

BNCE Research Communique

Building Community Capacity and Entrepreneurship in the North

Prepared at the University of Saskatchewan by the Building Northern Capacity through Entrepreneurship (BNCE) Research Team; Edwards School of Business; International Centre for Northern Governance and Development



International Centre for Northern Governance and Development





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Introduction – Project Summary

In partnership with residents of Saskatchewan's north, the Building Northern Capacity through Entrepreneurship (BNCE) project studies capacity building in Northern communities, and how they are impacted by entrepreneurship. Our goal is to learn how entrepreneurship contributes to 'the good life,' well-being, and prosperity. We have built a network of connections across Northern Saskatchewan, and together we are learning about the economic and social aspirations of Northern communities and how entrepreneurship plays, or can plan, a role.

BNCE is a five-year project funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC). The research team is comprised of University of Saskatchewan researchers from the International Centre for Northern Governance and Development (ICNGD) and the Edwards School of Business.

This project compares the situation in Northern Saskatchewan with Northern Scandinavia, as the two regions have much in common. Both areas have remote and primarily Indigenous communities, and communities in both regions are impacted by resource development. There are things to learn from both areas, and we will share what we learn in partnership with our Northern Saskatchewan friends.



We want communities to benefit from this work. A central aim of the BNCE project is to share our findings with communities so that they can better understand how entrepreneurship may benefit their residents, and be better equipped to develop plans and take actions to achieve their goals.



Working with Communities to Collect Information

Our research team values the importance of community partnerships and recognizes that solutionsbased research should be guided by community members. We use an approach called *Community-Based Participatory Action Research*, where research is done *with* and *for* communities to ensure that they can benefit directly from what we learn. We hope this approach and the project will contribute to the well-being of Northern Saskatchewan's communities.

Using this approach, our researchers collect information by listening to people's thoughts about their communities' strengths, challenges, needs, and aspirations. We do this through interviews, focus groups, and workshops, as well as methods that use photography and video. In these ways, we are exploring the characteristics of the past, current, and future business environment of Northern Saskatchewan.

School and Community Workshops

So far, we have conducted school and community workshops in seven northern Saskatchewan communities. During the school workshops, our researchers have spoken to groups of around 30 grade 10, 11 and 12 students in each community, and asked them about their future plans, their hopes for their communities, and what they like best about where they live. The community workshops follow a similar process with adults from each community, and involve discussions about:

- Local community characteristics, history and change;
- Dynamics of the economy, including the availability of goods and services, where they can be accessed, and which other communities access those goods and services;
- Perceptions of local development/business capacity strengths and needs;
- Thoughts on innovation, entrepreneurship and leadership.



Photovoice

Some participants of the community workshops also took part in a research method called Photovoice. Participants were asked to take photos or collect existing pictures that capture their perspectives about the 'good life', community well-being, and prosperity, and how these concepts relate to entrepreneurship.

Participants had about two weeks to gather photos, and then sat down with one of our researchers to explain why they chose their images, and what they represent. In each case the participant led the conversation and told the researchers stories about their lives and their community, which has provided valuable insights for our study.



OurVoice

As part of the youth workshops, we asked students to interview their peers and video record their answers. This peer-to-peer method, known as OurVoice, allows us to hear directly from young people what they like most about living in their community, and what would make their community an even better place to live. The videos are compiled and stitched together to create one video that captures the themes that the youth identify.

In addition to these methods, our researchers asked participants to take part in exercises that define the geography of their community and identify the various goods and services that are available to them. Both youth and adult participants were asked to mark on a map of Saskatchewan the areas they consider to be their community



Researchers also prompted participants with a series of cards identifying various goods and services, to determine whether they are available inside or outside each community. Those findings have been outlined on maps, included later in this report.

Research Project Phase 1 (June 2014 - April 2015)

During Phase 1 of the project, we met with people in selected Northern Saskatchewan communities to learn about capacity building in the North from experienced residents. We built relationships with these participants, who were chosen based on their leadership qualities and ties we already had with individuals. These participants were interviewed in person or over the phone, and were asked about their definitions of the three main concepts explored in this study:

- The Good Life
- Community Well-being
- Community Prosperity



The community members we spoke to pointed out the importance of including youth perspectives, particularly about future generations of entrepreneurs, and the education, training, and business development needs in the communities. Discussion topics included potential barriers for young people who want to leave communities (like not having a driver's license and lack of available training). There were discussions about the need for goods and services in communities, the need specifically for services for Elders and those with medical challenges, the degree of community control needed for self-sufficiency, and the importance of traditional ways of life. Participants also expressed concern about outsiders exploiting opportunities before communities are able to benefit from them.

These initial interviews helped us decide how to carry out Phase 2.

Research Project Phase 2 (April 2015 – December 2016)

Based on guidance from Phase 1 research participants, the BNCE research team worked with community research partners to during Phase 2 of the research project to focus on the following areas:

- community members' (including youth's) aspirations for the future;
- how entrepreneurship is (or is not) contributing to communities' ability to achieve these aspirations;
- how entrepreneurship might contribute positively toward the desired futures of these communities.

Community Partners

For Phase 2, we worked with communities from across Northern Saskatchewan that differed in size, language, and type. They included both Métis and First Nation communities.

Our Phase 2 research partner communities are:

- Pinehouse
- Ile-a-la-Crosse
- La Ronge
- Lac La Ronge Indian Band
- Stanley Mission
- Hatchet Lake
- Cumberland House

Youth Workshops

During this phase, we conducted *youth workshops* at the schools in each of the partner communities to learn about youth aspirations for their futures and for their communities' futures.

The results from that work included videos showing the youth in each community describing what they feel makes their



communities good places to live and what might be done to make them even better places to live. Those videos are available to view on our BNCE website (<u>http://northerncapacity.com</u>).

Community Workshops and Photovoice

During Phase 2, the BNCE team conducted community workshops in six of the seven participating communities. Unfortunately, we were unable to meet with the community at Stanley Mission, although we conducted the youth workshop there.

Members of the BNCE research team visited all partner communities, except for Stanley Mission, approximately two weeks after the community workshops to interview the Photovoice participants.

Data Analysis and Preliminary Results

Phase 2 of the BNCE research project involved approximately 375 participants from both the youth and community workshops and from the Photovoice interviews – about 200 high school students, 150 adult community members, and 24 Photovoice participants. Information gathered from those participants was transcribed into documents that the BNCE team then analyzed.

The research generated approximately 9,000 *data points* that were organized through three rounds of analysis to develop themes and preliminary conclusions. The next sections of this document describe these preliminary finds.

Preliminary Findings from Youth Workshops

This section includes the combined results from the youth workshops held in the seven communities visited by the BNCE team. It also includes a section indicating the information that came from the youth workshop held at Stanley Mission, one of the seven communities. Due to timing and circumstances, the community workshop has not taken place at Stanley Mission.

While talking to groups of young people across the North, our researchers heard high school students echo their peers from other communities in nearly every discussion. In each of the seven participant communities Grade 10 to 12 students took part in interactive activities including focus groups using workbooks; mapping exercises, identifying goods and services available in the community as well as drawing the geographic extent of their community; and the OurVoice peer-to-peer video exercise, wherein students recorded interviews with each other. In all of the communities we visited — Pinehouse, La Ronge, Lac La Ronge Indian Band at La Ronge, Stanley Mission, Ile a la Crosse, Hatchet Lake, and Cumberland House — young people painted a very similar picture of what they love about their communities, what developments they want to see in the future, their plans after high school, and who they consider to be leaders.

What youth love about their communities

When asked to identify the best things about living in their communities, young people across Northern Saskatchewan said the natural surroundings were at the top of their lists. They think their communities are beautiful, love being close to nature, and say that being able to go hunting, fishing, and trapping, as well as swimming, boating, ski-dooing, or camping is what makes living in their community great. Just as important to them is the close-knit nature of their communities, and their ability to live close to family members and friends. Young people often said they like living in a small place, where they can easily walk where they need to go and see familiar faces along the way.

What youth want for their communities

Youth across Northern Saskatchewan want to see their communities thrive. Many young people said having recreation centres would make a difference in their lives by providing healthy, engaging activities. Teens in each community listed youth centres and recreation facilities as places where they can seek entertainment and physical activity: these include sports facilities like volleyball courts, skate parks, or ice rinks, as well as places to watch movies or play pool. Youth said these types of facilities provide alternative activities to using drugs and alcohol.

Many young participants mentioned that a decrease of alcohol and drug use would make their communities better places to live, and also pointed out a need for mental health support services. They also hope for an increase in employment and educational opportunities that would make their lives, and the lives of adults in their community, better.

Young people also want to see more businesses. Though many list large chain restaurants and stores as things they wish they had in their hometowns, there is a general feeling that more small businesses that provide goods, services, and jobs would be beneficial. Fast food restaurants and cafes were mentioned frequently as additions young people would like to see, as well as retail stores that provide a wider range of goods than currently exist.

Many of the youth mentioned that goods are very expensive where they live, and that more affordable options are needed, especially for groceries.

In all seven communities, the majority of young people said that they intend to move away after high school. Most felt that there weren't sufficient opportunities in their communities for post-secondary education or employment, and while they would always return to visit their families, they did not think they would settle down there. If they had the knowledge and education to start a business, or there were more employment opportunities in their home communities, there was a sense that more youth may choose to stay close to home.

What youth want to do in the future

When we asked young people what they plan to do after high school, in every community the majority said they plan to move away to seek further education or employment elsewhere. Many indicated that they would like to return to visit friends and family, and some said that they could see themselves coming back to start a business in their home community. Most of the young participants, though, indicated that they would leave their community long-term after high school.

Who youth look up to

Our researchers talked to youth about what makes a good leader, and who they see as leaders in their communities. They listed an array of people they look up to, including family members, chiefs and other officials, Elders, coaches, business people, and teachers.

Youth spoke about the importance of Elders as sources of experience and knowledge, including traditional knowledge and stories. They said role models in the community are those who gain the respect of others and encourage community members to work together; they are committed to their communities, and are responsible and dependable. Young people said they appreciate those who are open to listening to and helping others, without asking for anything in return.

Defining Community: Results of Youth Workshop Mapping Exercise

Our research team presented participants with a map of the province, and asked them to mark the areas they considered to be their community. In general, the youth defined their community based on factors like where members of their family lived, where their friends were, and where traplines were located.

Stanley Mission

The BNCE team held a workshop with grade 10 to 12 students in Stanley Mission. Although a community meeting was also planned, the timing and circumstances did not enable us to hold that meeting. If the community desires it, we would like to return to meet with community members.

On November 3rd 2015 BNCE researchers Lee Swanson, Rhiannon Klein, Dana Carriere, and Brenda Schurr, received a warm welcome from the historical community of Stanley Mission. The team

worked with 25 students from grades 10 to 12 at Rhonda Hardlotte Memorial Keethanow High School. Students participated in exercises such as video interviews. group discussions and sharing circles.

In their discussions, the youth were guided by questions such as "What are the best things about living in your community? What



would make your community an even better place to live?". Participants highlighted the welcoming nature of the community and strong community bonds. The researchers also asked the youth about the role of entrepreneurs in the community, their ideas of leadership, and their future plans.

Community

The youth listed a number of positive things about their community, and reasons why it is a great

place to live. They talked about the beautiful landscape and scenery, as well as the extra-curricular and outdoor activities available in their area. Some participants said fishing was an important activity, in addition to skating, skidooing, snowshoeing, boating and swimming. Students like their school and the community rink, as well as Stanley Mission's historic church.

"It's not too big so we know pretty much everyone. The view is nice and there is nice people here. "

Many of the students listed their family and friends, and the welcoming nature the community as some of the best things about Stanley Mission. The fact that the community is small and easy to get around, and that people are 'like family' is important to the young people. Some mentioned that it is an excellent place to raise children.

When asked what would make their community an even better place to live, participants said they would like to see more educational opportunities for adults, and more employment opportunities.

The youth want more extra-curricular activities, both for themselves and young children, as well as recreation areas like parks and playgrounds.

During this discussion, youth also mentioned they would like to see more respect for the community among some of their peers. Participants said that less alcohol and drugs in the community would make it a better place.

Local business

The youth workshop also focused on the roles of entrepreneurs within the community and the businesses that participants would like to see created in the community. The youth said they would like see more restaurants in town, listing mostly fast food establishments or coffee shops as businesses they wish their community had. They listed a range of other businesses and facilities that they would like to have in Stanley Mission: a 24-hour gas station, a fitness centre, daycare, and a doctor, as well as a public library. Some mentioned they would like to go to school to learn about starting and running a business.

The local economy in Stanley Mission includes what we call the Giving, Sharing, and Trading (GST) economy, which is prominent in many communities across the North. Participants said that people in the community give, share, and trade goods like meat, fish, and berries. They also considered intangible goods like time and knowledge to be part of GST: some listed babysitting as a service that could be traded, as could passing along knowledge about traditional activities like preparing meat. People also barter with goods, such as trading fish in exchange for a car rental.

Participants said that the internet has become a good tool for selling and buying goods, as well as giving, sharing, or trading. On the community's online 'buy and sell' group, people can acquire food. clothing, vehicles, electronics, traditional crafts, and jewelry, as well as advertise services and community events. This is seen to have a positive impact on the community and the economy.



Future Plans

Members of the BNCE team also asked youth about their future plans. While some participants said they would like to stay in Stanley Mission, the majority said they plan to leave for post-secondary education and/or job opportunities. Some future careers in which the young people are interested include conservation officer, doctor, electrician, writer and journalist. Participants listed the University of Regina as an ideal place for post-secondary education, and some said Vancouver might be a place where they will seek job opportunities. Participants who indicated they would like to leave the community said that they would come home to visit.

Mapping exercise

Along with the video interviews and group discussion, students participated in a mapping exercise. They were asked to mark and define the geography of their community on our map of Saskatchewan. Participants indicated their lineage, hunting grounds, fishing areas, trap lines and berry picking areas as being part of their community.





Stanley Mission Insights

The youth who participated in our workshop in Stanley Mission echoed many of the things our research team has heard in other participant communities across Northern Saskatchewan. In all communities youth have told us they love the land and outdoor activities like fishing, skidooing, boating and swimming; in all communities they have said that they would like to see more recreational facilities and spaces for youth to spend time and be involved in healthy activities. In many communities, the youth participants also said that having less alcohol and drug use in their community would make them better.

Preliminary Findings from Community Workshops

Community workshops were held in six of the seven participating communities. The results from those workshops are included in this section. Due to timing and circumstances, only the youth workshop was held at Stanley Mission. If the people there would like the BNCE team to conduct a community workshop in their community, we would like to return to Stanley Mission to do so.

Cumberland House

BNCE researchers Megan McDowell, Dana Carriere, Jacqueline Woods, and Aasa Marshall visited Cumberland House March 8th, 2016 to conduct workshops with high school students and adult members of the community. At a later date, Dana Carriere and Jacqueline Woods returned to the community to discuss the photos taken by those who participated in the Photovoice exercise. The following is a summary of the themes that came out of discussions and exercises, both at the workshops and Photovoice interviews.

Community

Participants agreed that one of the best things about living in Cumberland House is the closeness of family and friends. They noted the strong sense of community that exists, and that when someone is in need, "the whole community gets together to put their dollars in", and lends a hand. This community support, as well as security and a sense of belonging, were among the qualities Cumberland House participants felt were most important to them. They also mentioned the importance of the

school, and that its goal is to provide every possible opportunity for the community's youth.

When asked what would make the community an even better place to live, community members talked about recreational wanting facilities. specifically that they would like to see the skating rink re-opened. They also listed more affordable groceries, increased availability to goods, and access to adult education as some of their priorities. Adult education provided in or near Cumberland House would allow people to study without having to leave the community, which participants saw as a large benefit. Classes on life skills, such as budgeting, were mentioned as a potentially helpful addition to the community as well.

"What is the best thing about living in Cumberland? There is a lot of land you can like do quading, and fish derbies and lots of family and its small, so there is not a lot of people."





Participants also indicated that increased health care and emergency services are needed to improve life in Cumberland. One participant said they would like to see a five-year strategic plan for the community development, with the intent of putting ideas into action. One positive program that currently exists is a Grade 12 course called Entrepreneurship 30; certified through Saskatchewan Tourism Education Council that allows students to learn restaurant skills.

Some participants agreed that leaders need to work together to create opportunities for community members, and noted a lack of communication between municipal and reserve leaders, which they felt could be a barrier to development. There are challenges with collaboration between those who are from the community, and those from the reserve. They felt that everyone would benefit if leaders collaborated on community planning and development, and worked together to understand their common and mutually beneficial interests. The community and reserve come together when there is an emergency, but participants felt they remain divided in other circumstances over political issues, despite wanting the same things.

Local Economy

The economy has changed in Cumberland House, as more traditional ways of making a living have disappeared. Trapping is no longer a viable occupation, and as Elders have passed away, traditional knowledge and skills have been lost.

Participants felt that a lack of job opportunities was a large challenge for the community. People who lack education have trouble finding employment, and may do odd jobs around the community to compensate. Community members feel there is potential for entrepreneurship and development in the community, but a lack of education, tools, and knowledge to make it happen. For participants, examples of economic development in the community include Chief Island's Store, and community initiatives such as the community garden to promote self-sustainability and sufficiency.

Because of the high cost of groceries, community members said they would like to see a Co-op food store in Cumberland. People would also like to see a hair salon in the community: a participant mentioned that, because there is nowhere to get a haircut in Cumberland, people take their money south that could stay in the community. There is potential to sell traditional goods, such as beaded items, both in Canada and internationally.

Giving, Sharing and Trading

Because of the high cost of goods, especially food, many people hunt or catch wildlife to eat and share with other members of the community. This type of sharing is seen as both positive and empowering: participants said there is a strong culture around food in Cumberland House, and that being able to give food to others, or have food on hand for guests, is important. Meat and fish are also regularly used to barter for goods and services.

"Cumberland likes to feed people!"

The Good Life

Many participants said the good life is tied to their families and the nature surrounding the community. This was reflected in many Photovoice images, which illustrate outdoor activities available in Cumberland House. These included (but not limited to) fishing, canoeing, and boating. Participants mentioned that nature was included in many of their images as a representation of the traditional way of life.

"I think it teaches my kids that this is our island and there is more to it than just your house and your school and the stores that sometimes close at six or sometimes don't open. Like, they can go and do other things, you know? And it, I don't know, I take them out and show them as much as I can so they can appreciate it."





"When Saskatchewan had its big centennial, we organized the Saskatchewan Centennial Canoe Quest. We did the whole Churchill River. We raced from La Loche all to way to Cumberland House and so there were 33 teams... We started each morning at 6:00 in the morning and then would race community to community to community."

Mapping Community Goods and Services

During the youth and community workshops, researchers asked participants to identify the types of goods and services that exist in their community. They also indicated where they go to access goods and services that are not available in Cumberland House, and the goods and services that are accessed by people outside of the community. The following map outlines what we heard from participants:



Goods and Services, Cumberland House



Map Produced by The Spatial Initiative, University of Saskatchewan, 2016



Cumberland House Insights

The preliminary findings presented in this document show that participants from Cumberland House see potential for economic development in the community, but think that education and leadership are needed to move forward. They are passionate about the natural environment and the food, work, and leisure activities it provides. They want to preserve traditional knowledge and activities, and think that these traditions could be used to further economic development.

Participants said that Cumberland House is a supportive community that comes together to help people in need. Both adult and youth participants spoke about the strong sense of community, and the importance of food to local culture. Some think that collaboration between leaders of the community of Cumberland House and the reserve could improve life for residents in both places.

Hatchet Lake

The BNCE research team visited Hatchet Lake on January 19th, 2016. Researchers Megan McDowell, Andrew Swift, Jacqueline Woods, and Brenda Schurr worked with youth and adults of the community in separate workshops to investigate the concepts of the good life, community well-being and prosperity, and the entrepreneurial activities occurring in the community. At a later date, researchers returned to the community to discuss the photos taken by those who participated in the Photovoice exercise. The following is a summary of the discussions and exercises, surrounding the themes of Community, Local Economy, and the Good Life.

"I feel that Hatchet is a welcoming community where they don't care [about] your appearance. They are basically interested in how you are doing, if you're ok, are you fed, and do you have a place to stay."

Community

Participants from Hatchet Lake said that the people, the beautiful landscape, and the wildlife are some of the best things about their community. They said they appreciate the ability to speak their own language with fellow community members, including in the economic development office. Participants felt that they are able to live off the land because of the abundance of fresh fish and wildlife, and the presence of supportive friends and residents with whom they can share.

Participants also talked about what they would like to see in their community, to make it an even better place to live. They strongly indicated the need for better and paved roads, and spoke of the issue of access and the reliance on the barge during the summer months, and the ice road being open only a few months in the winter. Participants said these infrastructure challenges have a significant impact on community development. One participant gave an example of a semi carrying construction supplies that was unable to make it into the community due to the closure of the ice road; this put community development plans on hold.

Participants mentioned the need for more housing, training facilities, treatment and healing centers in the community. They said that a youth centre, that provides a variety of activities, would benefit Hatchet Lake. Some expressed concerns about the effects of technology on young people, and felt they needed to be trained to use social media. Participants were concerned that fish levels needed to be more closely managed, that the caribou they have traditionally hunted are disappearing, and that traditional ways of helping people are being lost. They also have concerns about the high cost of food, gas, and infrastructure, and the general lack of support systems for everyone in the community.

Community members discussed their views on what defines good leadership in the North, and how it differs from the South. Participants said Northern leadership is different because many people live the traditional lifestyle, and those considered leaders speak the language. Community members indicated

"We have leaders – they have politicians"

the Chief represents and speaks on behalf of the community, as do Elders who have the knowledge of the history and of the culture. Participants listed the medicine man, the priest, health workers, and the RCMP as leaders in the community, as well as parents who teach children to be respectful, and are viewed as primary educators.

Local Economy

Participants discussed economic development in their community, including development and industry corporations that exist in the community. They also discussed survival, the local economy, and the importance of tradition.

Participants said that employment, living off the land, self-sufficiency, and sharing were important, intertwined aspects of survival. They also discussed the importance of entrepreneurship, and how the lack



of reliable roads and infrastructure creates barriers and limits opportunities for entrepreneurs. Some community members have small businesses that they run out of their homes, but feel the opportunities for business development are limited on the reserve, due to the government regulations and infrastructure issues. Participants indicated that ideas for entrepreneurial projects could be found in culture and tradition, and that tourism could be tied to promoting traditional goods. Some said they would like to see the development of cultural camps that would feature beading, drumming, traditional food, and activities like hunting, fishing and trapping.

"Everybody drums everything. I mean, if you want to talk about entrepreneurship, people would like to learn about this. You could have people come here as tourists and learn about culture. The fact is getting them here. There is a big interest. I know there is."



The BNCE research team was also interested in what we call the "giving, sharing, and trading" (GST) economy. Through speaking to members of Northern communities, the importance of the GST economy has become clear. Participants in Hatchet Lake said items such as meat, bannock, fish, firewood, handcrafts, and even individual items like headphones, were part of the GST economy. A few participants said the internet is a good resource for ideas about handcrafts, and a convenient place to sell those crafts. Participants also said that the GST economy is not only occurring in Hatchet Lake between community members, but between other Northern communities as well. Between communities, items such as gas, parts for vehicles and skidoos, hunting and trapping resources are common objects that are given, traded and shared.

The Good Life

For participants, the 'good life' was determined largely by tradition and going back to the traditional ways. Keeping active and healthy is an important aspect of the good life for some participants, which involves taking part in sports or simply working out on the land. Family was also an important aspect of the good life, with an emphasis on spending time together, honoring traditions, and passing on knowledge to younger generations. Some acknowledged that technology is becoming a large part of day-to-day life, and would like to see new ways of integrating technology and traditional ways.

Examples of Photovoice Contributions



"When you talk to anybody that you meet, it doesn't matter who we are, even children will say we need a road. [...] It's common knowledge out here with. If we get a road, like I said, we can still retain some of the economics, the money for community development will be much greater. And with prosperity the food costs, lifestyle, all that stuff."



"Our survival with life, it has always been fish, caribou, living off the land, the water. The four main things that has been from the past and that is our way of life until today."

Community Mapping

Like the youth workshop, the BNCE research team asked the members of the community to mark and define the geography of their community.

When defining their community, participants circled areas where they were born and raised, where their families live, and the location of family traplines and other culturally significant locations. One participant also circled Brochet, Manitoba because of the close connections and family relations between the two communities.

Mapping Community Goods and Services

During the youth and community workshops, researchers asked participants to identify the types of goods and services that exist in their community. They also indicated where they go to access goods and services that are not available in Hatchet Lake, and the goods and services that are accessed by people outside of the community. The following map outlines what we heard from participants:



Goods and Services, Hatchet Lake



Black Lak (XI Hatchet Lak Walla n Lak (Ħ rince Alber (114) Legend



Note: Entertainment includes: community gatherings, music events Personal services include: haircuts, manicures, massages Support services include: addictions aervices, counseling, food Bank, mental health Services for locals and visitors include: convenience stores, gas stations, grocery store, mechanics, restaurants, taxi services, tow truck operators

Map Produced by The Spatial Initiative, University of Saskatchewan, 2016



Hatchet Lake Insights

When examining the youth and community workshops, similar themes emerged from both. One of the major themes which developed out of both workshops were the close connections people had to one another and to the community as a whole. Both the community and the youth mentioned the close knit community as being one of the best things about Hatchet Lake.

Another major theme which emerged from the workshops was the importance of a road to the community. Community members went more into depth about how the lack of reliable roads limits community development whereas the youth saw it more as a barrier to community development. Even though the community and youth indicated the need for a road, a few participants saw the lack of a road kept the tradition and culture alive as there are few non-community members coming in which assists in the preservation of the culture.

Ile-a-la-Crosse

Members of the BNCE research team visited Ile-a-la-Crosse in September, 2015 to conduct workshops with high school students and adult members of the community. At a later date, researchers returned to the community to discuss the photos taken by those who participated in the Photovoice exercise. The following is a summary of the themes that came out of discussions and exercises, both at the workshops and Photovoice interviews.

Community Life

In discussions about life in the community, the majority of participants said that the best thing about living in Ile-a-la-Crosse is the people. Everyone expressed a strong sense of family and belonging, and participants mentioned the resilience and helpful nature of community residents. As an example of the community's supportive nature, one participant noted that prize bingos are held to raise money for families who need to travel for medical treatments.

Participants also pointed out the importance of their community's history as one of the oldest communities in the province. Some also said they take pride in the leadership and the resilience of the Metis people, and feel it is important to sustain their cultural and language heritage. Other characteristics participants love about Ile-a-la-Crosse are its beautiful scenery, the sense of self-sufficiency, and the amazing strength, kinship ties, and unique sense of humor displayed by members of the community.

"I think one of the things I appreciate is the resilience – for 250 years – knowing what happened to the people in this community and how they have had to overcome obstacles – there is amazing strength here."

When asked what would make their community an even better place to live, some participants said that bonding and connecting with neighboring communities would be beneficial; one person felt that the community tends to be protectionist, which might result in the community losing opportunities. Some said there is untapped potential in the tourism industry, and the fact that the community has a rich history could be promoted for tourism purposes. Participants said it is important to increase job creation and to provide more opportunities for young people to stay in the community.

Local Economy and Entrepreneurship

Participants expressed concern about the future of the traditional economy in their community: some said that products like wild rice or furs from trapping are less prevalent, and fewer people are selling traditional products such as beaded gloves, jackets, and moccasins. Participants felt there is an opportunity to expand the sale of beaded goods such as mukluks, as they are coming 'back into fashion'. They also mentioned the tourism industry as part of the economy with potential: local people have the skills and knowledge of the land, but not the entrepreneurial skills or initial support to get things started.

Other entrepreneurial activities in Ile-ala-Crosse include boat building, fishing, sewing and community gardening. To address the lack of investment, business initiatives put in place to assist entrepreneurs in the community were identified. These includes the support offered by the Sakitawak Development Corporation, Aboriginal Business Canada, Clarence Campo, and PLEDCO.

"I just think that entrepreneurship is something we've got to work a little harder at and any help is greatly appreciated and if we can expose more people to entrepreneurship... Always underlying in regards to moving forward with young people and business development is, of course, funding, so maybe microloans, and equity always seems to be a problem."



There has not been a real assessment of the job opportunities that could be created by the traditional economy, or of the human resource capacity of the community, some participants said. Until these are done, community members felt the traditional economy will remain underdeveloped. They said it is difficult to convey the potential and importance of the traditional economy to the government or investors. To local people the economy is not only about making money, but taking part in traditional activities and being on the land; this is something they feel the government does not understand.

Additional discussions were also made on the state of innovations in the community. An example of this was on how the food, gardening and fishing business in the community has been improved upon and expanded. Participants also acknowledge the need to have a long term innovation plan for both the farming and food industry, to ensure that the innovations are sustained and continually improved on.

The community has been over-researched, participants said, but there is little to show for how this has translated into policy or development. They said the setting up of a regional research plan/centre in Ile-a-la-Crosse is one of the ways of intensifying value-oriented research not just on economic development, but also human development.

The participants also talked about the role young people have been playing in entrepreneurship and how this can be further encouraged; participants want to instill entrepreneurial values in young people, and give them support that would help them grow.

The Concept of the Good Life

Participants described the 'good life' in terms of having your needs (such as housing, medi-care, heat, power and other social amenities) fulfilled, and the quality of life you live. Living in a close-knit community was also defined as part of the good life, in a place where people work together for the benefit of the community.

Examples of Photovoice Contributions



"I think it's important for the local leadership to bring the surrounding communities in to discuss entrepreneurship, business development, economic development, and community development. I think we have to discuss this a lot more often and I don't think a lot of people clearly understand or know the importance of business and entrepreneurship in a community."



"If someone goes for surgery or ... a medical reason the community will pool together and have a prize bingo and whatever we raise goes to the family that is down south to help with hotel rooms and meals and gas and stuff like that. And it just gives us, you know, pride that we can do it but also a sense of contributing to the welfare of others. We have always done it in one form or another. We help each in time of need. And I like that. That is who we are as a community and it has always been that way since I can remember as a child."

Mapping Community Goods and Services



"The Métis sash that was custom made in appreciation of a Memorandum of Understanding that was signed between The Northern Village of IIe a La Crosse and its citizens and a Fort McKay Métis group. You see their designs and emblems are on the sash, the symbol of IIe a la Crosse and the symbol for the Fort McKay Métis group. I thought it was important to add that because it shows the partnership and the imaginary line that divides the provinces or communities...that takes it away. It's showing that we can go beyond our community boundaries."

During the youth and community workshops, researchers asked participants to identify the types of goods and services that exist in their community. They also indicated where they go to access goods and services that are not available in Ile-a-la-Crosse, and the goods and services that are accessed by people outside of the community. The following map outlines what we heard from participants:



Goods and Services, Île-à-la-Crosse

Map Produced by The Spatial Initiative, University of Saskatchewan, 2016



Ile-a-la-Crosse Insights

Participants in Ile-a-la-Crosse, like youth participants and other community members across the North, spoke about the tight-knit nature of their community, and the support they show to each other. Unique to Ile-a-la-Crosse, however, was the emphasis on the history of the community.

Residents of Ile-a-la-Crosse said they want to see an increase in employment opportunities and business development in their community, and think there is a lot of potential for this, particularly in the tourism industry and traditional economy. What is needed, some participants said, is an assessment of this potential, and a plan for economic development that can be acted upon. Some feel that innovation, connecting with other communities, and embracing activities of the traditional economy (such as beaded crafts) might benefit the community's economic development.





La Ronge

On November 4th, 2015, BNCE researchers Lee Swanson, Brenda Schurr, Rhiannon Klein, and Dana Carriere visited La Ronge to conduct workshops with high school students and adult members of the community. At a later date, researchers returned to the community to discuss the photos taken by those who participated in the Photovoice exercise. The following is a summary of the themes that came out of discussions and exercises, both at the workshops and Photovoice interviews.

Community

Community participants said La Ronge is a community where residents are willing to help each other, with a solid spiritual community in which people of different faiths work together. They enjoy living in a community that isn't focused on consumerism, and that is small enough to get around easily. They appreciate the vastness and beauty of the land, the closeness of families, and availability of recreational facilities. Participants spoke about the importance of traditional activities to life in La Ronge. Hunting, fishing, and language were among those mentioned as things local people want to preserve.

Among the challenges community members see in La Ronge are shortage of specialists such as psychologists, and a lack of social amenities such as veterinary clinic, and accessibility to medical personnel for serious health problems. Participants also noted a lack of housing, particularly for professionals like teachers who come into the community.

Like many youth participants, community members said they would like to see more sources of entertainment and activities, such as a movie theatre or bowling alley. It is important to participants to see more employment opportunities in the community in order to make it a better place to live. They also spoke about the importance of education for young people, both formal and informal. Not only do they want high quality education for the children of the community, they think mentorship programs and creating better role models would be a benefit to residents.

Participants also spoke about the importance of the Truth and Reconciliation report, and being aware of its recommendations and working toward them together as a community.

Local Economy

Participants talked about the traditional, modern, future, and local economies, and the ways they have changed in recent generations. They discussed how the main industry in the North has shifted to mining, and the wood industry is nearly non-existent; commercial fishing has also suffered from

various issues, including fish marketing board regulations, and the fact that fresh fish is a "captured market" with limited licenses available. Activities like trapping are dwindling, despite an increase in the price of furs due to rising demand in Asia. Some pointed out the challenges of trappers and certification. and that federal government regulations have made it more difficult to get firearms training certification, and that becoming a firearms instructor is expensive. Some also pointed out the necessity of shifting from dog sleds to motor vehicles.



Further changes in traditional lifestyle result from a disconnection between government and the people. Participants talked about how opinions, regulations and policies are formed by those in urban areas, and Indigenous communities end up having to live by mainstream Canadian rules.

The local economy was discussed in terms of giving, sharing and trading that does not involve monetary exchange. Participants gave examples of giving as having their parents watch over their children when they are away at work, as well as other types of child care arrangements. The sharing of knowledge about making traditional goods, such as moccasins, was also considered to be part of this version of the economy.

In local community gardens, a number of families grow more vegetables than they need and share them with other families. Goods like firewood, moose meat, and fish are similarly shared. Sharing and giving are also reflected in activities like funerals, where a volunteer gives his or her time to prepare the grave site.

The participants noted that giving, sharing and trading in the community are done using the internet, telephone, and radio announcements, as well as through local TV. Other goods typically exchanged without the use of money also include cultural industries such as berries, handicrafts, and jewelry.

Entrepreneurship

In some discussions, participants talked about entrepreneurial activity related to industries such as fishing and tourism. One participant said there is a disconnection between people in the community who want to have individually-run businesses, and the leadership that wants to run them. There are some traditional industries practiced today such as picking and selling berries, in addition to more formal businesses such as the SaskTel store and Giant Tiger, and entrepreneurial initiatives, such as Craving's restaurant and the antique store D's Rings and Things.

Leadership

Participants identified numerous leaders in the community, such as parents, Elders, and universityeducated people, as well as soccer moms or dads, spiritual leaders, community leaders, and volunteers from the arts community. They listed many characteristics of good leaders: supportive,

caring, honest, genuine, accessible to others, courageous, humble, passionate, generous, and willing to admit mistakes.

Although one participant said there is a leadership deficit in the North, they believe this can be addressed by providing opportunities for young people to develop leadership skills. To make this a reality, they indicated the need for skillsbuilding activities like youth leadership camps, and for more support networks.





The Good Life

When asked to define the good life, community members frequently said it can be found in the natural environment, where they can participate in various outdoor activities. Boating, hiking, canoeing, and ice skating are activities involved in the good life for people in La Ronge.

In addition to the importance of the environment and landscape, participants' views of the good life were wide-ranging, and also included things like affordable housing and security, which includes access to health care services.

Examples of Photovoice Contributions



"I think it is just wonderful when people just take their passions and use them to benefit others and in which our group benefited from it...I just thought I would use it as an example of entrepreneurship that benefits more than the just person being the entrepreneur." "Well the fires burned all our blueberries so this is just my token I love the berries of the north so I happen to a bazillion raspberries in my backyard so, but yeah everybody has their berry patch. They pick the berries or they buy the berries. There are lots of professional berry pickers out here..."



Mapping Community Goods and Services

During the youth and community workshops, researchers asked participants to identify the types of goods and services that exist in their community. They also indicated where they go to access goods and services that are not available in Hatchet Lake, and the goods and services that are accessed by people outside of the community. The following map outlines what we heard from participants:



Goods and services, La Ronge

Map Produced by The Spatial Initiative, University of Saskatchewan, 2016



La Ronge Insights

The preliminary findings presented in this report suggest that community members in La Ronge are sincerely passionate about their community and want to see it grow in terms of economic and social development. They want to do this while harnessing the traditional and cultural ways of life that associate to their views of the good life, well-being and prosperity. Entrepreneurship is viewed as contributing to the success of community growth but only if it is balanced. That means entrepreneurship in communities mustn't disrupt local businesses that already exist, must build off of community goals and traditional practices rather than hindering them, and involve a level of environmental protection through ensuring safe and sustainable management of business operations. Entrepreneurship should provide opportunities for the community through training and employment.



Lac la Ronge Indian Band

Both the community and youth workshops were held November 5, 2015, and researchers returned at a later date to speak to Photovoice participants about their photos. The following is a summary of the themes that came out of discussions and exercises, both at the workshops and Photovoice interviews.

Community Characteristics

For participants, the natural world around Lac La Ronge Indian Band is one of the defining characteristics of the community. This includes the lake, the forest, wildlife, and recreational activities that community members do during the summer. Some participants mentioned the beautiful sunrises and berry picking camp, as well as the friendly nature of the people in their community as important, defining characteristics. Participants also talked about the collaboration among community members and family.

The topic of food was mentioned frequently, as people talked about the importance of traditional food collection and preparation to the community, including fishing, hunting, and trapping as well as the preparation of pemmican.

Participants also identified barriers that come with living in the community. They mentioned that there are not enough businesses, there are limited service options to choose from, and that some of the infrastructure (such as bridges and sewers) is poor. Some said businesses in the community operate with limited hours compared to the past.

The discussion also covered community efforts to overcome drug and alcohol abuse. They said that, in order to make it a better place to live, the community could use a wellness and a drop-in centre. Among other desires for the community were bus services, a 24-hour store, taxi services, and an innovative transportation system.

There have been many changes in the community, including changes to environmental conditions, economic activities, vocational activities, and the prices of goods and services. Adult members of the community have lost jobs in fisheries, furs are no longer sold at Robertson Trading, prices of gas to fly or drive to trap lines is now too high, and more people are now hunting and fishing for leisure rather than as entrepreneurial activities. Recently, fires and rains affected the availability of berries, and fewer people now make a living from traditional economy.

Local Economy

Participants described the community's economy as collaborative – our BNCE research team refers to this as the Giving, Sharing, and Trading (GST) economy. One participant gave the example of community members who kill moose and share it with others; hunters will often take a hunk of meat over to their neighbors and give it away. Fish and other goods are similarly shared in the community. Participants also mentioned the sharing of food when there is a loss in the community.

"A lot of small businesses went out of business and I think that as a community we have to be like 'okay how are we going to get those small businesses back?' Because we need things, stuff, like the clothing store, we need a coffee shop, we need things to do, right? And I think that the best way to that is to encourage people to keep trying."

Beaded products are sometimes sold or shared, and local artists sell items in places like Woodlands and Waterways tourism centre. A community garden allows students and other residents to grow and share vegetables, and those who have big gardens of their own tend to share their produce.



Participants indicated a need for young people to learn how to participate in and do more of these economic activities. They said people are often preoccupied with other things, and the teaching and learning rate for those economic activities have declined. They feel there is a need to rekindle interest.

The changes in the economic life are evident in the number of companies moving to elsewhere. Mobile companies, for instance, are moving north, mining companies now hire a minimum number of people.

Economic Development

Some discussions covered the current and past business activities in Lac La Ronge Indian Band at La Ronge, with a focus on the economic development corporations, the undocumented economy, and different sources of business education and training.

Participants also mentioned setbacks and challenges that go along with economic development in the community. The economic development corporations Keethanow Group Businesses and Kitsaki Management Limited Partnership were mentioned as components to the community economic development initiatives.

"I think that is promoting the good way, teaching our kids to share in the traditional food and showing them the whole process of it, like cutting up, smoking, drying it and then pounding"

Entrepreneurship

Specific current and potential businesses in the community were discussed providing a range of different types and levels of entrepreneurship from various community members. Within this theme, the various barriers that entrepreneurs face in the community were outlined including examples such as poor management, training, and monetary limitations.

The Good Life

Participants who discussed the good life referred often to nature, with a focus on the lake and lake activities, beautiful scenery such as sunsets, and the church on the waterfront. They described nature as untouched, with few vehicles, less pollution and more trees as being important parts of the good life. Being out on the lake and fishing with family is also considered to be part of the good life.

Food also plays an important part in the good life, particularly traditional food: one participant talked about the importance of pemmican and passing along the knowledge of making it to younger generations.



"When I went on the lake this summer I got to go on the boat and it is sense of freedom and it comes over you. You are on the boat and you get this adrenaline rush from just being out there and it is so beautiful. The wind on your face and going through your hair. It is really nice. Being on the lake. It's like going on a skidoo or whatever but you're on a boat. It feels like I don't know."



"I think that is promoting the good way, teaching our kids to share in the traditional food and showing them the whole process of it, like cutting up, smoking, drying it and then pounding it so that's how you come to these pictures."



Lac La Ronge Indian Band Insights

The community participant discussion echoed much of what the research team heard from youth participants across the North, in terms of community. Both groups of respondents mention the friendly nature of community members, the beautiful scenery and wildlife as what endears them to their region. They also have similar ideas about what needs to be done to make the community an even better place to live, which included calls for more social amenities and services. The two groups also saw drug and alcohol abuse as a problem, and wanted measures to be put in place to curtail it.

Furthermore, what constitutes entrepreneurial activities in the community are similar from the perspective of both the adults and youth. The dominant activities are fishing, hunting, and beading, but the two groups of respondents also admit that these activities are largely not for profit-making motives, as they are often shared among members of the communities, and used as a means of further cementing communal ties.

Pinehouse Lake

We initially visited Pinehouse Lake in December, 2014 as part of Phase 1 of the BNCE project. We met with the Reclaiming Our Community (ROC) group to present and discuss our research project. It was an excellent opportunity to build our partnership with Pinehouse community members.

From this visit we learned about what community members want to know, and collaborated on ideas about the research process. This included where the research will go and how it will benefit the community, and participants provided their feedback and suggestions about how to approach Phase 2. Participants were able to ask questions about the project, determine what the benefits would mean to them, and provide suggestions and thoughts. They also filled out a questionnaire that asked them to describe their community and to define the 'good life', community well-being, and prosperity.



Through this initial visit we were able to get a sense if we were asking the right questions and how well the information we learned from Phase 1 was captured. We ended up changing the focus of Phase 2 to incorporate business-related questions with respect to our understanding of the responses to these questions and response to phase one.

After our great initial visit to Pinehouse, we returned on April 28th to hold two workshops as part of Phase 2: one with approximately 60 students at Minahik Waskahigan Community School, and the other with adult members of the community. We returned at a later date to discuss the photos taken by those who participated in the Photovoice exercise.

The following is a summary of the themes that came out of discussions and exercises, both at the workshops and Photovoice interviews.

Local Economy

During the community workshop, much of the conversation revolved around business development needs and opportunities. Participants expressed a desire for more training opportunities for community members, and said that increased skills and training among residents could improve business development. They noted a need for book keeping/accounting skills and general business knowledge.



Participants also observed that people in the community obtain specialized training (in mining, for example), but are then limited when looking for different kinds of jobs. Other issues included concerns that on-the-job training is insufficient in dangerous professions (that include handling dangerous materials, for example), which is seen to be risky for workers. They said more community members need to obtain their driver's license: not having one is a barrier to both mobility and often to gaining employment.

Giving, Sharing and Trading

Giving, sharing, and trading are common among residents of Pinehouse, and the community has people who provide services informally (like car repairs). This idea of giving, sharing, and trading includes collective actions taken by community members, such as fire suppression, that contribute to the greater community, and bartering goods like locally-hunted meat. Needs in the community include infrastructure projects, from a new school and health centre to improved roads.

Infrastructure and Development

The garbage dump in Pinehouse is mentioned as a concern, both because it represents the wastefulness that can come with economic development, and also as a reminder that there are no recycling facilities in the community. The placement of the dump is also seen as a problem. The internet, though slow, is a convenient place to order goods, though it was mentioned that delivery is sometimes slow. It is also seen as a good resource for potential business. To support this, the community needs improved technology and access to technicians.

Community members believe there is a great deal of opportunity for business development in Pinehouse, and that a motivated group of people are a driving force for this development. For this to happen, increased capacity, planning, technology, and training is needed. An idea for business development included community mail delivery service between Pinehouse and La Ronge. Participants felt barriers such as expense that may be holding back development opportunities.

Community

Participants spoke about the importance of the contributions of Elders in the community, as well as respecting traditions and the land. People are concerned about the erosion of culture and tradition that seems to coincide with the loss of Elders and their knowledge. There is a desire to learn about and retain connections to culture and language, which could make the community better.

There was a concern about the impact of alcohol in Pinehouse; though the community has come a long way in tackling this issue, participants felt that even more work could be done. They are also concerned about the loss of local languages; however the community does have an 'Elder recovery program' and other social programming that is seen as positive. There is a need for more positive youth programming that takes into account local culture, language and identity. Many people believe that community is defined by collaboration, belonging, and acceptance, and that community support and strong families are essential.



The Good Life

Participants expressed the importance of traditional knowledge, Elders, and connection to the land. Living on the land, in a rural setting, with beautiful scenery is seen as an important component of the good life. This includes being able to live off the land, having a clean environment, and open, quiet space. There was also mention of the desire to live without a great deal of technology, doing things in traditional ways. Other important contributions to the good life are having a strong and healthy community, free of addictions and other social problems, having access to different levels of education, training, and mentorship, and being surrounded by family and friends.

Examples of Photovoice Contributions

"Simply amazing...this is what I wake up to every morning and this is what I would look at as a good life; seeing beautiful scenery of nature every day, all day (...) that would be better...just living off the land, like the older people used to."





"Like the Elders used to make their coffee. (...) Right over the fire. That's when it tastes best. So this, this keeps the tradition alive. That's one thing you can't take away from us. So good old dark coffee."

Pinehouse Insights

Pinehouse was the first community we visited during the BNCE project, and we learned a great deal from community members, both about Pinehouse itself, and about how to conduct our research in other centres through our partnership. Since our initial Pinehouse visit we have adjusted the methods and approach to the research, and we are grateful to the community for guiding us to refine the project in ways that would be beneficial communities in the North.

The preliminary findings presented in this document show that the people of Pinehouse are optimistic about their community's potential for economic development. Participants in both the community workshop and the Photovoice exercise spoke about their views that, though there are some barriers to creating businesses, there are good ideas for development and motivated people wanting to increase business in the community.

Both youth and adults spoke about the strength of their tight-knit community. Both groups feel it is a great place to live, and that community members are like a big, supportive family. Both young people and adults also noted the importance of maintaining tradition and language, and respecting the Elders who pass these things onto other generations.



Conclusion

The BNCE research team would like to sincerely thank all the communities for taking part in our study. Going forward, we plan to continue working with communities across Northern Saskatchewan to learn together how they can achieve their social and economic goals. In the coming months we will seek input from communities to ensure our findings accurately represent what our participants have told us, and to continue to add new information to our project.

As this project goes on, we will continue to share the results with the communities. We hope this information will empower community members to make changes that help both individual members, and the community as a whole reach their goals.

Please engage with our team on our social media pages, where you can access community videos, newsletters, and communiques from the various communities. Information on where to find us is listed on the last page of this report.



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