up easily and inexpensively even when people are separated by long distances.

Examples of capacity building in this area include:

- Coordination among organizations with similar goals and/or overlapping geographic coverage;
- Collaboration as a method of sharing costs and reducing expenses;
- Addressing difficulties associated with collaboration such as that it is time-consuming, difficult to sustain and can fail due to competition or unequal participation;
- Sharing of information and experience;
- Creation of networks.

8. Advocacy: Changing Policy, Practices, & Legislation

Webster's dictionary defines advocacy as "the act of advocating, or speaking or writing in support (of something)". Under this definition, almost every stewardship group plays an advocacy role. The issue is that they need more effective mechanisms to translate knowledge and concerns of groups into information usable by planners and decision-makers.

Advocacy techniques include:

- Involving the media to bring attention to a certain issue or cause;
- Influencing local, provincial and federal governments at the political level;
- Hiring consultants to provide technical and scientific information in order to strengthen a position or disprove a counter position;
- Educating the public;
- Using the legal system to undertake, or provide the threat of, court action;
- Making governments accountable to existing legislation, policy and regulation (Rosenau and Angelo 2001 p.11).

Capacity building in the area of advocacy involves providing groups with philosophies, techniques and tools to connect their communities with decision-makers that are not based on confrontational models, but on effective engagement. This entails focusing on solutions and working within the current economic and political reality in order to achieve maximum influence with a majority.

Appendix 4: Interview Questions

Building Capacity in BC's Stewardship Sector – Interview Questions

Stewardship Organization Profile

Organization Name:

How long has your organization been in operation?

What are the primary types of activities your organization is involved in?

- Advocacy and/or lobbying
- Education
- Land acquisition
- Policy development
- Habitat enhancement
- Monitoring and/or mapping and/or inventory
- Networking and/or umbrella
- Sustainability and/or sustainable development Land use planning
- Landowner contact
- Other

What is your annual budget?

How many staff does your organization employ?

How many volunteers are involved with your group?

How many members does your organization have?

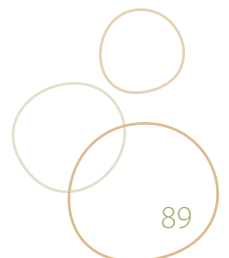
Capacity Building

Capacity Building is a broad topic; could you describe what capacity building means to you?

Has your organization engaged in any capacity building activities?

(If yes) Which have you done? (Did you do any that were not identified in the Framework?)

What were the outcomes?



Have you ever received funding for Capacity Building? (If yes, ask specifics i.e. was a special CB grant or rolled into a project?)

Have you ever or do you now receive core-funding support?

Would you say that capacity building is a priority for your organization? (scale: 1 not very important to 5 extremely important)

Are there barriers or challenges you face in building capacity in your organization? Could you identify your top 3)

What barriers do you see to building capacity for the stewardship sector as a whole in BC? Are they different than they were 5 years ago?

The Framework

Having had a chance to review the Capacity Building Framework sent to you by Naomi Tabata from the Stewardship Center for BC, could you identify the 3 most important areas of Capacity Building for your organization? (Prompt with whys).

1. The Foundation
2. Organizational Design & Management
3. The People
4. Leadership
5. Funding & Financial Management
6. Getting the Message out: Marketing and Communication
7. Partnerships, Networks and Alliances

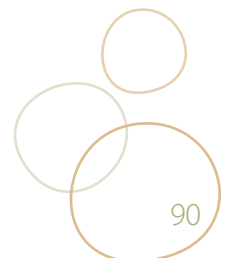
What would be the benefit of capacity building in these areas?

Which 3 do you think are the most important to build capacity for the BC Stewardship Sector as a whole? (if they are different from above, why/)

What would be the benefit of capacity building in these areas?

Is there anything you feel could be added to the framework?

Are there any parts of the framework that you didn't understand/ found confusing?





The Stewardship Centre For BC
www.stewardshipcentre.bc.ca