



WINTER 2009 NEWSLETTER

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Osborne Village
RESOURCE CENTRE

1-107 OSBORNE ST. WINNIPEG, MB R3L 1Y4
PH: 204.989.6503 FAX: 204.477.0903

COORDINATOR'S COMMENTS

April 2008 – January 2009 Stats

By Marg Law

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It is hard to believe that OVRC opened its doors 13 years ago in January of 1996 and has been providing pre-employment services to over 120,000 people since that time. Approximately 5,655 people reported finding employment after using the services of Osborne Village Resource Centre. The need for this Centre proves to be ongoing. The staff of OVRC wish to thank all those who have helped make our Centre so successful.

Osborne Village Resource has had another very busy year. Although the number of people using our Centre was slightly down from last year, new registrations are up and the number of people finding employment is also higher this year than this time last year. This certainly reflects the high unemployment rate that we experienced from April to November 2008.

1,515 new people were registered to the Centre with 7,431 people visiting the Centre for our various services.

Of those who visited OVRC, 1,005 people had appointments with our program staff. To date, our staff has produced 694 résumés for people and our Career Counsellor has seen 302 people.



Our Database Administrator reported that 254 people that he contacted had found employment after using the services of Osborne Village Resource Centre. It is projected that OVRC will see approximately 2,119 new registrants and 9,898 visits to the site by March 31, 2009 (12 months).

On behalf of the staff of OVRC, I wish all the people who use our Centre a happy and prosperous New Year. We look forward to continued service to you and the Community in 2009-2010.



ASK THE CAREER COUNSELLOR

Combining your passion with education

by Jude Gaal

Dear Career Counsellor,

After being out in the workforce for a number of years I am ready to go back to school. I am also committed to decreasing my footprint on the planet and would like to combine my passion for environment with my next career. Where can I go to get some advice or information on this, and what kinds of jobs are out there?

Eager to Contribute

Dear Eager to Contribute:

It's great to hear that you are now ready to pursue an education and are passionate about the environment. In the next five years, the Environmental Careers Organization (ECO), predicts that job growth in the environment, will be greater (16%) than growth in the overall Canadian job market (8%). With good job prospects and a wide variety of careers to choose from now is definitely the time to get into this exciting field. Opportunities can be found in the natural and applied sciences as well as business, communications, information technology, architecture, education, and law. Another excellent way of discovering different job opportunities is to Google environmental career websites such as:

- Building Environmental Aboriginal Human Resources (BEAHR)
- Environmental Careers Organization (ECO Canada)
- Environmental Studies Association of Canada
- Good Work Canada
- Canada's Environmental Information Portal
- Manitoba Environmental Industries Association, Student Chapter
- WorkopolisCampus.com

Also consider whether you would like to work for the private sector, government, or social service sector. How much time do you want to devote to education? If the answer is one or two years, explore the trades, or programs offered at the college level. Don't forget to visit the universities; talk with career counselors and professors in a particular program to learn more about job opportunities. And last, but not least, find and interview people who are already doing the type of work you are interested in to learn more about a specific occupation.

Doing a thorough job researching the possibilities will ensure that your chosen occupation encompasses your values, and allows you to use a skill set that keeps you motivated and enthusiastic.



GOODBYE ALICIA

A special farewell to a valued employee

by Marg Law, OVRC Coordinator

In the fall of 2007, Alicia Franco Espinosa joined the Osborne Village Resource Centre team. Alicia is from Mexico City and had come to Canada about three years ago. Her work experience in Mexico City was teaching at a University level and working for government. She began volunteering at the Osborne Village Resource Centre, assisting with our computer classes to improve her English skills. She did this for two years and last September, when we had to replace our Computer Instructor/Volunteer Coordinator, the staff of OVRC did not hesitate to recommend Alicia to join our team as a paid employee. Alicia was incredible and completely updated the computer curriculum, as well as the instructor and student manuals for all three courses of XP. She also took on our quarterly newsletter and developed it into a very polished, professional newsletter which got excellent feedback from clients and professionals working in the community.

In September of this year, Alicia was offered a position at the University of Manitoba, coordinating international students in the Agricultural program. She was very excited to get back into her chosen field and once more be working in an academic setting. The staff of OVRC were very sad to see Alicia leave, but we're also thrilled that she has been able to break into her field so quickly as a new immigrant to Canada. She has accomplished something that many new immigrants struggle with for many years when they come to our country. Congratulations Alicia! We wish you all the best in your future endeavours here in Winnipeg.



"Algunas personas vienen a nuestras vidas y rápidamente se alejan. Algunos permanecer por un tiempo, dejan huellas en nuestros corazones, pero ellos nunca jamás serán los mismos."

Some people come into our lives and quickly go. Some stay for a while, leave footprints on our hearts, and they are never the same.

We wish you well Alicia!

IN MEMORIAL

A Tribute to Richard Huggard (1944 - 2009)

It is with deep regret and sadness that we announce that our friend and colleague Richard Huggard passed away on January 17, 2009 suddenly of heart failure.

Richard had been with Osborne Village Resource Centre for 10 years from 1999 until 2009. He began as a volunteer where he tutored individuals on the computer. It was observed that he had the unique gift of communicating with people of all social and economic backgrounds, showing the same dignity and respect for people who were illiterate as to those with PHD's. When a staff position opened in 2001, it was offered to Richard and so began a nine year career with our Centre.

Richard provided thousands of individuals with resumes which in turn resulted in so many of those people obtaining employment. For seven years, Richard taught

our computer classes in the evening, demonstrating patience and a wonderful ability to pass on his knowledge to his students.

Along with the help of Ranjeet Bains, Richard quickly acquired all the technical skills and knowledge to keep the 25 computers at OVRC running on a daily and weekly basis for the past 9 years.

Richard will be sorely missed by all the staff at OVRC, both past and present that had the privilege of working with him. We and those individuals who Richard assisted in their job searches and who used our Community Connection computers will all miss his eagerness to help, his sense of humour and impish grin.

Goodbye Richard. We all loved you very much.



FEATURE REPORT

What is sustainable community development?

Definition from Simon Fraser University, Centre for Sustainable Development

The concept of a “sustainable community” does not describe just one type of neighborhood, town, city or region. Activities that the environment can sustain and that citizen’s want and can afford may be quite different from community to community.

Rather than being a fixed thing, a sustainable community is continually adjusting to meet the social and economic needs of its residents while preserving the environment’s ability to support it.

A sustainable community uses its resources to meet current needs while ensuring that adequate resources are available for future generations. It seeks a better quality of life for all its residents while maintaining nature’s ability to function over time by minimizing waste, preventing pollution, promoting efficiency and developing local resources to revitalize the local economy. Decision-making in a sustainable community stems from a rich civic life and shared information among community members. A sustainable community resembles a living system in which human, natural and economic elements are interdependent and draw strength from each other.

Potentially significant employment opportunities, consistent with more sustainable patterns of development, exist in many economic sectors.

Redesigned and improved infrastructure, knowledge-based services, environmental technologies, improved management and use of natural resources, and tourism are all rich areas for private sector investment, supportive government policies, and expanded training. Some of the most promising employment opportunities include:

- Upgrading the efficiency of energy use in buildings, products, and transportation systems



- Adopting and implementing sustainable forestry, fisheries, soil, and watershed management practices
- Expanded delivery and use of information technologies
- Sustainable tourism activities centred around areas of environmental, cultural, and historic significance
- Recycling and remanufacturing of solid and hazardous waste into marketable products
- Accelerated and expanded development of marine and freshwater aquaculture
- Adding value to fish, agricultural, and forest products
- Developing, manufacturing, and marketing products, services, and technologies that reduce environmental burdens
- Designing energy-efficient and people-friendly cities

Achieving sustainable community development means emphasizing sustainable employment and economic demand management (EDM).

Sustainable employment includes turning “wastes” into resources (e.g., recycling); improving efficiency with regard to energy and materials; converting to greater reliance on renewable energy sources; increasing community self-reliance (e.g., food and energy production); and sustainable management of natural resources (e.g., community forestry). EDM shifts our economic development emphasis from the traditional concern with increasing growth to instead reducing social dependence on economic growth.

EDITOR'S PERSPECTIVE

Osborne Community Gardens

by Francesca Russell

The mural behind the baseball diamond at the River Osborne Community Centre (ROCC) depicts a senior citizen teaching young children how to plant and tend a garden. Could this be a sign of things to come? Can the community come together to support this type of sustainable development.

The old fashioned "Victory Gardens" or "Community Gardens" as they are known these days can be traced back to England during the Industrial Revolution. Food and land were both scarce, so communities pooled their resources to survive. During the World Wars the practice of community gardening was a way to augment the food supply. In Canada, they were also known as "Railway Garden's" because they were located at the rail stations in the heart of the communities.

Today, community gardens can be seen as reflective of the lack of access to inexpensive produce within the inner-city. The trend of 'all-in-one' stores locating themselves in the suburbs has made it difficult for some people to get to the major stores. This leaves the smaller Mom and Pop stores and occasional franchises in the inner-core, which are most often significantly more expensive.

At its most basic level, a community garden physically brings people together. The informal setting of a garden provides an opportunity for people to meet who may not have done so before. Additionally, the foot traffic community gardening generates could also create a sense of belonging. Perhaps this might also help people feel safer, as a desolate street indicates a lack of security. A street with people out and about puts residents at ease and actually encourages more activity.

While preparing this column, a lot of buzz began to spread about whether an old, forgotten baseball field



Mural at the River Osborne Community Centre

could be turned into planters that will grow Osborne's future fruits and vegetables. I spoke with MLA for Fort Rouge, Jennifer Howard and she agreed that Osborne Village would benefit from a community garden. "Our unique community is a perfect place for community gardens," said Howard. The conversation quickly raised the question again on what can be done to change not just the image of Osborne Village, but how can the residents be brought together to build a community that is alive, vibrant and safe. However, Howard also expressed frustration. "The problem has always been the lack of involvement from the community." Apparently, there have been community groups that have sprouted up to contend with specific issues, but consistency has been a problem.

This type of sustainable development is not a new idea to the community; several years ago there was a

community garden on River, but like many green spaces, it was covered by concrete and glass. Howard agreed that renovating an existing green space would be a great idea for a community garden, but she emphasizes the need for the community to speak up and commit to the idea before any lettuce is planted.

I also spoke with City Councilwoman Jenny Gerbasi, and she said that she was “looking into the idea of a Community Garden,” but still feels that Osborne Village has sustainable qualities. “Osborne Village is one of the most densely populated neighborhoods in Canada. We are seeing more infill development which is sustainable because people are moving into smaller footprints with access to public transit and existing services rather than contributing to urban sprawl,” said Gerbasi. Sadly, those smaller footprints have to still travel to buy their produce from the grocery store which can be a great distance if one likes to save a few bucks. The vegetables and fruit that are put on the tables of those infill dwellings has to come on a big truck, and sometimes on a big plane. By the time it gets here those little prints have grown -- a lot.

Back in 2002, Intergovernmental Affairs Minister Jean Friesen, lead minister for the Neighbourhoods Alive! Program said of the West Broadway Community Gardens, “Neighbourhood revitalization is about more than just bricks and mortar. In the case of this community garden, it’s actually about the space between buildings,” said Friesen. “These projects emphasize the development of green space, recreational options for children and environmental improvements that will enhance the lives of residents.” Now, West Broadway’s Community Gardens are flourishing.

Over the past few years, greening activities through the West Broadway project have included developing community gardens and parks such as Spirit Park (200 Young Street), Boulder Park (152 Langside Street), and Sherbrook Garden (198 Sherbrook), and partnering with Klinik to install and maintain raised beds to grow food for Agape Table. This year these activities are continuing. The Good Food Club has worked with the Landless Farmers to create an urban agriculture project at Klinik, and there was a garden sign-making workshop hosted



River Osborne Community Centre

with Art City. They are also building a Green Plan and Neighbourhood Composting strategy in partnership with community members and organizations.

I can’t help but think – Can something as simple as a garden be a part of the solution for the troubles that plague Osborne? If a community garden brings together people, the creation of more pedestrian traffic, and of course, a smaller carbon footprint, perhaps the members of this community could come together and grow more than vegetables. While it may not solve all the problems Osborne Village faces, it may just be a carbon foot in the right direction.



Community Gardens on West Broadway

COMMUNITY COMMENTARY

Community Gardens in Osborne? Neighbourhood members discuss the possibility of creating a 'Community Garden' in the Osborne Fort Rouge area

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Shauna Carmichael is an OVRC volunteer and long-time resident of Osborne Village.

What does "Sustainable Community Development" mean to you?

Shauna Carmichael: There is no single definition of sustainable community development because every community has its own unique characteristics and challenges. In general, it has emerged as an alternative to conventional approaches to development; a participatory, holistic and inclusive process that leads to positive, concrete changes in communities by creating employment, reducing poverty, restoring the health of the natural environment, stabilizing local economies, and increasing community control. Sustainable communities share common themes and concerns: economic security, environmental protection, social justice, and a commitment to the welfare of future generations.

What do you think about having Community Gardens in the Osborne/Ft. Rouge Community?

Shauna Carmichael: This summer, I would have loved to plant a garden, but where? A neighbor of mine was also interested. I asked the caretaker of my building, who was in general supportive and pointed out that a tenant a couple of buildings down had taken it upon himself to build his own little plant garden outside the window of his basement suite (I was quite impressed with it!). However, the small area between our buildings did not receive enough sunlight to plant one.

In the early nineties, I recall a community garden located on River Ave in an empty lot (where a large condominium is now under construction); it was run at a grassroots level. My neighbor participated in this project and found it rewarding and enjoyable. There is not currently a community garden located in the

Osborne Village area, even though it the most densely populated area in Winnipeg. I believe there definitely is a need and interest in such an endeavor.

With rising food costs, a growing interest in organic and local produce, and a widespread concern for our environment, it seems to be the perfect time to develop a community garden in this area. There are other such projects in the city which have had successes on a number of levels, especially with the youth in their areas, whom of course are integral to the future of any community. A community garden project would go a long ways in both improving community relations and building a sustainable community in the Osborne Area!

Karl Thordarson is the Technical Assistant for Winnipeg Parks and Open Space.

What do you believe are the positive outcomes that a community garden would bring to this community?

Karl Thordarson: The adopted City of Winnipeg Policy states that community gardens "Serve as a tool to achieve quantifiable goals such as food security, neighbourhood stabilization and revitalization, reduction of crime, job training, therapy, and community building."

Urban gardening can be seen as a healthy social activity that provides citizens with a passive, low cost leisure opportunity.

Food security issues for local citizens and beneficial use of available urban green space are important aspects of healthy living that can be addressed through the development of Community Gardens.

Moreover, the conversion of passive areas to diverse plantings of foods and flora immediately increases the health of the local ecosystem. Community gardens can provide food sources not only to human users but also to various desirable species of birds, butterflies, insects or urban fauna.

Community Commentary (continued)

The decreased use of maintenance equipment in these areas will also lead to a reduction of fuel emissions released into the environment.

You mention that the ROCC would be a good location; what are the advantages to using this particular space?

Karl Thordarson: The location is almost ideal. It is centrally located in the community, easily accessible and is linked to a day care and an elementary school.

A multi use site such as ROCC opens up opportunities to attract new gardeners from various age groups and backgrounds, thereby developing a rich context for sharing experience and knowledge- one of the greatest benefits of growing food with others.

Logistically the site offers good sun exposure as well as the potential for rainwater harvesting from the community club building. Not to mention the mural already in place.

Patti Malo is a local resident and the Client Services Representative and Administrator for OVRC

Would you use a community garden if one was in the neighbourhood?

Patti Malo: It would depend on a couple of things, 1. how close it was and 2. how much time it would take. Having considered that if I think it would be a great ideal but only if it is convenient.

Do you have any concerns that a community garden may bring in this particular area?

Patti Malo: I would be concerned about the teenagers and young adults vandalizing and raiding the gardens.

Thanks to the discussions generated by these articles, a grassroots committee has formed to spearhead the development of a community garden in the Osborne / Fort Rouge area.

4 TIPS FOR STARTING A COMMUNITY GARDEN PROJECT

Advice To Consider Before You Get Underway

By Stefan Fediuk, Chief Editorial Director for Northscaping.com

1. Establish a planning committee.
2. Identify and define a champion for the project.
3. Invest some up-front effort into the site selection.
4. Investigate a charitable status designation.

Stefan Fediuk, B.E.S., M. Land. Arch.

Stefan is the resident horticultural expert at Northscaping.com. He has been actively involved in the landscape and garden industry as a Professional Landscape Architect and Horticulturalist for over 25 years. He has relocated to Windsor, Ontario to work for the city of Windsor. To read the full article on how to start a community garden and some more wonderful advice on northern gardening and landscaping, follow or go to this link to their website:

www.northscaping.com



Enjoying the Daylily Gardens at Winnipeg's Assiniboine Park

SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE

Changing the Way We Feed Ourselves

by J. Heinrichs, the Manitoba Food Charter

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Food security is defined as a situation in which all people have access to safe, nutritious, culturally appropriate food at all times. In a world that is rapidly changing and requiring more locally produced and less processed foods to meet the limitations of our environment and consumer health concerns, gardening and buying locally produced food has emerged as a viable option to address these concerns. Indeed, eating locally and growing your own food was once the way everyone fed themselves, long before issues about greenhouse gas emissions, food safety and quality, and dietary diseases and obesity took centre stage in the media spotlight. Regardless of ones motives for growing their own food and eating locally produced foods, then benefits are undeniable.

Crops grown and marketed close to home are picked at their peak and usually consumed shortly after harvesting. Local food preserves genetic diversity and smaller local farms often grow many varieties to provide a longer season, an array of colors, and the best flavors. Large-scale industrial agriculture breeds plants and animals for their ability to grow quickly and uniformly, withstand harvesting, survive packing and shipping, and last a long time on the shelf. Large scale production results in fewer varieties of food and greater vulnerability to disease and disaster.

Buying local food directly from farmers supports local families as it cuts out the middleman and ensures farmers get the full price for their food, helping farm families stay on their land. Buying locally can also build trust and community because when you buy direct from a farmer you are engaging in a time-honored connection between eater and grower and you're supporting a local business. Local food production also preserves open space because when farmers get paid more for their products they are less likely to sell



farmland to large-scale operations or for development.

Local food can also benefit the environment and wildlife because Manitoba farms encompass a patchwork of fields, woods, streams, and ponds that provide essential habitat for wildlife. And, local food can make a lighter carbon footprint as on average our food travels at least 1,500 miles from farm to plate and each calorie of food produced requires an average of 10 calories of fossil-fuel inputs for travel, refrigeration and processing.

The stellar growth in garden clubs, community gardens, and CSA (Community Shared Agriculture) operations is evidence of how keen consumers are to take part in growing and eating local food and living more healthily and sustainably, all of which enhances food security. Indeed, in northern Manitoba community and school gardens and greenhouses are popping up everywhere and northerners are turning to local food production and gardening as a way to access affordable healthy foods and build community. In urban areas farmers' markets and community gardens are more popular than ever, and the shift in thinking about the links between diet and health are evidenced in the emergence of school nutrition policies and the change in cafeteria menu choices. Any way you look at it, gardening and eating locally grown food is a win-win situation for our bodies, our economies, and our environment.

For more information on any of these topics please contact the **Manitoba Food Charter:**

1-800-731-2638

info@mbfoodcharter.ca

www.manitobafoodsecurity.ca

CAN WE BE A SUSTAINABLE CITY?

An Interview with Michael Dudley - Institute of Urban Studies, University of Winnipeg

In your research, what have you seen being done in Winnipeg when it comes to Sustainable Community Development?

First of all, we need to talk a bit about what we mean by “sustainable community development.” A sustainable community is generally understood as one that is able to meet the needs of all of its citizens, and enable them to achieve a high quality of life, while at the same time existing within the natural limits of its regional ecosystem.

This may sound well and good, but we should look closer at what all this means. Sustainability has three major dimensions: the ecological, the social and the economic. Each one of these is an immensely challenging dimension for any community to fulfill, as each is in its own way controversial. For instance, the economic indicators that politicians rely on to gauge our success as a nation, our prosperity and our quality of life – such as housing starts, automobile sales, and consumer spending – are presently highly consumptive and ecologically destructive processes.

We are also so economically dependent on other city-regions for imports, products and resources that it’s extremely difficult for any community to be able to call itself a sustainable one, even if it is implementing a host of “green” initiatives such as mass transit, local agriculture and renewable energy infrastructure.

That being said, we are making some significant progress in Winnipeg towards being more sustainable, such as the many high-profile “green” buildings in the city (including the new Manitoba Hydro office tower) and the city’s first steps towards building mass transit. But we have a very long way to go. And this is no way meant to criticize any politicians past or present: it’s simply a function of how deeply unsustainable our

entire western economic model is – a model in which Winnipeg is by necessity quite firmly entrenched.

Are there any trends from other cities that you believe would benefit Winnipeg communities?

As we know, the redevelopment of the Fort Rouge Yards is going to be a major component of the Bus Rapid Transit plan, so examples of urban redevelopment along BRT routes will be very valuable -- particularly in terms of how BRT can contribute to revitalization. A great example here is Cleveland Ohio, which has been especially hard-hit by the mortgage crisis but has still attracted over \$4 billion in new mixed-use development along its BRT corridor.

There are many new developments emerging in Winnipeg. Do you know if any of them are including sustainable features?

As I mentioned, the Manitoba Hydro Building is going to be one of the most energy-efficient office buildings in the world, utilizing some 60% less energy than the National Building code would have required. It will feature geothermal heating and cooling as well as a “solar chimney” which will use convection to circulate air through the building.

But beyond “bricks-and-mortar” I think what’s a more significant development here is the grassroots energy that’s building around making Winnipeg an ecologically-friendly city. Look at the rapid momentum that Bike to the Future has gained in a very short time, as well as the successful lobbying the Winnipeg Rapid Transit Coalition undertook in support of the BRT. And this past summer the energy that went into the farmer’s market in Osborne Village was really impressive! I

happen to work with one of the organizers so saw some of what went into making that a reality.

Is there any community in Winnipeg that serves as a model for Sustainable Community Development?

No. As I mentioned, the reality of the demands of sustainability are so great that it's going to take a great deal of social and economic change to bring real "sustainable communities" about. This is not to say that there aren't great things happening within our communities! West Broadway is doing great things with their garden plots at the grounds at Klinik, as well as connecting with community-supported agriculture.

Looking ahead to an oil-poor future, however, we are going to need to fill in all those empty downtown parking lots with more productive land uses that meet human needs. We are going to need to learn to love density again. Look at Osborne Village – for all the hand-wringing that goes on in the suburbs when a new condo or apartment building is proposed, and fears that this will ruin their quality of life, the Village is one of the most popular destinations in the city, and also one of the most dense. This district is a model for how we could build up other parts of the city.

Is there a role that new immigrants to Canada in particularly Winnipeg can provide in making our communities more sustainable?

I think a better way to put this is, what can we learn from new immigrants about making our communities more sustainable? We should be listening to newcomers about the living arrangements they came from. In Britain there's a movement called "Transition Towns" which is about creating community self-reliance to prepare for an energy-poor future, and part of this is about re-learning practices that our grandparents took for granted but were largely forgotten in the drive-through utopia most of us have grown up in. So they seek out senior citizens who recall mending their own clothes, making their own soap, practicing low-intensity and localized farming. Similarly, many of our immigrants are coming from cultures where they have grown up

knowing how to do things for themselves; or at the very least knowing how to live – sometimes in close proximity to one another – as actual communities of extended family and neighbours, as opposed to the atomized, individualistic culture we are accustomed to. Again, a lot of this has to do with learning to live more densely, and many immigrant groups will be able to help us out with that!

But we do have good models here already: I believe that one of Winnipeg's greatest assets that can contribute to making it become more sustainable is its built form. Older and intact pedestrian-oriented districts such as Osborne village exemplify what is now being almost universally advocated to remedy our car-dependent sprawling cities. And Winnipeg actually has a good number of such districts: Corydon, Academy, Marion Street, Selkirk Avenue, Ellice, Broadway. These areas will become very valuable assets when oil prices once again skyrocket – places where people can live, work and shop without relying on their cars.

Osborne Village especially offers diverse, locally owned businesses, high residential densities, excellent bus service, and a narrow, human-scaled "street wall" that makes for an appealing pedestrian experience. That's why this is such a great location for the Canada Day street closure – it feels like a real place, an outdoor living room! I think any future "sustainable" Winnipeg will have a lot to learn from Osborne Village.



Michael Dudley is a Research Associate and Librarian for the Institute of Urban Studies at the University of Winnipeg and blogs at citystates.typepad.com.

COMMUNITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

People Taking Charge of their own Economic Destinies

by Terri Proulx, Seed Winnipeg Inc.

Sustainable development is part of what Community Economic Development or CED, attempts to achieve. It is a holistic approach that is a proven model time and time again. It means groundwork level action that vibrates up, instead of a top-down approach. People taking charge of their own economic destinies in a socially inclusive manner has huge economic implications affecting the entire community or Winnipeg as a whole.

If we broaden our tax base to include those who are currently excluded, we enrich all businesses as fresh spending and more economic activity spur growth in all sectors.

A perfect example of CED is Local Investment Toward Employment (LITE). LITE started because a credit union employee saw a flawed system to outright charity. Neechi Foods is a worker owned cooperative grocery store in the heart of the Inner city. This store refused to move to a more prominent location because if it did, the residents would have to travel far to find another grocery store. Most of the residents near Lord Selkirk Park do not have a vehicle.

Each Christmas, Neechi was in danger of closing its doors because the near-by residents were by and large, hamper recipients and not shopping at Neechi. This would mean job losses and further hamper recipients. This doesn't make sense. Why purchase hamper supplies from wealthy suburban grocery chain stores if it's increasing the need for hampers? So LITE was created and raises money each year, purchasing groceries from Neechi and donating them to the Cheer Board. Now LITE operates year round, creating jobs and maintaining existing jobs with a multitude of initiatives (www.lite.mb.ca)

Another example of CED: The Canadian Muslim Women's Institute (CMWI) offers support services to many

newcomers who face multiple barriers to employment including stereotyping, language, education and recognized skills. These women are by and large, stay at home moms who are finding remarkable challenges to entering the job market.

CMWI has created a training program to teach these women sewing skills. These women not only gain a skill, they are doing this in a group setting; socializing and practicing their English. This training program will transform to a social enterprise called SewFair in the spring of 2009. SewFair will retain some of the trainees and others will have gone on to find other job opportunities after having something on their resumes which qualifies them as viable employees. SewFair will be a place for all of us to buy ethically produced and sweatshop-free clothing and bags.

Yet another example of CED businesses is, two worker cooperatives incorporated by the Lost Girls of Sudan. The Lost Boys of Sudan is a phrase coined by aid agencies that assisted many orphaned boys who'd spent years walking to safety during the war in southern



Sudan. The girls, because of many circumstances, were a sorry afterthought. Of the Sudanese refugees brought to Canada during this war, one third came to Winnipeg. The Lost Girls have incorporated a catering cooperative and a residential cleaning cooperative.

Worker cooperatives adhere to the seven internationally recognized cooperative principles. <http://www.ica.coop/coop/principles.html> These principles are not taken lightly. Training, for example, is one principle. While many of these women will not want to remain in their cooperative forever, they are taught on-the-job, transferable business skills while being paid. Skills they would normally have to pay for, business skills, such as reading financials, marketing plans, remitting GST, Employment Standards regulations, etc., are a must teach. These women will not only have these marketable business skills, its being done in a socially inclusive environment that looks at the needs of members before absolute profit. (For Sudanese catering or residential cleaning services phone 218-8830)

Manitoba relies heavily on small to medium sized business to sustain our economy. If we are going to be sustainable, we must reach out to those who are working toward solutions to including those with barriers to employment. We need immigration and aboriginal participation in our economy.

CED, or sustainable development is about collective self-help and inclusion. It does not rely on government, but seeks inclusion from government to act with policies and initiatives that understand our communities can only be strong if we take everyone's economic viability into consideration.

Community Economic Development takes social conditions, individual needs and economic reforms into account. We want a populace that can fend for themselves in a manner that is speaking to the economy, based on human capital and human need. We want people to be economically productive while fulfilling social needs.

Worker cooperatives and other social enterprises are not just "feel-good" endeavors: They are serious

businesses that contribute to the economy in a manner that is sustainable because they look at issues beyond profit. But profit must be made in order to further the social goals. CED recognizes this and supports worker cooperatives and other social enterprises as a means to economic activity.

November 28 is a date to mark on your calendars as the largest Winnipeg CED day of the year. This year, LITE's annual Blueberry Pancake Breakfast and the CED Gathering are both being held on the same day.

The Breakfast will be held at the Indian and Métis Friendship Centre (45 Robinson at Dufferin) from 7:00 am to 10:00 am. This community-partner catered breakfast is a celebration of CED in Winnipeg's inner city and is a highlight of the LITE campaign. Tickets are \$12.00 or \$5.00 for low-income. Come hear Fred Penner and enjoy some pancakes made with local ingredients.

The CED Gathering takes place 9:30 am – 4:00 pm. Join others engaged in all aspects of community economic development for a full day of networking, learning, sharing, and inspiration. With over 30 workshops, this free, all-day event takes place at St. John's High School in Winnipeg's North End (401 Church Avenue). Register online at www.ccednet-rcdec.ca.

Hope to see you there!



THE UNIVERSAL CATCHPHRASE

A Students Experience with Sustainable Development in Ghana

by Michelle Schram - Environmental Studies and International Development, University of Winnipeg

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Sustainable Development. As a fourth year undergraduate International Development Studies student, I've heard the term hundreds of times—and frankly, its meaning is almost lost on me. Along with terms like 'participation', 'empowerment', and 'social capital', 'sustainable development' has become a catchphrase within the development sphere and elsewhere. The term 'development' in itself is contentious enough, and can lead to some controversial discussions. And we all know the media can't get enough of 'sustainability' with environmental issues taking the spotlight.

Nevertheless, the concept of sustainable development is important in a universal sense. My view is that to take part in a development initiative, sustainability in the broadest sense of the term must be a priority, and this is applicable anywhere in the world. I've heard countless stories of Western development workers who design complex water irrigation systems or farming tools and then vacate, leaving local people with no access to supplies or knowledge to repair the products. Further, sustainability is jeopardized when development organizations impose solutions to problems that they have often conceived, which may not align with local cultural values, available resources, or simply the interests of the intended beneficiaries. However, there is good development. Through my studies and

practical experiences, I am trying to learn as much as I can about how to achieve the goal of beneficial, sustainable development, within different global contexts.

One of my first practical experiences with development was when I went to Ghana, West Africa for three months last year, as my practicum through the International Development Studies program at Menno Simons College (in affiliation with the University of Winnipeg). I realized perfectly well that I was a naïve, young Westerner, but kept an open mind to learn about a new culture and unfamiliar part of the world. I organized the practicum myself, and was connected with a privately owned agricultural college by a non-governmental organization working out of the United States. The college, called the Kumasi Institute for Tropical Agriculture (KITA), advertised itself as a small, innovative school working on a variety of agricultural enterprises with the goals of environmentally friendly practices and community development work. Growing up on a farm in southwestern Manitoba, I view agricultural and rural issues as crucial, and this especially holds true in a country like Ghana where over half of the population is employed by the agricultural sector. The opportunity to learn about tropical agriculture in a hands-on environment was extremely exciting for me.

Arriving at the farm, just outside of Kumasi, I was so

impressed. The college students were engaged in multiple projects such as vegetable/staple foods production, mushroom production, rabbit, poultry and snail (that's right, snail) rearing, jatropha production, beekeeping, palm tree nursing, the list goes on. On top of this, the students had lectures and studies to keep up with, which was made difficult with the absence of electricity on site. Additionally, the administration encouraged community involvement in two nearby villages, doing activities like semi-extension work with local farmers, help with agro-enterprise production to increase income generation, teaching agriculture science at the schools, and youth programs such as the one I was involved in. I was enthusiastic about my major role as facilitator of a youth program called the Future Farmers of Ghana Club, which had previously been active and dropped with the departing of another volunteer who had been running it. Through the creation of school vegetable gardens and workshops on agricultural income production via products such as mushrooms, snails and rabbits, the goal of the club was to try and change the youth perception of agriculture as a livelihood reserved for the poor and shameful, to that of an honorable and sustainable livelihood. Coming from a small agricultural-based town myself, I was all too familiar with the situation of young people seeing their parents struggle within farming, parents encouraging their children to aspire for better opportunities, families caught in a system almost entirely dependent on the weather, market and other externalities. There were strong parallels between the environments, halfway around the world from one another.

Living in a foreign place for three months is far too short. Only by the end of this term was I beginning to gain a grasp on the local language, customs, and general way of life. Organizational capacity was limited, and I quickly learned to expect to rely on Plan B...and C...and probably D... I came to embrace the laidback mode of life, despite the various challenges. Overall, I saw my experience as an amazing opportunity to learn, and I found this knowledge in the KITA students, the administrators, the local teachers, and immensely from the children I was working with. The reality of the lives of these rural youth was that many of

them would end up seeking employment in the cities, often before high school graduation, where they would gain employment selling towels or blue jeans if they were fortunate, but most likely would end up shining shoes or hawking on the street for an unstable minimal income. Many become trapped in a state of poverty, and are susceptible to violence and substance abuse. This is one of the major issues the Future Farmers Club was trying to address.

In terms of sustainability, I saw many challenges during my stay in Ghana. One of the major frustrations I encountered was the college administration's attempt to diversify and expand the projects being implemented at KITA, to the point where focus was seriously lost. To a visitor who sees KITA for a short time, the institution's range of activities seems extremely broad, innovative and developed, but the longer I examined the farm's operation, I noticed that in the ambitious undertaking of adding new projects without possessing the capacity to properly develop single enterprises, the college failed in producing sustainable outcomes, and projects with considerable potential fell by the wayside. This was the situation as I saw it after three months; an opinion that was shared by the majority of the student body who found themselves overburdened and burnt out.

In an effort to prevent this neglect of sustainability happening with the Future Farmers program, I did my best to establish the means for continuation of the club after my leave in December. This involved organizing interested KITA students and schoolteachers who saw the value of this educational program to the local youth, and collaborating with them to create goals for the future of the program. They were the real teachers and influence in the children's lives anyway, and I was mainly a passing spectacle. I still keep in touch with the local teachers and KITA students, and they tell me the club is still going strong. I will someday return to Ghana, and expect to see some of these youth managing their own farms, and creating sustainable livelihoods for themselves. Until then, I will involve myself in community development projects here in Winnipeg and Manitoba, as I think the greatest capacity for sustainable development lies in our own local contexts.



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ABOUT OVRC

Please feel free to contact us at:

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If you have any comments, questions or concerns about our services,
contact the Centre Coordinator Marg Law at marlaw@wtc.mb.ca

In Partnership With



ABOUT OVRC'S NEWSLETTER

In our upcoming newsletter we will be looking at the Mature Worker –

What is their future in the present labour market?

Older workers are delaying retirement and some retirees are stepping back into the job market.

As HR ramps up for the influx, it should make sure workers are trained to cope with an intergenerational workforce and that recruiting efforts attract -- and do not discriminate against -- older workers.

If you would like to submit an article for the Spring Issue, please contact Francesca Russell at:

(204) 989-6493 or frarus@wtc.mb.ca

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Osborne Village
RESOURCE CENTRE

1-107 OSBORNE ST. WINNIPEG, MB R3L 0C3
PH: 204.989.6503 FAX: 204.477.0903