

REPORT SUMMARY

CAPACITY BUILDING: A FRAMEWORK FOR STRENGTHENING STEWARDSHIP IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

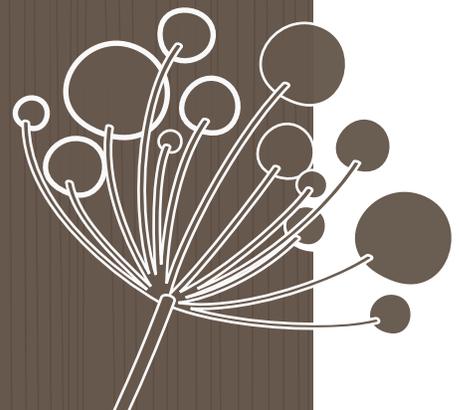
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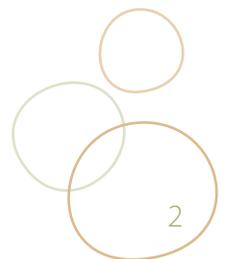
THE STEWARDSHIP CENTRE FOR BRITISH COLUMBIA



Acknowledgements

As with any project, many more people are responsible for making the project happen than just the authors named on the front. A big thank you goes to the Stewardship Centre for BC, and specifically Naomi Tabata, for both initiating and overseeing this project. As well, the Project Team played an essential role in providing ideas and feedback. A special thank you goes out to the many stewardship organizations who gave generously of their time during the interviews.

This project would not be possible without the funding and support received from the Fraser Salmon and Watershed Program. In addition, this project was initiated as a result of the visionary work at the BC Ministry of Environment. Their support for capacity building and their funding for initial capacity research resulted in the Stewardship Works! program which is testing the impact of core funding on the capacity of stewardship organizations. Their support also paved the way for this project.



Project Overview

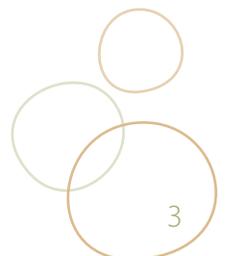
Building the capacity of stewardship organizations is an important part of the mission of the Stewardship Centre for BC (SCBC) and thus the Centre initiated this project in order to continue its work of supporting stewardship in B.C. The purpose of this research was to gain an understanding of the current status of capacity building in the stewardship sector in British Columbia in order to identify gaps and recommended next steps. The project entailed conducting a background review of the literature on capacity building, developing a framework of capacity building that would be applicable to stewardship organizations in British Columbia, conducting interviews with stewardship organizations to review the Framework, and creating a plan of next steps for capacity building for the B.C. stewardship sector.

One of the key findings was that while there is an overwhelming amount of material written on capacity building, no common definition, approaches or best practices have yet been identified. What makes the field even more confusing is the fact that a variety of terms are used interchangeably to describe capacity building including organizational development, organizational effectiveness, capacity development and organizational capacity. As a result, stewardship organizations often find capacity building difficult to do because they are uncertain where to start and how to accomplish it.

Numerous obstacles to capacity building were identified in the research including:

- Organizational and stewardship culture;
- Lack of funding for capacity building;
- Organizations tending to become stuck in reactive mode;
- Lack of recognition of the value of capacity throughout the stewardship sector;
- Groups not knowing how to build capacity or where to access resources; and
- Few tools or resources specific to the stewardship sector have been developed.

In British Columbia, with budget cuts to both federal and provincial governments, stewardship groups have been very innovative and efficient in achieving their objectives in a climate of shrinking resources and increasing expectations. As resourceful as these not-for-profit organizations are, many still struggle and there is a concern that the full potential of these groups may not be being realized. Capacity building, the systematic strengthening of the capabilities of an organization, provides a means to help organizations realize their full potential.



Capacity Building Framework

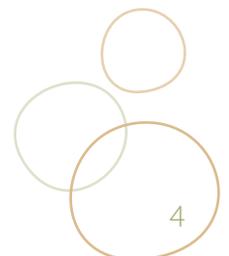
One of the issues for organizations who want to do capacity building is knowing how to accomplish it. Thus, an important aspect of this project was developing a capacity building framework in order to provide a common platform to be able to discuss capacity building and to help stewardship organizations systematically approach capacity building. The goal in producing the framework was to include all areas of capacity building and yet use simple language and be easy to comprehend. The framework was reviewed by the Project Team and twenty-one interviewees from stewardship organizations around the province and was well supported. Some of the interviewees were so pleased with having the framework as a tool that they planned to put it to use in their organizations immediately.

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

Initial research suggests that nonprofits increase their capacity tremendously when they reassess their aspirations – their mission, vision and their strategy and the actionable ways to achieve their goals.

2. Organizational Design & Management Well-articulated goals and well-developed strategies are an important first step in capacity building, but unless these are placed within the context of the right organizational structure, an organization is unlikely to be effective. A good organizational structure allows an organization to be responsive to change while integrating and aligning human resource capabilities, external environmental factors, strategic practices, technology and internal resources.

3. The People While many nonprofits recognize the people working and volunteering for the organization as their greatest resource, this is also an area of great challenges for organizations. Capacity building in this area involves recruitment, retention, management, succession planning, and training matters for volunteers, staff, management, boards and members.



4. Leadership & Team Building Leadership is the process of influencing others to accomplish objectives that move the organization to realize its vision and mission and effect social change. The most distinguishing characteristic between thriving enterprises and struggling enterprises is the presence and quality of leadership at all levels.

Teamwork provides a strategy and structure to enable groups to build skills to work together to achieve the mission they all so passionately believe in. Not only does teamwork help people accomplish more in less time, but it also helps people find greater fulfillment in the work by providing a sense of connection and belonging.

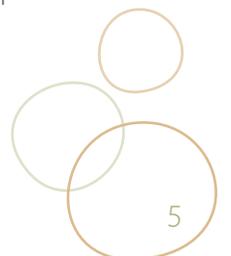
5. Funding & Financial Management Financial capacity involves developing the skills required to design a diverse and effective financial strategy, creating an organizational culture that recognizes the importance of integrating fundraising into all areas of the organization and building the expertise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

6. Getting the Message Out: Marketing & Communications All nonprofits have a need to stand out in the crowd – whether it is to attract volunteers, change people’s behaviour, find people to participate in their programs or get funding. Not knowing how to effectively communicate in order to get the desired response prevents many organizations from being the strong and productive organizations they want to be. Without the ability to communicate strategically, an organization’s voice is likely to remain unheard – or worse, create misunderstandings and problems for the organization.

7. Relationships & Networks The development of connections is a way to bring together people working in similar ecosystems or with comparable challenges to be able to share information, pool resources and learn from each other. Such connections prevent overlap and improve effectiveness, reduce competition among organizations, and increase opportunities to share infrastructure and other resources.

8. Advocacy: Changing Policy, Practices, & Legislation Historically, changes to government policies, practices and legislation have almost always resulted from grassroots pressure. Webster’s dictionary defines advocacy as “the act of advocating, or speaking or writing in support (of something)”. Under this definition, almost every stewardship group plays an advocacy role.

Capacity building in the area of advocacy involves providing groups with philosophies, techniques and tools to connect their communities with decision-makers that are based on effective engagement rather than confrontational models.

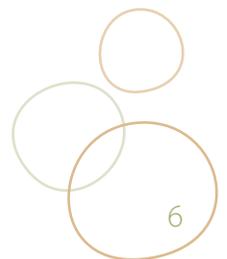


Gaps and Recommendations

Capacity Building Gaps

A number of gaps in stewardship capacity building in British Columbia were identified:

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



Recommendations

1 | The Stewardship Centre to Take a Leadership Role

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

Capacity building is not likely to advance very rapidly in the B.C. stewardship sector in unless someone takes a leadership role. The Stewardship Centre for BC is in a unique position to take this leadership role: capacity building is part of their mandate, SCBC already serves as an umbrella group for stewardship organizations in B.C., and the Centre has relationships and partnerships developed with stewardship organizations, government and funders.

The leadership role for capacity building in the stewardship sector in B.C. is an important undertaking that will require considerable resources.

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

2 | Create Hub for Stewardship Capacity Building in B.C.

The few capacity building resources that currently exist in B.C. are spread through different organizations and difficult to access. A central hub for capacity building in the province would provide a clearinghouse of information as well as a learning exchange and make it easy for stewardship groups to find the resources they need.

The hub must have a significant online component because stewardship groups are spread throughout the province and many outside of the larger urban areas currently have little access to resources. The website should have an interactive capability that enables people to post information, events, and resources and to submit feedback and ask questions. It is recommended that the Stewardship Centre for BC house this hub as they already provide online resources to the stewardship sector.

In order to ensure success, funding should not only be found to develop the capacity building resources, but also to promote the resources and the SCBC as the hub for these resources. An outreach strategy should be developed to ensure that stewardship groups are made aware of and have access to the resources.



3| **Develop Capacity Building Tools and Resources.**

A| Create a Capacity Benchmarking Tool

Now that a capacity building framework has been developed, the next priority is to create an assessment tool so that organizations can benchmark their current capacity in the different areas under the Framework.

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

B| Begin Building Upon Areas of the Framework

An important next step is to begin developing a suite of resources, tools and approaches for each of the eight areas of the Framework. As this will be a large undertaking, three areas of the Framework are recommended as priorities to be developed first based on the research: Foundation, People and Marketing and Communications.

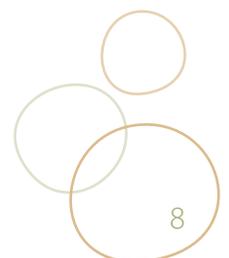
4| **Create an Inventory of Resources in the Province and Build Relationships.**

A comprehensive list of capacity building players and resources for use by the stewardship sector needs to be developed for the online hub. While some capacity builders were identified as a part of this initial research, this list needs to continue to be developed and also include professional facilitators, consultants and companies that provide nonprofit capacity building services. In addition, case studies demonstrating the benefits of capacity building should continue to be gathered.

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

5| **Advocate and Educate for Stewardship Capacity Building.**

Understanding the importance and value of capacity building to stewardship is an essential aspect of furthering capacity in the sector. The SCBC needs to both advocate and educate about what capacity building is and the benefits of



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

6| Use Plain Language and Terminology.

Using plain language and terminology in developing resources and tools and educational materials for capacity building is critical to ensure they are accessible. An investigation should delve into whether 'capacity building' is the best term or whether a better term or simpler language exists. This will require feedback from throughout the stewardship sector as well as those involved in conducting capacity building.

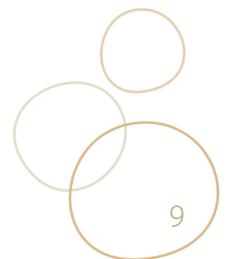
7| Determine Best Practices for Stewardship Capacity Building.

Discovering best practices – the tools and techniques that work the best for the stewardship sector - is an essential part of building capacity. Best practices also include examining the best delivery models for capacity building.

While extensive research was a part of this project, additional research is required. Specifically, research needs to be done on best practices and on information, approaches, tools and techniques that are applicable to the stewardship sector or can be adapted.

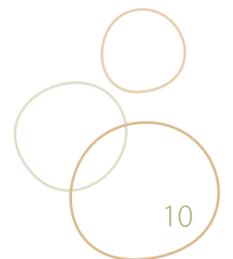
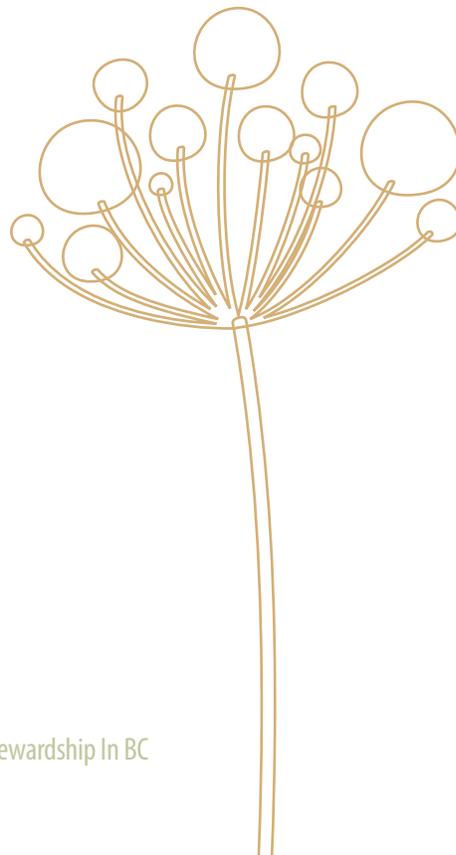
8| Explore Opportunities for Capacity Building Funding.

To be effective at building capacity, stewardship organizations need access to funding. SCBC should foster relationship with funders and government to support initiatives that fund capacity building work. The success of programs like Stewardship Works! should be celebrated and built upon to increase the awareness of the value and need for core funding.



Conclusion

The stewardship sector is at the nascent stages of capacity building and there is a great deal of opportunity to move forward strategically to provide resources and support to strengthen our organizations and protect our environment. Capacity building is an important area, not just an add-on to what groups are already doing. If we value the work that stewardship groups do, we have to also value the groups themselves and invest in their success. As one interviewee said, "Capacity building would allow us to flower instead of stumble along. The possibilities would be limitless. This work spreads our wings."



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Fraser Salmon & Watersheds Program



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All organizations are encouraged to use the information in this document to their benefit, provided that acknowledgement to the authors and The Stewardship Centre For B.C. is made.

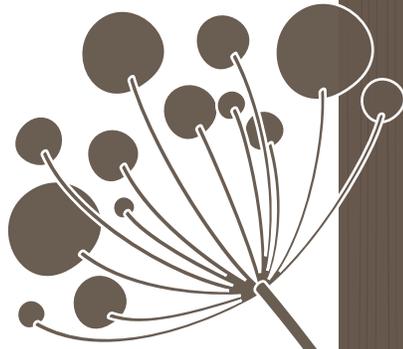
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